



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 20TH JULY 2005 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: Those Members of the Council appointed to the Executive Cabinet

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the Minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 22nd June 2005
4. Public Questions
5. To receive the Minutes of the Member Development Working Group dated 28th June 2005 and 18th July 2005 (to follow)
6. Issues arising from Overview and Scrutiny Committees
7. Notices of Motion referred from Council under Council Procedure Rule 10
 - (a) **Pathway by ASDA (officer report)**

It was proposed by Councillor S. P. Shannon and seconded by Councillor P. M. McDonald

“The practice of using the public footpath that connects Churchfields to Market Street that runs alongside the entrance to the ASDA store in Bromsgrove, for the loading and unloading of 44 tonne heavy goods vehicles, has put both pedestrians and employees of ASDA at risk of injury. Bromsgrove District Council as the Health Executive for such establishments were aware of the dangerous practice after being informed on a number of occasions over several months, yet failed to take any positive action, until forced to by Labour Councillors. In failing to act earlier we feel the Council failed in its obligations under Health and Safety legislation to protect people from risk of injury. No action has been taken by the Council regards ASDA or those responsible for condoning such practices. Although signs are already in place prohibiting vehicles over 30 cwt from using the area. We feel there has been a blatant disregard for the safety of others and by-laws prohibiting such practices.

Therefore, we call upon the Council to form a cross-party group to carry out an investigation into how such circumstances could happen, and why legal action has not been taken. In doing so this should go some way to ensuring that in future this Council will not fail in its duty to protect both employees and pedestrians from unnecessary risks.”

(b) **Avoncroft Museum of Buildings**

It was proposed by Councillor N. Psirides and seconded by Councillor M. H. Gill

“In view of the recent public concerns, this Council refers back to the Cabinet its decision to withhold the annual grant to the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings. The reinstatement of this grant will demonstrate the continued support of this Council for the significant contribution that the Avoncroft Museum of Buildings continues to make as a Tourist attraction in the District.”

(c) **Losses accumulated prior to Transfer of Housing Stock**

It was proposed by Councillor P. M. McDonald and seconded by Councillor S. P. Shannon

“That this Council calls upon the ODPM to carry out a Public Enquiry into the massive losses accumulated prior to the transfer of the Council housing stock to B.D.H.T.”

8. Policy relating to Rides and Amusements in Bromsgrove High Street
9. Redundancy and Redeployment Policy
10. Section 106 Monies
11. Customer Service Centre Progress Report and Customer Services Business Plan 2005/06
12. 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

11th July 2005

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 22nd June 2005 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors Councillor 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 P. M. McDonald, W. R. Newnes, N. Psirides J.P. and C. J. K. Wilson.

20/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Executive Cabinet held on 18th May and 24th May 2005 were submitted.

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

21/05 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

The Minutes of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 7th June 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that with reference to Minute No. 05/05, the Statement of Community Involvement be approved for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination;
- (b) that the remainder of the Minutes be noted.

22/05 **ISSUES ARISING FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

FLYPOSTING

Members considered the final report from the Flyposting Task Group which had been approved by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

23/05 **MOTIONS REFERRED FROM COUNCIL UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 10**

Capital Receipts/Assets

Councillors P. M. McDonald and C. J. K. Wilson were invited to speak in support of the motion that no money is taken from Capital receipts/assets until a Joint Committee is set up to carry out a cost benefit analysis.

In connection with this matter, the Cabinet considered an officer report on Recovery Plan Spending Priorities 2005/06 which recommended the expenditure of available resources, together with a bid to the Capacity Building Fund to achieve the delivery of the recovery plan and sustainable transformational change within the authority. It was

RESOLVED: that no action be taken with regard to the motion.

RECOMMENDED: that the spending proposals set out in the report be endorsed and that approval be given to the release of the appropriate funds in order that officers can seek to procure the appropriate solutions.

24/05

REVENUES SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2005/06

Consideration was given to the Revenues Services Business Plan for 2005/06. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Business Plan be approved.

25/05

LEISURE SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2005/06

Consideration was given to the Leisure Services Business Plan for 2005/06. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Business Plan be approved.

26/05

ANNUAL PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005/06

Consideration was given to the Annual Performance Plan for 2005/06. Following discussion, it was

RECOMMENDED: that the Annual Performance Plan for 2005/06 be approved.

27/05

A FRAMEWORK FOR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Members considered a report which set out a new framework for Business Planning and Performance Management in order to improve the effectiveness of such activities within the authority. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposal for undertaking workshops to improve and embed Business Planning and Performance Management across the Council be approved;
- (b) that the Cabinet agrees that it will recommend clear priorities for the next three years so that these can drive the review of the medium term financial plan and the preparation of next year's Service Business Plans;
- (c) that the annual cycle and procedure for preparing Service Business Plans and the Budget is modified to better reflect the linkages between service improvement and the allocation of resources;
- (d) that a cross-party and politically balanced Member Performance Management Board be set up as a Committee of the Cabinet to comprise four Conservative Members and three opposition Members, with overall responsibility for monitoring and driving performance;
- (e) that the proposed Performance Management Framework for the Council as set out in the report be approved.

28/05

PROCUREMENT

The Cabinet considered a report which summarised key activities being undertaken with regard to procurement and presented a proposed Corporate Procurement Strategy and a Guide on Selling to the Council. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the current and future activity in relation to procurement be noted and endorsed;
- (b) that the "How to do Business with Bromsgrove" Guide on Selling to the Council be approved;
- (c) that approval in principle be given to changing the amount above which formal tenders are sought to £75,000, and that the Standards Committee be requested to consider this matter at the same time as reviewing the Contract Procedure Rules.

RECOMMENDED: that the draft Corporate Procurement Strategy be approved and adopted.

29/05 **DEVELOPMENT OF A REVISED HOUSING STRATEGY FOR BROMSGROVE**

Having considered the proposed process for the review and development of a revised Housing Strategy for the District, it was

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

30/05 **WEST MIDLANDS DRAFT REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY AND REGIONAL ALLOCATION STRATEGY - CONSULTATION**

Having considered a report on the draft Regional Housing Strategy, together with the officer response submitted by districts that made up the Southern Housing Market area, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the delivery of the Regional Housing Strategy be noted;
- (b) that the actions taken by officers in preparing and submitting a draft response on behalf of the districts of the Southern Housing Market Area be endorsed;
- (c) that officers be requested to make representations regarding the need for local authorities to be given greater freedoms so that they do not have to seek consent from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to dispose of land at less than best consideration for the provision of affordable housing.

31/05 **AFFORDABLE HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Having considered a report on the Affordable Housing Capital Programme, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the detail of affordable housing dwellings that have been delivered and those projected be noted;
- (b) that the affordable housing schemes recommended for spend against approved capital budgets itemised in Column III of the table set out in 5.3 of the report be approved;
- (c) that the Head of Strategic Housing be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Safety and Strategic Housing, to allocate the funding remaining within the approved capital budgets and where necessary approve adjustments to the allocations made to schemes within the approved capital budgets.

RECOMMENDED: that approval be given to the slippage of grant funding committed to the two affordable housing schemes detailed in 5.2 of the report from the 2004/05 Capital Programme to 2005/06.

32/05 **LOW COST HOUSING DEVELOPMENT – EACHWAY, RUBERY**

Following consideration of an update report regarding the provision of low cost affordable housing on a garage site at Eachway, Rubery, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that approval be given for the land within the development site at Eachway Garage Site and Maple Road, Rubery to be conveyed to a Registered Social Landlord at zero, market or below market value, as necessary, to achieve the provision of affordable housing to rent and for Low Cost Fixed Equity sale, and if appropriate, any capital receipt be recycled as social housing grant;
- (b) that the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised to negotiate the best terms for funding the provision of low cost housing on the site;
- (c) that approval be given for an application to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for consent under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 to dispose of the land identified in the report.

33/05

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

In order to ensure that the appeals process for the review of decisions regarding homelessness or non-acceptance on to the Council's Housing Register was fairer and more transparent, it was.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a two stage housing appeal process be introduced whereby each request for a review of a homelessness housing decision should firstly be considered by a senior officer of the Council or an independent body acting as an agent for the housing authority, and that where the applicant is not happy with the review decision they be entitled to request that the case be heard by the Council's Appeals Panel;
- (b) that for a probationary period of twelve months, one representative of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust continue to be invited to form part of the Appeals Panel when cases are reviewed at the second stage;
- (c) that the officer carrying out the first stage review, in addition to considering written submissions, should in all cases, when minded to make a decision that is against the applicant's interests, invite the applicant to make an oral representation;
- (d) that the Council's Head of Legal Services be authorised to investigate and make the necessary arrangements to provide the review procedures set out in resolutions (a) and (b) above.

34/05

TENDERS FOR SHOPMOBILITY FACILITY – BUDGET SHORTFALL

Having considered a report on the revised costs for the proposed Shopmobility scheme in Bromsgrove Town Centre and the funding options to address the shortfall in the budget allocated for the scheme, it was

RECOMMENDED: that the revised project cost of £99,431 be accepted and that the budget shortfall of £25,000 be met by savings of £8,500 from the re-roofing of the Spadesbourne Suite, with the remaining £16,500 to be met from working balances in 2005/06.

35/05

IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG) 4.5 RETURN AND THE NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR LOCAL E-GOVERNMENT

Having considered a report on the Government's latest statement on the National Strategy for Local e-Government and on the Council's position with regard to the Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) 4.5 Statement, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the Government's latest report on the National Strategy for Local e-Government be noted;
- (b) that the Corporate Director (Resources) be authorised, in consultation with the Member e-champion and the Portfolio Holder for Resources, to agree the content of the Council's IEG 4.5 submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, to be submitted by 18th July 2005.

36/05

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 being as set out below:-

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
37/05	8
38/05	7
39/05	1

37/05

HOUSING AGENCY AGREEMENT – BROMSGROVE DISTRICT HOUSING TRUST

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the increased cost of £781 detailed in paragraph 3.7 of the report for the provision of Housing Agency and Caravan site and Hostel management services, to be met from within the overall Revenue Budget of the Council for 2005/06, be noted;
- (b) that the revised gross baseline cost set out in paragraph 3.8 of the report be approved for acceptance, subject to a strengthened service level agreement being agreed and the proposal by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust to fix costs (other than inflation) for a period of eight years.

38/05

ARTRIX FUNDING

Having received advice from the Monitoring Officer, Members agreed that Mr. A. Woods, Manager of the Artrix be allowed to join the meeting in order to respond to questions. Mr. Woods was not present during the ensuing discussion and decision-making.

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the payment of the sum of £120,000 per year, which the Council has previously committed to making available to the Artrix by way of maximum shortfall deficit funding, now be paid in quarterly instalments in advance for a period of three years from 1st April 2005, as a cash flow subsidy;
- (b) that at the end of each financial year there be an accounting exercise to determine the extent of any budgetary shortfall incurred by the Artrix, and that in the event of it not amounting to £120,000, that any difference between such amount and the amount actually paid by the Council during that financial year be recovered from the Artrix;
- (c) that the Artrix Trust be required to present a more detailed cash flow statement to the Corporate Director (Resources) before any payments are made;
- (d) that this arrangement be reviewed in January 2008, prior to the end of year three by the Corporate Director (Resources) and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and that a report be prepared for the Cabinet;
- (e) that the Trust be advised that there will be no further revenue funding available from the Council in the current financial year;
- (f) that because of the urgency of the matter, the decision regarding the first two quarterly payments be not subject to the Council's scrutiny call-in procedure.

(Note: Councillors D. C. Norton and Mrs J. M. L. A. Griffiths declared a personal interest in this matter as members of the Arts Centre Operating Trust. Councillor R. Hollingworth declared a prejudicial interest in this matter as a former member of the Arts Centre Operating Trust and left the meeting during consideration of the item. Councillor W. R. Newnes left the meeting as an observer during consideration of this item).

39/05

APPLICATION FOR REDUNDANCY

Following consideration of the report, it was

RESOLVED: that the action taken by the Head of Environmental Services regarding the compulsory redundancy of an employee earning less than £30,000 per year be noted and endorsed.

The Meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Tuesday, 28th June 2005, at 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors C. B. Lanham (Chairman), Mrs. K. M. Gall (Vice-Chairman), G. N. Denaro, Mrs. J. Dyer (substituting for Councillor C. R. Scurrall), B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., D. Hancox, N. Psirides J.P., and E. C. Tibby.

08/05 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor C. R. Scurrall.

09/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group held on 12th May 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 12th May 2005 be approved and confirmed.

10/05 **MEMBERS' IT PROGRESS**

The latest situation regarding the provision of internet connections to Members was reported. It was noted that vast majority of the notebooks and printers requested by Members had now been provided. Consideration was given to the need for an IT training programme for Members and it was noted that a programme based on the European Computer Driving Licence may be appropriate for some Members. It was felt, however, that a variety of training should be available to Members including training in groups and on a one-to-one basis if appropriate to meet the varying needs of Members.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

11/05 **AREAS OF TRAINING IDENTIFIED AS A PRIORITY**

Members considered the need for a Member training programme. Whilst the three areas identified as a priority were noted, it was felt that a more strategic approach was required, taking into account the need for Member training at various levels in a variety of areas. It was noted that this would be a part of the forthcoming mini CPA process and was also an important part of the Council's Recovery Plan.

RECOMMENDED: that the Officers be requested to prepare a formal strategy document, including a comprehensive Member training programme.

12/05 **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT – DISCUSSIONS WITH WALSALL MBC**

It was reported that discussions had taken place at officer level with Walsall MBC regarding progress made by that Authority towards the introduction of a full Member development programme. It was felt that Officers should continue to meet as appropriate and to feedback information and ideas to this Working Group as necessary.

RESOLVED: that the position be noted.

13/05 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

RESOLVED: that the next Meeting of the Working Group be held at 6.00 p.m. on Monday, 18th July 2005.

The Meeting closed at 5.20 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE MEMBER DEVELOPMENT WORKING GROUP

Monday, 18th July 2005, at 6.00pm

PRESENT: Councillors C. B. Lanham (Chairman), Mrs. K. M. Gall (Vice-Chairman), G. N. Denaro, Mrs. J. Dyer, M.B.E. (substituting for E. C. Tibby), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (substituting for D. Hancox), Ms. J. A. Marshall, D. C. Norton (substituting for B. L. Fuller, C.B.E., Q.F.S.M.), N. Psirides J.P. and C. R. Scurrall.

14/05 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. L. Fuller, C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., D. Hancox and E. C. Tibby.

15/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Working Group held on 28th June 2005 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 28th June 2005 be approved and confirmed.

16/05 **MEMBER DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development submitted a draft Member Development Strategy for consideration by the Group. The following comments were made:

- There would be a need to follow up on each member's induction training, about 6 months after it had taken place.
- The list of training topics in paragraph 7.2 of the strategy would need to be prioritised. Overview and Scrutiny, Media Training, Strategic Planning and ICT skills had already been identified as first priorities and it was agreed that financial management training should also be classified as a first priority.
- The list of training topics in paragraph 7.2 should also be expanded to include Equalities Training and Charing Meetings.
- The Strategy would need to be adapted to include provision for individual training plans, specifically tailored for each member's needs, together with any other requirements arising from the forthcoming member mentoring programme.
- The initial enquiries made to Redditch and Wyre Forest Councils, about their possible participation in a joint member training programme, would need to be followed up to establish with certainty whether those Councils would wish to be involved.

RECOMMENDED: that, subject to the above comments, the Member Development Strategy be approved.

17/05 **NEXT MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP**

RESOLVED: that the next meeting of the Working Group be held at 6.00pm on Monday 12th September 2005 and that items for the agenda include the following:

- A timetable for the roll-out of Members' Lap-top computers and the necessary connections to broadband, etc.
- A programme for assessing Members' individual training needs up to April 2006.
- Proposals for Media Training, possibly later in September 2005.

The Meeting closed at 6.35pm

Chairman

EXECUTIVE CABINET MEETING, 20TH JULY 2005

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY SAFETY & ENGINEERING

PATHWAY BY ASDA

Purpose of Report

In relation to "The practice of using the public footpath that connects Churchfields to Market Street that runs alongside the entrance to the ASDA store in Bromsgrove, for the loading and unloading of 44 tonne heavy goods vehicles, has put both pedestrians and employees of ASDA at risk of injury. Bromsgrove District Council as the Health Executive for such establishments were aware of the dangerous practice after being informed on a number of occasions over several months, yet failed to take any positive action, until forced to by Labour Councillors. In failing to act earlier we feel the Council failed in its obligations under Health & Safety legislation to protect people from risk of injury. No action has been taken by the Council regards ASDA or those responsible for condoning such practices. Although signs are already in place prohibiting vehicles over 30 cwt from using the area. We feel there has been a blatant disregard for the safety of others and by-laws prohibiting such practices. Therefore, we call upon the Council to form a cross-party group to carry out an investigation into how such circumstances could happen, and why legal action has not been taken. In doing so this should go some way to ensuring that in future this Council will not fail in its duty to protect both employees and pedestrians from unnecessary risks".

Recommendation

No recommendation is made.

BACKGROUND

A Ownership and Maintenance Responsibility

The footpath referred to is not a "public footpath" or indeed a right of way. It is land the Council owns whereby the public have access to pass and repass in the same way that the public access either adjacent to the car park or indeed the land which fronts the whole of ASDA's store.

B Health & Safety of Pedestrians & ASDA employees

ASDA Stores Limited did execute a Health & Safety risk assessment prior to the commencement of their unloading operations and assessed the risk to their employees and public as low, but did ensure that marshals were in place in the unlikely event of member of the public being present at the time of their activity which was late night – early morning.

C "Bromsgrove District Council as the Health Executive for such Establishments"

The Council is the responsible authority for the building/business i.e., the footprint of the trading establishment.

All other areas outside that footprint are the responsibility of the Health & Safety Executive Inspectorate.

D Precipitative Action in Relation to the Above

Precipitative action to address the issues raised by Councillor Shannon was taken with ASDA management by both letter and telephone communication. Councillor Shannon was advised of this by correspondence dated 11th March 2005 and 17th March and by e-mail on 9th May 2005.

E Action Taken

The installation of a barrier across the access to Recreation Road South car park was undertaken within 24 hours of the instruction given by the Chief Executive Officer as a precaution following the matter being raised in the Council Chamber on 10th May 2005.

F Prohibition of Vehicles of 20 CWT or more

The Council's car parking order does restrict the use of vehicles for everyday use to 30 CWT. However the car parks are capable of carrying heavy goods vehicles which would be required for emergency vehicles access and any reconstruction or maintenance requirements.

G Summary

The matters raised in the motion were being addressed by the Council's Officers with representatives of ASDA both before and since the motion raised at the Council meeting of 10th May 2005. Legal action against ASDA or any offender is normally a matter of last recourse following failure to resolve on a consensual basis.

The Health & Safety issue was assessed by ASDA prior to their operation of unloading, what they had not sought was the Council's approval for such operations.

J J Moody
Head of Community Safety & Engineering

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 20TH JULY 2005

RIDES AND AMUSEMENTS IN BROMSGROVE HIGH STREET

Responsible Portfolio Holder	
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Admin Services

1. **Purpose of Report**

At the request of the Licensing Committee, to review the Council's policy towards granting consent for the stationing of children's rides and amusements in Bromsgrove High Street.

2. **Recommendation**

No recommendation is made.

3. **Background**

- 3.1 At its meeting on 13th June 2005, the Licensing Committee requested the Executive Cabinet to review the Council's policy towards granting consents for the stationing of children's rides and amusements in Bromsgrove High Street. At the time the request for a review was made, the Committee had been considering a request for the stationing of a children's ride and a candy floss/doughnut stall in the High Street during the Christmas period, which is something which has been permitted for several recent years. The candy floss/doughnut stall requires a street trading consent, which was refused by the Committee on the grounds that it would compete unfairly with several existing town centre retailers. The stationing of children's rides does not require a street trading consent, but would fall within the Council's general practice of giving permission for events in the High Street.
- 3.2 It should be noted that there is a delegated authority to the Head of Administrative Services to give consent for a range of events in the High Street. This is mainly confined to non-commercial events although the policy also states "Some requests for commercial events may also be approved, provided that those events are not likely to remove trade from existing town centre traders and where the event is likely to attract visitors to the town centre". Because a charge is made for the use of a children's ride, it is considered to be a commercial event, but applications have been approved on the basis that they attract visitors to the town centre and do not remove trade from existing retailers/traders.
- 3.3 In recent years, consent has been granted for children's rides to be placed in the High Street on 2 occasions each year. One is the Christmas period (in practice this has been from about 2 weeks before Christmas Day until about 2 weeks after) and the other is on the day of the Christmas Lights Switch-on which takes place on a Saturday towards the end of November. The operator who attends during the Christmas period usually brings only one small roundabout. Last year on the afternoon on the Switch-on ceremony, there were three children's rides, plus two children's stalls ("hook-a-duck" or similar).

No charge is (or can be) made by the Council for allowing the rides and stalls to be stationed in the High Street, although requirements are made of the operators as to safety, exact siting, liability/insurance etc. The operator who usually provides the rides in conjunction with the Christmas Lights Switch-on has commented that he usually receives very little in the way of profit; it is understood that the operator who provides the ride over the Christmas period has made a donation to the Chairman's Charity arising from his visit.

- 3.4 The Economic Development Officer states that although he objected to the food stall during the Christmas period, because of its effect on local businesses, he has no objection to the children's rides, in fact he supports them.
- 3.5 The Arts Officer in the Leisure Services Department takes the view that on the day of the Christmas lights switch on in Bromsgrove the rides and stalls do add to, and enhance, the over all event. He feels that the rides and stalls should be child friendly and represent value for money. The Head of Community Safety and Engineering concurs with this view.

4. **Financial Implications, Legal Implications, Risk Management Implications**

There are no financial, legal or risk management implications arising from this matter.

Background Papers

None

Contact Officer

Name: Mr. V. Harrison, Head of Administrative Services

Email: v.Harrison@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881419

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

20TH JULY 2005

REDUNDANCY / REDEPLOYMENT POLICY

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

1. Summary

1.1. The Council has acknowledged through its recovery plan that a number of its Personnel policies are in urgent need of review and this report outlines the proposed changes to one of them, the Redundancy / Redeployment Pay policy.

2. Recommendations

2.1. It is recommended that Cabinet endorse the revised Redundancy / Redeployment Pay policy.

3. Redundancy / Redeployment Policy

3.1. One of the urgent areas for review that was identified (given how our budgetary situation appeared in January) was the Redundancy / Redeployment Policy. Members will recall that an element of it, the Protection of Employee Pay during Redundancy Redeployment, was revised in January 2005.

3.2. The Council submitted to the Personnel Policies Consultative Group (PPCG) a proposal to change the policy as it currently stands. After discussion with the PPCG and mindful of the comments about the possible effect on employee morale the Senior Management Team have agreed to some minor changes. The revised policy is attached at Appendix A. Members are asked to endorse this approach.

4. Financial Implications

4.1. None.

5. Personnel Implications

5.1. Covered within the policy.

6. Other Sub Headings

6.1. None .

Legal Implications
Governance/Performance Management Considerations
Community Safety Considerations
Risk Management Considerations

Policy Considerations
Environmental Considerations
Equalities Implications

Background Papers

Pay and Protection Policy

Contact officer

Name: Kevin Dicks, Corporate Director (Resources)

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

Tel: (01527 881487)



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REDEPLOYMENT & REDUNDANCY POLICY (INCLUDING PROTECTION OF PAY ARRANGEMENTS)

1. REDEPLOYMENT POLICY STATEMENT

- 1.1 This policy is to assist in the redeployment of employees where posts become surplus to requirements due to the need for change.
- 1.2 The Council will undertake to achieve any required staff reductions via consultation, and co-operation, with Employee Representatives and other specific individuals concerned.
- 1.3 Redeployed employees will receive the required level of training as necessary.

2. CONSULTATION

- 2.1 When the Council is considering the need for redeployment, all relevant parties concerned will be kept fully informed and consulted with at both the earliest practicable time, as well as at all future procedural stages.

3. REDEPLOYMENT PROCEDURE

IDENTIFICATION

- 3.1 Employees who may be deemed “at risk” of redeployment will be identified by the appropriate Head of Service in consultation with Personnel Services.

CONSULTATION

- 3.2 Management will consult with employee representatives informing them of the reasons and need for redeployment at that time.
- 3.3 An employee, who may be deemed “at risk” of redeployment, will be consulted and advised of the Redeployment procedure.
- 3.4 The employee, with the support of Personnel Services, will construct a skills matrix, which will identify their relevant knowledge, skills and experience to enable a matching process for suitable alternative posts to be undertaken.
- 3.5 The employee will be advised of the posts currently available and any other alternative options that can be considered.
- 3.6 The Council will consult with the employee to determine any specific preferences they may have:
 - a) To consider any roles that currently may be, or are likely to become, available within their current department if their qualifications and experience meet the Job Description and Person Specification for a particular post.

- b) To consider employment in a vacant post, or future vacant post, within another Council department which may also be at an alternative location.
- c) To discuss any other viable alternative actions which may not have already been considered.

RECRUITMENT

- 3.7 The specific needs of Redeployment will be met by adapting the formal internal recruitment procedure as indicated below:
- a) Details of all available vacancies to be communicated to Personnel Services.
 - b) Personnel Services will maintain details of all employees who are “at risk” of being redeployed and analyse employee skills matrix against available vacancies.
 - c) The employee will be interviewed by the Line manager and the Personnel Manager / Officer to ascertain which alternative posts, along with terms and conditions of service, which would be deemed appropriate for the employee. This would include roles where training may be a requirement.
 - d) The information gained from this procedure will determine which employee matches which post(s) and Personnel Services will then arrange the recruitment process (i.e. interviews and assessments etc).
 - e) All Redeployment recruitment interviews will include the involvement of the Personnel Officer or a nominated representative.
 - f) During the process other factors such as length of service, the employee’s retirement age, along with the priority areas of redeployment must be taken into account.
 - g) Following selection, the Redeployment opportunity offer will be made in writing and a copy signed by the employee as per the normal recruitment process. If an employee rejects the offer of a Redeployment post, details will be recorded by the Personnel Officer. (Refer to Section 6)
 - h) Posts considered inappropriate for an employee in a redeployment situation will follow the normal recruitment procedure.
- 3.8 The above procedure requires the acceptance and co-operation of Management and employee representatives, with both parties recognising that in the interests of securing redeployment of employees: -
- a) Employees may need to be redeployed into jobs where they do not meet the full requirements immediately but it is considered that with training they could perform the duties adequately. An appraisal of competence will then be conducted as detailed in 5.2 of this policy.
 - b) Whilst every effort will be made to ensure an employee finds a suitable role, Management must be sure that the appropriate “match” of employee to post will be made.
-

- c) An employee may be redeployed into a post for which other employees, not “at risk” of being Redeployed, may also have wished to have been considered.

4. EMPLOYMENT IN A SUPERNUMERARY CAPACITY

- 4.1 In all but exceptional cases the suitable alternative employment offered to an employee will be a substantive post within the establishment. However Management does recognise that circumstances may arise where it would be appropriate to offer employment in a supernumerary capacity. This could occur for example if there is a specific task or Project to complete, or where there is no suitable vacancy at the time but past experience of turnover suggests that an appropriate vacancy would be likely to arise in the near future.

5. TRIAL PERIODS

- 5.1 The reasons for the trial period are:
 - a) That the employee may see if the new job is suitable.
 - b) That the employer may assess the capability of the employee.
 - c) That acceptance of a trial period will not jeopardize the right of the employee to claim his/her redundancy payment.
- 5.2 An employee who accepts an offer of a Redeployed post will be entitled to an initial trial period of four weeks during which time they will still have the option of refusing the offer. In all instances this period must consist of four weeks worth of genuine operational experience and opportunity. A formal review will take place at the end of this period. (See Section 12 – Employee Rights)
- 5.3 If, during or at the end of the Trial Period, the employee refuses the offer then Section 6 of the Policy will be invoked.
- 5.4 Should the employee be offered an alternative Redeployment post then they will be eligible for a second trial period, as per 5.2
- 5.5 If, during a trial period, Management decide that a person is unsuitable for the Redeployed post, it will not be counted as a refusal.

6. REFUSAL OF THE OFFER OF SUITABLE REDEPLOYMENT

- 6.1 If an employee refuses the offer of a suitable Redeployment post the relevant Corporate Director will invite the employee and their representative to a meeting where the specific reasons for refusal can be discussed and considered.
- 6.2 If the Corporate Director concludes that the alternative employment offered is unsuitable, then he/she will recommend to Personnel Services that the employee returns to the Recruitment Stage of the Redeployment procedure Section 3 (Stage 3.7 c) to arrange for an alternative post to be identified.
- 6.3 If the Corporate Director concludes that the employment offered is suitable, and the employee continues to refuse the offer, the employee may then have his/her service with the Council terminated, along with forfeiting their right to a redundancy payment (if applicable).

- 6.4 Should the action as described in Section 6.3 take place, the employee will have the right of appeal against this decision to the Chief Executive Officer. This appeal must be in writing within 10 days of the Corporate Directors decision. (See Section 13 – Appeals Procedure)

7. KEY RESPONSIBILITIES OF EMPLOYER AND EMPLOYEE

- 7.1 The Council will endeavor to find alternative jobs for all eligible employees.
- 7.2 Eligible employees will have the right to apply for any available posts as explained in the Recruitment Section of the Redeployment Procedure (Section 3).
- 7.3 The Council may offer an eligible employee a post, as provided for in Section 3, regardless of whether or not a formal application has been submitted for that post. Where such an offer is refused by the employee it shall count as an offer under the terms of Section 6 unless the reasons for refusal are deemed to be reasonable.
- 7.4 The Council will provide training for employees who are in a Redeployment situation, to help them match the requirements of a specific role, should they be considered suitable. In such cases consultation will take place between the Council and the employee concerned to determine the form of training to be undertaken, with training costs being met by the Council.
- 7.5 If an employee is prevented from continuing existing training as a result of redeployment, they will not be required to refund to the Council any expenses already agreed to in respect of that specific training/ educational course (if applicable).

8 PROTECTION OF PAY

- 8.1 If it is necessary to redeploy an employee into a post at a lower grade than their current role the Council will, as a temporary measure, protect the employee's Contractual Pay for a period of twelve months from the date of redeployment.
- 8.2 Contractual Pay will be defined as basic salary in the employee's current post including any other pay as stipulated in the individual's contract at the time of redeployment. For example (if applicable):
- a) Bonus averaged over the 12 months prior to the transfer.
 - b) Overtime averaged over the 12 months prior to the transfer.
 - c) Travel expenses over and above current travelling distance.
 - d) Essential Car User Allowance.
 - e) Shift Payments.
- 8.3 Annual Pay Increments and Protected Pay:
- a) The Protected Pay guarantee effectively means that the protected salary, based on the Contractual Earnings formula above, would be "frozen" and **will not** attract an incremental rise or annual cost of living increase.

- b) The new post salary would continue to attract both an incremental rise and the annual cost of living increase.
 - c) If the salary in the new post rises above that of the “frozen” protected salary then the new basic salary would automatically apply.
- 8.4 Where an employee voluntarily applies for a post where the total package of terms and conditions is of lesser value than their protected salary they forfeit their right to protection of terms and conditions on appointment.
- 8.5 All cases in which pay has been protected shall be reviewed from time to time by the appropriate Line Manager and Personnel Services.
- 8.6 On completion of the Protected Pay period, the employee will revert to the highest SCP point for the grade of the new post (if the grades overlap then at a point not less than the employees current salary).
- 8.7 Pension status can be protected for up to 10 years with a Certificate of Protection (as detailed under the Local Government Pensions Regulations), which the Council will obtain from the Pension Administrators, should the employee so wish.

9. CASES WHERE A SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE POST IS UNAVAILABLE

- 9.1 On occasion there may be circumstances when it will not be possible to offer an employee suitable alternative employment. This could occur (for example) if the individual’s skills matrix does not match the Job Description and/or Person Specification of an available alternative post.
- 9.2 Where there is no alternative, termination of employment may be considered with the Redundancy Procedure invoked as appropriate.

10. REDUNDANCY POLICY STATEMENT

- 10.1 By invoking careful forward planning, it is the policy of the Council to ensure that employment for all of its employees is, as far as reasonably possible, Secure.
- 10.2 It is, however, recognised that there may be changes in conditions, organisational requirements and technological developments that may affect staffing needs.
- 10.3 The Council, in consultation with Employee Representatives, will seek to minimise the effect of redundancies through the provision of sufficient time and effort to consider options to avoid implementing a redundancy.
- 10.4 Where compulsory redundancy is unavoidable the Council will handle the specific cases of redundancy in the most fair, consistent and sympathetic manner possible, to minimise any hardship that an employee may be subjected to.
- 10.5 The council will adopt the provisions of the ACAS code of practice in dealing with redundancy situations.

11. REDUNDANCY PROCEDURE

MINIMISING REDUNDANCIES

11.1 In consultation with Employee Representatives and employees, to avoid or minimise redundancies, the council will at first consider the following alternatives prior to formally affecting compulsory redundancies:

- a) Natural wastage.
- b) Restrictions on recruitment.
- c) Retraining and redeployment to other parts of the organization. (See Redeployment Policy above).
- d) Reduction or elimination of overtime.
- e) Introduction of short-time working.
- f) Retirement of those employees already beyond normal retirement age.
- g) Seeking applicants for voluntary early retirement (see separate Voluntary Early Redundancy Policy), or voluntary redundancy.
- h) Termination of the employment of temporary or contract staff.

CONSULTATION

11.2 If the number of employees affected, “at risk” of being made redundant, amounts to less than 5 employees across the Council at any one given time, then individual employees will be counselled as to whether or not they wish their representatives involved in their case. The formal consultation process, as indicated below (11.2 & 11.3), would not necessarily be invoked.

11.3 Employee representatives will be informed about:

- a) The reason for the redundancy.
- b) The numbers and descriptions of the employees who will be affected.
- c) The specific numbers of employees at the establishment(s) in question.
- d) The proposed method (Section 12 – Redundancy Selection Criteria) of carrying out the redundancies.
- e) Details of redundancy pay and how it will be calculated.

11.4 If the Council perceives that staff redundancy is a possibility then it will:

- a) Commence consultation at the earliest reasonable opportunity and, if possible, at a time when the proposals are still in the formative stage.
- b) Provide adequate information to employees to which they can respond.
- c) Give employees adequate time in which to respond.

- d) Give conscientious consideration to points raised by the employees and, wherever possible, respond in a positive manner.
- e) Consultation will be with the appropriate recognised Employee Representative(s) and the employee(s) who may be affected.
- f) Communication with any affected or “at risk” employees will be formally made from the Council in writing.

REDUNDANCY - SELECTION CRITERIA

- 11.5 In most redundancy situations it will be necessary to identify a group of employees who will be under consideration of redundancy. Once the group has been identified it may then be necessary to identify which employees from this group will be selected for redundancy.
- 11.6 It will be the Council's policy to firstly seek volunteers for redundancy, and possibly even early retirement. If sufficient numbers are not achieved via these methods then the Council will have to apply the following criteria to determine selection from the group. The selection procedure has been designed to ensure all individuals are treated in a fair, consistent, objective and non-discriminatory manner.
- 11.7 The elements of the Selection Criteria will be:
- a) **Length of Service** – A linear measure dependant upon the number of continuous years service in Local Government. (Not only Bromsgrove District Council)
 - b) **Extra Skills/ Tasks** - Allocating points for specific skills/ tasks that employees may possess or do, other than their skills and abilities within their normal working role, which are over and above their basic job description.
 - c) **Maintaining Standards** – A measure of an individual's ability to maintain the standards of the Council by attaining a points score, dependant upon their recorded disciplinary record over the previous 5 years service (or complete service if less than 5 years).
 - d) **Capability** - An assessment-based measure achieved by evaluating an individual's standard of work whilst also involving an assessment of the development capability and of an individual.
 - e) **Team-working/ Flexibility** – The ability to affect change and support the team ethic. This assessment-based measure is achieved by evaluating an individual's workplace history and experience by professional observation.

(A more detailed Summary of the Selection Criteria can be found in *Appendix B*.)

- 11.8 All “at risk” employees will be measured by the same criteria and selected, or de-selected, for redundancy dependant upon their individual performance against these measures.

- 11.9 “At risk” employees who have been selected for redundancy will be informed of the Council’s decision in writing.

12. EMPLOYEES RIGHTS

- 12.1 When an employee is being made redundant, he/she has certain rights to:

- a) **Representation and Support.**
Be accompanied by a fellow employee or trade union official to a consultation meeting when they make a reasonable request to be so accompanied. The accompanying person can address the hearing and confer with the employee, but not answer questions on behalf of the employee, unless prior agreement with management has been made. Management must be given details about the employee representative prior to the meeting convening.
- b) **Reasonable Paid time off work.**
To look for another job or to arrange for training.
- c) **A Redundancy payment.**
This will be calculated in accordance with the statutory provision at a rate of pay in accordance with the equivalent of the employee’s actual weekly wage.
(Employees with less than 2 years continuous service, under the age of 18 or over the age of 65 are not entitled to redundancy pay).
- d) **Resolution of outstanding balances.**
A local agreement will be reached between the employee and line manager with regards to any outstanding annual leave/TOIL, any negative flex balance and any outstanding loans to the Council.
- e) **A period of Notice.**
This will be in accordance with the statutory provision and / or the employee’s contract of employment.
- f) **A Trial Period for Alternative work.**
Where alternative work is available, an employee has the right to a trial period and appropriate training without jeopardizing Redundancy pay. This is detailed in section 5. A formal review will take place after this period where the individual will be interviewed and assessed as to progress against a training plan. (See *Appendix A – Redeployment Policy Evaluation Sheet*)
- f) **An appeal against selection for Redundancy.** (See Section 13 – Appeals Procedure).

13. APPEALS PROCEDURE

APPEALS - AGAINST REDEPLOYMENT

- 13.1 Appeals against the original decision either to revise staff levels or change the Service Unit structure should be made to the relevant Head of Service.
- 13.2 Where an employee feels aggrieved at the interpretation or application of this policy they will have a right of appeal to the relevant Corporate Director. Such appeals could concern, for example, identification of jobs affected by

redeployment, the suitability of alternative posts and any other matter on which there is a disagreement. Notices of appeal must be in writing and are to be submitted to Personnel Services within 10 working days of the grounds of appeal arising.

APPEALS - AGAINST SELECTION FOR REDUNDANCY

- 13.3 The Redundancy procedure is designed to be as objective, equitable, fair and consistent as possible. However, there may be occasions when an employee disputes the selection decision.
- 13.4 In such cases the employee must notify the Chief Executive, in writing (with supporting documentation) no later than 10 working days after receipt of the written notification of redundancy that they wish to appeal against the decision.
- 13.5 The submission must specify on what grounds the decision is disputed.
- 13.6 On receipt of the appeal, the Chief Executive will require that the Head of Service documents the procedure and application of the scheme and provides this as part of the evidence within 5 days of receipt of the written appeal.
- 13.7 The Chief Executive will ensure that copies of such documentation are forwarded to the employee, and will convene a meeting with the employee (who has the right of representation) within 10 working days of receipt of the written appeal, to consider the appeal.
- 13.8 The Chief Executive will examine the evidence from both parties, and give the decision in writing within five days of the hearing.
- 13.9 The Chief Executive's decision will be the only internal appeal mechanism open to the appellant employee.

REDUNDANCY - CAREER OUTPLACEMENT AND SUPPORT

- 14.1 The Council recognises that redundancy can be a traumatic experience for everyone concerned.
- 14.2 In order to support employees through this difficult period the council will offer career outplacement support and advice, either via the Personnel Services or by engaging specialist agencies.
- 14.3 The Personnel Services can also, in some circumstances, assist with the search for new employment, for example by approaching other district councils or large employers in the area, or by assisting with the preparation of CVs and interview skills training.
- 14.4 Personnel Services - In the event that a Head of Service feels that there may be a potential redundancy in the foreseeable future, they are advised to seek the advice and guidance of Personnel Services at the earliest opportunity. The legislation surrounding redundancy is fairly complex and changes periodically and seeking the advice of Personnel Services will ensure that the council adheres to the requirements of the law.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

20TH JULY 2005

SECTION 106 MONIES

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor June Griffiths
Responsible Head of Service	Robbie Hazlehurst, Director of Leisure Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report asks Members to consider a number of applications and projects for the use of Section 106 Monies associated with parks and open spaces, play areas and recreation areas.
- 1.2 On the basis that Members support all of the applications and projects contained in this report it would represent an investment in new or refurbished play facilities, open spaces and recreational facilities of approximately £650,000 across the whole of the district. This figure rises to over £1 2 million if existing commitments are taken into account.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Executive Cabinet is recommended to
 1. Determine which of the applications/projects for the use of Section 106 Monies it wishes to support and;
 2. Determine whether it is prepared to consider Section 106 Monies as partnership funding in relation to the application that has been made by Catshill 20:20 and;
 3. Determine the level of 'match funding' that is to be required from applicants and;
 4. Agree that no retrospective applications for funding will be considered and;
 5. Delegate to the Director of Leisure Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Finance and Leisure and relevant Ward Councillors the authority to progress the approved applications/projects to a conclusion and;
 6. Authorise the Director of Leisure Services in conjunction with the Head of Legal Services to agree with third party organisations as may be necessary appropriate Conditions of Grant including those outlined in Appendix 2 and;
 7. To include the agreed applications and projects in the Revised Capital Programme for 2005/06 and the Capital Programme for 2006/07 as appropriate.

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As a result of negotiations with various developers across the district the Council has, where it has not been possible to achieve 'onsite' provision, benefited from financial contributions towards the provision of 'off site' play areas, public open and cultural/leisure/recreational provision.
- 3.2 The result of those negotiations is that the Council has achieved in excess of £1.27 million from such agreements of which there is approximately £626,500 available that is not already committed or earmarked. The table below shows on a geographical basis the broad areas from which these funds have been generated. In some instances because of the way the various agreements and payment terms are structured the Council may not currently have all the indicated funds at its disposal.

Development Area	Commuted Sums £	Commitments to date
Central Bromsgrove	655,400	£50K (Artrix)+£44k (Sanders) +£8,750(Asda PA) +£360,000 (Replacement pitch re Breeme Park Development)
Barnt Green	122,000	£40k allocated to Cofton Hackett Parish Council (Myhill field)
Catshill	73,400	
Clent	29,300	
Hopwood	22,550	
Tardebigge	29,400	
Hagley	107,400	
Rubery	65,000	Allocated to St.Chads Park & Brook Road Recreation Ground
Hollywood/Wythall	169,950	£80k (Woodrush Teenage Facility) + £40 (Wythall Park Play Area)
Total	1,274,400	

- 3.3 Over recent months a number of applications for the use of these monies have been received and these are detailed at appendix 1
- 3.4 In relation to the applications and projects received to date there are a number of issues that need to be considered as follows: -
1. Members need to determine whether they are prepared to consider Section 106 Monies as 'partnership' funding in respect of the Catshill 20:20 application.
 2. Members need to determine whether they wish as a matter of principle to require a level of match funding from external applicants and if so what level is this to be set at?
 3. Members need to determine whether they wish to support retrospective applications.
- 3.5 As can be determined from the applications and projects detailed in Appendix 1 the schemes are at different stages of development. It is therefore proposed in relation to the applications and projects the Council is prepared to give 'in principle' support to that the Director of Leisure Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for

Finance and Leisure and relevant Ward Councillors be delegated the authority to progress the applications/projects to a conclusion. As part of this process it is also proposed that 'Conditions of Grant' as outlined at Appendix 2 are negotiated and agreed with applicants prior to the release of any monies.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 As outlined in paragraph 3.2 above there is currently approximately £626,500 of Section 106 Monies available to fund the cost of the proposals contained in Appendix 1 which based upon the estimated costs received to date amount to £652,700. This represents a potential budget shortfall of approximately £26,200. Members should however be aware that the costs for a number of the schemes have at this stage been factored in at the higher level of the estimates provided.
- 4.2 As Members will also be aware there are new Section 106 Agreements being negotiated with potential developers on an on going basis that should take account of this shortfall if the need arose.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The terms within each of the Section 106 agreements normally govern where the commuted sums for outdoor play/open space provision should be spent with the rule of thumb normally being within a reasonable distance of the development they were obtained for. Some agreements can however be quite precise about where the money should be spent so care needs to be taken when allocating Section 106 Monies to particular projects.
- 5.2 None of the sums listed above are subject to a 'claw back' clause that would entitle the developer to a return of the money in the event that the Council did not expend it with a specific period of time.

6. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS – SUMMARISED

6.1

Personnel Implications	Leisure Services staff resource in respect of providing advice to the applicants and/or working up the projects which are Council oriented.
Governance/Performance Management Considerations	Local PI : Increase in the % of play areas conforming to national standards Local PI LIB037:Increase in the number of play areas per 1,000 children under 12.
Community Safety Considerations	Schemes to be provided in accordance with the Police Crime Risk Assessment for the site.
Risk Management Considerations	1. Risk of granting money to a scheme that is not accepted by local community and therefore unsuccessful in terms of meeting local needs. This risk will be reduced through appropriate project management to ensure that appropriate consultation is undertaken by the applicant prior to final approval to the schemes being given. 2. Risk of the Council not receiving due recognition for its financial contribution. This risk will be covered by conditions of grant which

	clearly how the Council's input is to be acknowledged
Health & Safety Considerations	If the Council is minded to support applications for play areas it is proposed that any such project should be carried out to the current national and or European standard as may be amended from time to time
Environmental Considerations	The Parish Council shall be encouraged to preserve any wildlife habitat and care for the environment and encourage sustainable use of materials.
Equalities Implications	All schemes were appropriate shall comply with the requirements of the DDA Act and demonstrate that they will be accessible by the whole community i.e. fully inclusive.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Various letters and/or application forms received.

Contact Officer

Name: Robbie Hazlehurst, Director of Leisure Services

e mail: r.hazlehurst@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881292

or

Name: Rob Heard, Parks & Recreational Development Manager

E mail: r.heard@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881382

Section 106 Monies – Details of Applications/Requests received

<u>Applicant</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>	<u>Potential Source of Funding</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Alvechurch Parish Council	- Completion of Sports Building for interior build @ Rowney Green.	£34,000 with a funding bid of £20,000	Hopwood	Application received
Beoley Parish Council	- Swanslength Play Area refurbishment/extension - Drainage improvements to pitch in Beoley	£40,000 £10,100 Method of Funding: - Parish Council - £3,000 Bromsgrove - £7,100	As Above	Council sponsored Scheme Application received. Both Parish Councils have been advised to contact the Football Foundation to determine opportunities for grant aid
Barnsley Hall	- Requisition of land and provision of new play area	£80,000	All Saints Road Development	Council sponsored scheme
Barnt Green Parish Council	- Hewell Road park Improvements & play area improvement at Bitterell Road	£12,000	Barnt Green	Application received
Belbroughton Parish Council or Belbroughton Recreation Centre?	- Skateboard Park	£40,000	Hagley Developments	Request via Cllr Sherry
Belbroughton Recreation Centre	- Sports storage - External toilets	£1,500 £20,000	Hagley Developments	Application form sent
Bentley Village Hall	- Refurbish Play Equipment	£20,000	Tardebigge	Application form sent
Blackwell Parish Council	- Relocation of play area	£40,000	Barnt Green	Application requested from Parish Council
Bromsgrove Town F.C.	- Portable goals for Lickey End Recreation Ground.	£2,200 Club - £500 BDC - £1,700	Bromsgrove Developments	

Catshill 20:20 & George Wagstaff Memorial Trust	- Refurbishment of Play area @ George Wagstaff Memorial Meadow.	£40,000 Method of Funding: - The Trust - £5,000 Council - £35,000	Catshill Developments & Catshill 20:20?	
	- Cycle track/Footpath around field.	£25,000	Catshill Developments & Catshill 20:20?	
Catshill 20:20 & Catshill Village Hall	- Refurbishment of the Hall	£55,000	Catshill Developments & Catshill 20:20	
Council Sponsored Scheme	- Refurbishment of Horse Course play area	£50,000	Catshill Developments	Council sponsored scheme
Charford Recreation Ground	- Skateboard/BMX facility	£40,000 - £50,000	Bromsgrove Developments	Request via Cllr Shannon/Lanham – Council sponsored scheme
Housman Close	- Refurbishment of Play Area	£50,000		Council Sponsored scheme
Clent Parish Council	- Provision of skate equipment	£20,000		This scheme has already commenced.
Dolphin Centre	- Provision of play area	£40,000	All Saints Road Development	Council sponsored scheme
Hunter's Hill School	- Provision of new sports hall	£300,000 plus. £30,000 requested	Barnt Green	Meeting to be held with the School
Hagley Parish Council	- Play area refurbishment	£40,000	Hagley Developments	Application received
King George V Playing Fields	- Floodlights for existing Multi Use games area	£20,000 - £30,000	Bromsgrove Developments	Request via Cllr Deakin – Council sponsored scheme
Oakhalls	- New Play area	£40,000	Oakhalls Development	Request via Cllr Spencer
Romsley Parish Council	- Pitch drainage works	£15,000	Holy Cross Lodge	Application awaited
Stoke Prior	- Play area refurbishment	£2,000	Bromsgrove Developments	Application awaited

PROPOSED CONDITIONS OF GRANT

That in return for the Grant or equipment the applicant ensures that: -

1. Health and safety codes of practice are adhered to i.e. that the play equipment and surfacing is EN1176 and EN1177 compliant (European standards of safety).
2. Inspection and maintenance procedures are implemented and recorded in accordance to national guidelines (as recommended by RoSPA) ie; routine (daily), operational (quarterly) and main (annual) inspections required.
3. An RPII inspector trained to the appropriate level undertakes the operational and main inspections.
4. A post installation Risk Assessment is undertaken of the site.
5. The scheme is DDA compliant i.e. that reasonable steps are made to provide an inclusive play facility.
6. Appropriate budgetary provision is made to maintain the site to the required standard and for its future replacement.
7. Bromsgrove District Council receives due recognition for its financial input in all publicity associated with the project and that a sign board, (design to be agreed with the Director of Leisure Services), be erected on site

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 20TH JULY 2005

CUSTOMER SERVICE CENTRE PROGRESS REPORT AND CUSTOMER SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2005/6

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Kevin Dicks

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1. This report seeks:
- 1.1.1. to provide Members with an update as to the progress, since it opened, of the Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre;
 - 1.1.2. to address staffing issues with regard to the Customer Service Centre; and
 - 1.1.3. Members' approval of the draft Customer Services Business Plan for 2005/6.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. It is recommended that:
- 2.1.1. Members note the progress with regard to the Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre since it opened on 1st March 2005;
 - 2.1.2. 3 additional full time equivalent posts are created with immediate effect, at a cost of £32,000 (£67,000 for a full year);
 - 2.1.3. that the estimated increased costs of £32,000 for 2005/6 be met from the amount set aside for contingencies;
 - 2.1.4. that the estimated increased costs of £67,000 for future years be incorporated within the revised medium term financial plan; and
 - 2.1.5. Members approve the draft Customer Services Business Plan for 2005/6;

3. PROGRESS REPORT

- 3.1. As members will recall the Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre opened on time on 1st March 2005.
- 3.2. The staffing structure as approved by Members is as follows:

- Customer Services Manager SCP43-48
- Assistant Customer Services Manager SCP28-32
- 11 FTE Customer Services Advisors SCP18-25

3.3 It was pointed out at the time of setting the staffing structure that this would need to be reviewed due to the lack of customer data that was available.

3.4 The following services have been delivered from day 1:

- Council Tax
- Business Rates
- Benefits
- Bus Passes
- Car park Permits
- Cashiering function
- Environmental Health Services

3.5 The following services have also been taken on since the Centre opened:

- Blue Badge Permits (County) from 18th April 2005
- Depot Services from 9th May 2005

3.6 Currently it is planned to take County Council services Trading Standards and Registration services from 18th July 2005, with other services then migrating as per BDC or County service migration plans (the suggested migration plan is attached to the draft Service Business Plan). Members will need to consider whether they are happy with the migration plan or would like a period of consolidation for the CSC in order to improve performance levels. This is covered later in the report.

3.7 The statistical information with regard to the CSC is as follows (*Malvern information included for comparative purposes as it was the first centre to open and is regarded as the busiest centre):

Personal visits

Number of personal visits logged on e-shop	March 05	% of visits resolved at first point of contact	April 05	% of visits resolved at first point of contact	May 05	% of visits resolved at first point of contact
BDC	478	85%	797	87%	754	76%
Malvern*	1454	74%	1135	69%	1127	81%

Telephone Calls

No of answerable 'phone Calls	March 2005	% of total calls answered immediately	April 2005	% of total calls answered immediately	May 05	% of total calls answered immediately
BDC	12,116	46%	13432	8%	9335	25%
Malvern	14,378	No Data	11416	53%	9668	60%

Service Requests resolved at first point of contact

Total Service requests solved at first point of contact	March 2005	% closed at first point of contact	April 2005	% closed at first point of contact	May 2005	% closed at first point of contact
BDC	2,736	78.9%	3,979	85.6%	3901	55%
Malvern	6,702	83%	5,859	84%	4896	82%

- 3.8 It should also be noted that in addition to the above there are visitors to the cash office that are not logged onto e-shop (the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system) In the case of Bromsgrove we can only measure this by the number of cash office transaction made:

March – 2,325 transactions
 April – 3,242 transactions
 May – 2799 transactions

- 3.9 As can be seen from the above information the Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre is second only to Malvern in terms of volumes of telephone calls received out of the Hub centres. It should be noted that Malvern's centre also acts as the main switchboard for the Council. And with the staffing resource we have it is felt that the centre performs well across all customer service channels.
- 3.10 For information the staffing levels at Malvern is 13 full time staff and 4 part time staff. It should be borne in mind that this includes 7 posts funded by the County whereas for Bromsgrove there are 5 posts funded by the County. We will be looking to increase this by 2 with the take on of further County services.
- 3.11 It is inevitable that callers will not all be answered immediately due to the nature of the calls we are dealing with. Revenues, Benefits and more recently Depot calls can each take up to 20 minutes to resolve. (May 2005 average call duration was 4 minutes 3 seconds). With calls of this type and the resource the centre has available it is inevitable that customers are queued and some do go to the voicemail system. Until recently this had been contained but recently with voicemail and call abandonment figures are becoming a significant problem.
- 3.12 The standard of services resolved at first point of contact (FPC) has been excellent since opening 85.6% at best which is above the hub target of 80% of calls resolved at FPC and continues to remain high for walk in customers. (76% in May)

During May the overall standard fallen to 55% which is symptomatic of taking on the delivery of Depot service during this month resulting in more service requests being sent to the back office

- 3.13 We do not have an exact system for counting visitors and the data comes from service requests logged onto e-shop. Although we do endeavour to log all queries even those who have just asked for information it is inevitable that all will not get

logged. However from the data we have visitors to the centre are growing and are nearly double in April compared to the opening month of March. (478 compared to 797) in addition there are those who come to make payments.

3.14 Things that have gone well:

- Excellent team committed to delivering a high standard of service.
- The opening and the commencement of operation of the centre went well.
- Taking a phased approach to delivering services via the centre has proved to be the correct approach to take.
- The services that we have chosen to deliver via the centre have been very supportive of this service delivery route and have worked closely with the centre to ensure services have been in a position to migrate e.g. Environmental Health and the Depot.
- Back office response to the Service Team has been very positive and getting favourable feedback from Revenues and Environmental Health teams
- The response of the public to the new environment has been very positive
- The team has embraced the concept of service delivery and use e-shop to a very high standard.
- Above the Hub target for resolving queries at first point of contact e.g. 85.6%
- Royal opening visit was successful
- In general IT and Telephony systems have been very good and have been intrinsic to service delivery

3.15 Things that have gone not so well

- Trying to occupy and operate a building that was still being constructed created problems most notably the ongoing problems of leaks through the ceiling and delivery of public signage.
- Delivering a new service just before a key operation by the council was not a wise decision e.g. trying to operate an infant service at the time of Council Tax main billing created problems that really could have damaged the service centre in the public's eye (however due to the need to open the centre, due to the PSA target, this could not be avoided).
- The mix of part time and full time staff has been a bit of a problem because of the number of whole time staff, it has been hard to maintain staffing levels all the time due to the need to give these staff a break. We are now trying to address this via current recruitment exercises.
- Staffing levels have also been affected by opening with one part timer not in post and also had another full time member of the team leave to join Worcester City in early May.
- We picked up the Blue Badge service from County with effect from 18th April. This has proved to be very time consuming to administer (a feeling from all the hub centres) and is currently creating on going problems.
- Early problems with Cashier IT systems (namely Credit Card payment facility) created problems at a crucial time e.g. April payment for Rent and Council Tax.

3.16 Lessons learned other observations

- Staffing especially the mix of Part Time and Whole Time is crucial to the service delivery of the centre. Also we are now really at capacity for staff

against service to allow cover for holiday's sickness and training etc. Any more services taken on should really come with additional staff.

- The lack of detailed call volume information relating to services to be delivered hampered any detailed staff planning in advance of taking services.
- Having Voicemail on the telephony system can be counter productive.
- Because the way Bromsgrove is delivering migrated services, i.e. just how much of that service is delivered by the CSC. It is hard to compare performance against other Hub centres as they all deliver services in a different way.
- The lead in time to delivering a migrated service is a significant factor and services should not migrate until they are in a position to do so. This should include all work to get service tree in e-shop correct, staff training, update of systems to reflect this way of working, update of website to reflect this way of working and the introduction of as many customer self serve options as possible e.g. On line payments on line forms etc
- Bromsgrove is not pushing a customer focus on its website. The key customer information is still buried or hard to navigate to. It is very easy to find details of meetings but if you want to find out about what you should put into your recycling bin, this is very hard to find – we are working to address this.
- With visitor volumes increasing it felt that some kind of queue management system is needed. This not only will take pressure off staff but also will generate more detailed management information regarding visitor volumes.

4. ADDITIONAL RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

4.1. Whilst the first few months of the centre have gone well it is fair to say that the last few weeks have been extremely difficult due to the lack of staffing resource. Recent performance levels have been as follows:

Telephony May 2005

Contact Centre	Total Answerable Calls	Calls answered immediately	Calls Queued	Calls abandoned	% of calls abandoned	Calls offered to voicemail
BDC	9335	2318	7017	2808	30.08%	1564
Malvern	9668	5770	3898	956	9.88%	446

4.2. Service delivery during May and into June has dropped significantly, of concern is the number of callers abandoning, which demonstrates that for 30% of customers we are not meeting their expectation. Also the volume of calls going to voicemail which has two potential consequences 1) we are not meeting customers expectation by answering the call and 2) raising customer expectation in that they will be called back as a result of leaving a message.

4.3. As a result there have been a significant number of occasions where the CSC hasn't been able to take the calls and this has resulted in a number of complaints to the main reception desk.

4.4. There are three main reasons for this:

4.4.1. staffing vacancies (Currently 1.5 FTE's)

4.4.2. sickness levels (currently 2 staff on long term sick)

4.4.3. failure demand (primarily at the depot)

4.5. We have taken the following steps to try to address the current situation:

- Roger Horton has contacted other centres to see whether we could "borrow" some staff - to no avail
- We have looked at our back office to see whether there was any one who could help - none that have the requisite skills
- Transferring calls to the depot to relieve the pressure - unfortunately not possible as the staff there were agency staff
- Passing more calls back to revenues and benefits - again impossible due to significant need for improvement there but also this is a significant retrograde step
- We are currently out to recruitment for the vacant posts
- We are actively developing and integrating 'e-forms' to the Council web site. The Depot have been testing specific forms and these should go live this week; these forms are directly integrated into e-shop (CRM) and don't require contact with a Customer Service Advisor. This should reduce the number of telephone calls to the Service Centre.
- As a short term measure, we are also looking to develop forms for 'service requests' that can be emailed directly to appropriate officers, not necessarily CSA's, to input the details to e-shop. This again would help reduce the number of telephone calls to the Service Centre.

4.6. We have now employed a number of agency staff to take the depot calls, still located at the CSC to relieve pressure on staff and to improve service levels.

4.7. The County Council will look at the processes in order to try to reduce call times however I feel that it is worth reemphasising our commitment to resolving as many calls as possible at the first point of call. It has become extremely apparent throughout my work with the revenues and benefits shared services that the services offered by the Bromsgrove District customer service centre exceeds the services provided by other centres - i.e. more is done at the centre - I believe this is entirely the right way to go. Obviously that does not mean that we won't / aren't looking at ways we can improve performance of the service.

4.7. We have now employed a number of agency staff to take the depot calls, still located at the CSC to relieve pressure on staff and to improve service levels.

4.8. The County Council has done some work on our call volumes and staffing needs using an Erlang queuing tool.

4.9. Based on our call volumes from May the Centre took 9,738 calls which given there were 22 working days that gives a daily volume of around 442 calls. (This doesn't take into account any weighting for busier or quieter days). Given a call duration of 240 seconds and spreading the call volume over a day the model indicates that the Centre need 7 people on the phones during the peak time in the morning, dropping down to 6 until around 3.30pm then tailing off until the end of the day. This is using a call pattern for another call centre although the patterns are usually fairly similar.

- 4.10 If the call duration is reduced the number of people needed to handle those calls significantly drops (typically small numbers of long calls are very resource heavy and inefficient).
- 4.11 If we reduce the time to 180 seconds we only need 6 in your peak morning hours, tailing off until the end of the day, and 120 seconds we would only need 4 people at peak times. Looking at call volumes from week commencing 20th June 2005 which are averaging out at 577 calls per day, we need 6 at peak times on a 120 second handle time, 7 people for a 180 second handle time and 8 for a 240 second handle time.
- 4.12 Based on the BDC vision for the service, resolving as many calls as possible at the first point of call, it is suggested that the staffing establishment is set at 8 for telephony, 4 for face to face and 2 for cash office. This equates to an increase of 3 FTE's.
- 4.13 Assuming a start date of 1st October and recruitment costs of £1,000 there will be additional costs of £32,000 (£67,000 in a full year). It is suggested that in 2005/6 these are met from the amount set aside for contingencies.
- 4.14 This increase in staffing resources is just to reflect the current service levels and as such the staffing resources for the future migration of services will need to be reviewed. We will of course continue to try to make further improvements to service delivery either by streamlining processes (making it more a self service culture), or reducing failure demand so that the CSC can take on additional services without additional staffing resources. It is suggested that there is a further review of service delivery and staffing levels in January 2006.

5. SERVICE PLAN

- 5.1. The plan is the first to be produced in the new corporate style, the intention being to have a common, but dynamic approach.

In summary it :

- ❖ Sets out the services provided, including those provided with our partner organisations, in the public, private and voluntary sectors, and work-load levels.
- ❖ Details service performance over the past year, with reference to both successes and failures, and measures to address failures and improve performance.
- ❖ Describes the challenges and service targets for the next financial year, and the resources available (staff and financial) to tackle them.
- ❖ Sets out the linkages between the Community Plan, Corporate Plan, in particular, the Council's key objectives, the Recovery Plan, Medium-Term Financial Plan, Best Value Performance Plan, Service Business Plans and Staff Training and Development Plans, thus demonstrating the importance of their inter-relationship to performance management and ultimately the successful provision of customer-focused, quality services by the Council.

- 5.2. A copy of the Draft Business Plan is shown at Appendix 1 to the report for Members' consideration.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. None other than included in the report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 7.1. The following risks could arise if the staffing situation isn't resolved:
- Staff showing signs of stress and this being passed on to the customer.
 - The calls volumes for the interim not receding and the staff levels not being able to sustain the level of service we aim to deliver.
 - The number of calls falling into the 180 queue is very poor compared to other hubs – negative view of the CSC from the public
 - Manager and Assistant Manager continuing to be drawn into day to day operational issues and not being able to further develop the service.
- 7.2. Approval and implementation of the Service Business Plan will assist in ensuring that service resources are used in a focused, well managed way, thus maximising the ability of service managers and their staff to achieve key service objectives, and minimising the risk of service failure.

8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1. It will be essential to monitor progress against agreed service objectives and to take intervention measures if required, to ensure that Customer Services strongly contribute in a prioritised, well managed manner, towards the achievement of elements of the Council's Recovery Plan, Community Safety Strategy, and in particular, the Council's Objectives as set out in the Community Plan, Best Value Performance Plan and Draft Corporate Plan.

9. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. Two major service objectives contained within the Service Business Plan, are improving access to services for our customers and customer focus. These objectives will primarily be achieved through the Customer Services Centre, and the provision of comprehensive and readily accessible service information through the Council's web site.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Contact Officer

Name: Roger Horton
E Mail: r.horton@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881781

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

SERVICE
BUSINESS
PLAN

CUSTOMER SERVICES

1st April 2005 - 31st March 2006



bromsgrove council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

CONTENTS

Introduction	Page 3-5
Council Values and Priorities	Page 6-7
Business Framework	Page 8
Meeting Customer Needs	Page 9
Working Together	Page 10
Our Performance	Page 11-12
Resources	Page 13-14
Service Improvement Action Plan	Page 15
Comment and Feedback Form	Page 16

Introduction

The Council is a partner in the development of the Worcestershire Hub through which all customer services in Worcestershire will be fully integrated and jointly provided. This service business plan provides an overview for how Customer Services will deliver and develop services to support District Council and County Council Objectives and the visions of the Worcestershire Hub.

Our Service

Bromsgrove District Customer Services Centre was opened on the 1st March 2005 and delivers the following District Council services:

1. Revenues Service (Council Tax and NDR)

All enquiries regarding council tax and NDR including all account queries, setting up direct debits, payment arrangements. Detailed service requests are passed to back office professional service as and when required.

2. Benefits Service

Dealing with old and new claims and providing benefit advice to customers. Assisting with the completion of benefit claims and verifying supporting documentation at point of contact. Passing detailed service requests to back office professional team as and when required and liaising with the Fraud Team in relation to caution meetings booked in PACE (Police and Criminal Evidence) room.

3. Environmental Health Services

Dealing with customer enquiries/complaints to private sector housing (including drainage); pollution of air, land and water (including noise pollution - commercial, industrial, vehicular and domestic); food safety; pest control; health and safety at work; infectious disease control; dog (and other animal) nuisance control; and general public health nuisance control. Passing detailed service requests to back office professional team as and when required.

4. Cashiering

Offering a full cashier service for all payments for Bromsgrove District C including Council Tax, Rents (Current arrangement with BDHT due to end 30/6/05), car park fines, bus passes, car park permits and bulky refuse payments.

5. Depot Services

Acting as first point of contact for all depot services, including round information, missed bins, dispensations, trade waste, cess pool emptying,

bulky refuse, recycling issues and abandoned vehicles. Passing detailed service requests to back office professional team as and when required.

6. Car Park Permits

Administration of the permit service for car park permits including parking fines and appeals.

7. Bus Passes

Dealing with the issue of new permits and renewals ensuring supporting evidence is correct and payments are made.

8. Blue Badge permits

With effect from Monday the 18th April the centre has delivered the Blue Badge parking service on behalf of County Social Services.

Ultimately we aim to provide all aspects of contact with the Council, our partners and customers through various contact channels (face to face, telephone, fax, e-mail the internet including self service). To enable resolution of all queries at the first point of contact regardless of the access channel the customer chooses.

We aim to deliver services in an environment that removes all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination by providing quality services for people with disabilities, people with visual and hearing impairments

Our Year

As the Customer Service Centre only opened on 1st March 2005 most of the year was taken up with identifying a site (where the service centre could be located), recruiting and training the staff, agreeing the services to be delivered from day 1 and ensuring that the systems and process were in place to support the delivery of those services.

It is testimony to the hard work and dedication that the service centre opened on time and that the Service Centre has been well received.

Our Challenges for the Future

The immediate future will need to be one of consolidation. Two of the major service areas of the Council have been transferred to the CSC – revenues and benefits and the depot.

It has already been acknowledged that the Bromsgrove Customer Service Centre is doing more than the majority of the other centres in the County with regard to both of these service areas. We still believe that this is the correct way in which to operate and is in line with the Worcestershire Hub vision of resolving as many calls at the first point of

contact as possible. This unfortunately has posed its own problems and we have been to some extent a victim of our own success which has led to the need to urgently address the resources required to deliver the required level of service.

Development Plan

Both District and County services will continue to migrate and be delivered via the Service Centre a draft migration plan of services (See Attachment 1) has been constructed including both District and County Council Services. This is very much in need of refinement and will undoubtedly have additional resource implications. In addition to this the timescales involved with the migration of services are very dependent upon having the appropriate technology in place, especially with regard to services such as planning.

Further challenges

- Supporting the Council e-government strategy
- Supporting Benefit Services with BFI assessment
- Supporting all services delivered via Service Centre in achieving and developing individual Business Plan objectives relating to customer service standards
- Supporting the delivery and review of the councils Customer Care Charter
- Supporting the delivery/review of the Councils Compliments & Complaints policy
- Supporting the delivery of Hub Customer Care Standards

Council Values and Priorities

Service Mission Statement

“To provide high quality, efficient and effective customer services for the whole of the Council. To enable resolution of all queries at the first point of contact regardless of the access channel the customer chooses.”

Professional & National Standards

Service Centre Standards – What we will do for you

- Greet you in a friendly and professional manner
- All our staff are easily identified by uniform and name badges
- Treat you as an individual and give quality service to meet your needs
- Offer customers whose query is confidential the use of a private area
- Train all our staff to at least NVQ level 3 or equivalent in Customer Service

Areas of Focus

The six Council objectives are:	In 2005/06 we will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean safe attractive District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support our colleagues in Environmental Health and Depot Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective Local Development Framework 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Caring socially aware society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist the Council with its equalities programmes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment and development of local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide accurate employment advice to our HR Department
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good sustainable leisure opportunities 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Efficient and effective Council 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide expert professional support and guidance in line with the requirements and expectations of the Council

Recovery Plan Issues

The Related Recovery Plan Themes are:	In 2005/06 we will:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance and Service Improvement 	<p>Customer Services will support and underpin appropriate elements of the Recovery Plan. In particular will focus on recovery actions associated with the Depot, Revenues & Benefits, Customer Service, Complaints and Communication. In particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the delivery and review of the councils Customer Care Charter • Supporting the delivery/review of the Councils Compliments & Complaints policy

ICT and e-Government National and Local Projects that affect this service:

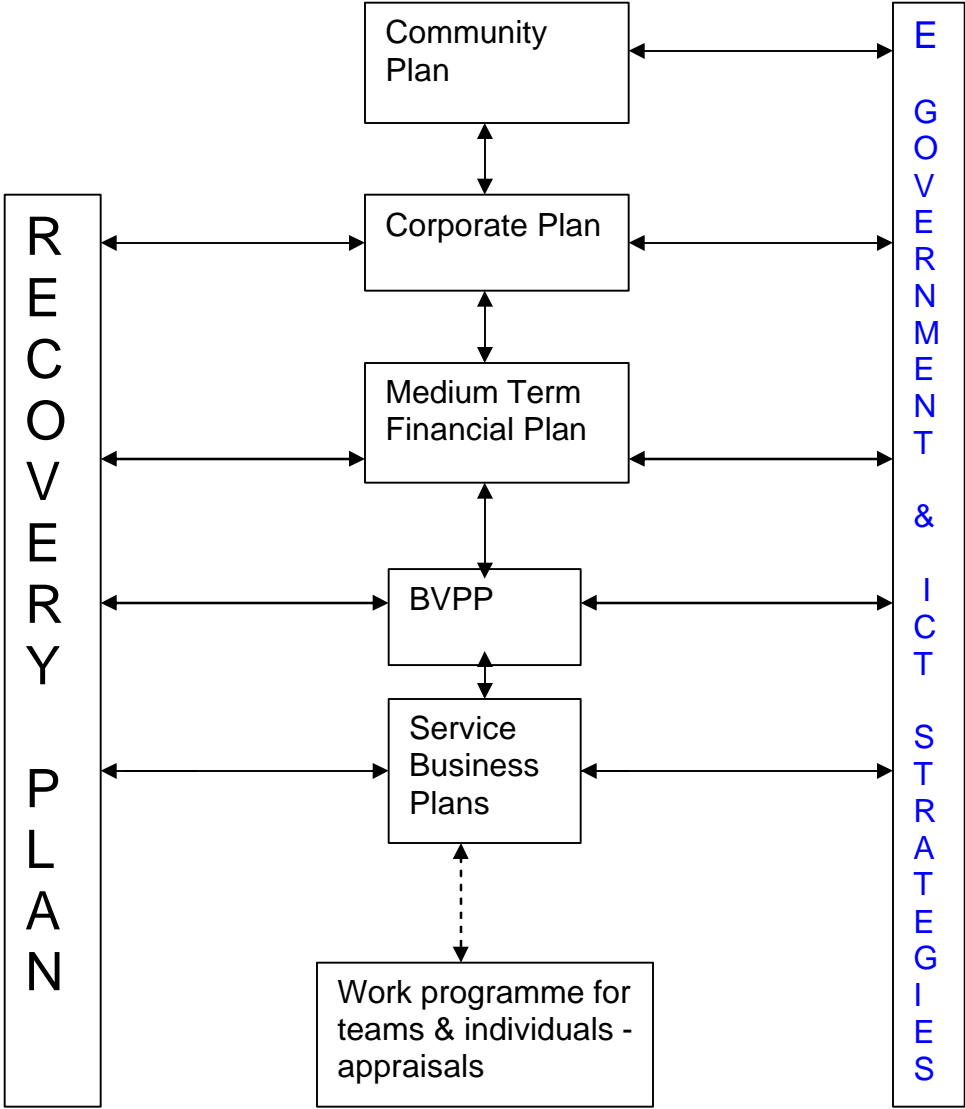
The Customer Service Centre is central to the Council's e-Government strategy.

Other projects include:

- e-billing
- e-payments

Business Framework

How Our Key Plans Fit Together



The framework provides a process for continued improvement.

Meeting Customer Needs

The Customer Service Centre has three categories of customer.

1. External (Citizens of Bromsgrove District and Worcester County)
2. Internal (Departments and Sections of the District & County Council)
3. External Partners – The service centre via the District Council is a partner in the development of the Worcestershire Hub, through which all customer services in Worcestershire will be fully integrated and jointly provided.

<p>In 2004/05 We Have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opened the Customer service centre including the following services from Day 1; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Revenues and Benefits b. Environmental Services c. Car park passes d. Bus passes e. Cashiering 	<p>This year We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take on depot services • Take on blue badge services • Take on further county council services • Consolidate and improve upon quality of day 1 services provided • Work with potential partners to try to further the services offered by the CSC • Further develop and implement the migration plan for the CSC • In partnership with the County Council Carers' Unit run an advice clinic and promoted National Carers' week • In partnership with County support Customer Services week • Commence NVQ Level 3 training programme of Customer Service Advisors
---	---

Working Together

- **External Partnership arrangements**

The Worcestershire Hub partnership consists of key organisations within Worcestershire responsible for delivering public services. The core members are ourselves, City of Worcester Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Worcester County Council, Wychavon District Council, Wyre Forest District Council.

On a local level the customer services centre is currently working with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust offering a payment facility for tenants until June 2005 and we will have further discussion with the trust with a view to integrating them into the Service Centre.

Discussion has also taken place between representatives of the local police, North Worcestershire DIAL and local CAB with the objective of developing more integrated services in the future.

We will continue to support county wide initiatives e.g. National Carers' Week as and when required.

We recognise the need to develop further links with all agencies operating locally with the objective of enhancing service delivery. In addition to meeting as part of the Multi Agency Liaison group we intend to make contact with agencies on an individual basis these include Job Centre Plus, Veteran's Agency, Pension Service, WHABAC, St Basils Ecumenical Centre, All Womens' House, Age Concern.

Our Performance

There are no Best Value Performance Indicators that relate directly to the performance of the Customer Service Centre however there are values that have been agreed by the hub and we also support the Benefit Service in meeting its BVPI indicators.

<p>In 2004/05 We have:</p> <p>Not applicable</p>	<p>This year We will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to see 95 per cent of our customers within 20 minutes of arriving at First Point. • Wherever possible we will try to resolve 80 per cent of enquiries at the first point of contact. • Customer satisfaction target of 95 percent. (During 2005/06 we aim to undertake quarterly exit surveys of customers (See attachment 2) • To test overall customer satisfaction with telephony service undertake quarterly survey. (based on random sample of customers called back)
--	---

Areas where we didn't achieve

Not applicable as the Customer Service Centre only opened on 1st March 2005

What we are doing about it

- Although there were no issues with 2004/5 performance there have been concerns with performance with regard answering telephone calls. This will need to be addressed by a combination of reviewing the service areas for which the most calls arise e.g. depot and reviewing the level of resources

Anything key or special that we learnt? Significant or unexpected learning.

It has been quite clear since the opening of the Customer Service Centre that some of the services that have transferred don't fully understand the role that they still have to play in customer services. This will need to be the subject of ongoing development as part of the Hub.

There was a significant lack of customer data, call numbers etc. before the CSC opened this has led to the need to review the staffing levels.

Resources

• Financial

2003/04 Actual net spend	2004/05 Estimated net spend	2005/06 Projected net spend
N/A	£127,500	£209,349

The costs and establishment for 2005/06 are set out below:

Expenditure / Income	Cost	Notes
<i>Employee costs</i>	£284,759	<i>9 Whole Time members of staff and 6 Part Time</i>
<i>Premise costs</i>	£0	
<i>Transport costs</i>	£0	
<i>Supplies and Services</i>	£37,500	
<i>Contract Services</i>	£0	
<i>Transfer Payments</i>	£0	
<i>Support Service Costs</i>	£0	
<i>Capital Costs</i>	£0	
Total Expenditure	£322,259	
<i>Income</i>	£112,910	
Net Expenditure	£209,349	

Staffing

Name	Brief Details of Duties	Room No	Tel Ext	E mail address
Roger Horton	Customer Services Manager		1781	r.horton@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Val Jarvis	Assistant Customer Services Manager		1782	v.jarvis@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Suzanne Agar	Customer Service Advisor			s.agar@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Maureen Baker	Customer Service Advisor			m.baker@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Elaine Currall	Customer Service Advisor			e.currall@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Irene Goring	Customer Service Advisor			i.goring@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Linda Harvey	Customer Service Advisor			l.harvey@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Ann Davies	Customer Service Advisor			a.davies@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Claire Lawrence	Customer Service Advisor			c.lawrence@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Kim Mayall	Customer Service Advisor			k.mayall@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Lesley Monks Smith	Customer Service Advisor			l.monkssmith@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Gail Owen	Customer Service Advisor			g.owen@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Norma Porter	Customer Service Advisor			n.porter@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Carla Banner	Customer Service Advisor			c.banner@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Carol Rutter	Customer Service Advisor			c.rutter@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Portfolio Holder details:

Councillor Roger Hollingworth 0121-445-0323
 Email : r.hollingworth@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Service Improvement Action Plan

Improvements to customer services is an important element within the Council's overall recovery plan.

The major areas for improvement within the service area are as follows:

Key Problems/Issues	Actions to Address	Timescale
Take on of further District Council services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Development of migration plan➤ Implementation of migration plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ End of September➤ Ongoing
Improvements to service delivery performance targets	Clarify resources needed for services delivered	August

As part of the Councils corporate approach to performance monitoring there will be quarterly updates to Senior Management Team of progress.

Comments and feedback form

We would like your views on this booklet. Please detach this page and send it to:

The Audit & Policy Section
The Council House
Bromsgrove

1. How helpful have you found this booklet?

.....
.....
.....
.....

2. What did you particularly like about it?

.....
.....
.....
.....

3. What aspects can be improved? How?

.....
.....
.....
.....

4. Any other comments?

.....
.....
.....
.....

Name
(Optional):.....

Service: