



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 19TH APRIL 2006 AT 6.00PM

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BROMSGROVE

AGENDA

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

MEMBERS: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader), Miss D. H. Campbell J.P., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey J.P., Mrs. C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker.

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the Minutes of the Executive Cabinet held on 22nd March 2006 (attached)
4. Public Questions
5. To receive the Minutes of the Performance Management Board dated 20th March 2006 (attached)
6. To receive the Minutes of the Audit Board dated 28th March 2006 (attached)
7. Members' Allowances Budget (attached)
8. Capital Strategy 2006/09 (attached)
9. Treasury Management Strategy (attached)
10. Human Resources Strategy 2006/08 (attached)
11. Allocation of Homelessness Grant Funding for 2005/06 and Anticipated Spending for 2006/07 (attached)
12. Car Parking Order Amendment (attached)
13. Revenues and Benefits Policies on Lone Working, Prosecution and Code of Practice for Authorised Officers (attached)

14. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal and Democratic 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
15. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-

“RESOLVED: that under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
16	14

16. Benefit Fraud Policies – Verification Framework Anti Fraud Policy, Benefits Investigations and Intelligence Gathering, Fraud Strategy and Terms of Reference 2006/07, Fraud Investigations Business Plan 2006/07 (attached)

S. NIXON
Chief Executive

The Council House,
Burcot Lane,
BROMSGROVE
Worcs.
B60 1AA

6th April 2006

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

Wednesday, 22nd March 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader), Miss D. H. Campbell J.P., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey J.P., Mrs. C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker.

OBSERVER: Councillor N. Psirides J.P.

179/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 22nd February 2006 were submitted.

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

180/05 **TENDERS COMMITTEE**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Tenders Committee held on 21st February 2006 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the Minutes be noted.

181/05 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Performance Management Board held on 17th February and 20th February 2006 were submitted.

RESOLVED: that the recommendations set out in the Minutes be approved and adopted.

182/05 **2006/2007 INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN**

Having considered a report on the proposed Internal Audit Plan for 2006/07 and having noted the issues which had impacted on the work of the Internal Audit Section during the current year, it was

RESOLVED: that the 2006/07 Internal Audit Plan be noted and approved.

183/05 **MONITORING OF THE REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2005/06**

The Cabinet considered a report which monitored the position of the Revenue Budget for the period April to December 2005. The report also referred to the progress made on capital schemes, together with the variances as at December 2005, and the position regarding the expenditure of funds made available for work in connection with the Recovery Plan. Having noted the proposed monitoring improvements to be implemented during 2006/07, it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the net revenue underspend of £164,000 for the period April 2005 to December 2005 be noted;
- (b) that the capital underspend of £727,000 against the Revised Capital Programme at December 2005 be noted;
- (c) that the progress made on capital schemes to date be noted.

184/05 **COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report on a proposed Communications Strategy entitled 'A Strong Voice for Bromsgrove District' which set out seven priorities for improving internal and external communication, together with a series of planned actions and targets dates for implementation. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED: that the Communications Strategy, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved.

185/05 **CUSTOMER FIRST STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a proposed Customer First Strategy which sought to improve customer service and embed a new customer culture across the Council through a series of planned actions based on twelve key themes over a period of around three years. Following discussion, it was

RESOLVED: that the Customer First Strategy, as set out in the Appendix to the report, be approved.

186/05 **TASK GROUPS OF THE CABINET**

The Leader referred to the decision taken at the previous meeting of the Cabinet to establish a Town Centre Development Sub-Committee and a Planning Policy Sub-Committees of the Cabinet and to the subsequent report which proposed revised arrangements.

Having given the matter further consideration, it was now proposed that instead of establishing Sub-Committees or Member Task Groups, these particular subject areas would be considered by officer groups to be monitored by a cross party Advisory Group of Members to be established by the relevant Portfolio Holder. In addition, the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management wished to establish a cross party Member/Officer Advisory Group to reviews services provided by the Street Scene and Waste Management Department. Reports arising from these respective reviews would be reported formally to the Cabinet in due course.

RESOLVED: that the proposals be approved.

187/05 **AMENDMENT OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The Cabinet received a report on proposed revisions to the Council's Constitution which had arisen following a major review of the Constitution. This had been undertaken as a requirement of the Recovery Plan with the assistance of Wright Hassall solicitors. It was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the changes to the Constitution recommended by Messrs. Wright Hassall be approved as draft recommendations;
- (b) that the Leader convene a group of Members to consider the draft recommendations in detail with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, with a view to making final recommendations to the Standards Committee and Council;
- (c) that the Standards Committee be requested to recommend to the Council that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make consequential amendments to the Constitution as appropriate.

188/05

MS. D. POOLE AND MR. C. MORRISON

The Leader welcomed Ms. D. Poole, Head of E-Government and Customer Services to her first meeting of the Cabinet. He also paid tribute to the efforts and contribution made by Mr. C. Morrison, Interim Head of E-Government and Customer Services over the past six months.

The Meeting closed at 6.55 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Monday, 20th March 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Vice-Chairman, in the Chair), G. N. Denaro, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., C. B. Lanham, Mrs. J. D. Luck, D. C. Norton (substituting for B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M.) and J. A. Ruck.

(NOTE: Councillor Mrs. M.M.T. Taylor was present at the meeting).

21/05 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from the Chairman, Councillor B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M., and Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive.

22/05 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Board held on the 17th and 20th February 2006, were submitted.

RESOLVED that, subject to the following amendments to the Minutes of the 17th February 2006, the Minutes be approved and confirmed as a correct record:-

- (i) that, in view of the lack of information in a number of areas within the Business Plan for Culture and Community Services, further consideration be given to a (revised) report at the next ordinary meeting of the Board; and
- (ii) that the word "slight" be deleted from recommendation 10 (Economic Development and Town Centre Management).

23/05 **RECOVERY PLAN - UPDATE**

Consideration was given to three separate Reports on the Council's Recovery Plan, encompassing (i) a revised four month summary for the period February to May 2006; (ii) an overview of the Recovery Plan; and (iii) a detailed copy of the Recovery Plan timetable. Members raised a number of general questions to which the Chief Executive and the Head of Financial Services responded appropriately. However, a number of specific issues were raised, and it was

RESOLVED

- (i) that "senior elected members" as referred to in paragraph 3.1.1. in the Recovery Plan be referred to by name and/or their office held;
- (ii) that, when available, the report to be completed by IDeA on Peer Mentors be submitted to the Board for information and/or appropriate attention;
- (iii) that, notwithstanding the comments of the Head of Financial Services in this regard, it was evident that there had been a breakdown in staff communication over the new procurement arrangements which had been recently put into place, and, accordingly, the Executive Cabinet be informed that Heads of Service should be made accountable for any continued transgressions. It was further **AGREED** that a report on the circumstances relating to this matter should be submitted to a future meeting of the Board;

24/05

SELECTION OF CORPORATE HEALTH PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

A report which set out proposals for the restructuring of the process of monitoring the Council's performance information, by providing a more focussed and strategic approach to reporting performance to the Performance Management Board, was submitted.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the criteria set out in the report for selecting the Corporate Health Indicators be approved;
- (ii) that the Corporate Health Indicators selected on the basis of the agreed criteria at (i) above were considered and noted;
- (iii) that the Corporate Health Indicators be submitted to the Board on a quarterly basis following initial consideration by the Corporate Management Team; and
- (iv) that the Corporate Health Indicators be reviewed on an annual basis.

25/05

CORPORATE HEALTH PERFORMANCE INDICATORS – QUARTER 3 2005/06

Further to Minute No.24/05 above, a report was submitted outlining the performance information for the third quarter (covering the period from April to December 2005 inclusive) of those Corporate Health Indicators selected. A number of questions and points were raised by members, and it was

RESOLVED

- (i) that, where possible, an "update sheet" be provided at the meeting for those indicators where Planned Action appears blank in the report, due to information not being available at the time of the preparation of the agenda;
- (ii) that, with regard to BVPI12 – Working days lost due to sickness absence – the Head of Street Scene and Waste Management be requested to submit a report to a future meeting of the Board on the effect on sickness absence following the introduction of the wheelie-bin collection service;
- (iii) that the Head of Organisational Development and Human Resources be requested to furnish the members of the Board with details of costs in "added years" of those employees retiring early from the service (excluding ill-health retirements);
- (iv) that the Executive Cabinet be advised that it is the view of this Board that the performance target figure for LPI Corporate – % reply cards sent in agreed time - should be increased from the current figure of 80% to 95%;
- (v) that the Head of Organisational Development and Human Resources be requested to submit a report to the next meeting on progress on PDR's (Performance Development Reviews);
- (vi) that, with regard to LPI Corporate -% of full responses sent within 10 days – the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to assess whether there is a need to increase the current target figure of 75%; and
- (vii) that, in all other respects, the report be noted and approved.

26/05

EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S OPINION ON 2005/06 BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN

Members were advised that it was a requirement of the Local Government Act 1999 that the Council should prepare and publish an annual Best Value Performance Plan and ensure that the external auditors opinion was formally reported to the Council and its members. Accordingly, a report bringing members' attention to the statutory opinion of KPMG (the Council's external auditors) was submitted.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

27/05

PROCEDURE RULES OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

Members were reminded that, when the Performance Management Board was set up, in addition to the Terms of Reference, a set of Procedure Rules were required to govern the way the Board works and the relationship between Members and officers. A set of procedure rules has been drawn up following discussions with the Chairman of the Board, and have been approved by both the Standards Committee and the full Council, and, accordingly, members views were sought thereon.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Standards Committee be informed that in the opinion of the Board, the first paragraph of Section 3 of the Procedure Rules (Relationship between the Board and Officers), should be deleted; and
- (ii) that, in all other respects, the Procedure Rules be noted and approved.

28/05

CULTURE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES BUSINESS PLAN 2006-07

As referred to under the earlier Minute No. 22/05 above, the Head of Culture and Community Services again submitted his Business Plan for 2006-07 for members' consideration. A number of points were raised and answered, including the following:-

- (i) that a report be submitted to a future meeting on the attendance records and the officer hours incurred over the next series of Spotlight meetings in order to establish the cost to the Council of such meetings;
- (ii) Community Engagement and Consultation – members dismissed as unhelpful the description under Estimated Cost as “within existing budget”, and it was **AGREED** that members would receive an update in this regard as soon as possible; and
- (iii) (That the words “potential closure” be deleted from the final Project Title in the Agreed Support Services Schedule (service review of Bromsgrove Museum, and Haybridge and Woodrush Sports Centres).

(NOTE: Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E. declared a personal interest during the discussion on Woodrush Sports Centre as she was a Governor of the School).

The Meeting closed at 4.35 p.m.

Chairman.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE AUDIT BOARD

Tuesday, 28th March 2006 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillors A. N. Blagg, G. N. Denaro, G. H. R. Hulett, C. B. Lanham D. C. Norton and N. Psirides J. P.

1/05 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor G. N. Denaro be appointed Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

2/05 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor C. B. Lanham be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

3/05 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A. J. Dent.

4/05 **DECLARATION OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest and whipping arrangements were made.

5/05 **AUDIT BOARD REPORT AND TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Board considered the report which has been submitted to the Executive Cabinet on 30th November 2006 when the creation of an Audit Board had been approved. The report detailed the terms of reference of the Board.

The Chairman made reference to a booklet published by CIPFA that gave guidance for on the roles and functions of Audit Committees. It was agreed that a copy of the booklet be provided to each member of the Board.

RESOLVED that the report be noted

6/05 **INTERNAL AUDIT PROCESS REPORT**

The Board considered a report which detailed the audit processes used by this Council and included copies of the internal audit manual, protocol, charter and performance indicators. The documentation was comprised of the internal audit manual, protocol, charter and performance indicators. Members welcomed in particular the proposals to produce information leaflets on the work of the Audit team. Members requested that a breakdown of the productive audit time be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) a breakdown of the productive audit time be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

7/05

2006/2007 AUDIT PLAN

The Board considered the Audit Plan for 2006/07. The Board was informed that 136 potentially auditable areas had initially been identified and the report detailed the process used to objectively identify which areas were audited. The report detailed the areas which would be audited in the forthcoming year. Members were informed of the main areas which were reviewed as part of any audit, these were the key areas of risk such as value for money, cash handling, processes and statutory requirements.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the report be noted; and
- (ii) That as part of the review of work undertaken in the previous quarter the audit scope is included for each audit undertaken.

7/05

AUDIT BOARD PROCEDURE RULES

The Board considered the procedure rules for the Audit Board which gave guidance on the way the board would operate and would form part of the Council's Constitution.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8/05

WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE BOARD

Members considered the future work programme for the Board. It was noted that the Council's external auditors KPMG had expressed an interest in attending a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) that a meeting of the Board be held on 25th April and that KPMG be invited to attend that meeting; and
- (ii) the following items comprise the future work programme of the Board
 - Performance Indicators on a quarterly basis
 - Key concerns highlighted in audit reviews
 - Responses to audit reports
 - Summaries of fundamental recommendations arising from reviews
 - Current state of the audit plan
 - Relevant new documents as they are published
 - The external audit letter and programme
 - Relevant correspondence from KPMG
 - Summaries of work undertaken in the previous 3 months
 - Marketing of the audit function
 - Summaries of investigations and outcomes
 - Statement of internal control
 - Statement of assurance

The Meeting closed at 7.10 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19TH APRIL 2006

MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES BUDGET

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Leader
Responsible Head of Service	A. R. Burton, Head of Legal and Democratic Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider and address the financial implications of implementing the Members' Allowances Scheme during 2006/07.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council be requested to approve the release of £38,573 from revenue balances in order to increase the budgetary provision for Members' Allowances for 2006/07 and thereby cover the anticipated costs.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Each year an Independent Remuneration Panel appointed by the Council reviews the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme and makes recommendations on any changes. At its meeting on 7th March 2006, the Council received the Panel's report on its review of Members' Allowances for 2006/07 when the report and the recommendations contained therein were approved and adopted in full.
- 3.2 However, it was also agreed that it was a matter for individual councillors to decide whether they wished to receive an increase of just 2.95%, which is in line with the pay award agreed for Council staff for 2006/07, or whether they wished to receive the full increased allowances to which they are entitled.
- 3.3 The Council's Revenue Budget for 2006/07 was agreed by the Council on 28th February 2006 prior to the receipt of the Panel's report. This included increasing the budgetary provision for Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances (SRAs) from 2005/06 as follows:

	2005/06	2006/07
Basic Allowance	£110,531	£113,294
SRAs	£39,960	£40,598
Total	£150,491	£154,252

- 3.4 Members have now been consulted as to their wishes as to the level of increases they wish to receive for 2006/07.
- 3.5 If all Members were to take the full Basic Allowance of £3,350, this would require a budget of £130,650 for Basic Allowances, representing a shortfall of £17,356. Although a number of Members have indicated that they wish to receive only a 2.95% increase only (i.e. £2,934), it is suggested that the budget allocation should be based on the maximum potential cost.
- 3.6 It has been calculated that the maximum budget required for Special Responsibility Allowances will amount to £62,175, representing a shortfall of £21,217. This calculation is based on Members receiving the full amount of Special Responsibility Allowances to which they are entitled. Although not everyone has chosen to receive the full amount, it is possible that holders of positions of responsibility may change and that new position holders may choose to receive their full allowance. This calculation also provides for Special Responsibility Allowances to be payable to two additional Cabinet Members in the event of a restructuring of portfolios. Furthermore, it should be noted that there are some variable factors built into the Member's Allowances Scheme with some allowances payable per meeting. This calculation has allowed for the Appeals, Electoral Matters and Appointments Committees to meet six times per year and for a maximum of 20 Scrutiny Task Groups per year. These may prove to be over-optimistic but nonetheless wholly unpredictable assumptions.
- 3.7 In summary, the maximum budget shortfall for both Basic Allowances and Special Responsibility Allowances based on a 'worse case scenario' would amount to a total of £38,573. To address this anticipated shortfall, it is suggested that the Cabinet recommend the Council to release the necessary additional resources from revenue reserves.
- 3.8 In future it is intended that meetings of the Independent Remuneration Panel be held at an earlier stage so that its recommendations can be fed in to the Council's budget-making process.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 These are covered in the main body of the report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Members' Allowances Schemes are governed by The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 (as amended). The Regulations and the Council's Members' Allowances Scheme provide that any Member may elect to forgo their entitlement to all or part of their allowances if they so wish. The Council's Scheme states that if a Member has made this decision, he/she can change their mind, but not retrospectively.

6. Corporate Objectives

- 6.1 The Members' Allowances Scheme reflects the objective of being an efficient and effective Council.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 Action is required to increase the budget provision for Members' Allowances for 2006/07 to avoid the risk of overspending.

Background Papers

None

Contact officer

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19th APRIL 2006

CAPITAL STRATEGY 2006-2009

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor R. Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Head Of Financial Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to present to members the Capital Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council for 2006-2009. The Strategy brings together the work undertaken by the Council in recent years on the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, which together set out a vision for Bromsgrove for 2006 and beyond.

2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:

- 2.1 The Cabinet recommend the Capital Strategy to Council for approval.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Capital Strategy document sets out how Bromsgrove District Council aims to use its capital resources to achieve its vision that 'Bromsgrove District will be an attractive, clean, healthy, safe, and prosperous district where an improving quality of life is enjoyed equally by all', and the key strategic policies, priorities, and objectives agreed in the Recovery Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Community Plan and Corporate Plan.
- 3.2 Within the Capital Strategy the Council wishes to see cross cutting themes to improve the social, economic and environmental well being of the area by creating opportunities for improving health, reducing crime, providing high quality employment and developing leisure and tourism in the District.
- 3.3 The Council's approved Capital Programme for 2005/06 – 2007/08 reflects the key aims and objectives of the Council and asserts the Council as community leaders to lever in additional investment and add value to the programme. The Council is also providing small amounts of pump priming investment together with technical support or advice.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications of the Capital Programme as identified in this report are included in the medium term financial plan 2006/2009 which was approved by Council on 28th February 2006.

5. OTHER SUB HEADINGS

5.1 None

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

Background Papers

Capital Programme
Medium Term Financial Plan
Departmental Service Plans

Contact officer

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CAPITAL STRATEGY

2006/2009

CAPITAL STRATEGY

JAYNE PICKERING
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The Purpose of the Capital Strategy

The Capital Strategy document sets out how Bromsgrove District Council aims to use its capital resources to achieve its vision that 'Bromsgrove District will be an attractive, clean, healthy, safe, and prosperous district where an improving quality of life is enjoyed equally by all', and the key strategic policies, priorities, and objectives agreed in the Recovery Plan, Annual Performance Plan, Community Plan and Corporate Plan.

This document outlines the framework of consultation, strategic partnership working, management planning, and monitoring which takes place to ensure the Council's planned capital expenditure decisions deliver quality local services in Bromsgrove District. It seeks to show how these are integral to the process of assessing the needs of the community with corporate financial and service planning through Member, community and partner involvement. The Capital Strategy brings together the work undertaken by the Council in recent years on the Community Plan and Corporate Plan, which together set out a vision for Bromsgrove for 2005 and beyond.

This document therefore describes Bromsgrove's capital finance strategy and capital investment process, setting out:-

- the planning process;
- the priorities for capital investment;
- the departmental service strategies;
- how schemes are selected and resources allocated;
- how progress on schemes is monitored and evaluated;
- how progress in implementing the capital programme is monitored;
- how performance is reviewed;
- the Council's arrangements for partnership working;
- the Council's procurement strategy;
- how the Council's assets are managed; and
- how the Council consults for service and strategic planning purposes.

There are two types of Council expenditure which are capital and revenue. Capital resources are used to provide the new assets, and the enhancement of existing assets, which the Council requires to enable it to deliver its services to the citizens of the District, and which includes expenditure on land, buildings, and vehicles plant and equipment.

Examples of capital expenditure include the Dolphin Centre, recreation grounds, cemeteries, the Service Centre, car parks, public conveniences, CCTV systems, refuse and recycling freighters etc. Also included are grants to Registered Social Landlords for the provision of affordable housing.

On the other hand revenue expenditure comprises the Council's day to day operating costs such as salaries, wages, energy, printing, stationery, and maintenance etc. The Capital Strategy is therefore only concerned with the planned use of capital resources.

Background

Bromsgrove District covers an area of approximately 83.8 square miles and lies to the south of the West Midlands conurbation bounded by Birmingham, Dudley Solihull, Redditch, Wyre Forest and the largely rural districts of Wychavon and Stratford-upon-Avon.

Whilst it is only 14 miles from central Birmingham, the Clent and Lickey hills provide an important dividing line between the industrial Midlands and the rural landscape of North Worcestershire. The area is visibly dominated by agriculture, although it supports a varied economy based on a range of small and medium sized businesses. The District has a resident population of 87,837 (2001 census).

The Council is an enthusiastic and committed community leader, with a clear understanding of issues that need to be translated into actions either, directly by the Council, in partnership with others, or by enabling others to act. The Council facilitates the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which has been created and this will help to strengthen the existing partnership working which exists to deliver successful outcomes for local people. Continued development of the LSP will contribute towards better use of resources throughout the District.

Within the Capital Strategy the Council wish to see cross cutting themes to improve the social, economic and environmental well being of the area by creating opportunities for improving health, reducing crime, providing high quality employment and developing leisure and tourism in the District.

The Annual Performance Plan and the Community Plan are supported by a series of other specific strategy documents including Strategic Housing, the Local Development Plan, and Divisional Service Plans etc. The Capital Strategy brings together the interrelationship of the capital elements of such documents.

The Council's approved Capital Programme for 2005/06 – 2007/08 reflects the key aims and objectives of the Council and asserts the Council as community leaders to lever in additional investment and add value to the programme. The Council is also providing small amounts of pump priming investment together with technical support or advice.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

In 2002 the Government introduced universal inspections of Local Authorities throughout England. The process, known as Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), was designed to encourage councils to improve their corporate governance arrangements and to deliver service improvements on a continuous basis to local people. Councils would be judged and placed within one of five categories, poor, weak, fair, good or excellent.

On 3rd June 2004 Bromsgrove District Council decided to request Voluntary Engagement through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). This would enable the Council to focus its endeavours on improvement rather than deflect effort in preparing for CPA, and secure guidance and support towards achieving progressive improvement in the performance of the Council. As a consequence, the CPA process scheduled for September 2004 was deferred.

The Council's request for Voluntary Engagement was accepted and in September 2004 began the process of developing the Recovery Plan. This was seen as a key priority for the Council and has subsequently been reviewed and approved by Ministers at the ODPM.

By developing a clear integrated plan for wholesale improvement and change we will be able to provide a cost efficient effective value for money Council supplying high levels of service at a price that our customers want to pay.

As a further part of the Recovery Plan the Council has undergone an Organisational Restructure as part of a range of measures and initiatives that will create a framework from which dynamic change will flow.

New Organisational Structure

Direct Management Responsibility

Chief Executive

Economic Development

Assistant Chief Executive

Communications
Performance
Policy

Corporate Director (Services)

Culture & Community Services
Planning & Environment Services
Street Scene & Waste Management Services

The Planning Process

The ten year **Community Plan 2003 – 2013** was published in December 2003 and it focuses on the way in which services are delivered and how they can be improved for everyone's benefit. The Plan was compiled by Key Strategic Partners in response to the out-comes of extensive consultation, undertaken across the District and the plan sets out the vision of partners representing the community of Bromsgrove District. The delivery of the Community Plan is managed by the Local Strategic Partnership whose membership consists of key senior representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The **Corporate Plan 2005 – 2008** forms the Council's response to the Community Plan in terms of delivery. Covering a three-year period, it highlights our strategic aims and objectives as well as the more inspirational vision statement and values that we work towards, and is updated on an annual basis. The key plans and strategies that affect the Corporate Plan are set out below:

- **Annual Performance Plan:**
 - spells out information on things we said we would do, the things we have achieved and what our objectives are for the future;
 - focuses the results of the key performance indicators which impact on the achievement of the Council's six Key Objectives;
 - allows the Council to demonstrate how cross-cutting issues are being addressed through the combined efforts of the different service areas.
- **Annual Service Business Plans:**
 - produced by each of our service areas;
 - detail how the specific services will work towards delivering the Council's strategic aims and priorities, as set out in the Corporate Plan;
 - links with our Medium Term Financial Plan.
- **Staff Development Review:**
 - all Council employees participate in a process that involves an annual meeting and six-monthly update with their line manager;
 - employees agree a number of specific targets and objectives for their work in the coming year that reflect the priorities that have been identified in the Corporate, Service and Business Plan.

Prioritising Capital Investment

The Council's Vision is that 'Bromsgrove District will be an attractive, clean, healthy, safe, and prosperous district where an improving quality of life is enjoyed equally by all'.

The Council has expanded the Vision to include six strategic objectives which are:-

- To make a major contribution towards achieving a healthy caring and socially aware community;
- To provide a clean, safe and attractive environment;
- To protect and improve our environment and promote sustainable communities;
- To foster and sustain a strong and expanding economy;
- To provide sustainable culture and leisure opportunities;
- To be an efficient and effective Council.

The Council has also set itself three corporate priorities within the strategic objectives which are:-

- The Recovery Plan;

- Statutory functions not being performed to an acceptable standard;
- Bromsgrove First (key community needs identified in the Corporate Plan and 'spend-to-save' schemes).

Capital is a finite resource which means that a strict policy has to be adopted for approval of capital schemes. For the forthcoming 2006/07 – 2008/09 Capital Programme the only new capital schemes which are likely to be successful are those which meet the three corporate priorities set out above. Under current policy any service not on this list will not be a priority for the coming year.

The Council is in Voluntary Engagement with the ODPM and is concentrating on meeting the improvements required as detailed in the approved Recovery Plan. The Council has set a date of 31st March 2007 as the date by which it must be out of Voluntary Engagement.

Corporate Capital Finance Strategy

A keystone of the Council's Capital Financing Strategy has been to be debt free and this was achieved in March 2000. The Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of Council Dwellings to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust in March 2004 also provided substantial capital receipts. The Council has therefore adopted a prudent approach to the use of its capital resources to enable the debt free status to be maintained as long as possible. However the Council may have to review its debt free status in the long term because of the limited opportunities for obtaining future capital receipts. At 1st April 2005 the following capital resources were available for use:-

- Capital Receipts £20.6m
- Section 106 Planning Agreement Resources £2.3m
- Government Grants and other contributions £0.4m

The Local Government Act 2003 introduced the new Prudential Code capital controls system which came into force on 1st April 2004. Under these arrangements local authorities are freed from the allocation of Central Government credit approvals and are now able to borrow funds to finance capital schemes providing capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable as demonstrated by using a series of comprehensive prudential indicators. The Council currently has no plans to borrow funds to finance capital schemes.

The Local Government Act 2003 also introduced the 'pooling' of capital receipts from sales of Housing Revenue Account assets whereby a proportion of the capital income has to be paid over to Central Government. Under these regulations the Council is permitted to retain a proportion of 'poolable' capital income provided it is spent on affordable housing, regeneration, or housing functions, and the Council has therefore approved a number of schemes financed from such income.

An important element of the Capital Finance Strategy is to continue to seek funding from other agencies as part of the match funding process, to further stretch the use of the Council's own resources. Examples of this will be Advantage West Midlands, Government Grants (e.g. Implementing Electronic Government, Liveability Recreation, Community Safety (C.C.T.V.), Countryside Agency, Lottery, and partnerships with other Councils.

Traditional PFI is not being pursued as it is considered the current constraints render it unsuitable for the smaller type of projects undertaken by the Council. Instead reliance is being placed upon partnerships where considerable success has already been achieved and a 'mini' PFI is under consideration for a further phase of the Dolphin Leisure Centre.

The Council will also continue to utilise the capital resources made available through the planning Section 106 obligations which are utilised to finance schemes involving affordable social housing, leisure play areas, and public open spaces.

The Capital Asset Project Group

The Capital Strategy is also one of the responsibilities of the Capital Asset Project Group (CAPG) which is a sub-group of Corporate Management Team. CAPG is a strategic cross departmental body meeting monthly chaired by the Corporate Director (Resources) which comprises senior managers



with primary responsibility for capital strategy, capital budgeting and monitoring, capital finance, corporate property matters, and asset management. Other officers join the Group as necessary when they have specialist contributions to make. See Appendix 1 for the Terms of Reference.

The Council's latest published Capital Programme involves expenditure totalling £16.253m over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09 financed from a combination of capital receipts, Government grants, and Section 106 planning agreement funds. See Appendix 2 for full details.

Departmental Services Strategies

Each department has its own capital investment strategy which links into the Council's Capital Strategy and these can be seen at Appendix 3.

The Capital Investment Process

Scheme selection and prioritisation:

The Council currently has a 'live' four year Capital Programme that is reviewed on a regular basis. The capital budget is reviewed several times a year after the original budget has been approved by Council prior to the start of each financial year. After the previous year's capital outturn has been reported to Executive Cabinet the revised version of the current year's budget is prepared which includes any schemes which have been approved for carrying forward to the latest year, along with any other new schemes which have been approved since the original budget was agreed.

Nearer the end of each financial year an estimated outturn version of the current year's budget is prepared, which incorporates the latest estimate of budgetary requirements for schemes, and the purpose is to minimise the carrying forward of unspent budget to the new following year's budget.

New schemes may be added to the Capital Programme during the year provided they have received approval from Executive Cabinet following submission of a detailed Business Case, or schemes can be rescheduled within the Programme if necessary.

It is Council policy that the following investment criteria should apply on all capital schemes:-

A scheme will:-

- Maintain existing assets to standards suitable for service delivery;
- Improve and acquire assets to meet service and customer needs;
- Improve the stewardship of assets; spend to save (innovative schemes that will secure the Council a better rate of return than the investment interest earned); to reduce longer-term problems and liabilities;
- Satisfy legal obligations of the Council (e.g. health and safety requirements, and compliance with the disability discrimination legislation);
- Develop community assets in areas of need;
- Maximise the use of other funds to encourage investment in specific areas such as energy efficiency, economic development and infrastructure developments (using funds derived from Section 106 agreements with developers), and;
- Maximise the benefits of partnership working.

The following formal process applies for the consideration of bids from officers for inclusion of new schemes in the Capital Programme:

- Basic feasibility study undertaken;
- Officers undertake a formal Capital Appraisal of the proposed scheme which includes the following essential elements:
 - Key service objectives;
 - Analysis of costs and income, and the cashflow over the years of the scheme;
 - The impact on revenue costs and income;
 - The Human Resource Implications;

- Alternative proposals considered and reasons for rejection;
 - Extent of internal consultation carried out with other officers;
 - Factors for evaluating the success of the scheme;
 - Risk factors that could delay project delivery;
 - Risks if project is not approved;
 - How the project will help to achieve the Council's Priorities and Corporate Objectives;
 - Productivity benefits;
 - Likely asset savings;
 - How the scheme will help performance improvement.
- Each proposed capital schemes is categorised by the proposing officer according to the following criteria;
 - 1 = Statutory requirements e.g. legislation, health & safety, matched funding;
 - 2 = Projects which clearly relate to the achievement of corporate priorities;
 - 3 = Projects which do not clearly relate to the achievement of corporate priorities but which would have an impact;
 - 4 = All other projects.
 - The priority for the use of capital resources in the forthcoming 2006/07 – 2008/09 Capital Programme will be capital schemes which enable the Council to achieve it's Recovery Plan, and those which address statutory services which are not currently being delivered to the desired standard. The capital appraisal process has been designed to ensure this occurs. See Appendix 4 for the Capital Appraisal Form.
 - The Capital Asset Project Group considers all bids in relation to the achievement of the Council's Priorities and Corporate Objectives and the level of resources available;
 - Proposed schemes are reported to Corporate Management Team for approval;
 - The proposed Capital Programme is presented to Executive Cabinet for discussion and approval;
 - Consultation with Scrutiny Task Groups is undertaken before finalising the Capital Programme;
 - Schemes included in the approved Capital Programme can only commence once approved by Executive Cabinet following the submission of a detailed Business Case;
 - The revenue consequences of schemes included in the approved Capital Programme are incorporated into the Medium Term Finance Plan.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Projects:

Budget holders and budget managers carry out the day to day control of their individual capital schemes using their professional and project management skills. The following monitoring process also takes place:

- Monthly financial monitoring by heads of service, budget managers and project officers including the updating of the 'Contract Register';
- The preparation and issuing of monthly capital monitoring statements to heads of service providing details of expenditure and planned budget to date and scheme variances to enable any appropriate action to be taken to keep the capital programme on track;
- Monthly reporting of the capital monitoring reports to the CAPG;
- Quarterly reporting of progress and performance on the capital programme, along with the reasons for major variances, to the newly created Performance Management Board.

In order to reduce the need to carry forward unspent budgets to succeeding years Executive Cabinet have requested that scheme budgets are realistically profiled over the time period of the Capital Programme.

Bench marking:

Bench marking involves comparing the performance of Bromsgrove over a range of performance indicators with a selection of similar local authorities. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance has developed a model known as the Nearest Neighbours Selection Model to assist local authorities in comparative and bench marking exercises. Users of the model are provided with a wide range of Standard Spending Assessment based, socio-economic indicators upon which their specific 'family group' is calculated (the family group is a selection of local authorities with similar in characteristics to Bromsgrove for comparison purposes).

Bromsgrove has previously used this model to produce a list of 20 similar authorities which have been used for bench marking purposes. The latest period with information available is for 2003-04 which saw an improvement in the number of performance indicators which were above average, but there was also an increase in the number which were below average.

Performance Management:

The Council has established a wide range of performance targets, local indicators, and service information, and there are also the Best Value Performance Indicators. The Annual Performance Plan adds to this process together with Community Plan, Corporate Plan and the individual departmental Service Plans. The Council has also invested in a new computer system Performance Plus to aid the management of performance across the entire authority.

The recently established Performance Management Board will receive quarterly performance information on capital projects, which will combine financial and performance information (projects on time and delivering planned outcomes).

Capital schemes are proposed with the aim of achieving the Key Priorities and Objectives of the Council and the capital appraisal process requires the identification of any related performance indicators which will be impacted by the scheme. The success of many schemes can therefore be evaluated by monitoring the movement of such related indicators.

Property performance indicators have been developed as part of the Asset Management Plan, and these are regularly monitored. In addition the Council is now a member of the IPF AMP Network. The actual progress on delivery of schemes against the target of the Capital Programme is monitored by preparation of monthly capital monitoring statements for budget holders and the details are also reported to Executive Cabinet quarterly, and the final capital outturn is also reported following closedown of the accounts.

In order to celebrate and promote the successful delivery of capital schemes Press Releases are issued at the appropriate time to provide the local press and community of the full details. Recent examples include the achievement of the national targets for the recycling of waste following significant capital investment in vehicles and equipment, the new 'Shopmobility' scheme offering disabled people the use of free wheelchairs and scooters for shopping in the town centre, and the major Mill Lane town centre improvement package to make it safer for pedestrians and improve the traffic flow.

Key Partners in the Development of this Strategy

The Bromsgrove Partnership

The Council recognises that it cannot deal with all the issues facing the District alone and has therefore embraced partnership working through the establishment of the Bromsgrove Partnership. Their function has been to develop the Community Plan following extensive consultation across the District and to drive forward the delivery of the Plan towards the year 2013. Membership comprises representatives from a wide range of public, private, community, and voluntary groups as follows and full details can be seen at Appendix 5:-



- West Mercia Police;
- Neighbourhood Watch;
- Vice Principal NEW College;
- Environment Agency;
- Redditch & Bromsgrove PCT;
- Weaver PLC (Chair);
- Basepoint Plc;
- Judd Medical Ltd;
- BARN (Voluntary Sector);
- CALC (Parish Councils);
- Worcestershire County Council.

The Community Plan 2003 – 2013 sets out the key aims and targets under five theme groups and in response to this the Council has produced the Corporate Plan for a period of three years which constitutes the Council's response in terms of delivery and highlights the key priorities and objectives. Full details of the areas covered by the theme groups can be seen in Appendix 5. The ideas of the multi agency group therefore influence the content of our Capital Programme because the Capital Strategy is linked with the Corporate Plan which in turn is linked with the Community Plan. The five theme groups are:-

- Consider your Environment;
- Develop & Prosper;
- Feel Safe;
- Health & Social Well-being;
- Learn & Grow;

Members of the Partnership are committed to addressing the priorities identified in the Community Plan in a way that will 'add value' to the services they will normally provide. A successful event held in December 2004 provided the opportunity for the Partnership to re focus on three main strategic areas

- Health and Well being;
- Literacy and numeracy;
- Anti-social Behaviour.

Theme group chairs are producing an action plan developing a range of achievable targets that demonstrate added value to work already being undertaken.

The Bromsgrove Partnership also functions as the Local Strategic Partnership with their lead role of promoting economic, social, and environmental well-being. The Strategic Partnership Taskforce document published in March 2004 reinforced the importance of this issue in the delivery of high quality services. The further considerations of partnership working include the need to:-

- Deliver a more seamless service;
- Provide greater choice for service users;
- Improve service delivery.

Combined with the need to find additional efficiency savings [Gershon 2004] there will be further impetus to review current levels of partnership working and revise practises to achieve benefits across the authority and the district.

Examples of Successful Partnership Working

The Council actively seeks and encourages joint working with a variety of partners to deliver services, to attract additional funding, and secure community benefits. There are many examples of successful partnership working involving the Council in the years 2003/2006 which include working with:-

- a range of registered social landlords and the grant funding of capital schemes to provide additional affordable housing for the benefit of local people;

- Worcestershire County Council and joint funding to provide the 'Worcestershire Hub', and also the 'One-Stop Shop' Customer Service Centre, in Bromsgrove town centre;
- NEW College for the provision of a new Arts Centre where the college provided the land and the Council provided the building and agreement on a trust arrangement for split use of the facility; and,
- ASDA where in exchange for a piece of land, ASDA has provided the Council with its first every multi storey car park.

Other partners include Advantage West Midlands which is playing a key part in developing the former UEF site as part of the A38 high technology corridor, and British Waterways where a joint feasibility study has been carried out relating to increased leisure and tourism access to the canal system from and within Bromsgrove. The Council recognises that future partnership working will be a key element in delivering successful capital schemes.

Local Area Agreements

The Council is also involved in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) which is currently being developed. The LAA is a three-year agreement that sets out the priorities for Worcestershire. It is negotiated between government, represented by Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), and a local area, represented by the County and district councils and their partners working through the Worcestershire Partnership. The aim of the LAA is to simplify funding streams and allow the area greater flexibility to address local priorities.

Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement is due to start in April 2006. The County LSP have agreed to concentrate on establishing the outcomes and performance targets in the first year of the Agreement with a fuller consideration of the re-aligning of funding streams to support the outcomes kicking in from April 2007. The Council agrees with this approach and will need to monitor this closely through 2006/07 to ensure our residents benefit from any re-alignment of funding streams.

A successful LAA will provide an opportunity for improving future service delivery in a number of ways:-

- Focus on key strategic priorities and measurable outcomes;
- Assist partners to more clearly identify gaps and overlaps in provision;
- Pooling of budgets/resources leading to greater efficiency and effectiveness;
- Enhanced performance management in conjunction with partners, thus enabling a process which is transparent and accountable;
- Simplification of delivery structures and clear accountability and governance arrangements;
- Improved community cohesion through greater engagement of all sectors, notably private, voluntary and community;
- By linking outcomes to a clear identification of needs, based on data from local communities through effective consultation.

Corporate Procurement Strategy

The procurement process involves revenue and capital expenditure to the value of £9.5 million per annum and has recently been reviewed and a new strategy has been introduced with new working practices such as ordering over the internet, the use of Government procurement cards, minimum invoice values, and monthly invoices from suppliers.

The Council is committed to procuring Best value for money supplies, services and construction works, and has developed the new procurement strategy to assist in meeting that objective. Full details are available in the separate Procurement Strategy document. Once fully implemented, the new strategy will improve the Council's procurement capacity which should enable us to deliver capital projects more cost effectively in terms of obtaining better specifications and prices from suppliers of materials and services etc. The procurement process also ensures the requirements of the Financial Regulations, Standing Orders, and European Union procurement regulations are adhered to.



The key procurement objectives of the new strategy are:-

- Becoming Strategic;
- Modernisation of procurement methods;
- Development of a procurement manual;
- Appropriate training and development;
- Performance management;
- Standard project management & gateway reviews;
- Partnering;
- Supplier management;
- Corporate Procurement;
- Supporting SMEs;
- E-commerce.

Asset Management

Asset Management is another responsibility of the CAPG. The Corporate Director (Resources) who chairs the group has also been designated as the Council's Corporate Property Officer thereby making this officer responsible for asset management. The CAPG therefore monitors the use of land and identify initiatives for consideration by the Council. The Council's Asset Management Plan has been approved to the 'Good' standard by Government Office West Midlands.

The CAPG has the following agreed terms of reference relating to asset management:-

- To ensure that the Council's land and property holdings are used and managed, having regard to the following:-
 - to meet the requirements of the various services provided by the Council, including housing and recreational needs and in support of the best value delivery of these services;
 - to meet the broad social and economic needs of the District and matters of comprehensive importance to the area, including the contents of Structure and Local Plans and similar documents;
 - the maximisation of income (where appropriate) and the disposal of land, which is surplus to requirements;
 - the corporate objectives of the Council.
- To ensure that any land or property, which has been identified for disposal, is reported on accordingly. To review land and property holdings to determine ways and means of achieving the above objectives through the sale, acquisition or letting of land, as appropriate.
- To consider alternative uses of the land and property holdings, as appropriate, where this would maximise the use of such assets and assist with service delivery.
- That prompt action is taken and it results in a profitable return.

Any proposals for the short, medium or long term future of any property or land are referred to CAPG for consideration. The Council does not have a formal Disposals Policy but the lack of a formal Disposals Policy should not be construed as an indication that assets are not currently reviewed for their continuing suitability and need. On the contrary, the Council regularly identifies under utilised assets for disposal as well as actively utilising its asset portfolio to contribute to corporate objectives.

The Council's existing process for identifying underused or surplus assets is a mixture of corporate and service action. At a corporate level the Council has identified strategic sites which are held for development to support the Council's housing objectives. Any under used/surplus assets will be reported to CAPG who will consider alternative uses or disposal. As this group has cross service representation, it will also consider issues from other departments.

In the latest 2005/06 – 2008/09 Capital Programme the Council will invest £944k in the improvement of its assets which includes:-

- Work on buildings to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Houndsfield Rd Caravan Site
- Burcot, Wythall, Holly & Rubery Lodges
- Dolphin Centre
- Recreation Grounds

Consultation

The Council undertakes extensive consultation. Once approved the Community Plan drives the Council's corporate strategic planning through an integrated matrix of strategies and plans including the Corporate Plan and the Annual Performance Plan. All strategies and plans have been subjected to widespread public consultation and will continue to be revised, through consultation, to take account of changing public priorities.

It is Council policy that formal consultation with the public will take place on all significant or major capital projects through the already established Citizen's Panel and 'Spotlight' meetings (see below). Consultation will also take place on the annual capital and revenue budgets each year and it is planned that this will start with the formulation of the budgets for year 2007/08.

The Annual Performance Plan demonstrates the corporate and service based links within the various other statutory and non-statutory plans that the Council produces, to ensure a holistic approach to meeting community needs. It also outlines the main capital projects the Council will be undertaking in the forthcoming year. Through the Capital Strategy and the Asset Management Plan, the Council will also ensure that its Capital Programme and Asset Base is aligned to best meet its objectives.

Consultation generally includes the use of the Citizen's Panel and various focus groups, as and when required, surveys, and 'Spotlight' meetings.

Citizen's Panel

The Council maintains a database of members of the public who wish to participate in this and regularly advertises for membership which is open to anyone resident in Bromsgrove. These volunteers are consulted as and when required by the Council.

'Spotlight' Meetings

Public meetings are held eight times each year in different areas of the District which comprise a panel made up of one representative each from the Council, Worcestershire County Council, the local Police, and the Primary Care Trust. Presentations are made to the audience on a range of issues followed by an open forum for questions.

The Local Development Framework

This is a strategic plan for the development of the Bromsgrove District over the next 15 to 20 years and Planning Department carry out consultation developers and other interested parties when developing this plan.

Housing Consultation Strategy

The Council has a good past record for working with its tenants in encouraging participation and meaningful consultation. Since Housing Transfer took place, the main responsibility for tenant participation has transferred to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) enabling the Council to now concentrate on wider community and partner consultation as a mainstream activity within its strategic housing role.

In respect of housing needs, the Council undertakes substantial and varied consultation with residents, registered social landlords, the Housing Corporation, and the Voluntary Sector and other Agencies. All feedback from this consultation is fed into the policy development process.

The following list provides examples of the consultation work the Council is developing with the whole community, irrespective of whether they are tenants, persons accessing homelessness services or people benefiting from the authorities private sector housing and planning services.

A Selection from the Many Local Housing Consultations and Partnerships

- Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group;
- Housing Strategy Steering Group;
- Registered Social Landlord (RSL) Liaison Group;
- Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) Affordable Housing Working Group;
- BDHT Sheltered Housing Review and Charford Regeneration Teams;
- Bromsgrove Private Landlords Forum;
- Affordable Housing Development – Local Consultation;
- Private Sector Housing Strategy and Policy Consultation Questionnaire;
- The Housing Strategy Steering Group;
- Ethnic Minority Focus Group;
- Research into the Housing Needs of Young People.

A Selection from the Many County Wide Housing Consultations and Partnerships

- Health and Social Care Groups;
- South Housing Market Area Co-ordination;
- Consulting on Our New Housing Strategy - Unlocking the Door to Meeting Housing Need;
- The Housing Needs Survey and Stock Condition Survey;
- North Worcester Care & Repair Agency.

Culture and Community Consultation Strategy

Culture and Community Services recognise that the operation of facilities and the planning process for activities/service delivery within the department needs to be driven by the outcomes of valid consultation. To this end the department has developed a consultation strategy to ensure that the needs of the community are adequately addressed, continuous improvement is achieved and quality of service enhanced.

The following methods of consultation are currently in use within the department: -

- Comments System
- User Questionnaires
- Consultative Groups
- Council Complaints Procedure
- Open meetings
- User/Non-user General Residents Survey
- Open Days

Community Safety Consultation Strategy

Much of what Community Safety achieves is based on wide consultation with its Partners and the Community it serves. Every 3 years a District wide Residents Survey is taken to understand what are the priorities and needs of residents. This is backed up by a Crime Survey which looks at all types of Crime on a Ward and Age Group basis. Areas of priority are identified through this process.

A yearly survey is conducted by West Mercia Police and it's Community Safety Partnerships on key issues. This information is available by County, District or Ward areas. The Council also use residents and young people focus groups for specific issues.

The Council seek the support of Voluntary Organisations about supporting specific projects in the community such as drug & alcohol abuse, domestic violence, homelessness and diversionary activities for young people.

The latest initiative is Partners and Communities Together (PACT) which is a Pilot Scheme to problem solve the way that Neighbourhoods are policed and interact with other statutory organisations.

The Council use innovative ways to communicate such as 'Who wants to be a millionaire' style electronic voting, multi-texting and are looking at various e-mail packages to provide instant surveys.

The Council undertakes a wide range of consultation through its established Citizens Panel, Community Forums, 'Spotlight' meeting throughout the District, and other participation groups. The Council's response to consultation is to identify future investment and service delivery needs so that these may be incorporated as necessary into the Capital Strategy and other policy documents. This approach has in the past contributed to the identification of capital schemes to improve car parking, leisure facilities and reduce crime, amongst others.

In all of the approaches to consultation the Council ensures that feedback is given to consultees so that they are aware that their views are being listened to and acted upon.

Review of the Capital Strategy

This is the fourth formal Capital Strategy for the Council and will be subject to regular review to ensure that it reflects the Council's priorities and corporate objectives and contributes to the Community Plan. The new Prudential Code system for control of local authority capital expenditure has been in place since 1st April 2004 which opens up opportunities for borrowing capital resources to finance capital projects provided the criteria of being affordable, prudent and sustainable is clearly met. In the long term the Council will reconsider its debt free status in the light of this development so as to ensure we continue to be best placed to deliver the Council's priorities and objectives.

The Capital Strategy is a corporate document, owned by both Members and officers, and reflects and supports the wider community and partnership role. It is one part of the bigger corporate management and governance picture and will adapt as the Council evolves.

Capital Assets Project Group

Terms of Reference (Approved by OMT 23rd June 2004)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This group operates as a sub-group of Officers Management Team (OMT) and was formed by OMT on 7th October 2003 to formulate and maintain the Asset Management Plan, Capital Strategy and 3-year rolling Capital Programme. It is chaired by the Corporate Director (Resources) supported by the Principal Accountant (Capital), and consists of representatives of each department with an input to capital matters.
- 1.2 At this point in time, the group has experienced most, if not all of the major events in the annual calendar and some 'extras' as well. Therefore, it is appropriate that the group should now be given more formal Terms of Reference by OMT.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. This group will in future be called the Capital Assets Projects Group.
2. The Corporate Director of Resources is named as the Corporate Property Officer as required by the Asset Management Plan and he/she will lead and direct the group and chair the regular meetings.
3. The group, consisting of representatives of all departments with an input to the capital finances of the Council, will meet at least 6 times a year at appropriate times to consider updates of the Asset Management Plan (AMP), the Capital Strategy (CS) and to monitor and update the Capital Programme.
4. The group will be required to update annually the AMP and CS for submission to Officers Management Team (OMT) although there is not now a requirement to submit them to ODPM.
5. Monitoring and changes to the rolling Capital Programme must be considered in the light of any rules or restrictions laid down by OMT or Cabinet.
6. All capital schemes will be considered first by this group on completion of a Service Improvement Proposal form and recommendations made to OMT as to the inclusion or otherwise of any scheme into the Capital Programme, most particularly at the annual update of the rolling 3-year Capital Programme which will be towards the end of each calendar year.
7. Information/requests for capital schemes will be collected by group members from elected Members and officers and presented to the group by early September. Service Improvement Proposal forms will be prepared for consideration by the group.
8. Schemes in the approved Capital Programme will be regularly monitored by the group (at least every 2 months) and variations arising in-year by way of proposed new schemes, deletions, underspendings, and overspendings will be dealt with under the approved budget Virement Rules and reported to OMT - and Cabinet/Council if necessary.
9. Current Virement Rules allow that budgets can be vired between schemes:
 - ❖ up to £15,000 by Officers agreement
 - ❖ up to £100,000 by Cabinet approval
 - ❖ over £100,000 by Council approval

APPENDIX 1

10. Scheme bids for external funding of new projects, which sometimes may need to be submitted at short notice, will be brought to this group for consideration as soon as possible and reported to OMT, Chairmens Group and Cabinet. If successful, the group will incorporate any such scheme into the Capital Programme for reporting and monitoring purposes. Where match funding is required from the Council's own funds then the above Virement Rules will apply.
11. Matters relating to the funding of capital schemes will also be considered by the group, particularly the identification and use of Section 106 receipts and external grants.
12. Close links will be maintained with other Officer Groups involved in capital projects, particularly the Social Housing Development Project Team and the E-government Group.
13. All capital spending by the Council will be included in the Capital Programme irrespective of where the funding comes from.
14. An annual timetable of events will be prepared so that a programme of work, including meeting dates, can be agreed by the group.
15. These terms of reference may be reviewed and changed from time to time by OMT to meet changing circumstances and to ensure good practice.

JULY 2004

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT & HUMAN RESOURCES							
New HR Information & Management System.	0	30,000				Gen cap receipts	To provide the Council with a modern Human Resources system which will enable both efficient and effective monitoring of its staff and provide information to support performance indicators. The system will provide a flexible approach in order to facilitate the changing role of the Council and enable the Council to meet current and future e-government targets.
SUB-TOTAL	0	30,000	0	0	0		
LEGAL & DEMOCRATIC SERVICES							
Replacement Electoral Software	0	15,000				Gen cap receipts	Replacement of the current IT electoral software with a more reliable alternative.
Committee Minutes System	22,000	3,000				Gen cap receipts	A high priority scheme required to release savings in the revenue budget.
SUB-TOTAL	22,000	18,000	0	0	0		
FINANCIAL SERVICES							
Pensions Backfunding for employees transferred to BDHT	200,000					Gen cap receipts	Payment in respect of the LSVT transfer
SUB-TOTAL	200,000	0	0	0	0		
E-GOVERNMENT & CUSTOMER SERVICES							
Corporate Budget for IT Upgrades	60,000	40,000	40,000			Gen cap receipts	To enable a rolling ICT replacement programme to be undertaken.
Corporate Budget for IT Upgrades (a bid for increased budget)	0	14,000	0			Gen Cap Rec	Scheme is for refreshing Corporate Desktop (provision of laptops, new visual display units & central processing units, but not servers, to ensure we are capable of handling future new software applications) (additional to existing upgrade budget requirements).
Provision of Service Centre - BDC Share (I.E.G) Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	9,000	68,000				Gen cap receipts	Completion of the 2004/05 scheme.
Implementing Electronic Government (I.E.G. Net) (Budget Carry Forward for 2003/04 Projects)	24,000					IEG Grant	The completion of IEG Projects commenced in 2003/04 including Web-Based Templates, Content Management /Intranet, Intranet GIS, Worcs E-Hub, Members On-Line.
Completion of Worcestershire Hub Core Programme	39,000					IEG Grant	The completion of the IEG Project commenced in 2003/04 for the Worcs E-Hub.
ICT Infrastructure including Telephones & Equipment for Disaster Recovery. (Invest-to-Save) (Scheme already approved)	1,873,000					Gen cap receipts=£1,666k IEG=£207k	To provide flexible, secure, robust, and scalable ICT infrastructure that is equipped to meet 21st century demands. Consolidate and/or upgrade network and server systems with minimal disruption to normal Council business operations. Provide proactive monitoring and capacity planning of the network and servers. E-enablement of service delivery, 24x7 helpdesk, and setup of necessary facilities to create off site disaster recovery.
Internet/Intranet Development (IEG) (Scheme already approved)	28,000					IEG Grant	This scheme is the complete refresh of the web and updates. Provide a common solution for the intranet and internet content management system. Ensure ongoing maintenance of the system. Comply with all national standards for local government websites. Provide an on-line communication tool and payment facilities to the citizens of Bromsgrove. To assist with the delivery of certain e-Government indicators.
Government Connect Scheme (Scheme already approved)	30,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Government Connect is a scheme which Bromsgrove DC has already signed up to. This is a national citizen authorisation programme whereby citizens have a unique reference which allows access to their local council's IT systems. E.g. enable them to review their council tax balances on-line.
IT Servers for the Active Directory	34,000					Gen cap Receipts	This was the business critical replacement of the Active Directory as the main shared drive for all users crashed and large scale data could have been lost.
Upgrading to Radius Cash Receiving System	0	50,000				Gen Cap Rec	The upgrading and setting up of the Radius Cash Receiving system for all electronic payments to the requirements of Financial Services Department.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Upgrading of Leisure Booking & Receipts/Income Flex-on-Line System	0	33,000				Gen Cap Rec	The upgrading and correct setting up of the Flex-on-Line system at all three sites. The system is used for Leisure bookings and the recording of income received.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Replacement of Academy Revenues & Benefits IT System		400,000				Gen Cap Rec	Replacement of existing Revenues and Benefits IT system.
Purchase Order Processing System		197,000				Gen Cap Rec & IEG	The scheme is for the provision of a cost effective and efficient IT based Purchase Order Management System as a replacement for existing manual methods. The Council is required to have an e-procurement system in place by December 2005 both to meet the national procurement agenda and its commitments in IEG statements submitted to central government.
SUB-TOTAL	2,097,000	802,000	40,000	0	0		
CULTURE & COMMUNITY SERVICES							
Recreation Grounds							
Improvements to Rubery Park (Funded from BDC S106 & Gov't Liveability Grant)	189,000					S106=£30k Grants=£159k	Park improvement scheme; including new facilities for teenagers to include a skate park and ball court facility, an extension to the play area, improvements to football pitch and signage and production of Management Plan.
New park at Barnsley Hall (Funded from Government Liveability Fund & BDC)	25,000	195,000				Gen Cap Receipts=£10k Gov Grant=£15k	The scheme includes creation of a new public open space/Park following the conveyance of a field from the Health Authority that was subject to a Section 106 agreement (Town & Country Planning Act). The scheme involves ground works to reinstate football pitches, additional landscaping to encourage wildlife, a new access road, car parking and infrastructure to serve proposed changing room facility (recommendation of the Playing Pitch Strategy 2003).
Improvements to Sanders Park (Funded from Government Liveability Fund £35k & BDC S106 £44k)	191,000	20,000				Gov Grants £140k S106=£44k Gen Cap Rec=£7k	Park improvement scheme; including refurbish/extension of play area (£130k contract awarded), refurbish/redesign existing skate park, improved landscaping, improved signage and production of Management Plan following consultation with residents in 2004. Consultation with residents took place in 2004 and a Sanders Park Forum formed.
Regeneration of two Allotment Sites (Funded from Government Liveability Fund £16k) - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	16,000					Gov Grants	The budget is for the regeneration of two allotment sites.
Callowbrook Park (Rubery) Improvement Scheme	0	35,000				S106	To provide improved leisure facilities at the park for children/teenagers. Officers are currently considering the feasibility of schemes in consultation with the young people of Rubery in association with the police, youth service and ward members. The aim is to run the scheme in parallel and complementary to the improvements identified to the St. Chads Park (Rubery) scheme which is being funded from external Liveability grant monies.
Wythall Park Play Area Refurbishment	40,000					S106	Provide the funding for the Wythall Park Community Association to replace the existing play area equipment and safety surfacing to meet health and safety guidelines (European Standards EN 1176 & 1177 and Risk Assessment recommendations), DDA and Play Value Assessment requirements and provide a more stimulating play facility for local children.
New Play Area at Myhill Field Cotton Hackett	20,000	20,000				S106	Grant to enable the provision of new Play area by the Parish council
Sports Development							
New Sporting Pitches (Garrington's/UEF)	0	60,000	150,000	130,000		S106	Increase/improve football facility provision in the District and improve quality and playing capacity of existing grass pitches and provide all weather pitches in lieu of the loss of the senior football pitch at Garringtons. Recommendation of the Playing Pitch Strategy 2003.
Wythall Teenage Sports Facility Scheme	0	80,000				S106	To provide an openly accessible area for teenagers to meet, participate in casual use football and other sports activity. The aim is to provide opportunities for diversionary activities to help curb localised anti social behaviour identified in Wythall.
Leisure/Sports Centres							
Dolphin Centre - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	171,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Completion of the Dolphin Centre Upgrade scheme.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Dolphin Centre - Renew/Repair Roof Coverings (as per condition survey) - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	13,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Completion of the scheme to renew/repair the roof coverings at the Dolphin Centre.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Dolphin Centre - Replacement Roof Cladding - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	8,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Completion of the scheme to replace the roof cladding at the Dolphin Centre.
Dolphin Centre - Sports Hall Inflatable - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	8,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Purchase of new inflatable for use with Children's parties etc.
Dolphin Centre - Replacement of Pool Plant	0	55,000				Gen Cap Receipts	The scheme is for the refurbishment of the Swimming Pool Plant at the Dolphin Centre which has been identified as requiring replacement as part of a recent Pool Plant Condition Survey. Scheme is to ensure we operate our pools to the required environmental standards and avoid deterioration in pool water quality.
Dolphin Centre Upgrade Phase II (Provision of Health & Fitness Suite) (Invest-to-Save)		1,192,000				Invest to save	The proposed fitness suite includes 68 station fitness suite, 42 pieces of cardiovascular and 26 pieces of resistance equipment, dedicated strength and conditioning area, an aerobic/spin studio, IFI beginners program area, customer workout programs, separate change areas, wet/relaxation area spa, sauna & steam, LCD & plasma televisions, & background music system.
Arts Development							
Arts Centre (Joint With College) (includes earlier years slippage)	60,000					Gen Cap Receipts	The budget is for the completion of the Arts Centre development.
Grant Aid							
Catshill 20:20 Community Project - Refurbishment of Play Area at George Wagstaff Memorial Hall	0	35,000				Gen Cap Receipts	The refurbishment of the children's play area at the George Wasstaff Memorial Ground
Catshill 20:20 Community Project - Cycle Track/Footpath around field		25,000				Gen Cap Rec £15k S106 £10k	Provision of new footpath around the Memorial Ground to be carried out in conjunction with the play area refurbishment
Catshill 20:20 - Refurbishment of Catshill Village Hall		43,000				S106	Refurbishment of the Village Hall by the Catshill Village Hall Management Committee
Community Services							
Restoration of Memorial Headstones in Bromsgrove Cemetery	20,000	10,000				Gen Cap Receipts	To restore/erect the memorial headstones that are currently laid down further to the Risk Assessment previously undertaken. Headstones shall be restored to sustain their historical and structural integrity and site signage replaced.
Replacement Roof at Spadesbourne Suite - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	22,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Completion of the scheme to replace the roof of the Spadesbourne Suite at the Council House.
Other Schemes							
Hunters Hill School Blackwell. Contribution towards New Indoor Sports Facilities	129,500	0				Gen Cap Receipts	Capital grant towards the provision of a new Sports Hall
Alvechurch - Completion of Sports Building at Rowney Green	20,000					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Beoley - Drainage Improvements to Pitch at Beoley	7,100					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Romsley - Pitch Drainage Work at Romsley	15,000					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Alvechurch - Swanslength Play Area Refurbishment/Extension.		40,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Barnsley Hall - Requisition of Land & Provision of new Play Area.	30,000	50,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Bart Green (Linthurst) - Hewell Road Park Improvements & Bitterell Road Play Area Improvements	12,000					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Belbroughton - Skateboard Park		40,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Belbroughton Recreation Centre Sports Storage Facilities & External Toilets	21,500					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Bentley Village Hall - Refurbishment of Play Area Equipment		20,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Blackwell - Relocation of Play Area		40,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Bromsgrove Town FC - Portable Goals for Lickey End Recreation Ground	1,700					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Catshill - Refurbishment of Horse Course Play Area		0	50,000			S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Charford Section 106 Schemes		100,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Clent - Provision of Skate Equipment	20,000					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Dolphin Centre - Provision of Play Area		40,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Hagley - Play Area Refurbishment	20,000	20,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
King George V Playing Fields - Floodlights for existing Multi Use games area		30,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Oakhalls - New Play Area		40,000				S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Stoke Prior - Play Area Refurbishment	2,000					S106	Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Community Safety							
C.C.T.V. Scheme 1 (Wythall/Drakes Cross)	90,000	87,000				Gen Cap Receipts	Provision of CCTV cameras in the Wythall/Drakes Cross area to provide continuous monitoring of the shopping and recreation areas. To comply with the Council's adopted Community Plan and the 2005/08 Community Safety Strategy.
C.C.T.V Station Sites (2003/04 Scheme) - Budget Carry Forward	21,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Completion of the scheme to provide CCTV systems at Wythall and Alvechurch railway stations.
Hagley Playing Fields CCTV Scheme (Gov't Grant & Hagley Parish Council) - Budget Carry Forward	10,000					Parish Council	Completion of the scheme to provide a CCTV system at Hagley Playing Fields.
SUB-TOTAL	1,182,800	2,277,000	200,000	130,000	0		
PLANNING & ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES							
PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL GRANTS							
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) (Private & BDHT Grants)	355,000					Gen Cap Rec-£143k Gov Grants=£212k	Budget for Disabled Facilities Grants which became mandatory under the provisions of Section 23 of the 1996 Act for works facilitating access to and around the dwelling, and for the provision of certain facilities within the dwelling.
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) (Private & BDHT Grants) PROBABLE BUDGET CARRY FORWARD		443,000				Cap Rec £276k Gov Grants £167k	Budget for Disabled Facilities Grants which became mandatory under the provisions of Section 23 of the 1996 Act for works facilitating access to and around the dwelling, and for the provision of certain facilities within the dwelling.
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) (Private & BDHT Grants)		232,000	646,000	663,000	680,000	Gen Cap Rec & Cap Grants	Under the provisions of Section 23 of the 1996 Act Disabled Facilities Grants became mandatory for works facilitating access to and around the dwelling and for the provision of certain facilities within the dwelling.
Discretionary Home Repair Assistance & Housing Renewal Grants (Private Sector Only)	80,000					Gen Cap Receipts	The Council's Strategy & Policy relates to the implementation of new services designed to improve housing quality, energy efficiency & health and social well being by improving poor standard, unfit or empty dwellings and by enabling people to remain in their homes. Part of the Council's agreed private sector housing strategy.
Discretionary Home Repair Assistance & Housing Renewal Grants (Private Sector Only)		156,000	161,000	164,000	168,000	Gen Cap Rec	The Council's Strategy & Policy relates to the implementation of new services designed to improve housing quality, energy efficiency & health and social well being by improving poor standard, unfit or empty dwellings and by enabling people to remain in their homes. Part of the Council's agreed private sector housing strategy.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
STRATEGIC HOUSING							
Retained Housing							
Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site - Door & Window Replacements - Amenity Blocks	8,000	0				Pooled Cap Rec	Refurbishment of amenity blocks on caravan site.
Homeless Hostels Schemes							
Burcot Lodge & Wythall Lodge - Refurbishment & Modernisation Scheme	23,000					Pooled Cap Rec	A second phase of the refurbishment and modernisation of the four hostels that continue to be owned by the Council. The four hostels provide a total of 35 rooms of temporary accommodation for a variety of homeless applicants whilst they are either having their application assessed, being provided with temp accom for a period seen reasonable for them to find alternative accommodation (where full duty is not owed to the client) or where the Council has accepted its duty to rehouse and is seeking to secure them permanent accommodation. The hostels are in constant use and average over 90% occupancy. The four premises require extensive refurbishment including window replacement, bathroom fitting replacement, floor replacement, kitchen refurbishment, outhouse and storage unit re-roofing and external works.
Refurbishment & Modernisation of Homeless Hostels (Holly, Rubery, Burcot, & Wythall Lodges)		18,000				Pooled Hsg rec	
Strategic & Enabling Housing Schemes							
4 Houses on garage sites (Grafton, Foxwalks) Probable Slippage to 2005/06.	64,000	32,000				S106	Grant funding of 4 houses for letting at affordable rents by Rooftop Housing Association development at a former garage site.
5 Houses on garage sites (Ryfield) (Includes slippage)	62,000	15,000				S106	Grant funding of the development of 5 houses for letting at affordable rents by Rooftop Housing Association development at former garage site.
Affordable Housing Schemes							
Grants to RSL - York Rd, & Hollywood La/Houndsfield CI (includes slippage)	126,000	32,000				S106	Grant funding of 3 houses for letting at affordable rents by Bromford Housing Association.
Grants to RSL - Flat over shops High Street - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	65,000					S106	Completion of scheme to grant fund the provision of a flat over shops in High Street.
Grants to RSL - Villiers Road (formerly 38-42 Broad St) (includes slippage)	480,000	120,000				S106	Grant funding of a development of 15 flats for letting at affordable rents by Rooftop Housing Association.
Grants to RSL - Shared Ownership &/or Low Cost &/or Rent Schemes	485,000					S106	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District. Method - New Build or purchase of existing by RSL. Tenure - Shared Ownership (25% - 75%) or rented / Fixed Equity. Property Type - General Needs Housing.
Grants to RSL's - Housing to Rent (New Build)	117,000	23,000				S106=£85k Pooled Cap rec=£32k	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District through new build. Method - New Build. Tenure - Rented. Property Type - General Needs Housing.
Grants to RSL's - Shared Ownership (New Build/Do-it-Yourself)	18,000	4,000				Pooled Cap Rec	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District. Method - New Build or Do It Yourself (where client identifies dwelling on open market and enters into shared ownership with an RSL. Tenure - Shared Ownership (25% - 75%). Property Type - General Needs Housing. Grants to be allocated on an individual property basis.
Grants to RSL's - Low Cost Shared Equity / Shared Rented Housing	46,000	12,000				Ring fenced cap rec	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District. Tenure - Low Cost Fixed Equity Housing (at 60% or 70% of Market Value). Property Type - General Needs Housing.
Grants to BDHT - Ex Council Dwelling Buy Backs / new build on sites owned by BDHT	210,000					Pooled Cap Rec	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District. Purchase and refurbishment of existing owner occupied dwellings. Tenure - Rented. Permanent and temporary accommodation for Homeless Families. Property Type - General Needs. AND / OR Development of new build affordable housing on existing sites owned by BDHT. Tenure - Rented. Property Type - General Needs. Grants to be allocated on individual property basis.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Grants to RSL's - Low Cost Housing		160,000				Ring fenced for Social Housing	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District. – Tenure – Low Cost / Shared Ownership Property Type – General needs housing. Funding – To be funded from capital receipts received and ring fenced for low cost housing schemes.
Grants to RSL's - Housing for Rent CAPITAL RECEIPTS RING FENCED FOR LOW COST HOUSING ELEMENT ONLY		200,000				Ring fenced for Social Housing	
Grants to RSL's - Housing for Rent SECTION 106 FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING ELEMENT ONLY		50,000				S106	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District through new build, buy backs or Purchase & Repair – Tenure – Rented Property Type – General needs housing. Funding – £50,000 - Sect 106
Grants to RSL's - Housing for Rent POOLABLE HOUSING CAPITAL RECEIPTS RESTRICTED TO HOUSING USE ONLY ELEMENT (CAPITAL ALLOWANCE)		35,000				Pooled Hsg rec	Allowance £35,000 – Retained Cap Inc under Capital Cost £200,000 – Cap Receipts Ring Fence Low
Grants to RSL's - General		40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	Ring fenced for Social Housing	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord to fund the provision of additional units of affordable housing within the District, if funding becomes available through capital receipts being received during the financial year... – Tenure – Low Cost / Shared Ownership/Homestart Property Type – General needs housing. Funding – To be funded from capital receipts received and ring fenced for low cost housing schemes, ONLY if they become available as capital receipts during the financial year.
Extra Care Sheltered Housing - Gilbert Court			1,000,000			Gen Cap Rec	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord towards the joint commissioning or the remodelling and provision of 27 additional units of affordable housing and community facilities within the planned remodelling of Gilbert Court Sheltered Housing Scheme to Extra Care Standard. Tenure – Rented (79) shared ownership (8) Low cost sale (5) Property Type – Housing for Older People... Funding – Funding from Capital Receipts, approved by Exec Cabinet on 28.09.05.
SUB-TOTAL	2,139,000	1,572,000	1,847,000	867,000	888,000		
STREET SCENE & WASTE MANAGEMENT							
Disabled Discrimination Act Improvements	20,000					Gen Cap Receipts	To ensure the final stages of all works to council buildings will be completed to the 2005/06 target of 100% compliance to the Act. To comply with statutory legislation within all council buildings.
Energy Performance (Inc 2003/04) - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	12,000					Energy saving trust	Completion of the scheme to provide solar panels at the Council House to improve energy performance.
Shopmobility - Provision & Equipment - Probable Slippage to 2005/06	99,000					Gen Cap Rec=£83k Revenue funding=£16k	The building and ongoing provision of a shopmobility facility in Bromsgrove. To provide a shopmobility facility for mobility-impaired visitors to Bromsgrove at the Churchfields Multi-Storey car park.
Mill Lane Town Centre Access Improvement. Probable Slippage to 2005/06.	148,000					Gen Cap Rec=£88k S106=£60k	The scheme is for the construction of raised access to the town centre across Market Street at the junction with Mill Lane, with associated new crossing of the Spadesbourne Brook. The scheme is to provide an improved and safe access from Market Street to Mill Lane for all pedestrians.
Dolphin Centre - Resurface Car Park (as per Condition Survey)	40,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Budget for the resurfacing of the Dolphin Centre car park.
Supply & Installation of Replacement Footbridge across Spadesbourne Brook	12,000					Gen Cap Receipts	Provision of a pedestrian footbridge across the Spadesbourne Brook. A replacement of an existing bridge which has been closed following the failure of the structure.
Pay & Display Car Park Ticket Machines		20,000				Invest to save	A review of car parking operations has taken place to see how we can operate more efficiently. Ticketing machines do breakdown and when this happens we lose income. New machines will help us maximise future income from which the cost of this scheme will be repaid to capital over the next 7 years. The scheme is for the provision of 6 additional pay and display machines in certain car parks in Bromsgrove which currently have only 1 pay and display machine.

Schemes by Department	Est Outturn Budget 2005-06 £	Original Budget 2006-07 £	Latest Estimate 2007-08 £	Latest Estimate 2008-09 £	Future Years £	Financing	Brief Description of Project
Concessionary Fare Implementation of Smart Cards		20,000				Gen Cap Rec	To implement smart card operation as part of the concessionary fares scheme
DEPOT SERVICES							
Rear Loading Refuse Freighters - Budget Carry Forward to 2005/06.	195,000	97,000				Gen Cap Receipts	To obtain 3 rear loading refuse freighters for accessing properties in areas which are difficult to access.
Washing Facilities for Depot Vehicles	38,000					Gen Cap Rec=£20k Grant=£16k Rev funding=£2k	In order to fulfil the legal requirements of our operating licence we have to inspect the vehicles. This means washing the vehicles both on top and underneath. In order to carry out this operation we must have the vehicle up in the air on an area which is drained to foul waste. This is a statutory environmental requirement.
Replacement of Fleet Vehicles (Multi Lift Vehicles)	0	125,000		0		Gen Cap Receipts	Part of the structured vehicle replacement plan to ensure we can comply with our statutory requirements for mobile litter crews, dog foul bins and fly tipping etc.
Replacement of Depot Plant & Equipment	8,000	0	0	0		Gen Cap Receipts	The budget is for garage equipment, bowling green mower, & plant for highways use.
New Tanker for Cesspools Work	0	58,000				Gen Cap Receipts	The Council has a responsibility to empty 2,500 properties who have cesspools within Bromsgrove District. The budget is for a new tanker vehicle.
Equipment for new cemetery at North Bromsgrove	3,000	0				Gen Cap Receipts	The budget is for essential equipment required for the new North Bromsgrove cemetery, and a trailer.
Pavement Sweepers for Street Cleansing	99,000	0		0		Gen Cap Receipts	Budget is for suitable vehicles to sweep the streets and pavements in line with Council specification. To comply with the Environmental Protection Act.
Replacement Equipment for Grounds Maintenance Work (Highways, Council & Leisure)	25,000	0	0	0		Gen Cap Receipts	The budget is for replacement equipment required to maintain the current grass cutting for Highways, Council and Leisure services. The replacements will reduce excessive maintenance costs.
Graffiti Removal System	25,000					Gen Cap Receipts	To obtain a vehicle suitably equipped for the removal of graffiti throughout the District.
Street Cleansing Vehicles & Equipment (Identified within Depot Strategy)		507,000				Gen Cap Rec	Implementation of the strategy to improve services delivered from the Depot and achieve the outputs required by the Council's Recovery Plan. This scheme is for the purchase of large, mini, & pedestrian controlled sweepers; pick-up vehicles, & trailers. Also replacement of existing vehicles.
Replacement Rear Loading Trade Waste Collection Vehicle. (Identified within Depot Strategy)		130,000				Gen Cap Rec	Implementation of the strategy to improve services delivered from the Depot and achieve the outputs required by the Council's Recovery Plan. Replacement of an existing 'V' registration trade waste refuse collection vehicle (£130k). Purchase of waste freighter will replace a freighter currently being rented.
Skips for new 18 tonne Depot Multi Lift Vehicles.		20,000				Gen Cap Rec	Skips for the new 18 tonne Multi Lift vehicles now planned for purchase in 2006/07. Will be utilised by all Depot services.
Replacement of 2 Large Mechanical Sweepers			140,000			Gen Cap Rec	The replacement of the two existing mechanical sweepers.
Improvements to Depot Site		50,000	50,000			Gen Cap Rec	Physical improvements to Depot yard and stores to meet HSE recommendations and create suitable parking arrangements for fleet.
SUB-TOTAL	724,000	1,027,000	190,000	0	0		
GRAND TOTAL	6,364,800	5,726,000	2,277,000	997,000	888,000		

FINANCING

Capital Receipts	3,758,500	4,267,000	1,910,000	700,000	721,000
Section 106 Agreements	1,710,300	917,000	200,000	130,000	0
Government Grants & Contribs	878,000	542,000	167,000	167,000	167,000
Direct Revenue Financing	18,000	0	0	0	0
	6,364,800	5,726,000	2,277,000	997,000	888,000

Departmental Capital Investment Strategies

Priorities for 2006/2009

The Council has agreed that the priorities for 2006/07 will be for capital investment to be made in the service areas involving Information Communications Technology, Street Scene, and Affordable Housing. This means that not all services can be priority areas at the same time and these with a lower priority in 2006/07 include Planning and Environment, Communications, Performance and Policy, and Culture and Community.

Planning and Environment Services Strategy

The Planning and Environment Services Department comprises the regulatory services of Planning and the Local Development Framework, Building Control, Environmental Health / Protection/Enforcement, and also the Council's Housing Strategy and Enabling role.

Planning Strategy

The department has been very successful in the previous two years in obtaining Government funds under the Planning Delivery Grant after meeting performance targets on the processing of planning applications, and for planning policy work. This funding has been used for both capital and revenue purposes. Capital schemes have included equipment for producing digital maps and the acceptance of electronic plans which are requirements under e-Government, and presentational equipment in the Council Chamber.

A number of new capital schemes are required but they have not been progressed because they do not meet the Council's current capital priorities.

Environment Services Strategy

There are currently no requirements for capital schemes.

Housing Strategy

On 29th March 2004, housing in Bromsgrove took a major step forward when we transferred our Council housing stock to a newly created, non profit making housing association, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). The Large Scale Voluntary Transfer of stock provided an opportunity to enable significant service improvements for tenants and additional funding to achieve the Decent Homes Standards for which a programme of delivery is well under way.

Successful completion of the transfer now enables the Council to focus its full attention on its strategic housing role, to ensure that those in need have an opportunity to access good quality, affordable housing in a safe environment.

In developing our housing strategy, the Council involves our local community, partners and other agencies in developing the local priorities that link to regional and national priorities. The Council recognise that it cannot 'deliver the goods' in isolation and that partnership working is crucial to our success.

The Council has arrived at four key housing priorities that have been ranked in the order identified from our consultation process and are focused on balancing the housing market, meeting housing needs and help to contribute to improving the social and economic infrastructure of the District. The four housing priorities are:-

- **Priority 1 – Addressing the Shortage of Affordable Housing**
 - Focusing on achieving a well balanced housing market and a consistent and appropriate supply of affordable housing to meet urban and rural needs, making best use of planning powers and the resources available

- **Priority 2 – Improving the Quality and Availability of Private Sector Housing**
 - To achieve sustained decent housing conditions, a strong, well managed private rented sector, improved energy efficiency of domestic homes and increased availability and accessibility of privately rented accommodation offering people more choice.

- **Priority 3 – Addressing Homelessness**
 - Promoting a continued co-ordinated approach to the ongoing provision of early intervention preventative and support services for the homeless and an improved supply of permanent accommodation to reduce the use of temporary accommodation. Increased access to privately rented housing for the homeless is targeted to help achieve this and to maintain our minimal use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation.

- **Priority 4 – Assisting Vulnerable Groups to Live Independently**
 - Aimed at enabling people who are vulnerable through age, disability or life experience to live independently, within the community. Promotion of healthy, safe and independent living through improved housing conditions, home safety & security checks and by creating the right environment through improvements and adaptations and linked action to enable older people to be discharged from hospital more rapidly through more efficient home adaptation.

The Council's housing strategy embraces planning and delivering homes for the whole community through strong partnership working in assessing needs, integrating housing with economic development, building relationships with providers and further engaging the local community in plans for new development. Key elements include a well managed private rented sector which is a fundamental part of meeting housing needs, the enforcement of standards in housing, in particular houses in multiple occupation, and support and encouragement to private landlords in increasing the supply and choice in housing.

The Capital Programme for 2005/06 to 2008/09 includes various housing schemes totalling some £3.57m, funded mainly from Section 106 Planning agreement resources supplemented by general capital receipts and 'ring fenced' housing capital receipts, consisting of:-

- Retained Housing (Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site);
- Homeless Hostels (Refurbishment & Modernisation);
- Strategic & Enabling Housing Schemes (Grant funding of schemes);
- Affordable Housing Schemes (Grant funding of schemes).

The Capital Programme also includes the following grants which are financed by a combination of Government grants and general capital receipts:-

- Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's);
- Discretionary Home Repair Assistance & Housing Renewal Grants.

See the Capital Programme shown at Appendix 3.

Future Housing Investment Strategy

Following the sale of the housing stock and having transferred most of its diminishing land holdings to Registered Social Landlord's (RSL's) for the development of affordable housing, the Council is faced with a prospect of considerably reduced capital receipts in future years.

The Council's planning moratoria for private development and its policy of favouring 'on site' provision' in preference to accepting commuted sums indicate that future capital receipts from

APPENDIX 3

Section 106 Planning agreements, which has been utilised to finance affordable housing schemes, is likely to decline.

There is an ongoing increase in demand for assistance through Disabled Facilities Grants which is partly financed by Government grants and the Council is therefore developing schemes that in time become self funding or that explore new sources of financing. The Council has also recently increased capital resources for the allocation of discretionary private sector housing renewal grants and has developed a repayment condition to these grants linked to fluctuations in property values, which will enable an element of future recycling of the investment.

The Council has reviewed its investment priorities and continues to fund a Housing Capital Programme that includes a programme of allocating development grant to enable RSL's to provide affordable housing across the range of tenures (rented, shared ownership and low cost housing). The programme reflects the identified housing needs of the district which indicates that up to one third of housing need can be met through intermediate housing options.

In addition to the use of Section 106 commuted sums, the Council has made a longer term partnership commitment with BDHT to invest one million pounds of its capital receipts into social housing through the joint funding of an extra care housing scheme in Bromsgrove.

In recognition of the funding being put forward by the Council, BDHT has agreed to assist the Council in replacing the use of its hostel accommodation with higher quality self contained dwellings from their housing stock for use by homeless people.

This financial strategy has the benefit of impacting upon all four of the Councils housing priorities:

- Priority 1 – Affordable Housing;
 - By potentially releasing the hostel sites as assets for sale or re investment in the provision of additional affordable housing.
 - By potentially releasing four sites on which additional affordable housing could be built.
 - By contributing funding towards the development of 27 additional dwellings within the proposed Extra Care Housing Scheme.
 - By enabling move on from under occupied family dwellings.
- Priority 2 – Private Housing;
 - By enabling low cost and shared ownership housing options to be provided within the proposed Extra Care Scheme.
- Priority 3 – Homelessness;
 - By enabling the phased replacement of hostel accommodation for the homeless with self contained dwellings of a higher standard dispersed in the community.
- Priority 4 – By assisting Vulnerable groups to live independently
 - By joint funding the provision of 27 additional units of extra care housing and enabling the re-modelling of 65 existing dwellings to the higher extra care standard.

Recycling of Capital Grants

The Council intend to recycle our grant following the same model as the Housing Corporation's proposed operation of recycled capital grant. So where the Council assists an RSL with grant towards affordable housing development, it is made a condition that a proportion of any future capital receipt from the sale of a property, or 'staircasing' to a greater proportion of ownership, is recovered by the authority for re-investment in affordable housing.

Culture and Community Services Strategy

The Culture and Community Services Department consists of the following elements and activities; Arts Development, CCTV & Lifeline, Children's Play Community/Partnership Development, Community Safety, Events, Museum and Tourist information Centre, Parks and Open Spaces, Spadesbourne Suite, Sports Development and Sports Centres.

Cultural and Community Services Strategy

The Councils key priorities in relation to the work of the department are: -

- To provide sustainable culture & leisure opportunities;
- To provide a clean, safe, attractive environment;
- To protect and improve our environment and promote sustainable communities;
- To be an efficient and effective Council;
- To develop and sustain a strong and expanding economy.

The aim of the Council is to ensure that there is a suitable mix of Cultural and Leisure activities and opportunities which are accessible to all sections of the community including arts, parks and open spaces, play areas, and sports facilities and opportunities.

Culture and leisure have long been recognised as important parts of modern life and bring to the District opportunities for employment, health benefits and a range of community benefits to groups and individuals. Our work in leisure also supports the work we do with partners in the areas of health and wellbeing, crime prevention and developing positive accessible opportunities for young and older people.

Service Aims

Participation - to promote greater participation in culture and leisure and encourage people to improve their skills and achieve their potential. To ensure that all people have access to take part in their chosen activity.

Service Delivery - to deliver services in a co-ordinated, cost effective and responsive way that enables them to strive to achieve 'top quartile' status. To provide facilities, activities and services that are sympathetic to the needs of the local community and users.

Equality and Diversity Issues – Culture and Community Services can and does play a major role in promoting the inclusion of all groups in society. However, inequalities have traditionally existed within some of our area of work, particularly in relation to gender, race and disability.

We are committed to promoting and developing equity, both within our work programmes and in our work with partner organisations.

What is equity? - Equity is about fairness, equality of access, recognising inequalities and taking steps to address them. It is about changing the culture and structure of what we do to ensure that it becomes equally accessible to all members of society, whatever their age, ability, gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality or socio-economic status.

To achieve equity we need to:

- Take account of the needs of different groups or communities within any given priority group;
- Adopt the recommended practices of equal opportunities and managing diversity;
- Address issues of fairness in the workplace and the way in which services are allocated and delivered;
- Acknowledge and respect diversity.

External Links - to establish and sustain partnerships, which benefit the development of safer and stronger communities in Bromsgrove District, the region and beyond.

Raising the Profile - to promote Bromsgrove and its culture and community services to everyone who lives, works, visits or attends school or college in the district.

Overall Objectives for 2006/07

The Service has set itself a number of key deliverables for 2006 / 2007 including the following items that may impact upon future capital programmes: -

- Deliver Phase 2 of the Dolphin Centre Refurbishment;
- Delivery of Section 106 Schemes;
- Play Strategy produced for the District;
- Evaluate the feasibility of setting up a Direct Marketing Partnership for Visitor Management across Worcestershire;
- To develop a strategy and action plans related to how the Council can best provide support to the voluntary sector within the district to ensure that their services are delivered in the most efficient, effective and economic ways possible, and assist the Council and the LSP to achieve their objectives;
- Delivery of the Community Safety Strategy by April 2008 (see Below).

The capital programme for 2005/06 – 2008/09 contains a number of key projects for Culture and Community Services including:-

- Dolphin Centre Refurbishment Phase 2;
- Contribution towards the development of new Sports facilities at Hunters Hill School;
- Refurbishment of a number of Children's Play areas across the district;
- Provision of a new park and play area at Barnsley Hall;
- The provision of a new artificial pitch in conjunction with a partner.

Future years schemes are likely to include: -

- Redevelopment and upgrading of CCTV;
- Contribution towards the refurbishment of sports facilities at Woodrush School.

Community Safety

Community Safety is part of Culture and Community Services Department and its main focus is via Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership which was formed in 1998 as a result of the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998. It has a statutory duty to improve community safety in Bromsgrove District.

The Partnership works through a three year strategy, the current one of which runs from April 2005 to March 2008. It is made up of statutory partners:-

- West Mercia Police;
- Fire & Rescue Service;
- Redditch & Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust;
- Worcestershire County Council; and
- Bromsgrove District Council;
- Other partners including representatives from the Voluntary Sector and BEM Group.

Community Safety capital schemes are mainly for the provision of Closed Circuit Television systems (CCTV) for which the Council has received Government Home Office capital grants in

previous years. Schemes being completed in 2005/06 include CCTV systems at Wythall and Alvechurch railway stations, with additional funding from Central Trains, and Hagley Playing Fields, with additional funding from Hagley Parish Council. A new major £177k CCTV scheme in the Wythall and Drakes Cross areas of the District is also due to commence in 2005/06 funded from Council capital resources.

There are currently five priorities for action in the current three year Strategy:-

- Reducing comparator crime in seven key areas by 17.5% during next three years;
- Reduce the Fear of Crime and Anti Social Behaviour to ensure Bromsgrove is safe place to live and work;
- Achieve Cleaner, Greener and Safer Public Spaces;
- Reduce the harm of Drugs & Alcohol;
- Realise the potential of our Young People.

Street Scene & Waste Management Strategy

Bromsgrove District Council delivers the following services to a population of 87,837 (national census 2001) people and 37,647 households (Council Tax Register):-

- Street Cleansing;
- Grounds Maintenance;
- Refuse and Recycling Collection;
- Commercial Services;
- Transport Management;
- Waste Education;
- Business Support; and
- Legislation as it affects those services;
- Car Parking and Engineering.

The Depot has suffered over the last 10 years from significant underinvestment. Whilst the Council has invested heavily in its refuse and recycling fleet financed mainly through Government grant funding, other elements of the fleet are outdated and in need of urgent replacement. Operational practices have not been reviewed and in general standards are well below where a progressive and high performing Council should be.

The capital programme for the Depot is well below where it should be. A well-managed fleet is fundamental to the delivery of effective services. With the exception of the refuse fleet, the majority of the fleet is old and looks shabby and represents a very poor image of the Council. An associated albeit a lesser problem is that vehicles do not carry a corporate livery and are not used for corporate messages.

Whilst the life expectancy of the fleet is known at the time of purchase the Council has failed to schedule a robust renewals programme. The current Capital Programme however now includes £1.57m for Depot Services over the period 2005/06 to 2008/09 for replacement vehicles and plant, and for the provision of washing facilities for vehicles.

This failing of earlier years has been recognised and a new approach has been adopted. Over the last two years considerable expenditure has been invested on a fleet of new refuse collection and recycling vehicles with an expected useful life of 7 years. £200k per annum is now being put into a provision to build up a fund for their eventual replacement.

A new strategy has now been agreed for Depot Services to replace the worn out vehicles and plant, and to expand the fleet to satisfactory levels to allow the delivery of high quality cost

effective services to the citizens of Bromsgrove. The latest Capital Programme for the period 2005/06 to 2008/09 includes capital resources to begin implementing the new strategy.

In recent months the Council has invested in a 'Shopmobility' scheme for persons with mobility problems which will be operated from one of its main car parks. Another major capital scheme in partnership with Worcestershire County Council is currently underway in the Mill Lane bus station and town centre area involving access roads and major works in order to improve the gateway accesses to the town. Further investment is needed in the other operational activities in order to deliver the recently produced Strategy document for the delivery of Street Scene Services.

Bromsgrove District Council is in Voluntary Engagement and needs to show significant improvements in the delivery of key services to move out of engagement through achievement of targets detailed within its Recovery Plan. To make progress considerable capital investment is required in equipment in each of the service areas.

Resources Strategy

Support Services

The Council's support services comprise:-

- Organisational Development & Human Resources;
- Legal & Democratic Services;
- E-Government & Customer Services;
- Financial Services.

The Council has invested insufficient capital resources into the support services in recent years particularly in relation to departmental computer systems where existing systems were either out of date, or non-existent with reliance was having to be placed on manual effort. This has been recognised and the following schemes have been included in the current Capital Programme to improve the delivery of support services and to aid the provision of timely accurate management information:-

- New Human Resources Information and Management System;
- Replacement Electoral Software;
- Committee Minutes System;
- Corporate Budget for IT Upgrades.

E-Government

Over the previous 3 years the Council has made substantial investment in Information Technology services under the Government Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) initiative with funding from Home Office Grant supplemented by the Council's own capital resources. The purpose of this is to introduce new systems of working across the Council and extend the use of the Internet to achieve efficiency gains which can then be redeployed into front line services. The level of capital resources available in the 2005/06 – 2008/09 Capital Programme for IEG developments is £357k, see Appendix 3 for details.

It is recognised that further substantial capital investments are necessary to enhance and modernise the Council's IT resources and new schemes have been developed and included in the latest Capital Programme as follows:-

- ICT Infrastructure
 - Investment in the ICT infrastructure to ensure systems are optimised and reliable with a computer network that provides secure and resilient access to these systems;

APPENDIX 3

- Internet/intranet Development
 - The base platform has already been developed and this proposal is intended to upgrade the internal Intranet and provide a fully functioning two-way communication Internet vehicle that provides citizens with a route to communicate and influence the Council (an e-Government requirement);
- Purchase Order Processing System
 - The provision of a cost effective and efficient IT based Purchase Order Management System as a replacement for existing manual methods;
- Upgrading of the Radius Cash Receipting IT System
 - A general upgrade to the system;
- Upgrading of the Leisure Booking & Receipts/Income Flex-on-Line IT System
 - A general upgrade to the system;
- Replacement of the Academy Revenues & Benefits IT System
 - Purchase of a new system;
- General IT Upgrades
 - A rolling programme of ICT replacements.

FULL CAPITAL APPRAISAL

SCHEME:	START YEAR:
KEY SERVICE OBJECTIVE:	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT	PRIORITISATION CATEGORY =
PROJECT LEADER:	

Element	Cash Flow £'000			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Contract Payments				
Equipment				
Consultants Fees				
In-house fees				
Other costs (specify)				
Total Capital Cost	0	0	0	0
Income (describe) This should include the possibility for matched funding (e.g. SRB, ERDF, Co-Financing etc.)				
Total Capital Income	0	0	0	0
Net Capital Cost	0	0	0	0

REVENUE IMPACT

Element	Cost £'000			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Ongoing
Employee Costs (describe purpose) (Do not include Internal Design / Supervision Costs)				
Maintenance Costs				
Other Costs (describe purpose)				
Loss of interest on use of capital receipts @ 4.5% p.a. on net cost of scheme				
Total Revenue Cost				
Income / Savings (describe)				
Total Revenue Income / Savings				
Net Revenue Impact				

ASSET MANAGEMENT

The number of years useful life for the capital asset for depreciation purposes	Years
Estimated residual value of the asset at the end of its useful life	£

APPENDIX 4

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (of preferred option)	F.T.E. (+/-)

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED include do nothing. If appropriate attach appraisal (including discounted cashflow and net present value calculations)

Alternative	Net Cost		Reasons for Rejection
	Capital	Revenue	

APPENDIX 4

INTERNAL CONSULTATION (With other service heads/unions/Health & Safety Officer) It is vital that all appropriate managers are consulted (incl. HRM) All IT schemes to be submitted via Head of IT Services		
NAME / JOB TITLE	COMMENTS	SIGNATURE

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Success/Evaluation Factor(s)	Target	Target Date	Source of Information

PROJECT PLAN

Project Stage	Expected Timescale From Budget Approval (eg +1 month)
<p>Key stages required.</p> <p>Must include:</p> <p>Start of works / implementation</p> <p>End of works / implementation</p> <p>Post Implementation Review</p>	

<p>ALL RISK FACTORS THAT COULD DELAY DELIVERY OF THE PROJECT.</p> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p>
<p>RISKS OF PROJECT NOT BEING APPROVED</p>

Justification

In order for funds to be released the business case must demonstrate a measurable return on investment. This must be demonstrated in the following areas. Please complete the appropriate section(s) below in support of your bid. All sections are to be completed.

1. Links to / impact on strategic objectives and council priorities

Council Priorities

The Council's priorities for the financial year 2006/07 in order are likely to be:

1. The objectives of the Recovery Plan;
2. Statutory functions currently not being performed to an acceptable standard;
3. Key Community Needs identified in the Corporate Plan and that could be pursued with the aid of a Local Area Agreement (LAA) bid.

How will the funds requested be used to help the Council achieve its priorities?

How will the funds requested be used to help the Council achieve its corporate objectives?

(the following objectives are not in any priority order)

1. To make a major contribution towards achieving a healthy caring and socially aware community.

2. To provide a clean, safe and attractive environment.

3. To protect and improve our environment and promote sustainable communities

4. To foster and sustain a strong and expanding economy

5. To provide a sustainable culture and leisure opportunities

6. To be an efficient and effective Council

2. Impact on customer satisfaction

What impact will this investment have on customer satisfaction? (e.g. an investment at a leisure centre could improve the facilities or increase the range of services available for customers and thereby increase the level of satisfaction) Please provide both narrative and an estimation of percentage increase.

3. Productivity benefits

How will the funds invested increase the volumes generated? E.g. by investing these funds the volume produced for each £ invested should increase.

4. Opportunity costs

What is the potential cost to the authority of not investing these funds?

5. Asset savings

How will this investment generate asset savings e.g. being able to dispose of an asset as a result of this investment?

6. Performance improvement

How will this investment help to improve performance? Please list the PI's that will be affected and the expected change.

Assumptions

Please detail the assumptions that have been made that will affect whether a measurable return on investment is achieved.

BUDGET HOLDER (S)	PORTFOLIO HOLDER (S)

Date of completion: / /

Assessment of scheme by Capital Asset Projects Group

Please detail the assumptions that have been made that will affect whether a measurable return on investment is achieved.

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CAPITAL SCHEMES PRIORITISATION CRITERIA

Category 1:

Projects for which the council has no option because the work derives from a statutory requirement. The statutory nature must be rigorously tested and confirmed by reference to the specific legislation involved. Where there are options as to the delivery of the project these must be investigated and the results published. This category will include schemes financed by matched funding and also schemes of a health and safety nature.

In this category it does not matter whether the project fits in with the corporate objectives. It is the statutory nature that is critical.

Category 2:

Projects which clearly relate to the achievement of the corporate objectives. This must be evidenced with reference to the specific objective(s). In order to assist in prioritisation within this category, the following information must be provided per project:

- A clear and concise statement of the objectives of the project
- A clear and concise evaluation of the options for delivering the project
- Objective statement of potential outcomes: (e.g.) number of people who benefit
 - how they benefit
 - additional finance generated
 - partnership benefits
 - relevance to national issues
 - cross-cutting issues addressed
 - environmental impact

The supporting data will be used to determine relative priorities within this category.

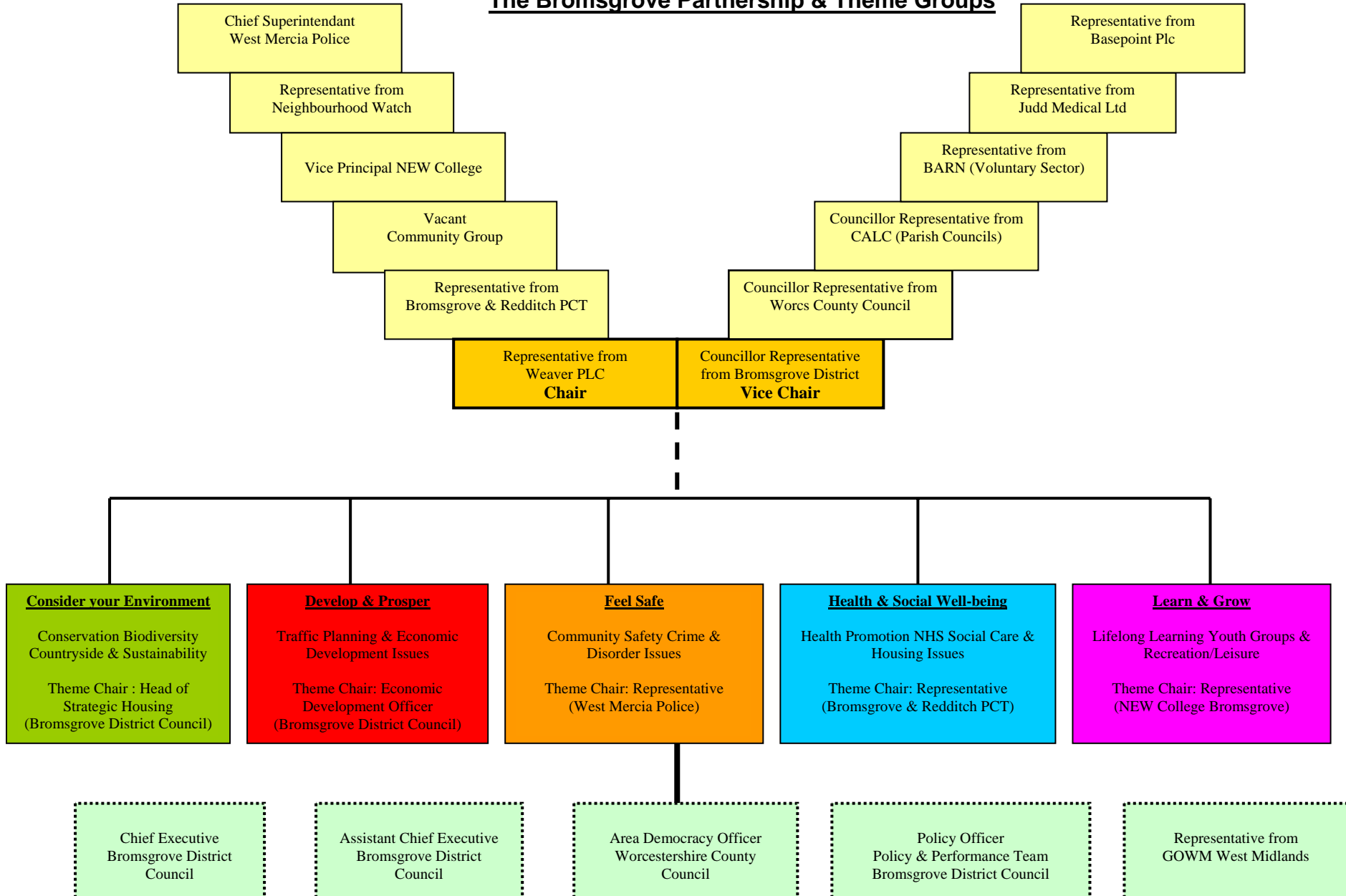
Category 3:

Projects which do not clearly relate to the achievement of the corporate objectives, but which nevertheless have an impact.

Category 4:

All other projects.

The Bromsgrove Partnership & Theme Groups



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19th APRIL 2006

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor R. Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Financial Services

1. Introduction

The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Council to 'have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans are affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Act therefore requires the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (included as paragraph 9); this sets out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

The suggested strategy for 2006/07 in respect of the following aspects of the treasury management function is based upon the Treasury officers' views on interest rates, supplemented with leading market forecasts provided by the Council's treasury advisor. The strategy covers:

- treasury limits in force which will limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council;
- Prudential Indicators
- the current treasury position;
- the borrowing requirement
- prospects for interest rates;
- the borrowing strategy;
- debt rescheduling;
- the investment strategy;

2. Recommendation

That the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy detailed in this report be recommended to Council for approval.

That the Council be recommended to set the Authorised Limit for borrowing at £6,000,000 as required by Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

That the Council be recommended to approve the maximum level of investment to be held within each organisation as detailed at £3m.

3. Treasury Limits for 2006/07 to 2008/09

Although Bromsgrove District Council is debt free (i.e has no long term outstanding debt), it is a statutory duty under S.3 of the Local Government Act 2003 and supporting regulations, for the Council to determine and keep under review how much it can afford to borrow. The amount so determined is termed the “Affordable Borrowing Limit”. In England and Wales the authorised limit represents the legislative limit specified in section 3 of the Local Government Act 2003.

The Council must have regard to the Prudential Code when setting the Authorised Limit, which essentially requires it to ensure that total capital investment remains within sustainable limits and, in particular, that the impact upon its future council tax and council rent levels is ‘acceptable’.

Whilst termed an “Affordable Borrowing Limit”, the capital plans to be considered for inclusion incorporate financing by both external borrowing and other forms of liability, such as credit arrangements. The Authorised Limit is to be set, on a rolling basis, for the forthcoming financial year and two successive financial years.

4. Prudential Indicators for 2006/07 – 2008/09

The key objective of the Prudential Code is to provide a framework for local authority capital finance to ensure that:

- capital expenditure plans are affordable
- all external borrowing and other long term liabilities are within prudent and sustainable levels, and
- treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with professional good practice.

Authorities must ensure that they are accountable for decisions taken in this respect by providing a clear and transparent framework supported by:

- local strategic planning
- local asset management planning, and
- proper option appraisal

The Prudential Code specifies a range of indicators that must be used. They should be interpreted as a coherent entity, because changes in any one indicator often impact on others. They must also be considered in conjunction with other annual strategic financial plans, such as the annual revenue and capital budgets. The effects that any alternative options in these budgets might have on the indicators must also be considered before approval is given to the final strategic plan.

2006/07 is the first year that prudential indicators are being set for Bromsgrove District Council as an accurate set of audited accounts has to be used for calculation of the indicators.

The following prudential indicators (in table 2 below) are relevant for the purposes of setting an integrated treasury management strategy.

PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
(1). EXTRACT FROM BUDGET SETTING REPORT	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	actual	probable outturn	estimate	estimate	estimate
Capital Expenditure	£9,320	£6,480	£6,629	£4,276	£1,142
Increase in council tax (band D) per annum	£7.10	£7.45	£7.81	£7.81	£7.81

PRUDENTIAL INDICATOR	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
(2). TREASURY MANAGEMENT PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
	actual	probable outturn	estimate	estimate	estimate
Authorised limit for external debt - Borrowing This reflects that the Council does not currently have longer term fixed rate debt or longer term investments at fixed rates	£0	£0	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
TOTAL	£0	£0	£6,000	£6,000	£6,000
Operational boundary for external debt					
borrowing	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
TOTAL	£0	£0	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Upper limit for fixed interest rate exposure expressed as either:- Net principal re fixed rate borrowing / investments	-75%	-75%	-75%	-75%	-75%
Upper limit for variable rate exposure expressed as either:- Net principal re variable rate borrowing / investments	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%	-100%
Upper limit for total principal sums invested for over 364 days (per maturity date)	£35,000	£32,000	£30,000	£30,000	£30,000

Maturity structure of fixed rate borrowing during 2006/07	upper limit	lower limit
under 12 months	100%	30%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%

5. TOTAL INVESTMENTS

The Council's treasury portfolio position at 31/12/2005 comprised:

Internally Managed Funds	£ 7,352,000
Externally managed Funds	
• Invesco	£ 16,231,000
• HSBC	£ 10,138,000
TOTAL PORTFOLIO	£ 33,721,000

6. Prospects for Interest Rates

The Council had appointed Sector Treasury Services as treasury adviser to the Council and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. Appendix A draws together a number of current City forecasts for short term or variable (the base rate or repo rate) and longer fixed interest rates. The following table gives the Sector central view.

Sector View: Interest rate forecast – 13.1.06

	Q /E1 2006	Q /E2 2006	Q /E3 2006	Q /E4 2006	Q /E1 2007	Q /E2 2007	Q /E3 2007	Q /E4 2007	Q /E1 2008	Q /E2 2008	Q /E3 2008	Q /E4 2008	Q /E1 2009	Q /E2 2009
Base rate	4.50%	4.25%	4.25%	4.00%	4.25%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
5yr Gilt Yield	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.25%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
10yr PW LB Rate	4.25%	4.25%	4.50%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	5.00%	4.75%	4.50%
25yr PW LB Rate	4.25%	4.25%	4.25%	4.50%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	4.75%	4.50%
50yr PW LB Rate	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.25%	4.25%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.50%	4.25%

Sector's current interest rate view is that the repo (base) rate will: -

- remain on hold at 4.5% until the end of Q1 2006
- fall to 4% by the end of Q4 2006
- edge up by 0.25% in Q1, Q2 and Q3 of 2007 to end the year at 4.75%

The risk to this forecast is to the downside in as much as the cuts in rates could occur earlier than our forecast suggests, although this will not necessarily affect the timing of the first upward move in Q1 2007.

The medium term financial plan included an interest rate of 4.5% on investments. This will generated an anticipated £728,000 to the Council in 2006/07.

7. Borrowing Strategy

It is anticipated that there will be no capital borrowings required during 2006/07.

8. ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Investment Policy

The Council will have regard to the ODPM's Guidance on Local Government Investments ("the Guidance") issued in March 2004 and CIPFA's Treasury

Management in Public Services Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes (“the CIPFA TM Code”). The Council’s investment priorities are: -

- (a) the security of capital and
- (b) the liquidity of its investments.

The Council will also aim to achieve the optimum return on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity.

The borrowing of monies purely to invest or on-lend and make a return is unlawful and this Council will not engage in such activity.

Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed below under the ‘Specified’ and ‘Non-Specified’ Investments categories. Counterparty limits will be as set through the Council’s Treasury Management Practices – Schedules.

9. **SPECIFIED AND NON-SPECIFIED INVESTMENTS**

The Council has determined which instruments it may use for the prudent management of its treasury balances during the financial year under the heads of Specified Investments and Non-Specified Investments. Some instruments may only be used by the Council’s external fund managers.

Specified Investments :

(All such investments will be sterling denominated, with **maturities up to maximum of 1 year**, meeting the minimum ‘high’ rating criteria where applicable)

	* Minimum ‘High’ Credit Criteria	Use
Debt Management Agency Deposit Facility	--	In-house
Term deposits – UK government	--	In-house
Term deposits – other LAs	--	In-house
Term deposits – banks and building societies **	* Short-term __, Long-term __, Individual __, Support __	In-house and fund managers
Certificates of deposits issued by banks and building societies	* Short-term __, Long-term __, Individual __, Support __	In-house buy and hold and fund managers
Money Market Funds	AAA	In-house and fund managers
UK Government Gilts	AAA	In-house buy and hold and Fund Managers
Gilt Funds and Bond Funds	* long-term __***	In-house and Fund Managers
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks	AAA	In-house on a ‘buy-and-hold’ basis. Also for use by fund managers
Bonds issued by a financial institution which is guaranteed by the UK government	AAA	In-house on a ‘buy-and-hold’ basis. Also for

		use by fund managers
Sovereign bond issues (i.e. other than the UK govt)	AAA (or state your criteria if different)	In house on a 'buy and hold basis' and Fund Managers
Treasury Bills		Fund Managers

** If forward deposits are to be made, the forward period plus the deal period should not exceed one year in aggregate.

*** minimum credit criteria to be AAA MR1 or equivalent for in house investments and as agreed with fund managers.

Non-Specified Investments:

	* Minimum Credit Criteria	Use	*** Max % of total investments	Max. maturity period
Term deposits – UK government (with maturities in excess of 1 year)	YES- <i>Minimum : long-term AA-, Support 1,2 or equivalent</i>	Fund Managers	10%	5 years
Term deposits – other LAs (with maturities in excess of 1 year)	YES- <i>Minimum : long-term AA-, Support 1,2 or equivalent</i>	Fund Managers	10%	5 years
Term deposits – banks and building societies (with maturities in excess of 1 year)	YES- <i>Minimum : long-term AA-, Support 1,2 or equivalent</i>	Fund Managers	10%	5 years
Certificates of deposits issued by banks and building societies with maturities in excess of 1 year	YES- <i>Minimum : long-term AA-, Support 1,2 or equivalent</i>	Fund Managers	10%	5 years
UK Government Gilts with maturities in excess of 1 year	AAA	by external fund manager(s) only subject to the guidelines and parameters agreed with them	20% Note: this limit will be aggregated with other bonds as described in this section. Total in gilts /bonds will be 75% of portfolio	10 years
Bonds issued by multilateral development banks with maturities in excess of 1 year	AAA	by external fund manager(s) only subject to the guidelines and parameters agreed with them	30% Note: this limit will be aggregated with other bonds as described in this section. Total in gilts /bonds will be 75% of	10 years

			portfolio	
Bonds issued by a financial institution which is guaranteed by the UK government with maturities in excess of 1 year	AAA	by external fund manager(s) only subject to the guidelines and parameters agreed with them	30% Note: this limit will be aggregated with other bonds as described in this section. Total in gilts /bonds will be 75% of portfolio	10 years
Sovereign bond issues (i.e. other than the UK govt) with maturities in excess of 1 year	AAA	by external fund manager(s) only subject to the guidelines and parameters agreed with them	20% Note: this limit will be aggregated with other bonds as described in this section. Total in gilts /bonds will be 75% of portfolio	10 years

The Council's external fund managers will comply with the Annual Investment Strategy. The agreements between the Council and the fund managers additionally stipulate guidelines and duration and other limits in order to contain and control risk.

10. Credit Ratings

The Council uses Fitch ratings to derive its criteria. Where a counterparty does not have a Fitch rating, the equivalent Moody's rating will be used. All credit ratings will be monitored monthly. The Council is alerted to changes in Fitch ratings from advice from the fund managers. If a downgrade results in the counterparty/investment scheme no longer meeting the Council's minimum criteria, its further use as a new Investment will be withdrawn immediately.

ORGANISATION	CRITERIA	MAX AMOUNT	MAX PERIOD
UK and non-UK Banks, UK Building Societies and Government gilt edged securities Note: The Council's external fund managers will only use institutions that meet the criteria in this category	Minimum Fitch F1+ short term backed up by AA- long term credit rating (or and support ratings of 1 or 2 or equivalent ratings from Moody's	£3m per name/issue	1 year
U.K. and non-UK Banks and Building Societies	Minimum F1 short term backed up by (minimum) A long term credit rating and support ratings of 1, 2 or 3	£2m	1 year
UK Principal Local Authorities UK Debt Management Office		£2m for any one Authority £2m	1 year 1 year

11 **Investment Strategy**

The Council maintains a level of cash deposits to enable management of the day to day cash flow. The in-house team uses the instruments as approved above and ensures that high credit rated institutions are used.

The minimum percentage of its overall investments that the Council will hold in short-term investments is 30%.

Giving due consideration to the Council's level of balances over the next 3 years, the need for liquidity, its spending commitments and provisioning for contingencies, the Council has determined that 70%* of its overall fund balances can be prudently committed to longer term investments (i.e. those with a maturity exceeding a year).

* This limit is being set to permit the Council's fund managers to invest in longer-term investments, although these investments will be used for trading purposes and are unlikely to be held to maturity.

Interest Rate Outlook: Sector is forecasting base rates to be on a falling trend from 4.50% to reach 4.00% in Q4 2006 but to rise again to end Q1 2007 at 4.25%. Councils should therefore seek to lock in longer period investments at higher rates before this fall starts for some element of their investment portfolio which represents their core balances. Some investments should be aimed to mature during Q1 2007 when the interest rate cycle turns up and the market yield curve should have turned positive. This will enable councils to lock into higher yielding investments with their maturing deposits.

For its cash flow generated balances, the Council will seek to utilise its business reserve accounts and short-dated deposits (1-3 months) in order to benefit from the compounding of interest.

End of year Investment Report

At the end of the financial year, the Council will report on its investment activity as part of its Annual Treasury Report.

There will be a quarterly monitoring report presented to members in 2006/07 in respect of treasury management activity and performance.

13. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The financial implications are included in the body of the report.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 This is a statutory report under the Local Government Act 2003.

8. **OTHER SUB HEADINGS**

8.1 None

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

Background Papers

Report from Sector and Invesco

Contact officer

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Appendix A

INTEREST RATE FORECASTS

The data below shows a variety of forecasts published by a number of institutions. The first three are individual forecasts including those of UBS and Capital Economics (an independent forecasting consultancy). The final one represents summarised figures drawn from the population of all major City banks and academic institutions.

The forecast within this strategy statement has been drawn from these diverse sources and officers' own views.

1. INDIVIDUAL FORECASTS

Sector View interest rate forecast – 13.1.06

	Q /E1 2006	Q /E2 2006	Q /E3 2006	Q /E4 2006	Q /E1 2007	Q /E2 2007	Q /E3 2007	Q /E4 2007	Q /E1 2008	Q /E2 2008	Q /E3 2008	Q /E4 2008	Q /E1 2009	Q /E2 2009
Base rate	4.50%	4.25%	4.25%	4.00%	4.25%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
5yr Gilt Yield	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.25%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%
10yr PW LB Rate	4.25%	4.25%	4.50%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	5.00%	4.75%	4.50%
25yr PW LB Rate	4.25%	4.25%	4.25%	4.50%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	5.00%	5.00%	5.00%	4.75%	4.50%
50yr PW LB Rate	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.25%	4.25%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.75%	4.50%	4.25%

Capital Economics interest rate forecast - 13.1.06

	Q /E1 2006	Q /E2 2006	Q /E3 2006	Q /E4 2006	Q /E1 2007	Q /E2 2007	Q /E3 2007	Q /E4 2007
Base Rate	4.25%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%	4.00%
5yr gilt yield	4.10%	4.00%	3.90%	3.80%	4.00%	4.10%	4.30%	4.40%
10 yr PW LB rate	4.25%	4.15%	4.25%	4.35%	4.55%	4.75%	4.85%	4.75%
25 yr PW LB rate	4.25%	4.25%	4.35%	4.45%	4.45%	4.55%	4.65%	4.65%
50 yr PW LB rate	3.95%	3.95%	4.05%	4.15%	4.15%	4.25%	4.35%	4.35%

UBS Economic interest rate forecast (for quarter ends) – 13.1.06

	Q/E1 2006	Q/E2 2006	Q/E3 2006	Q/E4 2006	Q/E1 2007	Q/E2 2007	Q/E3 2007	Q/E4 2007
Base Rate	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%
10 yr PWLB rate	4.25%	4.35%	4.45%	4.55%	4.60%	4.60%	4.65%	4.65%
25 yr PWLB rate	4.15%	4.45%	4.55%	4.65%	4.70%	4.75%	4.80%	4.85%
50 yr PWLB rate	4.05%	4.45%	4.61%	4.74%	4.80%	4.86%	4.91%	4.97%

2. SURVEY OF ECONOMIC FORECASTS

HM Treasury – December 2005 summary of forecasts of 26 City and 14 academic analysts for Q4 2005 and 2006. (2007 – 2009 are as at November 2005 but are based on 18 forecasts)

	Repo	Quarter ended		annual average repo rate		
		Q 4 2005	Q 4 2006	ave.2007	ave.2008	ave.2009
Indep. forecasters BoE Base Rate	4.50%	4.49%	4.29%	4.39%	4.54%	4.60%
Highest base rate	4.50%	4.55%	5.00%	5.40%	5.90%	6.20%
Lowest base rate	4.50%	4.20%	3.50%	3.75%	3.75%	3.75%

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19TH APRIL 2006

HUMAN RESOURCES STRATEGY

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor C Spencer
Responsible Head of Service	Clare Armour

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The attached Human Resources Strategy sets out the vision and objectives for the Human Resources and Organisational Development department over the next two years. In particular it sets out how the department will support the Council in achieving its overall objectives through effective and strategic people management.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Council agrees to the proposed Human Resources Strategy for 2006-2008
- 2.2 That the Council supports the Human Resources strategy Action Plan for 2006-2008

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The development of an effective Human Resources Strategy is a key aspect of the recovery plan for Bromsgrove Council. The main objective of the strategy is to ensure that the organisation has the capacity to deliver its vision and the corporate plan priorities. This will be achieved through ensuring the Council has the right staff, with the right skills, organised in the right way to deliver its services now and in the future. The strategy sets out how the Council will plan, recruit, retain and develop its staff over the next two years to meet this objective. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development has researched good practice of human resources in the public sector. A key finding of this research was that Human Resources needs to be more “visible, more responsive, more flexible and adaptable to the needs of the organisation.”¹ This strategy, which is directly linked to the national strategy for local government, is a key aspect of enabling this to happen within Bromsgrove Council.
- 3.2 Consultation on the strategy has taken place with unions and staff within Human Resources/ Organisational Development.

4. Financial Implications

¹ CIPD – Fit for Purpose: building a strategic HR function in the public sector 2005

- 4.1 Investment has already been made into the Human Resources/Organisational Development Department. It is anticipated that the delivery of the strategy will be achieved from within existing resources.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The delivery of the strategy will include responding to any employment or related legislation in existence or planned.

6. Corporate Objectives

- 6.1 As the strategy relates to the effective and strategic management of staff, it supports all the corporate objectives. However in particular it relates to “Being an Efficient and Effective Council”.

7. Risk Management

- 7.1 The risk of not having an effective Human Resources strategy is considerable for the Council. It is a key part of the recovery plan and demonstrates that the Council is taking a pro active approach to its most valuable resource. The strategy is strongly linked to the national strategy for pay and workforce issued by the Employers Organisation. The strategy sets out a structured proactive framework for how the Council manages its workforce, thereby improving staff performance and the performance of the organisational as a whole. Failure to adopt the strategy would have a negative impact on the recovery plan as well as the ability of the organisation to respond to customer needs and service requirements.

8. Other Sub Headings

- 8.1 Procurement Issues – Potentially in that improved ways of contracting e.g. advertising will be reviewed to ensure value for money and improvements to best value performance indicators.

Personnel Implications – A significant number of policies and procedures will be reviewed as part of the strategy as well as consideration of how the Human Resources/ Organisational Development department “adds value” to the organisation.

Governance/Performance Management Considerations – Improvements in the skills of the workforce, linked to a workforce plan will improve performance of the organisation.

Community Safety Considerations - None

Policy Considerations - None

Environmental Considerations - None

Equalities Implications – The strategy sets out how the function will respond to challenges around equalities issues in the workplace e.g. responding to best value performance indicators on equalities

Background Papers

HR Strategy

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bromsgrove council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

PEOPLE STRATEGY

2006-2008

For further information on this strategy please contact:

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Introduction

In order to ensure that the Council's most valuable assets, its employees, are able to contribute successfully towards the strategic direction of the Council and also achieve their full potential, the Council needs an effective framework for the recruitment, retention, deployment and development of all its staff. .

This strategy is based on the views of employees, members and trade unions, and divided into six sections:

1. Purpose and aims of the strategy
2. The Council
3. The Challenges
4. The People Management Themes
5. Strategic Goals
6. Review Arrangements

1. Purpose and aims of the strategy

This strategy aims to ensure that employees can achieve their best in order to deliver excellent services. It identifies the kind of employer Bromsgrove District Council wants to be and how it aims to achieve this. The Strategy is intended to be a framework, setting out the contribution of people management to achieving the Council's vision and objectives, with a clear indication of priorities.

The Council's vision is:

“Bromsgrove District will be an attractive, clean, healthy, safe and prosperous district where an improving quality of life is enjoyed equally by all.”

The Council's vision is underpinned by a set of values that are shared by Members and Officers. These are: -

- Putting our citizens first
- Being honest, open and fair at all times
- Valuing and respecting people
- Demonstrating integrity and accountability
- Ensuring quality customer service
- Seeking to achieve value for money
- Working together
- Recognising the need for improvement

The Council has identified three key priorities over the next three years, these are: -

- Healthy and safe communities
- Clean streets and public places
- Efficient and effective conduct of Council business

In addition, the Council has the following objectives: -

- To make a major contribution towards achieving a healthy caring and socially aware community
- To provide a clean, safe and attractive environment
- To protect and improve our environment and promote sustainable communities
- To foster and sustain a strong and expanding economy
- To provide sustainable culture and leisure opportunities
- To be an efficient and effective Council

The main objective of the Human Resources and Organisational Development Service is to assist with increasing the capacity of the organisation to deliver the Council's Vision and Corporate Plan priorities. To do this, the Service will:

-

- Enable the Council to attract, develop and retain the people it requires to deliver services;
- Encourage personal development and ensure individuals are given the opportunity to be equipped with the skill, knowledge and experience needed to contribute effectively to the Council's objectives;
- Promote the Council's values;
- Provide a diverse workforce representative of the community we serve;
- Provide a safe and healthy environment;
- Proactively develop human resources policies that reflect the needs of the Council;
- Provide comprehensive high quality personnel, training, health and safety and payroll advice which encourages best practice.

2. The Council

As of 31st December 2005, the Council employees 431 individuals across nine different locations. Of these, 70% are full time, and 30% are part time.

Of the Council's 431 employees, 54% are male and 46% are female.

Of the full time employees, 70% are male and 30% are female.

Of the part time employees, 17% are male and 83% are female.

0.5% of the Council's employees are from an ethnic minority background, compared to 2% economically active people in the local area.

0.7% of the Council's employees class themselves as disabled as defined by the Disability Discrimination Act, compared to 11% economically active people in the local area.

19% of the top 5% of earners in the Council are female, and 0% of the top 5% of earners are from black/minority ethnic groups.

Overall turnover in the Council is 15%. In some parts of the Council it is higher than others, e.g. leisure services. Recruitment in some areas is difficult, e.g. planning services and building control.

3. The Challenges

Local Government is a rapidly changing sector currently characterised by:

- A very strong emphasis on performance both of Council's as a whole and individual employees;
- Increased, and more stringent people related Performance Indicators;
- An increased emphasis on local partnerships working together on issues that are not the sole responsibility of one organisation, e.g. community safety and economic regeneration.

Local government also faces the challenge of key government initiatives such as:-

- **The 10 year local government vision** – which sets out a strategy for the next decade, covering areas such as leadership, neighbourhoods, partnerships between central and local government, citizen engagement and the ongoing performance agenda.
- **Local Area Agreements** – which allows local authorities and their partners to decide which local priorities best reflect local circumstances and gives flexibility to decide how funding is best spent.
- **The Efficiency Review** – which requires the Council to deliver a minimum of 2.5% efficiency gains each year.
- **The Audit Commission's 2005 Comprehensive performance Assessment** – which emphasises the importance of people as a key resource and will expect the council to show evidence of workforce planning and development.

Locally, Bromsgrove following a critical Corporate Governance Inspection in March 2003, took the decision in 2004 to request Voluntary Engagement with the Government in order to secure guidance and support towards achieving improvement in the performance of the Council. Voluntary Engagement was agreed and approved in November 2004, and a comprehensive Recovery Plan developed, with the target of ending Voluntary Engagement status by March 2007.

Within this context, the Council must also respond to changing service needs, skills shortages in a number of key areas both nationally and regionally, financial positioning requiring longer term management, and a move to e-governance.

In 2003, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) published the first Pay and Workforce Strategy which was adopted by both the Local Government Association (LGA) and central Government. This strategy was updated in 2005, and it seeks to address key people management issues that

the Audit Commission identified in its Comprehensive Performance Assessments.

Clearly the challenge for Bromsgrove District Council will be to create a workforce that is flexible, equipped to adjust to different tasks and roles, that understands the bigger picture, and is guided by well trained managers.

4. The People Management Themes

To enable our workforce to meet these challenges and support them in working to deliver our stated vision and values, the Council has set out a framework developed around the five key themes as identified in the ODPM's Pay and Workforce Strategy. These are:-

- 4.1 Developing Leadership Capacity
- 4.2 Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce
- 4.3 Developing the organisation
- 4.4 Resourcing Local Government
- 4.5 Pay and Rewards

Theme 1 Developing Leadership Capacity

We will develop our leadership capacity by: -

- 1-1 Developing the capacity of top teams through a "top teams programme" delivered by an external consultant commencing in 2006.
- 1-2 Planning the development of future leaders through the implementation of a succession planning strategy.
- 1-3 Recruiting and developing leaders (members and officers) who can articulate a clear vision of where the organisation is going. This will be achieved through a review of the recruitment function, in particular establishing how organisational core competencies can be used. The development of leadership will also be achieved through the succession planning strategy.
- 1-4 Providing excellent induction, training and development for elected members which is based on identified need and effectively evaluated.
- 1-5 Ensuring the effective use of development and training resources to provide employees and Elected Members with the skills and knowledge needed to maximise their potential.

Theme 2 Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce

We will motivate and develop our employees to achieve their full potential and achieve the Council's corporate objectives and service delivery requirements by:-

- 2-1 Raising the quality of management in key areas such as project and programme management, financial management, procurement, and partnership working. This will be achieved by implementing a comprehensive learning and organisational development programme which is linked to competencies and based on needs identified e.g.

through the emerging procurement strategy or best value performance indicators (BVPI). It will also include the implementation of a middle manager programme

- 2-2 Increasing the skills of front line and other operational staff, including multi-skilling. The organisations skills gap will be identified through a workforce planning process to be undertaken in 2006. In addition, partnerships will be further developed to enable employees to access basic skills and vocational training.
- 2-3 Creating a culture of lifelong learning and continuous improvement. This will be achieved through the promotion of employee involvement, new work/life balance policies and implementation of core competencies and the management development programme. In addition, basic skills and vocational training will be made available (see above).
- 2-4 Equipping employees with the skills, knowledge, competence and confidence to deal with change. This will be achieved through the development and implementation of staff competencies and through the enhanced learning function in the Council.
- 2-5 Ensuring a correlation between development and training investment, and personal and organisational performance. This will be achieved by the review of key performance indicators, extending evaluation of development opportunities and reviewing feedback from managers and employees.
- 2-6 Promoting and advising on the systematic identification and development and training needs for employees, teams and services as a whole. The Council will review its training needs analysis system and ensure that this is linked effectively with its workforce plan.
- 2-7 Commissioning or designing and delivering high quality development and training programmes to meet individual, team, service and corporate needs. This will be an integral element of the organisation's workforce plan.
- 2-8 Evaluating training programmes and training investment to ensure continuous improvement and efficient use of resources. A more robust evaluation process will be implemented during 2006/07 which will ensure that the impact of learning is assessed and that the impact on corporate performance is understood.
- 2-9 Providing advice and assistance to retain Investors in People accreditation.

Theme 3 Developing the Organisation

We will enable the Council to effectively deliver its key priorities and adapt to its changing environment by: -

- 3-1 Creating a high performance people management culture across the Council. This will be enabled through management development programmes and the implementation of the competencies. In addition HR will ensure that managers receive appropriate training and support on how to implement the organisation's people management policies.
- 3-2 Promoting the concept of staff as organisational advocates within the community by ensuring that they are motivated, valued and fairly rewarded. This will be achieved through consistent, effective line management (supported by training and competencies), improving communication (supported by the new Communication Strategy) better access to development opportunities and the implementation of job evaluation.
- 3-3 Implementation of single status in Bromsgrove Council through job evaluation, the development of a new pay and grading structure and harmonisation of terms and conditions by Autumn 2007.
- 3-4 Developing a successful partnership approach to employee relations;
- 3-5 Creating a more flexible workforce, able to deliver high quality, customer focused services. The Council will review best practice in work/life balance policies with a view to developing and implementing a work/life balance strategy underpinned with appropriate policies and training for managers.
- 3-6 Developing effective partnership working with other councils, relevant public and private sector organisations and unions in order to improve performance and efficiency.
- 3-7 Providing clear, consistent and rational organisational structures which empower employees to achieve success in service delivery. This will be supported by appropriate development for managers that encourages managers to promote greater empowerment.
- 3-8 Developing openness, accountability and transparency in decision-making processes affecting people at work. This will be achieved through the implementation of the organisation's communication strategy.
- 3-9 Setting, reviewing and assessing targets and objectives at organisational, directorate and individual levels ensuring a clear link between each level.
- 3-10 Communicating openly and clearly with all employees about their role and the activities of the Council as a whole, so that they can participate and contribute to the best of their abilities. This will be achieved

through ensuring managers have the skills to communicate effectively (supported by training and development of competencies) as well as through the new communications strategy.

- 3-11 Developing and maintaining appropriate arrangements and processes to ensure that efficient and effective consultation and negotiation is undertaken across the Council. This will be achieved through the Employee Consultation Strategy developed in Summer 2006 and the staff involvement process to be implemented in November 2006.
- 3-12 Ensuring a framework exists for employees to have an opportunity to contribute suggestions on how services can be improved as part of the wider communications strategy by Autumn 2006.
- 3-13 Developing a culture of corporate and co-operative working across the Council. This will be enabled by organising events where employees can come together to learn or share good practice such as the employee events developed as part of the Communications Strategy.
- 3-14 Developing effective mechanisms for downward, upward and lateral communication as part of the implementation of the Council's Communication Strategy.
- 3-15 Providing a safe and healthy environment in which to work through the development of appropriate policies and the delivery of training.
- 3-16 Promoting healthy lifestyles and supportive frameworks for healthy living amongst employees. This will include a review of the sickness absence procedures in late Autumn 2006.
- 3-17 Designing, implementing and monitoring human resource policies and practices which support organisational improvement as well as consistently contribute to and support the fair treatment of employees at work.

Theme 4 Resourcing Local Government

We will look to recruit and retain the best people for the job by: -

- 4-1 Ensuring effective strategies are in place for recruiting and managing a diverse workforce reflecting the population we serve. This will be achieved through a review of the organisation's approach to recruitment in Summer 2006 and the implementation of new procedures in Autumn 2006 which support the delivery of the workforce plan. In particular, the Council will ensure that there are no real or perceived barriers to recruitment.
- 4-2 Undertaking various initiatives aimed at ensuring equality for all staff and improving the organisation's approach to diversity. This will

include the review of recruitment and retention, learning opportunities and the implementation of job evaluation.

- 4-3 Developing better workforce planning across the Council, addressing national and local recruitment and retention issues. A workforce plan will be developed during Spring and Summer 2006 which is linked to service development and identified the skills and workforce the Council needs for the next 5 years.
- 4-4 Addressing the 'image' of local government among potential new recruits as part of the new approach to recruitment.
- 4-5 Developing a range of employment benefits which enable the Council to continually attract and retain the best people. This will form part of the new retention strategy to be developed in Summer 2006.
- 4-6 Providing flexible arrangements which respond to changing needs and priorities whilst maintaining the integrity of the Council's single employer obligation. This will be included in the new retention strategy to be developed in Summer 2006.
- 4-7 Challenging prejudice and discrimination in all its forms and ensuring every employee is treated with dignity at all stages of their employment with the Council. This will be achieved through management development, staff training and the introduction of competencies.
- 4-8 Ensuring that employees' efforts and contributions are recognised and successes celebrated. This will be at both line manager and organisational level and will be achieved by ensuring managers give effective feedback (management training and competencies), through specific organisational events and using appropriate communication methods such as the improvements to be made to the "The Grapevine" as part of the Communications Strategy.

Theme 5 Pay and Rewards

We will create pay and reward schemes that actively support improvement by:

- 5-1 Modernising local pay and reward structures to support a high performance, highly skilled and flexible workforce through the implementation of job evaluation during 2006 and 2007.
- 5-2 Modernising local pay and reward structures to support a high performance Providing fair, equitable and defensible systems for job grading/job evaluation. The job evaluation project team will have responsibility for ensuring that this occurs.
- 5-3 Working with staff side to seeking and deliver harmonisation of conditions of employment across groups of employees and services
- 5-4 Developing a range of employment benefits which enable the Council to continually attract and retain the best people within the parameters of delivering cost effective services to the public. A review of other employment offers available will be undertaken and this will be built into appropriate strategies and policies.

5. Action Plan

In order to deliver on these people management themes, a number of actions over the short and longer term can be identified.

Short Term (up to 31st March 2007)

Action	Officer responsible	Member responsible	To be completed by	People theme	Recovery plan theme – Ministers Heading
Commence Top Team Development Programme	Chief Executive / Head of HR and OD	Cllr. R. Hollingworth	April 2006	1,2 and 4	Strategic Leadership and Organisational Development
Develop and commence a Bromsgrove Management Development Programme	Head of HR and OD / Training Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	April 2006	1,2 and 3	Organisational Development
Undertake an Investor in People re-accreditation against the new standards	Head of HR and OD / Training Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	April 2006	1,2, 3 and 4	Strategic Leadership and Organisational Development
Review and revise the Council's health and safety Policy	Head of HR and OD / Health and Safety Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	May 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review and revise the Council's risk	Head of HR and OD /	Cllr. C. Spencer	June 2006	3	Organisational

assessment procedure	Health and Safety Officer				Development
Review and revise the Council's manual handling procedure	Head of HR and OD / Health and Safety Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	July 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review and revise the Council's Accident Reporting procedures	Head of HR and OD / Health and Safety Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	August 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review and revise the Council's Chemical safety procedures	Head of HR and OD / Health and Safety Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	September 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review and revise Disciplinary Procedure	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	September 2006	3	Organisational Development
Draft and implement Capability Policy	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	September 2006	2 and 3	Organisational Development
Agree a framework for Management Competencies	Head of HR and OD	Cllr. C. Spencer	September 2006	1,2 and 3	Strategic Leadership and Organisational Development
Develop Workforce Plans	Head of HR and OD	Cllr. C. Spencer	September 2006	1,2,3 and	Strategic

				4	Leadership and Organisational Development
Review and revise the Council's Display Screen Equipment procedures	Head of HR and OD / Health and Safety Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	October 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review and revise all policies in light of Age Discrimination legislation due from 1 st October 2006	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	July 2006	3 and 5	Organisational Development
Review Council's approach to Recruitment and Retention	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	July 2006	3 and 4	Organisational Development
Evaluate all Local Government Services (Green Book) jobs within the Council	Head of HR and OD / WMLGA	Cllr. C. Spencer	March 2007	4 and 5	Organisational Development
Draft a framework for capturing and implementing employee suggestions	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	October 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review employee and Trade Union consultation processes	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	November 2006	3	Organisational Development
Review sickness management procedures within the Council	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	November 2006	2 and 3	Organisational Development
Review and revise Grievance procedure	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	January 2007	3	Organisational Development

Draft and implement Stress Policy	Head of HR and OD / Health and Safety Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	January 2007	3	Organisational Development
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Long Term (1st April 2007 – 31st March 2008)

Conduct a Pay and Grading review	Head of HR and OD / WMLGA	Cllr. C. Spencer	April 2007	4 and 5	Organisational Development
Implement new Pay and Grading Structure for the Council as a result of the Job Evaluation exercise	Head of HR and OD	Cllr. C. Spencer	July 2007	4 and 5	Organisational Development
Commence process of harmonisation of conditions of employment	Head of HR/OD/ Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	April 2007	4 and 5	Organisational Development
Draft and implement Honoraria and Regrade Policy	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	May 2007	3 and 5	Organisational Development
Conduct a review of the Council's Family Friendly policies	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	September 2007	2,3, and 4	Organisational Development
Draft and implement TOIL Policy	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	January 2008	3	Organisational Development
Draft and implement leave Policy	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	January 2008	3	Organisational Development
Draft and implement Homeworking Policy	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	March 2008	3	Organisational Development
Review and revise Relocation Policy	Head of HR and OD / Personnel Officer	Cllr. C. Spencer	March 2008	3 and 5	Organisational Development

6. Review Arrangements

This Strategy will be continually reviewed against Council values and objectives and adjusted as necessary to ensure strategic fit. Strategic Management Team will receive an annual report on achievement of strategic goals, how they have impacted on corporate performance and these will be assessed and re-established for a successive two year cycle on an annual basis.

Clare Armour

Interim Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19TH APRIL 2006

EXPENDITURE OF ODPM HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING FOR 2005/06 AND ANTICIPATED EXPENDITURE FOR 2006/07

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

1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Members will recall that the Council currently receives an annual grant from the ODPM with which to co-ordinate homelessness support services and schemes that focus upon the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness in the District.
- 1.2 This report provides members with information relating to:
- The progress of schemes currently funded using ODPM homelessness grant 2005/6 which provide support to the homeless or help to prevent homelessness.
 - The level of ODPM homelessness grant funding allocated for 2006/07 & 2007/08
 - Details of the schemes recommended by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to receive grant funding for 2006/07.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the update on the progress of the homelessness preventative and support schemes funded through ODPM homelessness grant be noted.
- 2.2 That the level of ODPM homelessness grant funding for 2006/07 be noted.
- 2.3 That the submissions for the funding of schemes recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group from the 2006/07 homelessness grant be approved.
- 2.4 That the Head of Strategic Housing, in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environmental Services, be authorised to approve recommendations made by the Homelessness Steering Group for the reallocation of any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2006/07 in support of existing or new schemes.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council received ODPM homelessness grant funding of £42K for the financial year 2005/6. Unlike in previous years when the Council has had to gain ODPM approval of schemes to be funded by the grant, last year the Council was given discretion as to how the grant was spent.

3.2 The outcomes to be delivered are:

- Reduce or sustain the reduction in the level of rough sleeping by at least two thirds below the level in 1998.
- Avoid the long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with children and households with a pregnant woman.
- Reduce the use of temporary accommodation for homeless families with children.

3.3 As the Council experiences minimal or no rough sleepers and offers hostel accommodation or self contained dispersed units to homeless families, both of the first requirements are being met. Using other funding, the Council has made more accommodation available to homeless families through purchase and repair schemes which improves the standard of temporary accommodation offered but in terms of the final outcome does not actually reduce the use of temporary accommodation as defined in the PI. The Council's strategy to phase out the use of hostel type temporary accommodation is assisted by preventative and support services provided through this source of funding.

4.0 **AN OVERVIEW OF THE SCHEMES SUPPORTED DURING 2005/6**

4.1 Members will recall that as the Strategic Housing Authority, BDC co-ordinates and leads the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group which in partnership with a range of organisations has developed a strategy and action plan to address the support and needs of the homeless and develop schemes aimed at the prevention of homelessness.

4.2 Last year the Executive Cabinet gave approval to the grant funding for 2005/06 being used in accordance with the recommendations made by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group with delegated authority to re-allocate any under spend. The grant funding has been allocated and utilised as follows:

Allocation of ODPM Homeless Grant 2005/06		
	Planned	Actual
	£	£
Baseline Drop In Centre	10,000	10,000
CAB Debt Advice	12,454	12,454
Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme	10,000	10,000
Centrepoint	3,000	3,000
Countywide Mediation Centrepoint	4,000	4,000
Mediation Service(BYHF)	3,000	3,000
5 Good Start Package (BYHF)	500	500
5 Good Start Package (BDHT)	500	500
Partial furnishing of temporary accomm (BDHT)	1,497	1,497
Mediation Training (BYHF) Carried forward from 04/05	1,500	1,166
Total	46,451	46,117
Amount Carried Forward from 04/05	4451	
Grant	42,000	
Total Grant Available	46451	46451
Under spend	0	334

4.2 The 2005/6 funded schemes are progressing as follows:

Baseline Drop In Centre

The Basement Project opened in February 2005. ODPM homelessness grant monies helped towards set up costs. This scheme provides an Information and Support Day Centre with a focus on preventative work, emotional and practical support for young people and access to information for young people. The Basement Project is equipped with a comfortable reception area, kitchen and shower facility. Computer and Internet access will be made available to service users.

CAB Specialist Debt Advice Service

This specialist service offers assistance and representation for potentially homeless clients. The work has shown to be highly successful in achieving positive results in the prevention of homelessness. Between January and December 2005 this service assisted 88 clients and dealt with 617 issues. The majority of their work has been concentrated on money advice/repossession cases and during the period 25 evictions and possession proceedings were halted.

Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme (Private Tenancy Scheme)

BYHF have developed a 'Private Tenancy Scheme' which can provide three alternative incentives to encourage Private Landlords to let their accommodation to young people. In the period April 2005 to February 2006 the scheme has housed 8 young people through private landlords and currently has 10 clients on its waiting list.

Centrepoint Mediation and Preventative Work

Centrepoint, working at County level, has set up a County Mediation Advisory Group. The Group has carried out a needs analysis and snapshot survey. The objective is to identify existing mediation services and gaps in that service to ensure that it is available to clients throughout the County. During the first three months the scheme accepted 21 referrals of which 5 were from the Bromsgrove District.

Centrepoint have also developed a housing education pack linked to citizenship and the Personal Health, Social and Education (PHSE) standard in schools. Aimed at homelessness prevention, Centrepoint is promoting the pack and providing informal training for PHSE tutors.

Parenting Support Groups

Charford Multi Agency Resource Centre, in partnership with the Youth Offending Team, has run two, ten week courses to offer support to parents/carers of teenagers who are experiencing difficulties in coping with the issues around the parenting of teenagers. The first course ran in March – May 2005 was attended by 6 parents. The second course which is running currently is being attended by 8 parents. The issues addressed in the groups have been complex ranging from assaults on parents within the home, school exclusions, sexual, drug and alcohol misuse. Referrals have been received from Social Services, the Youth Offending Team and CAB. Officers from the Resource Centre have carried out engaging work. This has meant visiting people at home, identifying and addressing special requirements and arranging childcare to be available for those who need it.

Good Start Packages and Partial Furnishing of Dispersed Self Contained Temporary Accommodation

The scheme provides provision of packs of basic equipment and cooking utensils for clients experiencing homelessness and moving into temporary accommodation. Partial furnishing, (carpets, blinds and cookers) has been installed in newly provided dispersed, self contained flats being provided by BDHT as temporary accommodation in preference to use of shared hostel accommodation.

5.0 ODPM HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING FOR THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR 2006/7

5.1 The ODPM have advised us that the level of Grant allocated to the Council will remain the same for 2006/7 and 2007/ 2008 as for the previous year 2005/6.

Submissions for schemes to be funded from the £42k grant were invited and were considered by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group when it met on the 2nd March 2006. The details of the submissions and the revised bids are set out in the table below:

Homelessness Grant Applications for 2006/07

Name of Project	Initial Bid	Revised Bid	Outcomes	Other Considerations
BDHT Floating Support and Homelessness Prevention Service.	£23,540	£10,000	The recruitment of two homeless prevention officers. Prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness. Mixed funded initiative supported by BDHT and Supporting People. BDHT are committing an annual contribution of £11,875 and an application has been made to Supporting People for annual funding of £29,960.	The revised bid is enabled this year as a result of the scheme not being scheduled to commence until September 2006, the full bid amount will be required in future years. Recognition that by committing funds to this project will mean that in future years some schemes currently funded through Homelessness Grant will have to be active in seeking alternative funding.
BDC Strategic Housing Sanctuary Scheme	£2,000	£1,000	Prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness. Better outcomes in respect of social,	Will only be appropriate for a small group who can be helped to feel safe enough to stay at home.

			health and well being and education. Supported by Police and Supporting People.	
Bromsgrove & District CAB Homelessness Debt Advice Service	£12765.35	£12,000	Track record in preventing 20 households from becoming homeless. Value for money through piggy backing on existing housing advice service which uses volunteers.	Scheme will be enhanced by the introduction of the BDHT Floating Support Scheme
Centrepoint Awareness Raising with Health Professionals, Countywide Mediation Service, Review of 16/17 year old protocol	£3,500	£1,500	Increase access to health provision for young people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. Support family mediation to secure longer term funding. BDHT has made 5 referrals to them since Nov 05. Provide training to agencies to ensure that they are making appropriate homeless referrals.	
Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum Private Tenancy Scheme	£ 10,000	£5,500	Providing young people with access to the private sector. 8 young people housed since April, there are 10 clients on their waiting list and they are working with 9 landlords.	Provides a housing solution for a non priority group, but nevertheless dealing with a group from one of the main causes of homelessness – parental eviction/exclusion.
Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum The Basement 'Drop In' Service	£15,000	£12,000	The drop in service provides homelessness prevention work through counselling, life skills, conflict resolution, mediation service, and a mentoring and befriending scheme. It provides value for money through the use of volunteers and has charitable status which benefits	A preventative service for those more likely to be considered in Priority Need.

			from mixed funding from Lloyds TSB and other sources.	
Total		42,000		

- 5.2 An opportunity to bid for funding through Supporting People has enabled the Council to work with BDHT in developing proposals (the first scheme in the table above) to provide a service that will provide enhanced support to homeless clients living in temporary accommodation (whether it be Hostel, B&B or self contained flats) and quick response preventative work where early intervention in potential homeless situations can avert the problem.

The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group recognises the importance of developing the service and its ability to work closely with and support the existing preventative and advice services provided by CAB and Baseline. The proposed service offers an opportunity to make more strategic use of the ODPM grant in preventing homelessness and to provide a service for clients over 25 (younger people being catered for by Baseline).

The members of the Homelessness Steering Group discussed and understand that support for the scheme will require half of the grant allocation being committed in future years, which will impact on the grant accessible for other services. In preparation for this, the organisations represented on the Steering Group recognise the need for them to apply for alternative sources of funding during the coming 12 months.

- 5.3 Members are asked to approve the recommendations put forward by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Steering Group for funding, and that subject to spending being in line with the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy, the Head of Strategic Housing, in agreement with the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Environmental Services, be authorised to approve recommendations made by the Homelessness Steering Group for the reallocation of any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2006/07 in support of existing or new schemes.

6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

Grant funding under the Homelessness (In Need of Accommodation) (England) Order 2002 is allocated by the ODPM to local authorities in accordance with their expenditure upon schemes up to the allocation limit. Accordingly the expenditure incurred in supporting the schemes does not fall upon this authority.

7.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Prevention of homelessness through the schemes developed and funded through ODPM Grant assist the Council in meeting its duties to homeless applicants under the Homeless provisions of the Housing Act 1996 and the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002 that prevents local authorities from placing homeless families or expectant mothers in B&B type accommodation.

8.0 **OTHER SUB HEADINGS**

- 8.1 None

9.0 **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

9.1 None

CONTACT OFFICER

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Tel	01527 881270

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19TH APRIL 2006

CAR PARKING ORDER AMENDMENT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Margaret Sherrey
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report summarises the objections made by members of the public and statutory consultees with regard to the revised Car Parking Order previously agreed by the Executive Cabinet of the Council on 22nd February 2006.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That the Order is implemented as planned with effect from 1st May 2006.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 One response has been received based on the following objections;

- The increase from £1.00 to £2.10 at the Station is too steep.
- The fee of £2.10 is an odd amount.
- The increase will dissuade commuters from using the Station.
- The increase will dissuade commuters from using public transport.
- The increase undermines local and national policies to reduce dependency on the car and use public transport.

3.2 Officers believe that objections limited to one response regarding one particular car park are not reasonable grounds for delaying or amending the proposed Order, and on that basis would recommend the adoption of the Order as planned from 1st May 2006.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

Contact officer

Name Steve Martin, Transport & Engineering Officer
E Mail: steve.martin@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881457

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

19th April 2006

LONE WORKING POLICY, PROSECUTION POLICY AND AUTHORISED OFFICERS CODE OF CONDUCT.

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Diane Campbell
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Financial Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report requests the adoption of the attached Benefit Fraud related policies for the Revenues and Benefits section of the Council.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the attached policies relating to:

- *Lone Working Appendix A
- Prosecution Policy Appendix B
- Authorised Officer – Code of Practice Appendix C

be adopted by the Council.

* Please note that a 'Corporate' Lone Working Policy is currently being developed

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 These are new policies to formalise current guidelines that have been used by Revenues and Benefits section.
- 3.2 It is best practice to adopt formal policies as this is a requirement for the Department of Works and Pensions national performance standard.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 There are no financial implications as a direct result of this report.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 None as a direct result of this report.

6. OTHER SUB HEADINGS

- 6.1 None

Personnel Implications
Governance/Performance Management Considerations

Community Safety Considerations
Risk Management Considerations
Policy Considerations
Environmental Considerations
Equalities Implications

Background Papers

None

Contact officer

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REVENUES AND BENEFITS

LONE WORKING POLICY, RISK ASSESSMENT & PROCEDURES

2006/07

Lone Working

The term “Working Alone” might be defined as follows:

“A person is **working alone** when that person works in any environment where there are no other workers present who have knowledge of the work, workplace, and who are available to respond effectively to unusual occurrences or emergencies.”

Examples of Lone Workers

- Visiting Officers
- Investigations Officers
- Bailiff

Relevant Legislation

The Health and Safety Work etc Act 1974 requires all employers to provide safe places and systems of work including those who work alone.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1992 require all employers to carry out risk assessments. This includes assessments of the particular risks associated with lone working.

Employers have responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare at work of their employees and the health and safety of those affected by the work. These responsibilities cannot be transferred to the people who work alone. It is the employer’s duty to assess risks to lone workers and take steps to avoid or control risk where necessary. Employees have responsibilities to take reasonable care of themselves and other people affected by their work and co-operate with their employers in meeting their legal obligations.

ACTIVITIES/TASKS UNDERTAKEN BY OUTSIDE OFFICERS

Home Visits for Welfare purposes
Home Visits for Benefit checks
Home Visits for Benefit Investigation Purposes
Home Visits for Interviews Under Caution
Home Visits for Council Tax enquiries
Business Property Visits for Benefits Investigation Purposes
Business Property Visits for Non-Domestic Rate enquiries
Bailiff Visits to both Domestic and Non-Domestic Properties

MAIN HAZARDS

HIGH RISK	Physical Attack Threatening Behaviour Verbal Abuse Road/Traffic Accident
MEDIUM RISK	Accident/Illness Inclement Weather Stress Harassment Attack by dogs
LOW RISK	Vehicle damage/defect Theft/damage to property/vehicle Malicious allegations
WHO IS AT RISK?	Revenues and Benefits Visiting Officers Investigations Officers Bailiff

PRECAUTIONS TO BE TAKEN

- IT systems to be checked when visits prepared to identify those visits with “Potentially Violent” markers or “Warning” information on case notes.
- Visits to be planned in advance
- Obtain all background information before visits undertaken
- Record visits, in route order, in diary, giving indications of specific appointment times. Any visits that the officer feels could cause a problem (potentially violent or a vulnerable customer) should be highlighted on the daily list of visits left in the office.
- If the route is altered at all, to notify line manager prior to the change
- Estimated time of return to Office to be recorded and made visible to other office staff and line manager.
- Mobile phones **must** be fully charged up.
- Mobile phones **must** be switched on before leaving the office, and only switched off on return to the office.
- Mobile phones must be easily accessible and readily available to the officer, and not left in the car, in the bottom of a bag/briefcase, where not easily heard or retrievable.
- Two officers to visit if any officer feels vulnerable or concerned about a particular visit. In these circumstances the officers should contact the office both before and immediately after the visit, to ensure that the office is aware that officers are safe.
- All outside officers should carry a personal alarm.
- Officers should park their cars in a safe well-lit position.

- If the Officer starts work from home in the morning, the Officer should ring the Office or Line Manager to confirm their start time and the details of their first visit, as per the prepared visit schedule copy as left in the office.
- The Officer should also ring the office to confirm when they arrive and leave for each visit made.
- To call the office at lunchtime, to identify visits done and current progress through visit list and confirm lunchtimes taken/to be taken.
- If Officer is going to be more 10 minutes following estimated time of arrival, the Officer should contact where this is known in advance, giving a revised estimated time of arrival.
- If an Officer does not return more than 10 minutes following estimated time of arrival, and that Officer has not contacted the office, the line manager/other colleagues should contact the Officer on their mobile phone to find out current status and agree a further estimated time of arrival.
- If there is no answer to this contact with the Officer, the office should arrange for a further telephone call to be made 10 minutes later. If there is still no contact consideration should be given to checking the visit list and contacting customers to see if the Officer has arrived or left that property. This should help identify the last known visit(s) made.
- If there is still no contact from the officer after tracing their steps from the daily visiting list, consideration should be given to contacting the Police after speaking to the Revenues and Benefits Manager, or his absence, a Senior Officer.
- If the Police are notified of an absent Officer, details of that Officer (description/vehicle details/last known whereabouts) will be given to help further the enquiry.
- If the visit is to start after 5pm, the Officer **must** contact their line manager on completion of the visit. An estimated return time to the office should be established before the visit. Full details of the visit, the customer and address of the property should be given to the line manager in case of lack of contact/unable to contact. Where a number of visits are to be undertaken, a full list must be left with the Senior Officer and telephone calls must be made on completion each visit.
- If any work is undertaken outside of flexi-time hours (8am-7pm), time should be recorded on the Time-Off in Lieu card. Any time recorded on this card, should be taken as TOIL within 2 months of accruing it. If leave is not taken, the time will be forfeited.
- Where surveillance is undertaken, a full plan of the area will be provided with the application for surveillance approval, in order to highlight areas of potential risk and methods for reducing risks. This plan will also show the target property/person in relation to the site of Investigating Officer(s).
- All officers will use the Business Absence facility on the Flexi-clock system, which will enable an accurate account of officers movements, particularly in times of fire alarms.

ESSENTIAL EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

Mobile Phone
Panic Alarm
First Aid Kit
Warning Triangle
Wellington Boots
Fluorescent Marked Coat

TRAINING REQUIRED

Dealing with Aggression
Break-Away Techniques
Customer Care
Mental Health Awareness Training

ADDITIONAL MEASURES NEEDED?

- All outside officers must firstly undertake a risk assessment on an annual basis and must be reviewed as a result of an incident
- Training on all four identified courses to all officers.

Assessor
Assessment Date
Review Date
Issue Date
Previous Assessment?

Team Leader (Revenues and Benefits)
3 January 2006
December 2006
3 January 2006
Yes - 2/11/04



Housing/Council Tax Benefit Fraud Prosecution Policy

HOUSING/COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTION POLICY

Bromsgrove Council has the right to prosecute cases involving fraudulent claims for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit. It does not have legal powers to prosecute National Benefit Offences, as paid by the Department for Work and Pensions. Bromsgrove Council will, however, participate in prosecutions where National Benefit Offences are paid in addition to Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit. In these cases the Department for Work and Pensions would act on the Council's behalf.

Bromsgrove District Council will investigate suspected benefit offences up to a criminal standard of proof.

The purpose of the investigation is to establish the facts in an equitable and objective manner. Investigation and Visiting Officers will work within the guidelines of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984, in addition to other investigative legislation. Examples are: Human Rights Act 1998, Data Protection Act 1998, other relevant Acts of Parliament and Social Security Legislation. Council Policies on customer care and equal opportunities will also be adhered to.

The Council will use all powers granted to the Council by the Secretary of State for Social Security under the Social Security Administration (Fraud) Act 1997, namely the powers of inspection and the power to obtain information from landlords.

When landlords commit an offence by failing to report a change in their tenant's circumstances or help the claimant to commit benefit fraud, landlords will be investigated and may be prosecuted by the Council. The Council makes Landlords aware of their duty to report changes in circumstances. Any overpaid benefit to a Landlord will be recovered, either directly from ongoing payments of benefit to the Landlord or through civil recovery via the courts.

Where necessary, the Council will work in co-operation with other organizations such as the Police, Department for Work and Pensions, Home Office, and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, in order to combat benefit fraud.

It is the duty of the Fraud Investigators, Inspectors and Visiting Officers to look at all referrals of suspected or alleged benefit fraud and to establish the facts of each case. The Council's Officers will at all times apply appropriate procedures to maintain confidentiality.

The following section confirms Bromsgrove Council's policy on prosecution:

- The Council is prepared to prosecute, or ask others to prosecute, appropriate cases throughout the full range of Benefit Fraud;
- The final decision as to whether to prosecute or not, will be taken by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and his decision will be binding;
- Elected members will not make decisions about particular cases;
- The Council will seek to prosecute any person who declines to accept an Administrative Penalty or Formal Caution as an alternative to legal action;
- The following factors will be taken into account:
 - The amount of money obtained by the fraud
 - The duration of the offence
 - The suspects age, physical and mental condition

- Voluntary disclosure
- Previous incidence of fraud
- Social factors
- The amount of evidence obtained and the reliability of witnesses
- Possible failure or delay in the benefit sections administration.

Although Bromsgrove Council does not apply strict financial levels to the type of sanction that may be appropriate based on the level of the overpayment, in cases of Joint Working with the Department for Work and Pensions, liaison and consideration will take place, in accordance with their policies:

- Overpayment more than £50 but less than £2000 – Formal Caution/Administrative Penalty may apply.
- Overpayment of more than £2000 – Prosecution may apply.

It must be noted that this Council will select cases for prosecution if the overpayment is less than £2,000.

In cases deemed suitable for a Formal Caution or Administrative Penalty the following factors will be considered:

- the person has committed an offence, which would normally result in a prosecution
- the evidence is sufficient for a prosecution
- the person is aware of the terms of the Formal Caution/Administrative Penalty
- the person will agree to accept the Formal Caution/Administrative Penalty

The Council will seek to publicise successfully prosecuted cases if:

- the conviction will generate positive publicity
- if the release may help to deter others from fraud
- to promote the Councils Anti-Fraud work
- to promote the Councils fraud Hotline.

Feedback Form

Please Return to:

Mr Leigh Butler

Revenues and Benefits Manager

Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
B60 1AA

FROM:

COMMENT:



**Authorised Officers
Housing and Council Tax Benefit**

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Foreword

Why this Code of Practice is issued to you

Benefit Fraud is estimated to cost the taxpayer at least £2 billion per year. Fraud due to people working whilst claiming Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit forms a significant part of the overall level of fraud experienced. Obtaining information is necessary if we are to ensure that taxpayers' money goes to those for whom it is intended.

Our powers to obtain information are not intended to place additional burden on business, but to reduce the overall burden on Society. Everyone, therefore, has an interest in providing information to the Department of Social Security and Bromsgrove District Council so that we can combat fraud.

This code of practice is binding on the activities of Local Authority staff that operate the procedures under sections 109B and C of the Social Security Administration Act 1992. If you are required to provide information to Bromsgrove District Council under the provisions of sections 109B and 109C of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, this Code has been given to you so that you know what you can expect of the officers making enquiries, and so that you can understand your duties under these powers. It is aimed at encouraging compliance and cooperation. Where the requirements of this Code are not met grounds for complaint may arise. Information about how to complain is contained in this Code of Practice (see paragraphs 35-37).

Beating fraud is everyone's business. We must all work together if we are to achieve that aim.

Introduction

This Code of Practice explains the powers of Authorised Officers, their limitations and the responsibilities and rights of those from whom we may seek information, as defined in the legislation. Authorised Officers are required to undertake their enquiries in accordance with this Code of Practice at all times.

Authorised Officers of Bromsgrove District Council should issue this Code of Practice to people from whom they require information under sections 109B and 109C of the Social Security Administration Act 1992. It explains the powers of the Local Authority and therefore assists Officers in their enquiries. It should be issued with written enquiries, carried by Officers visiting employment premises, and made available in our offices to members of the public who wish to consult it.

The obligation to provide information is now detailed in sections 109A, 109B and 109C of the Social Security Administration Act 1992. These new sections have been introduced under schedule 6 of the Child Support, Pensions and Social Security Act 2000 and replace the previous section 110, 110A, and 110B of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, and the comparable provisions of section 33 of the Jobseekers Act 1995.

These powers are only for use in relation to enquiries for the purposes described in section 109A (2) – (paragraph 8 below), from specific people/organisations, as defined in section 109B – (paragraph 10).

Authorised Officers

Under section 109A, the Secretary of State may authorise an officer of a Local Authority, Department of Social Security, or of any other Government Department, to exercise section 109B and 109C powers. Officers who do not have this authorisation may not make enquiries under these powers.

Authorised Officers are required to act reasonably in seeking information from individuals and organisations who hold information necessary to Local Authority enquiries. This means that they must act in an appropriate way given the circumstances of the case, and any representations that may be made during their enquiries. The resultant actions taken by Authorised Officers should be ones that would stand up to the scrutiny of a Court, or other independent body.

If the course of action undertaken, or proposed, by the Authorised Officer was not considered to be reasonable it should be raised at once with the Authorised Officer. If this does not satisfy the concerns raised the complaints procedure set out in this Code can be applied.

What These Powers Are used For

1. Authorised Officers use section 109 powers to obtain information from certain people, under 109A, to:
 - Ascertain in relation to any case whether a benefit is or was payable in that case in accordance with any provision of the relevant social security legislation;
 - Investigate the circumstances in which any accident, injury or disease which has given rise, or may give rise, to a claim for Industrial Injuries benefit, or any benefit under any provision of the relevant social security legislation, which occurred or may have occurred, or was or may have been received or contracted;
 - Ascertain whether provisions of the relevant social security legislation are being, have been or are likely to be contravened (whether by particular persons or more generally);
 - Prevent, detecting and securing evidence of the commission (whether by particular persons or more generally) of benefit offences.
2. An Authorised Officer can ask for information about individual named persons or, in certain circumstances, the names and other details of the whole workforce. Requests for information can be made in writing or in the course of a visit. The

following are examples of the types of information that Authorised Officers might request, for example from an employer:

- Names of employees
- Wage details
- Period of employment
- Conditioned hours
- Terms of employment (i.e. whether an employee, sub-contractor, or self-employed)
- Bank details (e.g. whether wages are paid into a Bank, and its location)
- Staff/payroll number
- National Insurance number
- Home Address
- Date of Birth

This list is not exhaustive and there will be circumstances in which Authorised Officers will seek information not specifically listed here, which is relevant to their enquiries, and determined on the circumstances of the investigation.

Written Requests for Information

3. Section 109B(1) allows an Authorised Officer to write to (or e-mail) any of these persons defined in section 109B(2), listed below to obtain information. These people are:
 - Any person who is or has been an employer or employee;
 - Any person who is or has been a self-employed earner;
 - Any person who, under existing legislation, is treated as an employer, employee, or self-employed earner;
 - Any person who is carrying on, or has carried on, any business involving the supply of goods for sale to the ultimate consumers by individuals not carrying on retail businesses from retail premises;
 - Any person who is carrying on, or has carried on, any business involving the supply of goods or services by the use of work done or services performed by persons other than employees of his;
 - Any person who is carrying on, or has carried on, an agency or other business for the introduction or supply, to others, of persons available to do work or to perform services;

- Any local authority acting in their capacity as an authority responsible for the granting of any licence;
 - Any person who is or has been a trustee or manager of a personal or occupational pension scheme;
 - Any person who is or has been liable to make a compensation payment or a payment to the Secretary of State under section 6 of the Social Security (Recovery of Benefits) Act 1997 (payments in respect of recoverable benefits); and
 - The servants and agents of any person as described above.
4. An Authorised Officer will only write to any of those persons defined above for information if they have reasonable grounds to suspect that benefit fraud is being, or has been, committed. They will provide a written notice that sets out:
- Who they are;
 - Their address;
 - What information they need;
 - The format in which they would like the information provided in; and
 - When they would like the information by.
5. They may ask for original documents, photocopies of documents or extracts of documents (e.g. computer printouts etc) to be produced. However, they will only request the information they need and will take account of the burden this would place on the business, as well as their own needs.

The Legal Duty to Provide Information Required Under a Written Notice

6. If an Authorised Officer writes to ask for information recipients are legally obliged, under section 109B of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, to provide it, in the form it has been requested and within the time specified.
7. If a recipient of such a request has difficulty meeting any part of a request for information, they may contact the Authorised Officer to explain why, and make alternative arrangements for the provision of the information.
8. The legal duty to provide information is not discharged until this has been done.

Verbal Requests for Information by Visit

9. Under section 109C. an Authorised Officer may seek entry to any premises (including a home) where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that a business or trade is being carried out. They are also allowed to enter any premises (including a home) where there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that documents relating to a trade or business are kept.
10. An Authorised Officer may also seek entry to any premises:

- From which a personal or occupational pension scheme is being administered or where documents relating to the administration of such a scheme are being kept.
 - Where a person or someone acting on their behalf, who has paid compensation in relation to an accident, injury or disease to be found.
11. Requests to enter such premises will only be made where the Authorised Officer has reasonable grounds to believe that benefit fraud is being or has been committed by one or more persons.
 12. When visiting premises, the Authorised Officer will state who they are and will show their certificate of authorisation and identity card.
 13. The authorisation allows the officer to be accompanied by any other person or persons they think fit to accompany them, for the purpose of their visit. If other persons are accompanying the Authorised Officer, they will be identified, and all visiting officers will carry identification, which will be presented for inspection.
 14. Generally, Authorised Officers will give advance notice of their intention to visit. However, in certain circumstances this is not always appropriate, and visits may be made without prior notification.
 15. Officers will only enter premises with consent (that is, the owner, the occupier, or their representative). They should never try to force an entry – they have no legal powers to do so. If after entry has been granted, the officers are asked to leave before they have completed their enquiries, they will do so. However, where an officer(s) considers that such action has been taken to obstruct their enquiries or to conceal evidence, they will consider criminal proceedings.
 16. Under section 111 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, it is an offence to intentionally delay or obstruct an Authorised Officer in the exercise of their powers under this Act.
 17. When visiting premises, an authorised officer and any person accompanying them, may inspect the premises and question, with the consent of the owner, occupier, or their representative, anyone they find there. They do not have the power to detain people.
 18. The Authorised Officer may require anyone on the premises to produce documents, make photocopies of documents or extracts of documents or to create computer or other printouts. An Authorised Officer will only seek access to records that are considered to be connected with payments, and employment details, of employees, sub-contractors, recipients of commission payments, etc.
 19. If absolutely necessary (for example because there is no photocopier available), the officer may lawfully remove documents from the premises visited. The Authorised Officer will explain why this is necessary. Any original documents that are removed will be returned as soon as possible. A receipt will be given for any documents that need to be removed temporarily.
 20. Documents will not be seized and removed by force. They will only be removed with consent.

The Statutory Duty to Provide Information

21. No-one is required to provide any information (whether documentary or otherwise) that tends to incriminate them, or if they are married, or their spouse.
22. Otherwise, whether a request by an Authorised Officer is made in writing or verbally and in person, there is a statutory duty to provide that information, including any documentation that is requested.
23. Under section 111 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, it is an offence to intentionally delay or obstruct Authorised Officers in the exercise of their powers or to refuse, or neglect, to:
 - answer any questions;
 - furnish any information;
 - produce any documentswhen required to do so by an Authorised Officer. Obstruction includes circumstances where false or inaccurate information is provided in response to enquiries.
24. The Data Protection Act 1998 will not be contravened by providing information requested by Authorised Officers. Under section 35(1) of the Data Protection Act 1998 exemption from the non-disclosure provisions exists where a statutory provision, such as section 109B and C of the Social Security Administration Act 1992, requires the supply of information.
25. Failure to meet in full requests for information could result in criminal proceedings being instigated. The maximum penalty is a maximum fine, fixed at level 3, currently set at £1000, with a continuing penalty of £40 per day (under section 111(2) of the Social Security Administration Act 1992).
26. If information is not provided the Authorised Officer should explain the statutory powers and the potential consequences of non-compliance.

At the end of Local Authority enquiries

27. Where an Authorised Officer has made enquiries, and obtained information notification of any further action, that is being taken, will be made as soon as possible. When the enquiry has been concluded notification of that action will also be made.

Complaints

If you have grounds for any complaint about how Authorised Officers have used their section 109 powers, or the reasonableness of their actions, when obtaining information arise please write to the Head of Financial Services at Bromsgrove District Council.

Most complaints can be settled by contact with the Manager in this way, and it is the most effective way of putting things right. However if this does not provide a satisfactory outcome the complaint will be passed to the Professional Standards Unit for Counter-Fraud Investigations, who will send a reply as soon as possible. An acknowledgement of receipt of the complaint will be sent within 10 working days. The Professional Standards Unit may seek legal advice before replying in full. Their address is:

The Professional Standards Unit
Counter Fraud Investigation Branch
Fifth Floor West
Trevelyan Square
Leeds LS1 6EB

Independent legal advice may be sought at any time. The local Citizens Advice Bureau can assist in deciding whom to contact. Their locations and telephone numbers can be found in the local telephone directory.

This does not affect the right to seek assistance from a Member of Parliament to refer a complaint to the independent Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration, commonly known as the "Ombudsman". Further information is available from:

The Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration (The Ombudsman)
19th Floor
Millbank Tower
Millbank
London SW1P 4QP

Tel: 020 7217 4163
Fax: 020 7217 4160

Disclaimer

Please note this Code of Practice gives general guidance only and should not be regarded as a complete and authoritative statement of the law. If you do not understand any of the contents of the Code you may wish to seek independent advice.

Feedback Form

Please Return to:

Mr Leigh Butler

Revenues and Benefits Manager

Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
B60 1AA

FROM:

COMMENT: