



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 4TH APRIL, 2007 AT 6.00 PM**

**THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE**

**AGENDA**

MEMBERS: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader),  
Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader),  
Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., B. L. Fuller C.B.E. Q.F.S.M.,  
Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, 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 Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 7th March 2007 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Matters arising from the Minutes
5. Public Questions
6. To receive the Minutes of the Local Development Framework Working Group dated 28th March 2007 (to follow)
7. To receive the Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Management Board dated 23rd March 2007 (to follow)
8. To receive the Minutes of the Scrutiny Steering Board dated 6th March 2007 (Pages 7 - 10)
9. Car Parking Scrutiny Report (Pages 11 - 54)
10. Watercourses Scrutiny Report (Pages 55 - 76)
11. Flytipping Scrutiny Report (Pages 77 - 82)

12. Capital Strategy 2007-2010 (Pages 83 - 150)
13. Improvement Plan Exception Report (January 2007) (Pages 151 - 172)
14. Choice-Based Lettings Scheme - Update (Pages 173 - 186)
15. De-commissioning of Hostels - Progress Report and Revised Strategy (Pages 187 - 196)
16. District Council's Emergency Plan (Pages 197 - 200)
17. Bromsgrove Rovers (Pages 201 - 204)
18. Parcels for Armed Forces Overseas (Pages 205 - 208)

K. DICKS  
Acting Chief Executive

The Council House  
Burcot Lane  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B60 1AA

26<sup>th</sup> March 2007

# Agenda Item 3

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 7TH MARCH, 2007

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Executive Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Executive Leader), Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, Mrs. M. M. T. Taylor and P. J. Whittaker.

Observers: Councillors Mrs. S. J. Baxter, Mrs. J. D. Luck, P. M. McDonald and N. Psirides JP.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. H. Bennett, Mrs. C. Felton and Ms. K. Firth.

#### 169/06 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor B. L. Fuller C.B.E., Q.F.S.M.

#### 170/06 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2007 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the Meeting be approved and confirmed as a correct record, subject to the correction of the declaration of interest set out in Minute No. 159/06 (Discretionary Rate Relief Policy) to state Wythall Village Hall Committee.

#### 171/06 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

There were no matters arising.

#### 172/06 AUDIT BOARD

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Audit Board held on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2007 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting be noted and the recommendations be approved.

#### 173/06 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2007 were submitted.

With reference to Minute No. 68/08 (Integrated Financial/Performance Management Report – Quarter 3 2006/07), the Chairman of the Performance Management Board drew particular attention to the following issues:

➤ Shortfall of income from Dolphin Centre Health & Fitness Activities

Board Members had expressed concerns over an apparent lack of operational controls within the Dolphin Centre.

➤ Refuse Collection Overspend

Board Members had expressed concern over extra costs associated with the Faun refuse vehicles and had agreed that the Cabinet be requested to carry out a thorough investigation into the total costs associated with Faun vehicles.

➤ HSBC Bank

Following a recent presentation to Members by Postwatch Midlands which had highlighted that HSBC did not allow its customers banking facilities via Post Offices, Board Members had agreed to request the Cabinet to examine the Council's position in this regard, insofar as our social responsibility was concerned to the local community and various stakeholders. The Board had also agreed to request the Cabinet to ask the appropriate officers to review the Council's Procurement Policy and to consider developing a corporate Social Responsibility Policy for the Council.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted and the recommendations be approved;
- (b) that the relevant Portfolio Holders look into the three items referred to above and report back to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

174/06 **SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 6<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> February 2007 were submitted.

**RESOLVED:** that the Minutes of the Meeting be noted.

175/06 **FLYTIPPING SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Cabinet considered recommendations made by the Scrutiny Steering Board based on the report of the Task Group set up to scrutinise issues relating to flytipping. The Leader acknowledged the work undertaken by the Task Group and asked the Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board to thank the Task Group for its efforts in undertaking a good exercise. During the discussion he also asked the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management to liaise with the County Council to ensure that its publicity for the Household Waste Site permit scheme trial had covered all areas in the Bromsgrove District.

**RESOLVED:** that the recommendations contained within the Flytipping Task Group be approved, subject to officers reporting back to Members on their viability and affordability.

176/06 **ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 2005/06**

The Cabinet gave consideration to the Annual External Audit Report for 2005/06. During the discussion it was acknowledged that a number of the recommendations had already been or were in the process of being implemented.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the Annual External Audit Report for 2005/06 be accepted;
- (b) that the management response to the recommendations set out in the Annual External Audit Report for 2005/06 be endorsed.

177/06 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (DECEMBER 2006)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception Report as at December 2006. During the discussion the Leader commented that the format of the report was now clear and user-friendly and should remain unchanged. The Portfolio Holder for Human Resources and Legal and Democratic Services advised that the training needs analysis of Members would be put back until after the Local Elections so that the needs of new Members could be taken into account.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report, together with the corrective action being undertaken be approved;
- (b) that it be noted that 89.5% of the Improvement Plan is on target, 7% is one month behind and 3.5% is over one month behind.

178/06 **INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE AND FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - 3RD QUARTER 2006/07**

The Cabinet considered an integrated performance and financial monitoring report for the third quarter of 2006/07. At the request of the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management reported on the overspend situation with regard to Street Scene and Waste Management services and it was noted that the target income for these services had been reduced as part of the recently approved Medium Term Financial Plan.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that it be noted that 52% of indicators are improving or stable as at 31 December 2006 (68% if those indicators that cannot be reported on are excluded) which represents a small increase on last month's figures and is the same as at quarter 2;
- (b) that it be noted that 47% of indicators are achieving their targets at December 2006 (61% if those indicators that cannot be reported on are excluded), an improvement of 2 percentage points over November and a considerable improvement over the figure of 39% at quarter 2;

- (c) that it be noted that 70% of indicators are projected to outturn on or above target at the year-end (75% if those indicators that cannot be reported on are excluded), compared to 59% in November. This particular analysis was only introduced in October 2006, so comparison to quarter 2 is not possible;
- (d) that it be noted that the projected outturn position in relation to other authorities (by comparing projected outturn to the quartile positions) is a significant improvement over last year, and that there is a 22% reduction in the number of indicators in the bottom two quartiles;
- (e) that the potential areas for concern set out in section 4.7 of the report and the corrective action being taken be noted;
- (f) that the revenue financial underspend from April – December 2006 to budget of £331,000 be noted;
- (g) that the predicted revenue financial overspend of £65,000 be noted and that Heads of Service be requested to reduce the overspends where appropriate;
- (h) that the use of General Fund Revenue Balances and earmarked reserves be noted;
- (i) that the capital underspend of £1.098m against the Profiled Capital Budget to December 2006 be noted, together with the progress made on capital schemes.

**179/06 REVISED RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a revised Risk Management Strategy. It was acknowledged that there was a need for risk management to be embedded within the organisation.

**RESOLVED:** that the revised Risk Management Strategy as set out in the appendix to the report be approved.

**180/06 REVISED CONFIDENTIAL REPORTING CODE**

Consideration was given to a revised Confidential Reporting Code which would apply to all staff working for the Council. The Code aimed to encourage staff to feel confident in raising any serious concerns and to provide a sound mechanism for reporting and responding to such concerns.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revised Confidential Reporting Code as set out in the appendix to the report be approved;
- (b) that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be given delegated authority to amend the Code following the necessary consultation with the Trade Unions and any other relevant bodies.

**181/06 REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING AT PLANNING COMMITTEE**

Having considered a report on the success of the trial public speaking facility at meetings of the Planning Committee, it was

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that Meetings of the Planning Committee continue to commence at 2.00 p.m.;
- (b) that the approach taken by other local authorities in notifying interested parties of the opportunity to speak at the Committee meetings be investigated and incorporated into the Council's relevant processes as a benchmark of standard (or best) practice; and
- (c) that the public speaking facility be continued and reviewed again in twelve months time.

The meeting closed at 7.22 pm

Chairman

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# Agenda Item 8

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD

TUESDAY, 6TH MARCH 2007 AT 6.00 PM

**PRESENT:** Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell JP (Chairman), C. J. K. Wilson (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. M. Boswell, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. A. E. Doyle, J. T. Duddy, W. R. Newnes, S. R. Peters, N. Psirides JP, S. P. Shannon and C. J. Tidmarsh

**Observers:** Councillors G. N. Denaro, Mrs. K. M. Gall and Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP

**Officers:** B. Roots, P. Street, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. S. Sellers and Miss D. McCarthy

#### 106/06 APOLOGIES

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

#### 107/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

In relation to agenda item 5 (Car Parking Scrutiny Report), the following declarations of interest were made:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Nature of Interest</u>
Mrs. J. M. Boswell	Personal. Entitled to a concessionary bus pass.
Miss D. H. Campbell JP	Personal. A concessionary car permit holder.
Mrs. A. E. Doyle	Personal. Entitled to a concessionary bus pass.
N. Psirides JP	Personal. Entitled to a concessionary bus pass.
C. J. Tidmarsh	Personal. Entitled to a concessionary bus pass and wife is a Blue Badge holder.
C. J. K. Wilson	Personal. Entitled to a concessionary bus pass.

No whipping arrangements were made.

#### 108/06 MINUTES - 6TH FEBRUARY 2007

The minutes of the Meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 6th February 2007 were submitted.

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

#### 109/06 MINUTES - 15TH FEBRUARY 2007

The minutes of the Special Meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 15th February 2007 were submitted.

The Board took the opportunity to thank the Corporate Director (Services) for the letter he had sent to the Department of Trade and Industry on behalf of members.

Members also noted the list of post offices located in the Bromsgrove Constituency which had been provided by Postwatch Midlands stating which were classified as rural and which were urban. It was noted that some post offices that were previously classified as urban had been reclassified as rural.

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

110/06 **CAR PARKING SCRUTINY REPORT**

The Chairman of the Car Parking Task Group, Councillor G. N, Denaro, presented the Car Parking Scrutiny Report to members of the Board.

There was a discussion on the report and the Chairman of the Task Group answered all the questions put to him by the Board and clarified points as requested. It was confirmed that the figures within the report had been provided by the Council's Transport and Engineering Officer and had been checked by Financial Services.

It was stated that the Budget approved at the recent Council Meeting might impact on some of the recommendations contained within the report.

Members thanked the Chairman of the Task Group for all his work.

**RESOLVED**: that the report be approved and submitted to the Executive Cabinet requesting recommendations be approved and implemented.

111/06 **WATERCOURSES SCRUTINY REPORT**

Councillor Miss D. H. Campbell JP, Chairman of the Watercourses Task Group, presented the Watercourses Scrutiny Report to members of the Board. It was pointed out that the Task Group had mainly concentrated on the Bromsgrove Town Centre.

The Chairman reminded members that a bid for funding for improvement and maintenance work on watercourses had been included in the Medium Term Financial Plan as a medium pressure; however, at the Executive Cabinet Meeting on 21st February 2007, it was recommended that only unavoidable and high pressures be approved which had subsequently been agreed at the recent Meeting of the Council.

Various suggestions were made by members of the Board which included emphasising to the Executive Cabinet that as the town centre was one of the Council's priorities, funding could be made available for the maintenance of the brook situated in the town centre. Other suggestions included working in partnership with an organisation from the voluntary sector which could be eligible to apply for a grant for a project such as maintenance of watercourses and working in partnership with local schools.

It was highlighted that there was some concern that previous reports had not been acted upon and this had been referred to in the last recommendation within the report.

It was put to the Board that it might be possible that some recommendations could be implemented by officers and would cost officer time only.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) that a further recommendation be included in the cover report to the Executive Cabinet that officers be requested to devise an action plan on how recommendations contained within the report could be implemented using officer time only and built into their work programme; and
- (ii) that, subject to the inclusion of (i) above, the report be approved and submitted to the Executive Cabinet requesting recommendations be approved and implemented.

112/06 **SCRUTINY PROPOSALS**

Members of the Board considered the two scrutiny proposals relating to refuse and recycling which had been submitted. It was pointed out that in a meeting with the Corporate Director (Services) and the proposers, wording to encompass both scrutiny proposals had been agreed as stated in paragraph 3.3 of the report.

A discussion ensued on the various options outlined within the report on the way forward. Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Waste Management and Chairman of the Advisory Group for the Service, was invited to speak to inform the Board of the remit of the Advisory Group.

**RESOLVED:** that the composite scrutiny proposal stated in paragraph 3.3 of the report be considered by the Board at its first meeting after the Local Elections which is scheduled to be held on 5th June 2007.

113/06 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the future work of the Scrutiny Steering Board.

A copy of the Scrutiny Report compiled by Worcestershire County Council's Highways Scrutiny Task Group was distributed to members for their information. Members were informed that the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor Mrs. E. B. Tucker, would be attending the next meeting of the Board.

**RESOLVED:**

- (i) that, if after reading the scrutiny report distributed, members had any questions to put to the Chairman of Worcestershire County Council's Highways Scrutiny Task Group, they forward them to the Committee Services Officer by Friday 23rd March 2007; and
- (ii) that the following Work Programme be approved –

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Date of Consideration</b>	<b>Other Information</b>
Health Scrutiny Update	Quarterly (March/June/Sept/Dec)  <i>Next report delayed until 3rd April 2007</i>	Councillor D. McGrath, as this Council's representative on Worcestershire County Council's Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide an update report.
Worcestershire County Council's Highways Maintenance Scrutiny Task Group	3rd April 2007	Chairman of the Worcestershire County Council's Highways Scrutiny Task Group to attend to provide information to the Board on the work carried out by the Task Group.
High Hedges Legislation	3rd April 2007	Report relating to the cost incurred by other local authorities. The service at BDC to be reviewed in April 2007.
Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Proposal	5th June 2007	As agreed at the Board Meeting in March, the composite scrutiny proposal relating to refuse and recycling be considered by the Board as an area to be scrutinised.
Culture and Community Services – Task Group Review	June 2007	Task Group to reconvene for a review meeting June 2007.
Use of Consultants – Task Group Review	July 2007	Task Group to reconvene for a review meeting July 2007.
BDHT – Task Group Review	December 2007	Task Group to reconvene for a review meeting December 2007.

114/06 **ITEMS TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE EXECUTIVE CABINET**

Consideration was given to the items on the agenda for the Executive Cabinet meeting which was scheduled to be held on 7th March 2007.

**RESOLVED:** that no comments be put forward by the Board on any items due to be considered by the Executive Cabinet at its next meeting.

The meeting closed at 7.20 pm

Chairman

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

#### CAR PARKING TASK GROUP

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs. M.A. Sherrey J.P.
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell, Head of Street Scene and Waste Management Services

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations of the Car Parking Task Group which are contained within the attached report and which have been approved by the Scrutiny Steering Board.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are requested to approve and implement the recommendations contained within the attached report, bearing in mind that the budget approved at the recent Council meeting might impact on some of the recommendations.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following the Council's original decision to increase charges for Parking Permits and to introduce parking charges for the disabled and persons over 65, the Leaders of two Opposition Groups on the Council produced independent reports on these issues, which triggered the decision to set up the Task Group.
- 3.2 During their deliberations, the Task Group heard evidence from representatives of the town traders, the disabled, senior citizens, the general public, as well as comments from a number of Council officers.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The implementation of the recommendations contained within the body of the report would have a significant effect on the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan. However, in this regard, Members will no doubt recall that, following the submission of a petition in relation to charges for car parking

permits to a recent meeting, it was agreed that officers be requested to investigate means by which the budget figure of £50,000 “could be utilised to ensure the Council’s car park facilities may be used to best advantage by disabled persons and all sections of the community. “

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Possible amendment(s) to Car Parking Order.

**6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

6.1 The objectives meet the Council's Vision, Values and Objectives insofar as there has been community influence, and accords with the Council’s priority of Customer Service, Reputation and Performance..

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Significant loss of current income.

**8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 See Report.

**9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	Reduced risk of confrontations between Offender and Parking Attendant.
Policy	None
Environmental	None
Equalities and Diversity	Yes

**10. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service <i>(i.e. your own HoS)</i>	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**11. APPENDICES**

See Report

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

# SCRUTINY REPORT

## CAR PARKING

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## SCRUTINY REPORT

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Task Group Report –  
Scrutiny Steering Board  
March 2007

ANDY JESSOP - Committee Services Officer

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

**6<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2007**

**CAR PARKING TASK GROUP**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs. M.A. Sherrey J.P.
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell, Head of Street Scene and Waste Management Services

**1. MEMBERS**

Councillors G.N. Denaro (Chairman), Mrs. R.L. Dent, G.H.R. Hulett, D. McGrath, N. Psirides J.P., S.P. Shannon and C.J. Tidmarsh.

**2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006, it was agreed that a Task Group should be set up to look at issues relating to car parking, and the Task Group's terms of reference (see Appendix 1), which were compiled by the appointed Chairman, Councillor G.N. Denaro, were approved by the Board at its meeting held on the 5<sup>th</sup> September 2006, subject to the proviso that the Economic Development Officer be included on the scrutiny exercise scoping checklist as an officer to be invited to give evidence. At its first meeting, held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006, the terms of reference were reiterated and approved.

**3. BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS**

Following the Council's original decision to increase charges for Parking Permits, and to introduce parking charges for the disabled and persons over 65, the Leaders of two Opposition Groups on the Council produced independent reports on these issues, and copies of these reports are enclosed (see Appendix 2 – Note: In addition, Councillor G.H.R. Hulett, a member of the Task Group, has also prepared a report on the concept of "the disabled" and a copy of his report is also appended thereto).

It was evident from the outset that, with an over-subscription of Members wanting to serve on the Task Group, the subject would be a difficult and emotive one to scrutinise, given all the different aspects involved, and Members would like to place on record their thanks to the many organisations, individuals and officers who either wrote, e-mailed or gave us their views individually, face-to-face. The Group were also aware of the

need to view Car Parking as a service, not an income stream. It is therefore pertinent to quote the Strategic Aims from the Council's Car Parking Strategy document, as follows:-

"The parking service is operated at no overall cost to the Council, with any surplus being used to fund the CCTV and Shopmobility functions.

The Council will review the parking service (and any charges for that service) annually in line with occupancy patterns, customer satisfaction surveys, income, and strategic aims.

The Council will work in partnership with the County Council and Police in the adoption and management of on-street parking enforcement.

The Council will seek to improve the operational efficiency and security of car parks.

The Council will enforce Car Parking Orders by regular and active management patrols of all parking places.

The Council will work with the County Council to introduce residents parking zones."

It was conceded that some of the areas under discussion were worthy of further review but which did not come under the remit of the Group, e.g. Cost of CCTV and Camera Renewal; Incidents recorded by Car Park Cameras; De-Criminalisation of Parking; Bromsgrove Town Centre Development Review, and other Car Parking spaces/issues throughout the District.

Evidence was gathered from both local and national sources, and also from Government Departments. There has been a total of ten meetings, and at seven of these the Group has heard evidence from a number of speakers, including (inter-alia) Town Traders representatives, the disabled, the elderly, the general public (see Appendix 3), and, from the Council, the Acting Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Services), and the Economic Development Officer, and copies of all other written representations received are appended in the following Sections of the Report.

Having collated and considered all the above information, members set an initial list of priority areas for recommendation, and charged the Council's Transport and Engineering Officer with the task of "costing up" these proposals in consultation with Financial Services, and, over the Group's last two meetings, members re-examined and refined a number of these proposals with the benefit of the additional detailed financial information.

It should be noted that the Chairman reminded Members of financial restrictions, but a majority of the Group were adamant that recommendations should go forward without any restraint. Accordingly, estimated costs are given at each recommendation without comment, although recognised as a best estimate of a likely effect.

#### 4. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

1 (a) That, as the bulk of evidence received by the Task Group was overwhelmingly in support of this proposal, and as we are aware of other collected evidence also in favour, **the car parking charges recently introduced for the disabled be abolished.**

The question of charging for the Disabled was undoubtedly the most contentious issue the Task Group had to deal with. It is perhaps unfortunate that guidance from the Department of Transport is silent on this issue. Practice varies wildly but a recent survey of Blue Badge holders in Telford on this question brought a response rate of 66%, ( 332 drivers) who were against the suggestion that Blue Badge holders should pay a set charge-however, 23% were in favour, with 8% undecided (see Appendix 4). Despite the charges being imposed to support Shopmobility, which has been successful, the majority of comments received were in favour of the recommendation, and this has been re-inforced by a Petition recently submitted to the Council with many signatures attested.

Costs: Change Signage     £8k  
          Loss of Income     £50k

1 (b) The difficulties faced by disabled drivers and/or parents of disabled children were also acknowledged, and, accordingly, it was further recommended **that Blue Badge holders be allowed double the time currently allowed in the Car Parking Order before any penalties are levied.**

The question of sufficient space and time for disabled persons to visit the Town Centre was of great concern to Blue Badge holders. All members of the Task Group were particularly concerned by the problems experienced by mothers with disabled children where time for shopping can vary greatly from day to day (see Appendix 5). Greater care should be given to the siting of Disabled Spaces, as comments made to the Group about difficulties could be avoided with a little forethought.

In view of the points outlined to us by Blue Badge holders, the Group feel this recommendation is worthy at little cost.

Costs: Change Signage     £2k  
          Loss of Income     £10k? (not known)

2. that, as a means of encouraging drivers to use the town centre, **Sunday charging be abolished, along with charges after 6.00 p.m. on weekdays.**

This recommendation is made on the grounds that we need to encourage more trade into the town centre, and implementation would give a boost to the town centre prior to the Town Centre Development Review.

Costs: Sunday	£43.2k
Evening	£88k (approx.)

3. It is considered that the current charging policy might encourage drivers who were over the legal alcohol limit to risk driving home late in the evening (rather than leave their vehicle overnight and have to collect it before 8.00 a.m. the following day to avoid incurring a fine for exceeding their allotted time), and, accordingly, it is suggested that the **Overnight charging policy should be reviewed.**

There was considerable confusion regarding late night parking procedures, and it was necessary for one member of the Group to feed a machine just after midnight in an attempt to clarify the situation. It should be possible to amend machines to allow a further “buffer” for people to collect their vehicles. An internal review would allow various options and costs to be evaluated (see Appendix 6).

Costs: Indeterminate at present.

4. That, in an endeavour to attract increased usage of the Churchfields multi-storey car park, the **annual charge for a permit for the Hanover Street car park be increased to a more reasonable amount** (i.e. somewhat closer to the actual income per space than that which is currently charged), **and that, in addition, the multi-storey car park be included in the scheme as an annual permit option for the sum of £200** (which equates to £0.83 pence per day).

At present, the Multi-Storey Car Park is very much under-used, despite being well served by CCTV. Various “solutions” have been put forward, including discussions with ASDA, which have not proceeded. Use as a Sunday Market has also been suggested. The Group’s recommendation is aimed at making the Multi-Storey more attractive to all-day parkers by offering an annual season ticket at a discounted rate which equates to under £5 per week. This should free up all-day spaces at the Market Street Car Park.

Costs: Possible partial loss due to Incentives.

5. Currently, **ticket machines do not give change** and, with Pay-on-Foot costs too prohibitive in the present financial climate, other options could include (i) **allow machines to give full value of time paid**, even if it exceeds the time limit (i.e. a ticket costing £1 would give 100 minutes, not 60); (ii) **consideration should be given to “remote payment” by mobile ‘phone** (which would cut handling costs, over time). In this regard, it was felt **that a review should be carried out in relation to the number of hours available on certain car parks.**

Costs: £10k (approx.)

6. It was considered that, with a growing and ageing population, and with a finite number of parking spaces, the present system was not sustainable (see Appendix 7), and in view of the changes to the state pension age and recent equality and diversity legislation, the **Concessionary Permits system be reviewed by officers with a report to Executive Cabinet to follow in due course.**

The following types of permit are available at present:-

<u>Name</u>	<u>Cost (£)</u>	<u>Valid for</u>	<u>Valid On</u>
Concessionary	30	12 months	All Car Parks
Annual	300	12 months	All Long Stay Car Pks
Quarterly	75	3 months	All Long Stay Car Pks
Annual (Stourbridge Road)	200	12 months	Stourbridge Road
Quarterly (Stourbridge Road)	50	3 months	Stourbridge Road

Costs: Loss of Income of approx. £300k (at present).

7. That, in an effort to improve the accessibility of the Market to short stay shoppers at the Hanover Street car park, (where traders have complained that regular customers could not park as long stay parkers were occupying available spaces), **discussions be held with Bromsgrove School with a view to possibly utilising additional parking facilities at the old Perry Hall Hotel site, and that, if successful, consideration be given to the removal of long stay parking at this site.**

The Group were concerned to receive reports from Market traders on the unavailability of parking spaces both for loading/unloading and subsequently for customer parking due to the take-up of the all-day/long stay bays (see Appendix 8). Complaints were also received from coach passengers (particularly the elderly and the disabled) travelling into neighbouring towns in the late afternoon/evening, that they could not park conveniently for the Bus Station, (i.e. in the Recreation Road South Car Park) due to the hours restrictions. Perhaps these could be extended after 5 p.m., for example?

**8. That every effort be made to continue and improve the Shopmobility service currently provided by the Council despite restraints due to facility size.**

Resulting from a discussion on this issue, it was agreed that a sign would be erected adjacent to the three dedicated Shopmobility parking spaces drawing attention to the fact that Blue Badge holders were permitted to park in these spaces outside of the normal operating hours. **Consideration should also be given to the possibility of using additional, volunteer assistance** on the scheme, although it is accepted that numbers will be restricted due to accommodation problems.

**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Possible amendment(s) to Car Parking Order.

**6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives meet the Council's Vision, Values and Objectives insofar as there has been Community influence, and accords with the Council's priority of Customer Service, Reputation and Performance.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Significant loss of current income.

**8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

See Report.

**9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues:	None
Personnel Implications:	Possible
Governance/Performance Management:	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: Reduced risk of confrontations between Offender and Parking Attendant	
Policy:	None
Environmental:	None
Equalities and Diversity:	Yes

## 10. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

## 11. APPENDICES

See Report.

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

### CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Andy Jessop

E Mail: andy.jessop@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel: (01527) 881406



## SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

This form is to assist members to scope the scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

When the Board decides to set up a Task Group to scrutinise a particular subject, the appointed Chairman of the Task Group should complete this checklist. Completed forms will be considered by the Board and by the Task Group as a whole at the Task Group's first meeting.

- General Subject Area to be Scrutinised: *Car Parking Charges*
- Specific Subject to be Scrutinised: *To examine the Council's Car Park Policy with particular reference to dispensations in the context of the Council's medium term financial plan and with a view to making recommendations for improvement. The Task Group will take particular account of the effects of car parking policy on the economic well-being of the town centre and the needs and expectations of all those in the community.*
- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence?  YES  NO
- Should any Officers be invited to give evidence?  YES  NO  
If yes, state name and/or post title:.....  
*Transport and Engineering Officer*  
*Head of Financial Services*
- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence?  YES  NO  
If so, who and from which organisations?.....  
*Initially - ASDA / Age Concern / Bromark (Bromsgrove Marketing Partnership)*
- Should the Task Group receive evidence from other sources other than witnesses?  YES  NO  
If so, what information should the Task Group wish to see and from which sources should it be gathered?.....  
*Department of Transport Consultation Document Responses*  
*Other Councils' policies*
- Should a period of public consultation form part of the Scrutiny exercise?  YES  NO  
If so, on what should the public be consulted?  
*Ask for comments / suggestions / recommendations*

• Have other authorities carried out similar scrutiny exercises? YES NO

If so, which authorities? TELFORD / RUSHCLIFFE

What were their conclusions and what can we learn from them?

TO BE USTAINED

• Will the Scrutiny exercise cross the District boundary? YES NO

If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate?

• Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group whilst the Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? YES NO

If so, who and from which organisations?

• What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the scrutiny exercise?

3 units approx

• Approximate number of Task Group Meetings? 6

Signed: [Signature]

Chairman of behalf of the: CAR PARKS Task Group

Date: 18/08/06

Please return completed forms to:  
Miss D. McCarthy  
Committee Services Officer  
Legal and Democratic Services  
Bromsgrove District Council

## Leader of the Oppositions Report

Calling upon the Scrutiny Steering Board to  
set up a Task Group to investigate the  
reinstatement of free parking permits for the  
disabled and senior citizens

## Background and Methodology

Until May 1st 2006 the position regarding parking permits were a £5.15 charge for those between 60 and 64 and free parking for the disabled and those 65 and over.

The council through its budgetary process put forward many proposals for raising finance and saving money. One of those proposals was to charge the disabled and senior citizens for parking permits: the proposed charge £30.

In addition, a full charge of £30 is applied when residents change their vehicle and have to re-register.

The Council did not consult with the relevant organisations as part of its budgetary process and failed to consult with the relevant organisations until the 14th June 2006, some six weeks after its introduction.

## Findings

There was no evidence that a Risk Management Assessment had been carried out. Had there been the following would have been highlighted:

- The distance disabled people have to walk to get to the parking meter.
- The drop in trade to local businesses.
- The increase in Blue Badge Holders parking on double yellow lines.
- The need to put notices up warning Blue Badge Holders as they enter the car parks. Not doing this has led to a number receiving fines because they were not aware of the changes.
- Only three spaces for disabled to park when using the Mobility Scheme

The Councils approach has highlighted their complete disregard in relation to quality and diversity.

- Those in wheelchairs find it difficult to use public transport, thus free bus passes are of no use. Hence they have been discriminated by having the equivalent taken off them.
- Guilty of ageism in selecting this clientele group to raise finance distinct to others.
- Never recognised as a service
- Economically putting pressure on a selective group to go elsewhere.

Requested the following on 22nd May 2006:

1. How many residents between 60 and 64 years of age (numbers if possible of disabled separate) over the last three years purchased parking permits (each year separate).
2. The number of those 65 and over who received free parking permits (numbers of disabled separate if possible) over the last three years (each year separate).
3. How many permits were applied for in the month of May in the last three years (disabled separate if possible) and 2006 May.

This information was not obtainable: "it would appear that we do not currently hold all this information". (K Dicks)

This gives weight behind the claim that no research was carried out into the consequences of such action, but more importantly the fact that the decision was not based on any quantitative or qualitative analysis.

Support for the withdrawal of the charges:

1. Stoke Parish Council have called upon the Council to withdraw the charges.
2. 'SPIN' were not consulted and feel the charges discriminate against senior citizens' and specially the disabled who are in wheel chairs and cannot use public transport (buses)
3. Age Concern – Not consulted
4. Thousands of people have signed a petition to have the charges withdrawn.
5. Access – not consulted and feel the charges should be withdrawn. They emphasise that the disabled now have 'Zero Choice' as many cannot use public transport.

#### Conclusion

1. The Council never carried out any sort of analysis and acted without any evidential support.
2. It introduced charges to raise monies, although, it admits it had no idea of the number of permits issued. Therefore, it was ill thought out and made on the hoof.
3. It failed local residents in its complete disregard in relation to quality and diversity.
4. It fails to recognise that this is a service; it just sees it as an opportunity to raise money from the most vulnerable clientele group.
5. No regard for the local economy and in particular to ASDA who have experienced a drop in sales since the introduction of such charges.

The Leader in the press has stated: "the pain of making the books balance should be spread across the whole of the community". This surely is a contradiction in terms.

The Council is out of touch with the local communities and cannot communicate in any meaningful way. The Council has failed to recognise that this clientele group are in receipt of low incomes and cannot afford the full charges.

Bromsgrove has a high number of residents without pensions because of the closure of Garringtons, and ex Rover employees are having reduced pensions, yet the Council seems to be in denial on this point.

Finally, residents have made it clear that they feel the decision was petty, spiteful, unnecessary and singled out the most vulnerable to punish for the Council's failings in keeping their house in order.

Councillor P. M. McDonald

**“The true test of a civilised society is how it treats its less fortunate members.”**

### **The Motions:**

**1. “That this Council supports a request to ask the Executive Cabinet to rescind the recently imposed charges relating to the holders of Car Parking Passes for the Disabled.”**

**2. “That the Executive Cabinet be asked to withdraw the recently imposed ‘Administrative Charge’ for the issue of car parking permits in respect of appropriately qualified pensioners within the District.”**

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### **Background:**

Up until May 2006 the parking permit administration charge was fixed at £5.15 for those between the ages of 60 and 64. Those aged 65 and over as well as the disabled enjoyed free car parking. There are currently 21,500 Bromsgrove District residents who are over 60, approximately 24% of the district’s population. This is the second highest figure in the county. About 6,000 permits have been issued – most of which are renewed annually.

### **Main discussion:**

The proposed hike from £5.15 to £30 will increase the council’s income by a maximum of £150,000 – assuming all 6,000 present permit holders do renew, but at what social cost? In addition the disabled will have to pay the going rate for the time their vehicle remains stationary in one of the council’s car parks. It is not possible to estimate the additional revenue that this charge will generate. In taking these decisions the Cabinet has failed to consider the following issues:

1. The authority did not consult adequately. Indeed it has been claimed that various old people's organisations had been consulted and agreed to the proposals. Which organisations are these? Echoes of turkeys voting for Christmas perhaps ! It is confirmed that Bromsgrove Age Concern had not been consulted.
2. Many of the more severely disabled are physically unable to use public transport and are therefore forced to meet the parking charges.
3. It is generally accepted that the supermarket mostly affected by these charges, ASDA, has seen its turnover go down year on year, since the last lot of parking charges were introduced. These new charges will further add to this downward spiral.
4. Charging the disabled to park makes a mockery of the "caring" image the council is trying to foster after spending nearly £15,000 to provide a Shopmobility facility with the purchase of a number of electric scooters, and powered and manual wheelchairs. This figure excludes the cost of housing these wheelchairs etc. and it excludes the staff costs and running costs of approximately £50,000 pa.
5. Accusations of Ageism and disregard of the "Equality and Diversity" issues can be legitimately made against the council as well as hitting hard those who are financially disadvantaged.
6. The financially disadvantaged are a very real issue and may well be more numerous in Bromsgrove than elsewhere. We need to take into account the Garrington and Rover closures, which produced pensioners with either reduced pensions or no pensions at all.
7. By its actions, and its decision to impose parking charges on the disabled as well as increasing the permit fee sixfold this council sees the provision of car parking as a fund raising activity – pure and simple. It does not see the provision of car parking as a service to the community as whole. Car parking provision is not seen as a means of encouraging residents to patronise local businesses and it is not seen as a service to the most vulnerable in our society.

The plethora of letters, which appeared in the local press when these decisions were first announced included the following comments:



- Free car parking facilities in Rubery, Merry Hill, Redditch on Sundays and elsewhere attract shoppers away from Bromsgrove town centre.
- Real deprivation being caused by these increases to people with very tight budgets.
- The indignity of having to prop oneself up against the machine to feed it with coins when one is totally reliant on walking aids even to stand up.

Trying to remember the registration number and having to walk all the way back to the car, whilst suffering from a chronic heart condition – itself restricting the distance that can be walked - to check that the correct information is punched into the machine.

The advantage of having ASDA in the town centre – keeps the town centre alive. Any threat to ASDA packing up, as a result of ever increasing car parking charges, will be a serious threat to the viability of the town centre.

- Making up for the financial shortcomings of the council by hitting the elderly and the most vulnerable.
- Blue Badge holders have been fined as many are unaware of the changes. This is blamed on the inadequacy of warning notices – telling everyone of the new arrangements.

The introduction of these charges to the disabled have been compared with the ease in which councillors awarded themselves the recent ‘obscene’ increases in their allowances as one correspondent put it. There appeared to be no difficulty in raiding the reserves to accommodate the councillors’ increases but no such thought had been given in taking the same action to rescind these new charges.

**In conclusion:**

Most of the above points have been reinforced by callers at our monthly surgeries in the town centre.

One severely handicapped lady – who has to rely on two walking aids to stand up - was in tears, when she described her predicament to us.

**On behalf of the Independents I would strongly urge the Scrutiny Board to refer back to the Executive Cabinet for the reconsideration of the twin issues covered by these two motions.**

- **Firstly to cancel the sixfold increase of the annual permit and reduce it to its former level – of £5.15.**
- **Secondly to scrap the car parking charges for the disabled forthwith.**

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Sources:

1. Planning & Highways Committee 12.02.01
2. Policy & Resources Committee 22.02.01
3. Executive Cabinet 03.12.03
4. Executive Cabinet 26.10.05
5. Executive Cabinet 22.02.06
6. The Bromsgrove Advertiser 21.06.06
7. The Bromsgrove Standard 23.06.06 and 30.06.06

THE ETHOS

The Peoples general conception of “ disabled “ in relation to parking is one of being wheelchair bound, they have very little understanding of how being disabled affects ones ability to walk any reasonable distance , which is the supreme test of all applications for a Blue Badge. There are many causes of a medical nature that warrant The provision of the Badge, many being less than obvious, there are also some misconceptions one being that the Badge relates to the car, not so, it is purely the person who holds the Badge which of course means that to exercise their right to park in a disabled bay, or where appropriate, on yellow lines they only need to be a passenger in the car.

Some of the medical reasons relate to Heart Conditions, Breathing problems, Arthritis in all its forms, Prosthetics, Impaired sight, Mental disorders, these are just a sample of Blue Badge Provisions.

The duty of B.D.C. in providing disabled parking is to make sufficient spaces available as close to the principle shopping areas as is possible to reduce the distance disabled persons have to walk, the Council has made significant moves to do that, but the decision to charge the disabled and over 60's to park has at one fell swoop hugely increased the time and distance they must walk in addition to the cost. In an effort to highlight that the following is a typical example of a visit to the town using the MULTI STOREY Car Park and not having a permit.

Enter car park find disabled space on ground floor, one available to the far right of park facing A.S.D.A. put Badges on dash walk to far end to parking ticket machine Acquire ticket return to car put it on dash, walk to the store put pound in shopping trolley walk around store complete shopping walk trolley to car unload trolley take trolley to nearest and only trolley bay at the far end of park retrieve pound return to car, completely Knackered.

If there is a need to then walk to the High street shops Banks etc: one is in too much pain to summon up the will to do so, of course one can then drive to another car park which is then full and still some distance to walk.

GEOFF HULETT.  
COUNCILLOR CATSHILL.

## **Bromsgrove District Council Car Parking Consultation October 2006**

**Opinions expressed by Age Concern Bromsgrove & District clients during the period 09/10/06 - 19/10/06**

**Time limits - 2 hour maximum and abolition of short time tickets in some car parks**

“1 hr is too long for simple jobs such as going to the bank or PO, 2 hrs is too short for say a solicitors or hair appointment. It would be better if you could buy a 30 minute ticket at all car parks and the maximum stay was 3 hours not 2”

“The maximum time you can park doesn't take into account how long it takes to get out of my car, get my wheelchair out get to the machine get a ticket, get back to my car and so on , all before I can actually start to do my shopping”

“The new charges have just forced people to park on the streets – there are some roads around Bromsgrove that you almost can't get down now because of parked cars. There are also more people parking on double yellow lines than before”

“late night fees [up to 10.00] are an absolute rip off – other places I go the charges stop at 6.00 or 7.00”

There are places where blue badge holders have to buy a ticket but can then park for 1 hour longer than the time on the ticket”

“ At New Street station you get 20 minutes free and then can pay for another 20 minutes if you need it but you have to get a ticket when you first park. If they can do something like that then why can't Bromsgrove”

### **Bureaucracy**

“they say the charge is because it costs to set someone up on their computer system. But when I get a new pass next year I will already be on the system so why should it cost the same again”

### **Location of machines and related information**

“the regulations should be much clearer and they should be where you drive in and not just by the machines”

“The Dolphin car park in particular is very steep and difficult for disabled people who have to go backwards and forwards to get a ticket and place it on their car”

“How does someone with a blue badge know whether the charges apply to them or not - there is nothing about this on the information boards by the machines. If I go to Pershore it says quite clearly that 'these charges do not apply to blue badge holders', even if it said the opposite at least I would know”

### **Passing tickets on**

“Once I have paid for a ticket for a certain amount of time that time is paid for. I should be able to pass that ticket on to someone else to use until the time is up”

## Cost of permits

“ the jump from £5.15/£0.00 to £30.00 for everybody is too big a jump and discriminates against older people. And why £30 anyway for a simple admin job, it could have been say £15 or even £20 and it would have still caused problem because no body likes charges to increase, but it wouldn't have been so bad. It would have been better if they had kept different levels say 60 - 65 say £15, 66 - 75 say £10, over 75 say £5 that would have been fairer”

“charging another £30 for a new pass if you change your car during the year is wicked, I know its been changed and you don't lose the other months now but it still means that you have to pay out £60 in the one year”

“Parking in Bromsgrove is a lot more expensive than in Redditch”

## Drop in trade

“there are 11 empty shops in the High Street already, even the charity shops are closing”

“previously it used to be hard to find a parking space at ASDA now I can always find one. That must mean that less people are using it. The same thing applies at the Market car park”

“I've been told that at the Wolverhampton ASDA and at Waitrose in Droitwich there are free disabled bays, if they can do it why can't Bromsgrove”

“My family and I have changed my shopping now we go to Morrisons or Sommerfield. If other people are doing the same surely that must mean that the high Street shops will have fewer people who will go to them as well as the supermarket”

“Sunday parking is free in Redditch and there is a far better selection of shops so it is worth driving over there. The same applies to Rubery on a Saturday”

“I no longer shop at ASDA because of the charges, I'd rather drive to TESCO in Redditch”

“The shopping selection in Bromsgrove is already not good. Having to pay more for parking just makes people think even more about shopping some where else. In Kidderminster and in Birmingham I can park free with my Blue Badge”

“I've heard that at least one Support Group that used to meet in Bromsgrove are looking to meet somewhere else because they are 'livid' about the new parking charges. That means even more people who might have shopped in Bromsgrove while they were here”

## Bus Passes

“People say that instead of paying for a parking permit you can have a bus pass free. But a bus pass is no use if the buses go at the wrong time or there aren't any buses at all”

“If you are fit you can have a free bus pass. If you are disabled and can't use a bus easily then you have to pay for a parking permit, that's not fair”

*Keith Sherman, Chief Officer, Age Concern Bromsgrove & District, 51 Windsor Street, B60 2BJ  
Tel: 01527 871840, Email: [acbromsgrove@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:acbromsgrove@tiscali.co.uk), Website: [www.acbromsgrove.org.uk](http://www.acbromsgrove.org.uk)*

## CAR PARKING CHARGES IN BROMSGROVE

Taking into account all that's been written and said, and bearing in mind the Council's need to increase revenue in a manner fair to all, that will be easy to implement, I offer for consideration the following.

1. Discontinue all permits.
2. Allow long stay on all Car Parks
3. Make the Recreation Ground, and the Market Car Parks, Pay on Foot 'Shoppers' Car Parks. Allow free parking for the first hour but load the charge after four hours to discourage all day parking.
4. To accommodate those who park all day 5 or 6 days a week, 'sell' them allocated and marked parking places. These could be on all the other car parks the. The spaces would be marked eg. R.R. 01, a notice of authorisation to park in that space would be given to the purchaser this would be displayed, a very heavy fine would be made on unauthorised parking, possibly towing away or clamping !
5. For disabled drivers, free spaces would be made available on all suitable car parks. For pay on foot car parks, only the first hour would be free. The marked spaces should be close to the pay station.

By adjusting the level of charges for each car park you could effectively 'manage' car parking, for example out of centre car parks could be charged less.

Such a scheme, if implemented, would require less labour from car park attendants and council staff, but could raise the required revenue in a 'fair' way.



Sent: 02 November 2006 12:22  
To: Scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk  
Cc: [REDACTED]  
Subject: [REDACTED]

I had a phone call from [REDACTED] this morning. He wanted me to forward his views to the Car Parking Task Force.

"I am a resident of Bromsgrove and although I am only 53, I am disabled with congestive heart disease which limits my mobility considerably, hence I am a Blue Badge holder.

I am very disgruntled about the introduction of parking charges for Blue Badge holders in the Bromsgrove District – my sister is 62 and able bodied and can get about easily but qualifies for a £30.00 a year parking permit, whereas I, with my mobility difficulties have the inconvenience of getting to a pay machine and queuing up to pay. The alternative would be to buy a permit for £305.00 a year – that's from £0.00 to £305.00! I discussed this with Steve Martin, The Transport and Engineering Officer who said I could apply for a £30.00 a year permit but only if agree to be means tested which I find insulting and demeaning!

"The Bromsgrove District is the only District within Worcestershire County which has introduced these charges and I understand that the revenue raised is to fund the cost of the Shopmobility Scheme which runs from the Asda site. I would like to know who was asked about what disabled people like me want, whether we need free parking or mobility vehicles?

"I want to stress that the introduction of these charges makes me less likely to visit Bromsgrove and spend my money here – I have always chopped at Asda but now will be inclined to go elsewhere to shop."

Fiona Scott  
Equalities Assistant



Tel: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  
**Bromsgrove**  
**Worcestershire**  
[REDACTED]

Councillor Geoff Denaro  
Bromsgrove District Council  
The Council House  
Burcot Lane  
Bromsgrove B60 1AA

14 August 2006

Dear Councillor Denaro

### **Car Parking Charges**

Firstly, please accept my apologies for writing directly to you in this matter but in this instance I feel there is a need to put pen to paper which is unusual as I normally adopt the C'est la vie approach.

I was very pleased to see that the council has eventually decided to set up a Task Group to look at the issue of car parking charges again with particular reference to elderly and disabled drivers. In my opinion, the press coverage has generally concentrated on the issues being experienced for the over 60's who now have to purchase a permit for £30 although this was previously free or cost £5.15. However, it does appear that the position of disabled individuals **under the age of 60** has largely gone unreported

Accordingly, the reason for writing to you is to raise the profile for individuals under the age of 60 (and hopefully, the discussions regarding this category) that hold Blue Badges as they are disabled. You will no doubt be aware that previously free parking was provided and in my opinion the current situation is deplorable for the following reasons:

- To target what can be considered to be the most vulnerable people is scandalous and clearly goes against the recent initiatives or legislation to help the disabled integrate more fully into society.
- The council has offered no alternative in these circumstances but insists that the normal car parking charges must be paid or a £300 annual permit must be purchased. Simply put, either way this is an enormous increase in charges and far exceeds the widely reported increase of up to £30.
- The district council has totally ignored the physical and financial constraints that disabled people face. Furthermore, some disabled individuals have very challenging behaviour and therefore, the previous arrangements to park quickly and safely was essential for them and their carers.
- It ignores the detrimental impact to Bromsgrove and the businesses still trading.

Having queried the situation with the council the response was simply, this is the position although you can always park on double yellow lines, in accordance with the guidelines laid down, which seems a very strange suggestion bearing in mind that Bromsgrove is getting more and more gridlocked.

Thank you for taking the opportunity to read this letter and needless to say, should you wish to discuss this matter further then please do not hesitate to contact me. Also, may I wish you every success in resolving what can only be considered a 'poison chalice' task.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED SIGNATURE]



My name is [REDACTED] I have worked for Bromsgrove council for the past 18 months as car park attendant. When I tell people what I do as a career they think ALL you do is book people and make comments like I don't know how you sleep at night or have you no conscience. What they do not realise is that giving people an excess charge is only part of our job. I do want to stress these are my feelings and have not been influenced by any other source. So I am here today to try and explain some other duties carried out by the dreaded car park attendant.

**KEEP CHECK ON CARS IE CRIMINAL DAMAGE ACCIDENTS DOGS LEFT IN CARS**

**REPORT TO CCTV ANY PROBLEMS AROUND TOWN EG MANHOLE COVERS MISSING, SMASHED WINDOWS ALARMS GOING OFF ON CARS OR BUILDINGS**

**HELP PEOPLE TO USE MACHINES**

**IF MACHINES NOT WORKING TRY AND SOLVE PROBLEM IF CANT RING ENGINEER**

**HELP PEOPLE CARRY SHOPPING BACK TO CAR IF STRUGGLING**

**HELP ELDERLY OR LESS ABLED ACROSS ROAD**

**HELP FIND VEHICLES IF CANT REMEMBER WHERE PARKED THEM**

**WE GET A LOT OF ELDERLY PEOPLE WANT TO STOP AND TALK TO US & THEY LIVE ON THEIR OWN AND GET LONELY**

**GIVE DIRECTIONS**

**I ALWAYS TRY AND WALK AROUND CARPARKS WITH A SMILE AS IF I LOOK HAPPY IT MAKES OTHER PEOPLE HAPPY I ALSO TRY AND BE WELL MANNERED AND WELL DRESSED AT ALL TIMES**

**INSTEAD OF SEEING A PERSON LEAVE A CAR FOR EG HAS PARKED OVER 2 SPACES I WOULD GO UP TO THE PERSON AND TELL THEM SO THAT THEY COULD RECTIFY THE PROBLEM THIS WAY THEY GO AWAY HAPPY AND I DON'T HAVE TO BOOK THEM**

*If see permit nearly out of date, will tell person.*

*I have had an experience today with front of Market.*

**I WILL ALWAYS GIVE THE PERSON THE CHANCE TO BUY A TICKET IF THEY RETURN TO THE VEHICLE BEFORE I HAVE WRITTEN OUT THE EXCESS CHARGE.**

**. WE ALSO WORK WITH THE POLICE IN AN EVENING SOMETIMES DUE TO THE PROBLEM OF BOY RACERS ON CAR PARKS WHICH UPSET RESIDENTS**

**AS WE ARE ALL AWARE SINCE MAY WE HAVE HAD A LOT OF BAD PUBLICITY OVER THE CAR PARK CHARGES .I HAVE MADE A LIST OF THE MAIN GRIVIENCES OF THE PEOPLE OF BROMSGROVE**

**SUNDAY/PAYMENTS;- NO SHOPS OPEN ONLY USED FOR CHURCH GOERS AND DOLPHIN CTR AND ASDA THIS IS OUR WORST DAY FOR ABUSE AS PEOPLE GET ANNOYED WHEN THEY CAN GO TO REDDITCH AND HAVE FREE PARKING AND HAVE THE SHOPS OPEN**

**EVENING CHARGES GOING TO THE PUB HAD TO MANY DRINKS WANT TO LEAVE THE CAR UNTIL TOMORROW IF THEY BUY A ALL DAY TICKET AT 21.55 @ £2.10 IT WILL ONLY GIVE YOU 5 MINS PEOPLE SAY IT SHOULD GIVE THEM 12HRS**

**JUST POPPING IN FOR 5 MINS PEOPLE GET QUITE ANNOYED WHEN THEY JUST WANT TO POP TO THE TAKEAWAY OR THE LOTTERY WHICH IS ONLY GOING TO TAKE 5 MINUTES**

**CHANGE GIVEN BY MACHINES OR EXTRA TIME GIVEN I DO TRY AND CARRY CHANGE WITH ME BUT BY THE END OF THE DAY IT IS RUNNING A LITTLE LOW PEOPLE HAVE SUGGESTED WE SHOULD GIVE EXTRA MINUTES FOR MONEY GIVEN I DO TRY AND CARRY CHANGE BUT BY THE END OF MY SHIFT I AM STARTING TO RUN LOW.**

**PENSIONER PERMITS MOST PENSIONERS STILL NOT HAPPY MOST PEOPLE DO NOT RETIRE NOW UNTIL THE AGE OF 65 SO PERHAPS COULD PUT AGE FOR PERMIT UP TO 65**

**THEN SHOULD NOT PAY FOR A PERMIT BUT IS ONLY VALID BETWEEN SUN – THUS IF WANT TO USE CARPARKS ANY OTHER TIME MUST BUY TICKET**

**DISABLED PARKING SO MANY PEOPLE ARE AGAINST THIS AND I SOMETIMES FEEL SO GUILTY WHEN I SEE SEVERLEY DISABLED PEOPLE TRYING TO STRUGGLE TO MACHINES, IF I AM AROUND I WILL ALWAYS HELP BUT THIS IS NOT ALWAYS POSSIBLE**

**THE PROBLEM IS THIS SERVICE HAS BEEN SO ABUSED THAT A LOT OF PEOPLE ARE USING BLUE BADGES WHICH ARE FOR RELATIVES EVEN WHEN THE RELATIVES ARE NOT IN THE CAR. IF I DO MEET PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN BROMSGROVE AND REALLY ARE HAVING PROBLEMS WITH THERE DISABILITY AND GETTING TO MACHINES OR CANNOT AFFORD THE FULL PAYMENT OF A PERMIT I WILL GIVE THEM STEVE MARTINS ADDRESS AND TELL THEM TO WRITE AND EXPLAIN THE SITUATION TO HIM AND IF HE FEELS THEY HAVE A VALID CASE THEY MAY BE ABLE TO GET A PERMIT AT A REDUCED RATE.**

**I WOULD JUST LIKE TO FINISH THIS TALK BY SAYING THE PEOPLE OF BROMSGROVE ARE THE NICEST FRIENDLIEST PEOPLE I HAVE EVER MET. EVEN THOUGH I AM A CAR PARK ATTENDANT I GET PEOPLE STOPPING FOR CHATS, BEEPING HORNS AND WAVING AS THEY GO BY**

**.THE MARKET AT HANOVER STREET IS LIKE A COMMUNITY IN ITSELF IF YOU GO THERE ON OPENING DAYS EVERYBODY GOES JUST FOR A CHAT AND A CUP OF TEA IT DOESN'T MATTER WHO YOU ARE THEY WILL ALWAYS MAKE YOU WELCOME. I FEEL A REAL PRIDE WORKING WITH THESE WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO STILL HAVE TRADITIONS WHICH ARE NOW NOT EASILY FOUND. I HAVE HEARD A LOT OF PEOPLE SAYING BROMSGROVE IS 20 YEARS BEHIND EVERYWHERE ELSE BUT THIS IS WHAT VISITORS TO BROMSGROVE LOVE I HAVE**

**MET A LOT OF PEOPLE WHO ARE IN THE TOWN LOOKING FOR PROPERTY IN THE AREA AND THEY ASK ME WHATS ITS LIKE I ALWAYS SAY IT IS WONDERFUL PEOPLE STILL HAVE RESPECT FOR EACH OTHER AND WORK TOGETHER AND I AM VERY PROUD TO BE PART OF IT.**

**WELL THAT IS THE END OF MY VERSION OF HOW TO BE A CAR PARK ATTENDANT I HOPE I HAVENT OFFENDED ANYONE WITH MY HONESTY.AND WOULD LIKE TO THANK EVERYONE FOR THEIR TIME AND FOR LISTENING**

Q12: The car parks owned by the Council are expensive to maintain. What contribution should Blue Badge holders make towards these costs?

	Strongly agree %	Agree %	Total agree %	Neither agree nor disagree %	Disagree %	Strongly disagree %	Total disagree %	Don't know %	Total	Net agreement score
Blue Badge holders should pay the set charges	4.5%	18.7%	23.2%	9.6%	44.0%	22.3%	66.3%	0.9%	332	-43.1
Blue Badge holders on low incomes should pay a reduced charge	21.7%	33.9%	55.7%	10.4%	20.5%	13.1%	33.6%	0.3%	327	22.1
Blue Badge holders on low incomes should not be charged	37.3%	31.9%	69.3%	11.9%	14.9%	3.0%	17.9%	0.9%	335	51.4
Council owned car parks should be free to all users and funded purely through Council Tax	42.7%	23.0%	65.8%	10.4%	15.6%	5.8%	21.4%	2.5%	365	44.4

## Steve Martin

**From:** [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 02 October 2006 11:56  
**To:** Steve Martin  
**Cc:** External Margaret Sherrey  
**Subject:** Disabled parking

Hi Steve,

Here are my concerns regarding disabled parking in Bromsgrove:

- The disabled parking fee was introduced to support funding for the Shop Mobility Scheme, which at present, does not serve the whole disabled community; especially the children. The shop's range seems more suited to the elderly who are competent enough to drive the scooters and adults who need to be pushed in wheelchairs. There are no smaller wheel chairs for children or any other type of trolley with a chair, suitable for an older child to sit in.
- The change in time limit to 2hrs short stay car parks, particularly Parkside being the nearest to the shops, is simply not enough time to get around with a wheel chair and a child/adult who may have challenging behaviour issues. This puts added pressure and stress on their carer to clock watch for fear of a fine.
- If you purchase an all day ticket you should be able to freely move between car parks to suit your needs without having to re-pay regardless of short/long stay conditions (time concessions would be required for blue badge holders)
- Being disabled is not just about getting around there can be mental/learning difficulties, behavioural/emotional issues as well as the more obvious physical disabilities and it is about looking at the bigger picture and thinking of carer's needs as well

I appreciate that this is a rather delicate matter that needs to be handled with a degree of sensitivity by the council. Many parents and carers are not only battling with life but also their own issues and acceptance of their child/relatives condition. They can be struggling with many roles; parent, partner, colleague whilst also providing valuable care which often goes un-noticed until there is a problem. If a child/person is severely disabled they themselves may be unaware of any changes and it falls to their carer's to now remember to get the ticket. I feel what I am trying to say is that it's not just about the council collecting in money it is about taking a responsible look at the consequence of these actions and to reflect on whether they are actually benefiting the people they are trying to serve.

I would be happy to help further as long as my busy schedule allows and I can be contacted on [REDACTED]

Many Thanks  
[REDACTED]



## Points for Consideration

- The present parking system is not consumer friendly
- Two hours is not enough time to shop at leisure
- Time limit results in stressed shoppers; clockwatching
- Short stay meters cannot be re-fed so you have to move - if one is having lunch very inconvenient
- The multi-storey car park is little known and under used

## Disability Angle

- Disabled bays have been re-painted (why and at what cost?) but there are still no signs in front of them to inform blue badge holders that they have to pay
- Carer's needs are being ignored especially in the case of learning difficulty and challenging behaviour
- New fees for disabled are to fund Shop Mobility Scheme? If so it does not serve the whole disabled community especially the children
- If disabled people have a Motability car then all their DLA mobility component is taken up paying for it so parking fees are an added financial burden
- For some disabled people (especially learning difficulty) shopping is a treat and a day out

## Possible Suggestions

- Longer stay/concessions for disabled and please do not fine them
- When people come to Bromsgrove we need to welcome them and keep them there as long as possible - good business sense
- Open and Honest - admit to making a mistake in local paper and advertise a "No fee week" week to welcome shoppers back
- Make the short stay 4 hours with some all day spaces for convenience of shoppers
- Multi-storey could be £1 a day to encourage outside use as in local staff/businesses
- Asda could have the multi-storey as their free car park
- Some supermarkets refund car park fees if customers spend over £10.00 in store
-

Welcome to Bromsgrove - Or perhaps not!

It's no longer a pleasure to visit the small market town of Bromsgrove. It can only be described as a stressful experience – a constant race against the clock to ensure a £30 donation to Bromsgrove District Council coffers is not requested.

Upon arrival it's necessary to know there and then how long each queue is going to be in every shop/bank/building society. If this calculation is misjudged or you happen to meet an old friend/feel thirsty/see something unusual, the cost may be great. You only need to go over the time by a few minutes to get a car parking ticket.

Having spoken to many shopkeepers, visitors and shoppers in town the complaint is obvious and common. Becoming aware that time is running out when half way through choosing an item/eating a meal/having a drink/getting a hair cut is a huge problem for shopkeepers and customers alike. All thoughts of purchasing are abandoned and a particularly bad taste is left in the mouths of the restaurant customers.

Disabled and elderly visitors to the town have their own complaints.

Driving along Worcester Road after 6pm in the evening there are cars parked and hovering in the parking bays, on the double yellow lines and on the pavement. To pay 60p to collect a £1 portion of chips should not have to be an option. Perhaps a 15-minute free period after 6pm to allow the collection of takeaways should be considered. It would certainly be very popular and may prevent accidents not to mention damage to the kerbstones.

Evening visitors to Bromsgrove may be tempted to enjoy an extra drink or two and then take a taxi home but the thought of having to return at an unearthly hour the next day to retrieve the car may be encouraging drink driving. An option to be able to pay for the next morning would be welcomed as would a flat evening rate from 6pm or even free parking after 6pm – especially in view of the movement towards late night shopping having to be considered by many businesses.

Surely we are all aiming to achieve a bustling, prosperous, thriving and popular Bromsgrove. Please do not underestimate how vital car parking is to this.

Bromsgrove needs to have, as it already does, a selection of parking options. What is currently lacking is a parking system where the shopper/visitor pays for the time used.

It is our understanding that despite the amount of money received from car parking fees and fines the funds are not available for a traditional 'pay on foot' system. Perhaps Bromsgrove District Council should lead the way and be innovative. Old traditions could be returned to – after all Bromsgrove is a Market Town. With a fresh and friendly back to basics approach tickets could be issued at a manned kiosk and time spent paid for on exit.

Let us work together to make Bromsgrove the Market Town it deserves to be.

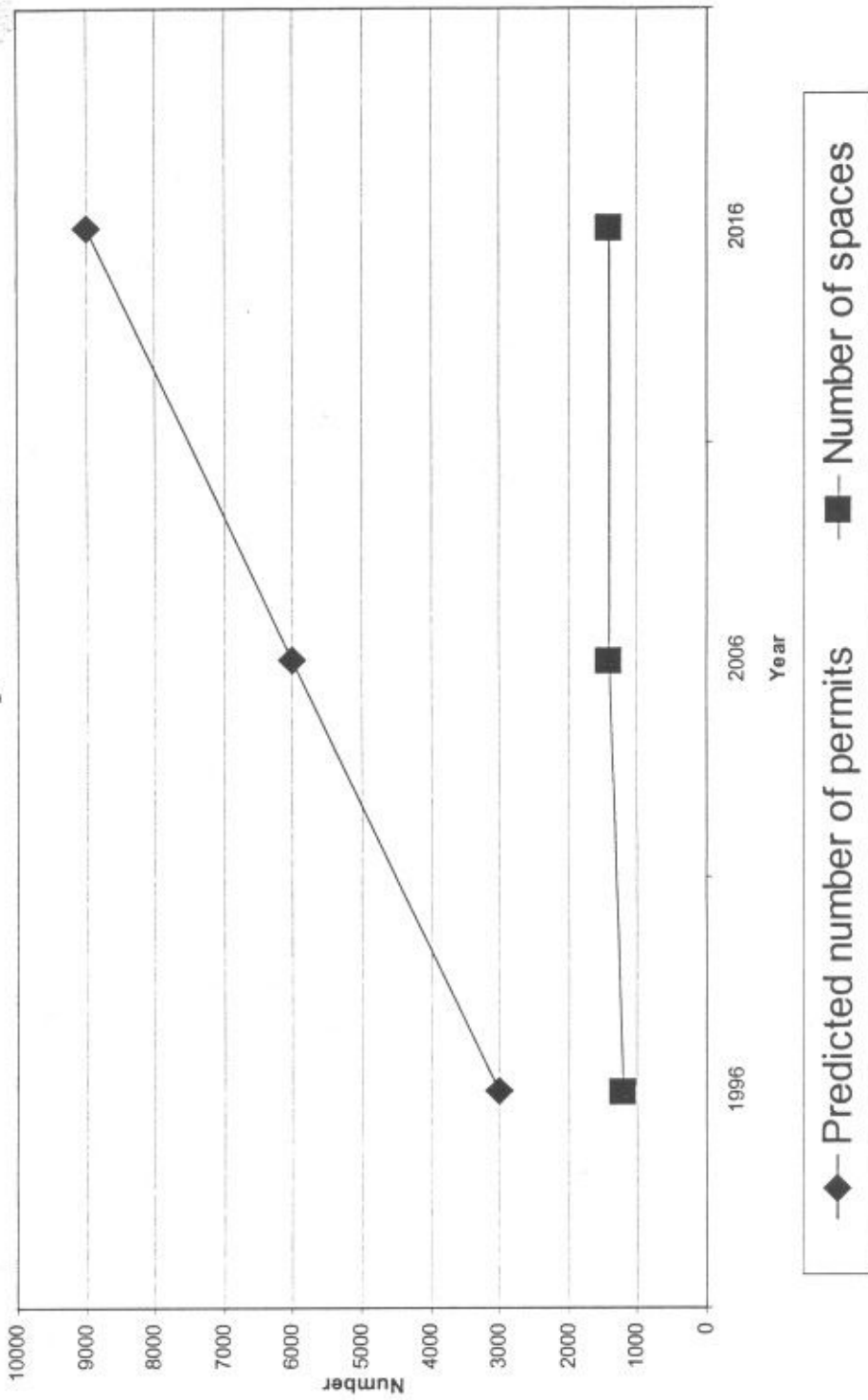
Anita Mears

Owner/Partner The Clothes Rail Etc...

Chairperson BroMark (Bromsgrove Marketing Partnership)



# Concessionary Permit Issue



Dear Sir/Madam.

21. 8.06

Prof Standard 11/8/06 Page 3 Car-parking.

Out of all the confusion & bitterness re the car park charges at Bromsgrove can I just mention that we get a lot of comment over the new parking policy. Thus I offer my time and comment yet again....

We spend a lot of money advertising what is the longest-running weekly Antique Collection Fair (27 years) in the Midlands at the Market Hall. We also run an event on the Town Sunday every month.

If Bromsgrove wants to attract visitors they should contact the people such as ourselves who do this for a living over many years. A major blow was delivered against tourism by the onset of Sunday parking charges by the Council.

Now I notice the sign outside the Market Hall which allows unloading in the disabled spaces prior to 9am has disappeared - any ideas?

We organised various events for many years (and still do) eg. one stately home had no organisation in an event attracting 18000 people in two days.

As someone said who came back to visit after twenty years in Canada Bromsgrove is still an ordinary market town with some charm.

Thus to attract an ever-demanding public a medium of judgement should be used in the degree of penalising people visiting and contributing to the well-being of the town. Diplomacy and common sense in the beginning can save a lot of wasted time on forums etc with the time and effort being put to better use for an allowed better solution to the important issues.

Yours sincerely,  
WALTER FRANK

Bromsgrove 17th August

26.9.06

Dear Sir/Madam

Your view '23rd August' of the main letter of the 'experienced eye' can I draw attention to the unique (unmentioned) event in the Market Hall which has added to the visitor level over the last 27 years.

Bromsgrove has the longest-running, weekly Antique / Collectors Fair in the Midlands - a record unsurpassed. Thus visitors come in from Stafford, Worcester, the Black Country, ~~where~~ normally this would not occur <sup>unless</sup> they had reason to visit the area in the normal course of events.

Fifteen thousand leaflets are printed by Humberley Jarvis plus weekly/monthly adverts in newspapers in Kidderminster, Halesowen, Stourbridge, Hinstock, Metcham and the large Express & Star catchment area.

Our long-established other events also promote the Bromsgrove area - I talked to people from Australia yesterday who got our leaflet from Codsall (Wichampton) Tourist Centre.

Thousands of pounds have been generated by both the Wednesday (weekly) and Sunday (monthly) Antique Fairs.

Long may it continue and with some diplomacy and forethought on such as parking charges more important matters can have some precedence.

Yours sincerely

Alan WATKINSON  
FW16B

Dear Sir/Madam,

1.9.06

- 1) On Sunday 27th Aug we organised de Antigua Fair in de Market Mall
- 2) At 8.10am two traffic wardens appeared to book (if possible) my first two stallholders. One stallholder was early having just come from hospital visiting her husband. She had been home a day for a week but made all effort to attend the Fair. She already had the requisite ticket on her car.

The other stallholder left her car for two minutes in the unloading bay (one of two by the Market) to find me to see where to park etc - not having done the Fair before. An argument ensued as the two wardens hurried in to book her - she was hysterical.... I told her to move her car onto the road (away from this awful situation) in Worcester have to ~~take~~ calm herself down.

- 3) During the week we have one warden - car park full. On a Bank Holiday (quiet) Sunday we have a warden + the main warden with a total of 15 cars on the car park!!!

4) The Fair attendance has dropped by 50% since paying for Sunday parking. I have spoken to people going for a meal who say that they now come to Bromsgrove very rarely because the limited time spoils the occasion of the meal.

5) Months ago the supervisor warden questioned a red notice on the market building which allowed stallholders to unload prior to 9am and then go to park (risked of having a tick to unload) that notice has applied for 12 years and formerly in the 'old market as well. In those months the sign remained even though the man said that 'he did not understand how it applied!!!' P/le saw 'explosives beware!' would it apply - as per 30 mph etc.

6) The red notice suddenly 'went' from the wall on the 23rd Aug approx. - vandals presumably said

Roger Munn - who has an extremely good job as Market Superintendent

7) I asked the head supervisor on the 27th Aug Sunday about the notice. "It was me" he said with an insolent grin of victory in line with national guidelines" he said.

8) I was amazed when I asked about people - Roger Munn, myself being told about this, and he said he told 'somebody'. Did he write to all concerned or 'somebody'.

9) Now then - I am on the 'pointed end' seeing so many people at all the venues, and they expect me to be the oracle. Including all venues I have 287 stallholders and thousands of customers - as I have said we have been in the Midlands the longest with these events

As someone said last Wednesday our events always set a vibrant tone to in this case an ordinary market town

From my point of view I have to waste a lot of unpaid time placating and keeping things afloat generally and making sure people all round get the message.

I hope that this is the last screed I have to do on such a straightforward subject which really has dropped Bomsgrove to the bottom of the league in the eyes of a lot of people.

10) On that Sunday the (two) vendors appeared every hour to a two-thirds empty car park. Sort the situation out because it will take a lot to get rid of the stigma.

11) I am now going to Parisbury's at Blacktooth - a town with a full, vibrant market and High Street no parking charges and two hours free parking.

May enforce the rules with diplomacy and care using a ~~modicum~~ <sup>modicum</sup> of judgement.

Really must go now!

Thank you  
Yours sincerely,  
R Munn

Waverley Jews

From: RT SHIM

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

13. 10. 06

To: A JESSOP Esq.

Dear Mr Jessop, Thank you for your attention and contacting me re BDC (a parking (Market))

- 1) Really the car park area is far small to have the whole area as 'long stay'. A large amount of trade has been lost because the casual 'short stay' customers cannot find a parking spot.
- 2) From the Antique Jew point of view the notice on the Market wall allowing traders (markets & antique) to use the two disabled bays for unloading prior to 9 am should be reinstated. It was removed not by vandals but by the supervising Traffic Warden without instruction or formal notice to anyone - not even Roger Mann - bad manners and a retrograde move. The sign had been there 12 years.
- 3) The Sunday Antique Jew (each month) like the one we have has suffered from parking alteration. Only 25% of the car park on Sunday is in use because there is very little to attract people into a market town on that day (which is usual).

People have stopped coming in to dine at various pubs because they cannot relax and enjoy because of the limited parking time. They go elsewhere to eat and to Classic & Shows etc which are myriad now.

Thus Sunday should go back to being Free Parking or very nominal fee, up to say three hours.

+1) When the Market Hall was built I was asked about views on all aspects including parking facilities and I suggested two storeys - one long & one short stay. Money came into the picture but my proposal was not adopted.



payments of its outlay and have a spin-off facility bringing movement and money into the town.

Two years ago a BDC Senior employee said it was a pity that the idea was never brought...

5) Yet again - not to be having but by weekly and Sunday Monthly Fairs at Bromsgrove have a bit of a unique position.

Weekly the Fair is the longest-running (26 years) in the Midlands - in fact there is virtually nothing on a weekly basis in most towns and cities in the Midlands of this type.

NB We have the oldest Antique Fair on a monthly basis at Kinver, the oldest, largest Best Fair in the Midlands (and the Country) at Kinver (but 26 years) and the only Best Fair in Worcestershire at Bewdley.

6) Basically we are in something of a recession and of course morale gets low and I suggest that anything positive from BDC would be welcomed in an area where

has been devastated by its surrounding loss of industry in the last few years - and of course Internet trading.

7) Our events are advertised nationwide and with such as Travel Keys in America who make holiday routes of interest for tourists going place-to-place in the country.

We do this for a living with some long standing reputation and hopefully we can have some positive policy to provide assistance and carry on.....

Thank you

Yours sincerely

Alvin Lowrey  
FOUR

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

#### WATERCOURSES TASK GROUP

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs. M.A. Sherrey J.P.
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell, Head of Street Scene and Waste Management Services

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the findings and recommendations of the Watercourses Task Group which are contained within the attached report and which have been approved by the Scrutiny Steering Board.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are requested to approve and implement the recommendations contained within the attached report, together with an additional recommendation made at the Scrutiny Steering Board meeting where officers were requested to devise an action plan on how the recommendations contained within the report could be implemented using officer time only and built into their work programme.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Following a number of incidences of flooding, together with concerns expressed over the untidy state of some of the watercourses throughout the district, the Task Group was formed to investigate ownerships, upkeep and maintenance, and this remit was extended by the Scrutiny Steering Board to include flooding, contamination and health issues.
- 3.2 During their deliberations, the Task Group heard evidence from representatives of the Environment Agency, the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, Worcestershire County Council, a local Biodiversity specialist, together with officers from within the Council

#### 4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

It should be noted that the enhancement of the Spadesbourne Brook was made a priority by the Task Group at the outset, and, in this regard, a provisional recommendation was submitted at the time of the budget bids for an additional £7,500 to be added to the Street Scene and Waste Management budget for immediate improvement and subsequent maintenance works, but as it was included in the Medium Term Financial Plan as a medium pressure, only unavoidable and high pressure bids gained approval

#### 5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Possible enforcement and/or prosecution issues.

#### 6. **CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

6.1 The objectives meet the Council's Vision, Values and Objectives insofar as, it accords with the Council's Objective Two (Environment).

#### 7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Health and Safety considerations will be paramount in any "clean-up" operations involving outside organisations.

#### 8. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 None.

#### 9. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	Possibly (see recommendation 13)
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998. This report has considered Sn. 17 of the CDA and the duty it imposes, and there are no implications arising from it.	
Policy	None
Environmental	Yes – visually and environmentally beneficial
Equalities and Diversity	Yes

## 10. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

## 11. APPENDICES

Terms of Reference  
Guide to Health & Safety at Work Requirements – Voluntary Workers  
Poster  
Leaflet

## 12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report of the Bromsgrove Society

### CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Andy Jessop  
E Mail:andy.jessop@bromsgrove.gov.uk  
Tel: (01527) 881406

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**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

# SCRUTINY REPORT

## WATERCOURSES

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## SCRUTINY REPORT

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Task Group Report –  
Scrutiny Steering Board  
March 2007

ANDY JESSOP - Committee Services Officer

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE WATERCOURSES TASK GROUP HELD IN  
THE CONFERENCE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BROMSGROVE  
ON 31st JANUARY 2007, AT 10.00 A.M.**

MEMBERS: Councillors Miss D.H. Campbell (Chairman), Mrs. K.M. Gall, S.R. Peters, N. Psirides J.P., C.R. Scurrall and C.J. Tidmarsh.

OFFICERS: Ms. H. Pankhurst, Messrs. J. Bailey and A. Jessop were also in attendance, as was Mr. J. Annan from the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust (by invitation)

**1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At the commencement of the meeting, Councillors Mrs. K.M. Gall and N. Psirides J.P. declared their respective personal interests in this topic insofar as they each have a brook at the bottom of their gardens. Also, Councillors Mrs. K.M. Gall and C.J. Tidmarsh declared their respective personal interests as they were members of the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust.

**2 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Task Group held on the 17th January 2007, were submitted and approved as a correct record.

**3 FINAL REPORT**

At the conclusion of the last meeting, Members requested that a list of recommendations be brought forward for discussion, and, accordingly, appended to these Notes is a draft Final Report based on the various issues which had been raised by the Task Group over their numerous meetings. Members gave due consideration to the draft Report and raised a number of additional suggested recommendations. On the basis that all the members of the Task Group were present, and that all the recommendations were considered individually (with additions, where appropriate), it was **AGREED** that, notwithstanding that the enclosed Appendix constitutes the "final version" of the draft Report, it be circulated to Members for one final time (with a cut-off date for comments and/or amendments) and, subject to their being no material changes, the Report be forwarded to the Scrutiny Steering Board for consideration at their March 2007 meeting.

The Meeting closed at 12 noon

**APPENDIX**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

**6<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2007**

**WATERCOURSES TASK GROUP**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs. M.A. Sherrey J.P.
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell, Head of Street Scene and Waste Management Services

**1. MEMBERS**

Councillors Miss D.H. Campbell J.P.(Chairman), Mrs. K.M. Gall, S.R. Peters N. Psirides J.P., C.R. Scurrall and C.J. Tidmarsh.

**2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2006, it was agreed that a Task Group should be established to scrutinise issues relating to watercourses throughout the District. The Task Group's terms of reference (see Appendix 1), which were compiled by the appointed Chairman, Councillor Miss D.H. Campbell J.P., were approved by the Board at its October meeting, subject to the proviso that flooding, contamination, and health issues be included in the scoping checklist as areas to investigate.. At the Group's meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2006, the terms of reference were reiterated and approved.

**3. BACKGROUND AND FINDINGS**

At the outset, by way of an introduction, John Bailey, an Engineering Technician at the Council, explained his role within the Council, and how his duties and responsibilities fitted in with those of the Environment Agency, the Worcestershire County Council, the Highways Partnership Unit and, to a lesser extent, Severn Trent Water. Members of the Task Group were given copies of maps covering twenty square miles of the District which highlighted Critical Ordinary Watercourses, now controlled as "Main" rivers (e.g. the Arrow and the Callowbrook), the Salwarpe (nominated as a Main river), and the Sugarbrook, Spadesbourne and Battlefield Brooks. Additional maps showing Watercourses with, so far as possible, boundaries indicating ownerships by the County Council (Highways and/or Education), this District Council and "others" were also distributed.

Members were advised that Main rivers were the responsibility of the Environment Agency, that Canals were the responsibility of British Waterways, and that Severn Trent were responsible for Sewers. Some ditches may be classed as Watercourses, if they had a “constant flow” of water passing through them, and open Watercourses, together with Culverted Watercourses that had not been adopted as part of the public sewerage system were not the responsibility of the District Council nor Severn Trent Water, but laid with the riparian owner (i.e. the owner of the land). Insofar as ownerships were concerned, it was noted that, in most cases where disputes arose between neighbours, these were private matters, but that, in the event of an impasse, it was sometimes necessary for the Council to serve notices and carry out the work “by default”. This process requires Committee approval. In the majority of cases, Watercourses formed a “natural” boundary, and common law indicates that persons have an interest up to the centre of the Watercourse as riparian owner, and as such, have a responsibility for the flow of water passing through their land.

These facts raised a concern with Members, and it was confirmed to them that if anyone had been involved in organised “clean-ups” in the past, they were, in fact, trespassing, and should have had the permission of the landowner(s), in case of dispute(s). To illustrate this (ownership) point, reference was made to that part of the Spadesbourne Brook which flows through the town centre by the Bus Station, part of which was the responsibility of the District Council, part County Council (i.e. the bridge) and that the area further down by Woolworths was in private ownership.

Members raised their concerns over the general appearance of the Spadesbourne by the Bus Station and felt that it was perceived by the public that the Council were neglecting its upkeep. It was stressed, however, that the weeds and vegetation present in the brook did act as a natural barrier assisting in the control of the flow of water, as well as acting as a natural habitat for wildlife, although it was conceded that there were some pernicious weeds that did need to be sprayed.

The Task Group met on six occasions, and discussions were held with the following who were invited to address the Group:

The Environment Agency  
Worcestershire Wildlife Trust  
Worcester County Council (Highways Agency)  
Health and Safety representatives  
Mr. Richard Gill, a local specialist in Ecological Surveys and Assessments  
Ms. Hayley Pankhurst, Local Plans, B.D.C. (Biodiversity)



In addition, all Parish Councils were contacted to ascertain whether there were any particular problem areas within their boundaries, and a number of issues raised were forwarded to the appropriate officer for attention. On the subject of Parish Councils, mention was made of the invaluable service provided in some Parishes by a "lengthsman", a part-time post which was funded by the County Council, and who was employed to check the state of the ditches and Watercourses within their area, and it was generally agreed that, should they not be aware, a letter be sent to all Parish Councils within the District drawing their attention to this service/facility.

During the discussion with the Environment Agency, Members were made aware of the Agency's responsibilities, i.e. with Main rivers, together with those critical Watercourses which have effectively become Main rivers, and although details of areas currently covered were clarified, it was noted that, with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007, a reorganisation would mean that Bromsgrove would fall into one of three new areas (Midlands West). It was generally agreed that the general public might well find it difficult to comprehend the demarcation between Authorities, and that, to overcome this confusion, a leaflet/map setting out the relevant information, would be advantageous.

As with the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency also gave a broad overview of their powers, duties and responsibilities, particularly with regard to drainage, highway surface water/flooding issues.

The discussion with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust centered around Biodiversity Action Plans, and it was noted that the various stakeholders, including this Council, were currently updating the County Plan, which was first produced in 1999. As a party who had previously "signed up" to the original document, the Council had a legal responsibility to protect those species named in the document, and, insofar as our local document was concerned, these included otters, bats, slowworms, great-crested newts, crayfish, badgers, and, perhaps most importantly, water voles, as Bromsgrove was the only area within the County to host such creatures. It was, however, reported with regret that the population of the water vole had been in severe decline since 1900, and, between 1990-1998, 90% of the population had been lost due to habitat destruction, over-management, concreting of channels, de-naturalising of habitat and, more recently, American mink.

Still on the subject of Biodiversity, the Group welcomed Mr. Richard Gill, a specialist in the field of Ecological Surveys and Assessments, to one of its meetings. He was a local resident, and had seen press reports on the setting up of the Task Group, and was willing to offer his services at no cost to the Council. He was happy to offer advice as to how surveys might be undertaken (or even carry one out himself), and hoped that his experience with surveys done on water voles in particular, and biodiversity issues in general, might be of help to the Group. It was noted that the timing of any water vole survey should ideally commence from May, the start of their breeding season.

The discussion with the Health and Safety representative was essentially to canvass his views on procedures and practices which ought to be put in place should the Council engage in any future clean-up campaigns, possibly involving the voluntary sector (e.g. the Probation Service). Members were given a broad overview of Health and Safety issues, and it was stressed that anyone requesting another person to carry out any task has a “duty of care”, and the questions as to who was responsible for supervision, equipment, identification of potential hazards (risk assessment) all had to be addressed and agreed. Suitable training, where appropriate, along with insurance, also has to be arranged. Subsequent to this meeting, copies of a brief guide to Health and Safety at Work requirements for Voluntary Workers were circulated to members of the Group.

At the Group’s final meeting, (inter-alia), officers made reference to an EC Directive on Water Framework, which was due to be introduced sometime in 2009, and which would be looking at the sustainability of Watercourses in terms of water quality, and highlighted that schemes like the Battlefield Brook, which runs through Sanders Park, which was only kept flowing through Severn Trent boreholes, would probably fall foul of the scheme as it would not be deemed as “sustainable” as a result of having to continue to pump ground water out to keep the brook flowing, due to the number of Abstraction Licences in existence. This was noted with some concern (see recommendation 9 below).

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

Members admitted to having learned an inordinate amount, and wished to place on record their thanks and appreciation to all those who had attended and spoken at the various meetings, but would like to register their particular gratitude to John Bailey for sharing his vast wealth of knowledge of the Watercourses, etc., throughout the District in a plain, matter-of-fact way, which was understood and appreciated by all concerned.

#### **5. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. that, (the enhancement of the Spadesbourne Brook, (from the vicinity of Wilsons Pet Store to the confluence with the Battlefield Brook), having being made a priority by the Task Group at the outset), the provisional recommendation whereby an additional sum of £7,500 was requested to be added to the existing Street Scene and Waste Management budget

(i.e. £5,000 for immediate improvement work and £2,500 for subsequent annual maintenance) be re-affirmed;

2. that the work to be carried out under 1 above include the installation of railway sleepers (to slow the flow of water), the creation of a

weir/cascade in an attempt to entice life back into the Watercourse, and the addition of flower baskets to enhance the appearance;

3. that, as a protected/endangered species, the Council should do all in its power to conserve the habitat of the water vole within the district, and, accordingly, the offer of Mr. R. Gill, a local specialist in Ecological Surveys and Assessments, to carry out, free of charge, a survey of water voles in the town during the summer months, be accepted, with grateful thanks;
4. that, in an attempt to educate and inform the public in this regard, a “Know the Vole” poster be produced and displayed (i) in the Town Centre Notice Board, (ii) by the Bus Station, (iii) on Sanders Park, and (iv) with the permission of British Waterways, on canal towpaths (See Appendix 2);
5. that, further to (4) above, as an organisation who had done some work in this regard in the past, a copy of this Report be forwarded to the Bromsgrove Society, with an enquiry as to whether they would be willing to contribute towards the cost of the provision of any display boards/frames;
6. that, a strategy should be put into place to deal with the very real threat of the American Mink decimating the remaining water vole population. In this regard, it is suggested that the Highways Operative currently employed on the maintenance schedule be requested to check selected sites/feeding stations for the presence of Mink every fortnight for a set period, and report his findings to John Bailey, Engineering Technician;
7. that, as it was illegal to intentionally or recklessly destroy the habitat of the water vole, the Depot/appropriate Grounds Maintenance contractor be made aware of the current “active” sites of the water vole in order to avoid such occurrence (through dredging or mowing). From a Biodiversity point of view, it is suggested that, to improve the management of the Watercourses within the District, a colour-coded system could be introduced, offering minimum maintenance for maximum environmental benefits, i.e., cut one bank; cut both banks; cut once per year, cut every year, etc., and that a schedule be prepared by the Council and/or the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust to be passed on to the appropriate staff in due course;
8. that a planned programme be set up to eradicate Himalayan Balsam, Fools Watercress and Japanese Knotweed from the various Watercourses within the District (Note: this work is only permissible at certain times the year, i.e. May/June for the Balsam and Watercress, and Sept/Oct for the Knotweed
9. Members felt that a degree of engineering work was needed to the Battlefield Brook in Sanders Park in order to give it a “more natural” look, and that sources of funding and/or grant aid would need to be

identified to carry out such work, and, in this regard, the attention of the Executive Cabinet is drawn to paragraph 3.4.4.2 (Battlefield Brook Restoration) of the Sanders Park Management and Development Plan 2004-09. Accordingly, this Task Group would wish to see the £10,000 bid in the current budget submission accepted by the Executive Cabinet in order to facilitate the commencement of the first phase of this work. It was also noted that, as the Environment Agency also had an interest in “naturalising” this Watercourse, that they might be approached to see whether they were able to help financially. Notwithstanding the above, however, the attention of the Executive Cabinet should be further drawn to the implications of the EU Water Framework Directive due to be introduced in 2009, as referred to in the final paragraph of item 3 (Background and Findings) above;

10. it was agreed that more publicity was needed to ensure that the general public know who to contact in the event of flooding, i.e., the Environment Agency, the County Highways, or the District Council – possibly done through a press release or the publication of an explanatory leaflet (see Appendix 3);
11. that, as the County Council were responsible for the discharge of water from roads/highways, closer co-operation was needed between the County and District Councils on highway issues, i.e., more frequent inspection of road gullies and culvert grills; more frequent clearing of grids on the County’s maintenance schedule - was three times per annum, now only as required – this is regarded as totally inadequate;
12. it was agreed that the District Council needs to press for more frequent preventative maintenance of culverts and ditches by the County Council (by possible expansion of the use of “lengthsmen” by the Parishes, a facility available for use through a grant of up to £2,000 funded by the County Council);
13. that, as the District Council had a Biodiversity Action Programme in place (set up in conjunction with the Worcestershire Wildlife Trust in October 2000), a post of Biodiversity Officer should be included on the establishment, or an existing officer’s job description should be amended to incorporate this important ` role within the organisation;
14. that, further to 13 above, as Biodiversity was now an issue which had to be taken into account by local authorities in almost all areas of its work, Members should be made aware of their responsibilities under this legislation, and that, following his recent presentation to officers, an approach be made to Steve Bloomfield, Planning Officer, Worcestershire Wildlife Trust, to enquire whether he would be willing to make a similar presentation to Members in this regard;

15. (i) that clarification be established as to the availability/suitability of any volunteers (e.g. the Probation Service) approached to help in any “clean-up” operations carried out by the Council , and (ii) that, in this regard, the Brief Guide to Health and Safety at Work Requirements for Voluntary Workers provided by the Council’s Health and Safety Office be circulated to all District Councillors and Parish Clerks for information; and
16. that, finally, the Executive Cabinet be reminded that there had been two previous reports on Watercourses and/or the Water Vole in the past, and that this Group hopes that they will give due consideration to the recommendations above, and that they will be proactive where necessary, and not reactive.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

Possibly (Health and Safety).

**7. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives meet the Council’s Vision, Values and Objectives insofar as it accords with the Council’s Objective Two (Environment).

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

Health and Safety considerations will be paramount in any “Clean-up” operations involving outside organisations.

**9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

**10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Please include the following table and spell out any particular implications in the relevant box. If there are no implications under a particular heading, please state ‘None’:-

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None

Policy	None
Environmental	None
Equalities and Diversity	Yes

## 11. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

## 12. APPENDICES (None)

## 13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Water Vole Conservation Strategy Document  
Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan  
Report of Bromsgrove Society

## CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Andy Jessop  
E Mail: andy.jessop@bromsgrove.gov.uk  
Tel: (01527) 881406

**SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST**

This form is to assist members to scope the scrutiny exercise in a focused way and to identify the key issues it wishes to investigate.

When the Board decides to set up a Task Group to scrutinise a particular subject, the appointed Chairman of the Task Group should complete this checklist. Completed forms will be considered by the Board and by the Task Group as a whole at the Task Group's first meeting.

▪ General Subject Area to be Scrutinised: Water Courses

▪ Specific Subject to be Scrutinised: Upkeep, ownership, maintenance

▪ Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? **YES/NO**

▪ Should any Officers be invited to give evidence? **YES/NO**

If yes, state name and/or post title: .....

John Bailey, Mike Bell, Phil Smeeth  
Legal Section

▪ Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence? **YES/NO**

If so, who and from which organisations? .....

Environment Agency  
County Council  
Womerkuskie Wildlife Trust  
Severn Trent      Health & Safety Executive

▪ Should the Task Group receive evidence from other sources other than witnesses? **YES/NO**

If so, what information should the Task Group wish to see and from which sources should it be gathered? .....

Ownership & responsibilities

▪ Should a period of public consultation form part of the Scrutiny exercise? **YES/NO**

If so, on what should the public be consulted?  
.....  
.....

- Have other authorities carried out similar scrutiny exercises? YES/NO  
 If so, which authorities?..... *Don't know - can we check*  
 .....  
 What were their conclusions and what can we learn from them?.....  
 .....  
 .....
  
- Will the Scrutiny exercise cross the District boundary? (YES/NO)  
 If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate?  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
  
- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group whilst the Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? YES/NO  
 If so, who and from which organisations? *Possibly - maybe later?*  
 .....  
 .....
  
- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the scrutiny exercise?  
*Possibly 36 months.*  
 .....  
 .....  
 .....
  
- Approximate number of Task Group Meetings?..... *?*

Signed:.....

Chairman of behalf of the:..... *D. H. Campbell* ..... Task Group

Date:.....

Please return completed forms to:  
 Miss D. McCarthy  
 Committee Services Officer  
 Legal and Democratic Services  
 Bromsgrove District Council



# **Voluntary workers**

## **A brief guide to health and safety at work requirements**

January 2007

Ian Peters – Safety Training And Related Services Ltd (STARS)  
starsuk@aol.com

## Voluntary workers

### A brief guide to health and safety at work requirements

The health and safety management of voluntary workers is very much a matter that needs to be determined at the planning stage, with roles and responsibilities fully determined by the time work commences.

When volunteers are asked to undertake work activities, both the **employer** (i.e. the organisation who asks volunteers to provide a service/undertake a task or has knowledge that the volunteers are undertaking work activities in or on an area that they occupy or control) and the volunteers themselves are required to comply with relevant health and safety legislation.

The employer has a responsibility under the **Health And Safety At Work Act 1974** to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of the volunteers and the health and safety of others who may be affected by their work activities.

This requirement means that, in particular, the employer has a legal duty to provide and maintain -

- A safe place of work
- A safe working environment
- Safe access and egress
- Safe handling, storage, maintenance and transport of articles and substances
- Safe plant
- Safe systems of work
- Adequate welfare facilities
- What ever is necessary and adequate information, instruction, training and supervision.

These are broad requirements under the Health And Safety At Work Act and the detail of what is required can be found in other relevant and appropriate legislation.

Persons who control premises or sites that are used by people at work, but who are not their employees (i.e. Volunteers), need to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the premises which are used by such persons, or by others that have access to them and the plant and the substances used on them, are safe and free from risks to health and safety.

Under the Occupiers Liability Act 1957 and 1984, the occupiers of premises have a duty to take reasonable care to ensure that their visitors are safe. It should be noted that whilst an occupier cannot be prosecuted for a breach of this civil duty, they may still be liable to pay compensation to a visitor who has been injured whilst they are on their premises, even though they are not at work.

The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 are also relevant to clients and the occupiers of premises and sites because of the absolute duty for Risk assessments to be undertaken for all work activities and safe practices and procedures to be determined and put into operation. In a practical sense, this would require an organisation who asks Volunteers to perform work activities to take the following steps –

1. Consider all aspects of the work to be carried out and ensure that a 'suitable and sufficient' risk assessment is undertaken by a 'competent person'
2. Reduce any identified risks to an acceptable level, so far as is reasonably practicable, by appropriate remedial action, if necessary
3. Provide whatever is 'necessary and adequate' information, instruction, training and supervision to enable health and safety at work requirements to be met. The information and instruction element is usually published in the form of a procedure/practice document, which may also contain the role and/or requirements that a supervisory person has to fulfil.

The training requirements depend on what a competent person will determine needs to take place and this will very much depend on the task, the hazards identified and the skills, knowledge and experience of the volunteers in question. It is insufficient to provide only written instruction or information to a volunteer without suitable and sufficient training.

Another factor of the risk assessment process is the requirement to consider the individual capabilities of volunteers if necessary. There is a requirement to consider the individual mental and physical capabilities of all volunteers when undertaking risk assessments and also allocating tasks. In particular, young persons (i.e. under 18 years of age) - because of their lack of work experience and pregnant women - particularly for manual handling operations tasks.

Arrangements should also be made to ensure that suitable and sufficient Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is provided, worn or used, maintained and replaced as necessary. The Client has a legal requirement to meet the cost of the PPE provision, although it would be acceptable for volunteers to voluntarily provide their own PPE and/or the cost of replacing it, so long as it meets British or EC standards.

Finally, the determination of adequate First aid facilities will have to be made and then provided, together with the emergency arrangements that the volunteers must adhere to should they be necessary to implement.

Should an accident or incident occur, it will need to be reported via the Council's Accident and Incident reporting system. The usual Council post accident or incident procedures will instigate investigation procedures and the requirements of the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrence Regulations (RIDDOR) may also be relevant.

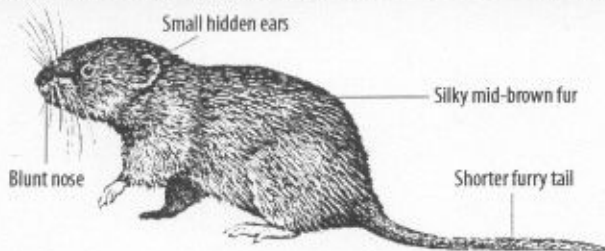
Additional useful reference or reading – HSG192 'Charity and Voluntary workers' – a guide to health and safety at work



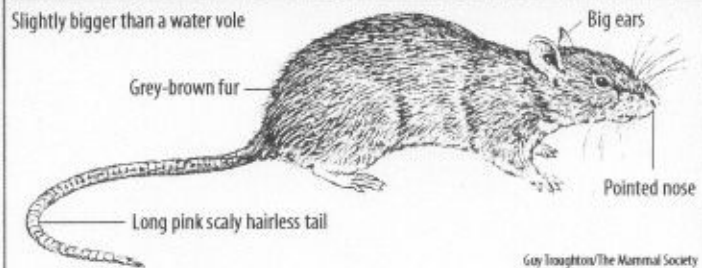
# KNOW THE VOLE

**Water voles can be confused with brown rats which are often found near water**  
**Follow our tips so that you can spot the difference**

## WATER VOLE



## BROWN RAT



Guy Ingham/The Mammal Society

You may be surprised to know that Bromsgrove District is home to one of the UK's rarest mammals, the water vole. Sadly, this attractive mammal has declined drastically across the country over the past few decades. Changes in farming practices, pollution, urbanisation, damaging river engineering and predation by feral mink have all contributed towards its gradual disappearance. The rivers and streams in and around Bromsgrove are one of only two strongholds remaining in Worcestershire. As such they are vitally important for the survival of the water vole.

**Where do they live?** Water voles prefer to live along streams, ditches and rivers with plenty of vegetation along the banks. They burrow into the soft earth along the stream bank, creating a characteristic neat round hole.

**What do they eat?** Water voles are vegetarians eating a range of bank-side plants such as rushes, grasses and reeds, as well as the fleshy tubers and roots of plants like yellow flag iris. Look for neatly trimmed stems and tidy piles of cut vegetation near the waters edge.





## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### LAND DRAINAGE ISSUES

### Along with Watercourse Management (Not Main Rivers)



#### LOCAL LAND DRAINAGE AUTHORITY

Bromsgrove District Council are such an Authority who can implement its powers under the Land Drainage Act 1991, although these are enforced only where warranted and involve the serving of a notice on the respective riparian landowner(s). However, a result is more often achieved by encouraging all parties concerned to resolve their problems directly.

#### MAINTENANCE OF WATERCOURSES

For ordinary watercourses, which represent 95% of all watercourses within the District, responsibility lies in general with the respective riparian owner(s). The remainder are classed as main rivers over which the Environment Agency exercise control, eg. Salwarpe - Sugarbrook - Spadesbourne through to Battlefield Brook, plus the River Arrow from Redditch to Radford Road, Alvechurch.

#### RIPARIAN OWNERS RESPONSIBILITIES

- Maintain an even flow of water without obstruction, pollution or diversion, that affects other users
- Requirement to accept the passage/flow of water during dry periods, or in full spate. There is no duty in common law to improve a watercourse. The overflow of water onto a natural flood plain during storm conditions is to be expected
- There is a requirement to ensure that stream banks are not obstructed by man-made structures
- Litter carried through can be removed at the owners discretion, though naturally such debris should not be released into such watercourses.

#### CONCERNING DITCHES/DYKES

These are considered to be man made. Though designed to take both surface and ground water, they can take a constant flow like any watercourse.

- Roadside ditches  
These are usually part of the backing boundary line (hedge/fence) which in



turn belongs to the associated land, and thus that owners' responsibility.

Certain ditch lines are maintained by the County Council as the Highway Authority, which has a prescriptive right to discharge surface water off the highway into all ditches and watercourses.

- **Field Ditches**

These are the landowners' responsibility to which the County Council still retain the right to discharge into.

Page 6

CULVERTS/ACCESS DRIVE -  
FIELD GATES/BRIDGES

These usually belong to the owners in question. They do represent an obstruction, usually due to the lack of capacity within their design, eg pipework just too small. All need to be governed by either the District Council, or by the Environment Agency. The latter are specifically involved with culverts.

## FLOODING IN GENERAL

Flooding can be attributed to the lack of maintenance of a watercourse, which is normally highlighted during severe weather conditions. Though the weather can simply overwhelm any situation, such incidents should be recorded by the District Council, and where practical the problem resolved.

This issue can also relate to surface water where it invades from one parcel of land onto another.

## WILDLIFE

Water Vole (just one of a number of protected species to be found in our area)



For guidance on wildlife issues  
Contact: Worcestershire Wildlife Trust  
Tel: 01905 754919

## USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS FOR HELP AND ADVICE

Planning and Environment Services  
Tel: 01527 881288

Drainage Section  
Tel: 01527 881360

Emergency/Out of Hours/Lifeline  
Tel: 01527 871565

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

Worcestershire County Council  
Community Response Unit  
Tel: 01905 768342

Environment Agency  
Tel: 01743 272828  
(08708 506506)

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

#### Fly Tipping Scrutiny Report

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor M Sherrey
Responsible Head of Service	Michael Bell

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report summarizes the recommendations of the Fly tipping Scrutiny Report and identifies costs and resource implications for the Street Scene department of implementing those recommendations.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that the contents of the report are noted and that much of the work suggested within the report has already been factored into the work programme of the department.

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 The Fly tipping Scrutiny Task Group produced 17 recommendations following its detailed investigation of fly tipping with the District. Fly tipping is an increasing problem within society and the task group have investigated a range of issues in relation to fly tipping in this area. Officers have taken on board the comments made by the Task Group and in some instances commenced work in the delivery of the recommendations. Most other elements of the recommendations have been built into the departments programme of work
- 3.2 This report lists the recommendations with comments against each in terms of financial and resource implications.
- 3.3 The report does not repeat the contents of the Task group report. This report therefore needs to be read in conjunction with that report.

#### 4. Proposals

- 4.1 **Recommendation 1. A Guide for the Public.** This will be incorporated within the Waste Awareness Guide currently being produced.

- 4.2 **Recommendation 2. Re-use and Recycling Schemes.** It was recommended that Copies of the Re-use Guide produced by the County Council will be made available within the members room. In addition all members will be sent copies of the guide via e mail.
- 4.3 **Recommendation 3. Reporting Fly tipping.** The departments Promotions and Awareness team will continue to use visits to various events to promote the fly tipping issues.
- 4.4 **Recommendation 4. Display at the Customer Services Centre.** The existing display at the CSC will be changed to incorporate information about fly tipping.
- 4.5 **Recommendation 5. National Fly tipping Prevention Group.** It is intended to provide a link on the Councils website to this group and to offer copies to those who request it.
- 4.6 **Recommendation 6. Disposal of Tyres.** It was recommended that the web site for the Tyre Recovery Association is publicised by the Council on its website with a link to this being made available. This will be carried out by Officers.
- 4.7 **Recommendation 7. Environment Agency Fly tipping Forum.** Arrangements have already been made for a member of staff to attend this forum whenever possible. Operational activities at the department will however take precedence over such meetings.
- 4.8 **Recommendation 8. Household Waste Site Permit Scheme.** Publicity of this scheme has already been undertaken in conjunction with the Councils Communications Manager and the Customer Service Centre.
- 4.9 **Recommendation 9. CCTV.** Officers have researched the use of mobile covert CCTV cameras however there would be a minimum one off cost of £10,000 to purchase the necessary equipment. It is intended that the situation is monitored and a further report be brought to Cabinet for funding if the situation deteriorates.
- 4.10 **Recommendation 10. Perryfields Small Holdings Sidemoor.** Officers will send a letter to the County Council requesting that they improve the access to the site in order to discourage fly tipping.
- 4.11 **Recommendation 11. BDHT.** Officers are continuing to work to build good relationships with BDHT and to continue working with the County Council. Relationships with the County Waste Management Team and Worcestershire Districts waste management units are good and maintained through regular meetings.



- 4.12 **Recommendation 12. Parish Councils Waste Awareness Guide.** All those consulted as part of this exercise will receive an e mail version of the Fly tipping report and the Waste Awareness Guide when completed. If specifically requested printed copies will be made available. Copies will also be available for the Members room.
- 4.13 **Recommendation 13. Parish Councils Response.** The actions required are the same as 4.12 above.
- 4.14 **Recommendation 14. Fly tipping hotspots.** The department has a response rate determined by performance indicators which it follows. Staff are also instructed that if they come across a fly tip incident they are, where possible, to remove it. These actions ensure that fly tipping incidents are dealt with quickly. However if an incident is likely to take longer than the 4 days indicated within the performance indicators, a notice will be erected to advise passers by that the incident is being investigated and dealt with. Fly tips are dealt with within 4 days of notification unless there are particular problems that require the use of specialized contractors.
- 4.15 **Recommendation 15. Increasing profile of next prosecution.** Where a successful prosecution has taken place officers will ensure that maximum publicity is gained from the incident as a deterrent to others.
- 4.16 **Recommendation 16. Publicity with involvement of local schools and media.** Officers currently visit schools for waste awareness campaigns and recycling initiatives. The problems and dangers of fly tipping will be incorporated into those presentations.
- 4.17 **Recommendation 17. Publicity of enforcement action.** This is similar to 4.15 but also relates to publicity of an incident in addition to an enforcement action. Officers will, where possible, photograph incidents and these will be used within press releases and publicity material.
- 4.18 This report has few direct financial implications but some resource implications for the Street Scene department. However most of the work suggested within the recommendations has been taken on board and will be built into the routine of officers.
- 4.19 The report is also flexible in its recommendations which will allow officers to develop initiatives within the existing operational framework rather than being prescriptive in terms of actions or timescales. This approach is welcomed by officers.

## 5. **Financial Implications**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report. Within Recommendation 9 the use of CCTV cameras is mentioned but only if the number of fly tipping incidents increases significantly. If that becomes apparent a further report detailing the benefits and costs of CCTV systems

will be prepared. An approximate cost of a mobile, covert CCTV camera is £10,000.

**6. Legal Implications**

6.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report.

**7. Corporate Objectives**

7.1 To provide an effective, efficient and environmentally sound service.

**8. Risk Management**

8.1 There are no specific risk associated with this report.

**9. Customer Implications**

9.1 Management of fly tipping is fundamental if the cleanliness of the area is to be maintained.

**10. Other Implications**

Procurement Issues:	None
Personnel Implications:	None
Governance/Performance Management:	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998:	None
Policy:	None
Environmental:	See Report
Equalities and Diversity:	None

**11. Others Consulted on Report.**

Portfolio Holder	<b>Yes</b>
Acting Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>Yes</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>

Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>None</b>

**12. Appendices**

None

**13. Background Papers**

Fly tipping Scrutiny Report February 2007.  
 Report to Cabinet 7<sup>th</sup> March 2007 Fly tipping Scrutiny Report.

**Contact officer**

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 Tel: (01527) 881703

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

4<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2007

#### Capital Strategy 2007- 2010

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Taylor
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Financial Services

#### 1. Summary

- 1.1 This report is to present to Members the updated Capital Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council for 2007-2010. The Strategy brings together the work undertaken by the Council in recent years on the Community Plan and Council Plan, which together set out a vision for Bromsgrove for 2007 and beyond.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that:
- i) Executive 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 for Bromsgrove of 'Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services', and the key strategic policies, priorities, and objectives agreed in the Community Plan, Council Plan, Improvement Plan, and Council Results.
- 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 2007/08 – 2009/10 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.

**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 2007/08 - 2009/10 which was approved by Council on 27th February 2007.

**5. Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications.

**6. Corporate Objectives**

6.1 Those projects described in the Capital Strategy which have been included within the Capital Programme have been aligned to the corporate objectives and priorities as part of the approval process.

**7. Risk Management**

7.1 Risk Assessments for all approved projects are undertaken as part of the detailed project proposals.

**8. Customer Implications**

8.1 Approved capital projects have been assessed in line with Council objectives and priorities, and demonstrate improvements in customer service where appropriate.

**9. Other Implications**

Procurement Issues – All expenditure relating to the approved projects included in the Capital Strategy will be subject to the Council procurement rules.
Personnel Implications – Implications are included as part of all detailed project proposals.
Governance/Performance Management - Implications are included as part of all detailed project proposals.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - Implications are included as part of all detailed project proposals.
Policy - Implications are included as part of all detailed project proposals.
Environmental - Implications are included as part of all detailed project proposals.
Equalities and Diversity - Implications are included as part of all detailed project proposals.

## 10. Others Consulted on the Report

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes (at CMT)
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes (at CMT)
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes (at CMT)
Corporate Procurement Team	No

## 11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Capital Strategy 2007 - 2010

### Background Papers

Capital Programme 2006/07 – 2009/10  
Medium Term Financial Plan 2006/07 – 2009/10  
Departmental Service Plans

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# **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S CAPITAL STRATEGY 2007 - 2010**



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)



# BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## Capital Strategy 2007 – 2010

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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 for Bromsgrove of 'Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services', and the key strategic policies, objectives, and priorities, agreed in the Community Plan, Council Plan, Improvement Plan, and Council Results.

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 reflects the Council's priorities and key deliverables as set out in the Council Plan 2007 – 2010.

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

- the planning process;
- the priorities for capital investment;
- how the Council's assets are managed;
- 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; and
- how the Council consults for service and strategic planning purposes.

Council expenditure falls into two types 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 major improvements to Council owned buildings, recreation grounds, cemeteries, car parks, public conveniences, Closed Circuit Television systems (CCTV), 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 90,700 (2004 projection).

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

The Council's Capital Programme for 2007 – 2010 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.

### **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) (now the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)). This enabled 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 the process of developing the Recovery Plan began. This was seen as a key priority for the Council and was subsequently reviewed and approved by Government Ministers at the ODPM.

The Recovery Plan included a clear integrated plan for wholesale improvement and change which is now enabling the Council to start providing cost efficient value for money services at a price our customers want to pay.

As a further part of the Recovery Plan the Council has undergone an Organisational Restructure which has provided a range of measures and initiatives which have created a framework to enable dynamic change to take place.

The Council completed its Recovery Plan in June 2006 which was largely focused on the Resources Directorate. A new Improvement Plan was approved in August 2006 which focused on external issues such as performance indicators, customer service and regeneration of the Town Centre and the MG Rover site at Longbridge.

The Audit Commission carried out a Comprehensive Performance Assessment of the Council during late February/early March 2007 which was based on levels of performance in the year 2005/06, and since then significant improvements in the levels of services provided have taken place, but more still needs to be done to become an 'Excellent' Council in particular, the Improvement Plan will also need to be updated for 2007/08.

#### Organisational Structure

#### Direct Management Responsibility

Chief Executive

Assistant Chief Executive

Communications  
Performance  
Policy

Corporate Director (Services)

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

Corporate Director (Resources)

Human Resources & Organisational Development  
Legal & Democratic Services  
E-Government & Customer Services  
Financial 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 (LSP) whose membership consists of key senior representatives from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

The Community Plan is currently being refreshed and 9 priorities have been identified. Three of these (the Town Centre, Longbridge, and Affordable Housing/Inclusive Living) are already reflected in the Council's priorities, however the Council Plan and Capital Strategy will need to be updated next year to reflect these priorities.

The **Council Plan 2007 – 2010** is currently under preparation which is a revision of the Corporate Plan 2005 – 2008. The Plan 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 which influence the objectives of the Council Plan are:

➤ **The Council Results:**

- focuses on the results of the key performance indicators which impact on the achievement of the Council's Vision, Objectives, and Priorities (see **Appendix 1**);
- spells out information on things we said we would do, the things we have achieved and what our objectives are for the future;
- 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 Council Plan;
- links with our Medium Term Financial Plan.

➤ **Asset Management Plan:**

- provides a framework to optimise the use of property assets in terms of service benefits and financial return in order to support the Council's priorities and corporate objectives;
- provides regular condition surveys to highlight areas where capital investment is required.

➤ **Management Development Strategy:**

- the Modern Manager Framework and 'Bromsgrove Way' have been introduced setting out a framework for staff management and development as part of our aim to be an improving Council.

## **Prioritising Capital Investment**

### **Vision, Objectives, Priorities and Values**

In September 2006 the Council approved a new Vision for the future which is:

**“Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services”**

The Vision has then been further developed into four objectives. The objectives and the description of what they include are set out. The objectives are designed to be broad. From these broad objectives, specific priorities have then been identified. The four objectives are:

- Regeneration
- Improvement
- Sense of Community and Well Being
- Environment

The rationale for selecting each priority is:

### **Regeneration**

*This Council Objective can be defined as:-*

- Improving the physical fabric of the District, in particular, the town centre and Longbridge site.
- Improving the living environment of the vulnerable, in particular, eliminating fuel poverty, reducing the gap in serious accidental injury and the indoor living environment in so far as it affects respiratory health (cold, damp, indoor pollution).
- Ensuring quality and choice in the local housing market across all tenures with the availability of sufficient decent, affordable and sustainable housing to meet the needs of all of the District's residents including those with special housing needs.
- Improving people's lifestyle choices, including diet, smoking and physical activity.
- Ensuring a strong, prosperous and competitive local economy which creates wealth in order to support the level of investment required to close the gap of inequality; contributes to the region's economy and enable people to improve their quality of life.
- Securing public and private investment in the above factors in order to lever in sufficient investment to tackle these issues.
- Reducing inequalities wherever these exist within our District.
- Improving household incomes through increasing economic activity by promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship and the take up of employment opportunities through improved access to jobs, employment growth (both public and private) and improving people's skills (both young people's and adults). Where people are genuinely unable to work ensuring that people take up the full benefits to which they are entitled.



*The following three priorities have been identified for this Council Objective:-*

1. *Town Centre*
2. *Longbridge*
3. *Housing*

### **Improvement**

*This Council Objective can be defined as:-*

- Providing an excellent customer experience including choice where possible.
- Maintaining a clear focus on our citizens' priorities.
- Making the best use of new technologies to improve services whilst reducing costs.
- Driving out efficiency savings and making the best use of our assets in order to further invest in our priorities.
- Making appropriate use of management systems e.g. risk management, performance management and project management.
- Ensuring we recruit the right staff and retain and develop their skills.
- Achieving public confidence in our prudent financial management, service delivery and corporate governance through positive external audit and inspection feedback.
- Maintaining a level of council tax from which the public feel we make good use of the money we spend and reflects the quality of services they receive.
- Ensuring we seek out, listen, respect and represent the views of our diverse citizens and communities.
- Communicating consistently to our citizen's and communities.
- Actively involve our citizens and communities in the design and delivery of our policies, strategies, plans and services.
- Joining up and integrating services both within the Council and with our partners making the best use of new technologies.
- Tailoring the mix of customer service, community leadership and democratic engagement to fit the particular circumstances of each community.

*The following three priorities have been identified for this Council Objective:-*

4. *Customer Service*
5. *Reputation*
6. *Performance*

### **Sense of Community and Well Being**

*This Council Objective can be defined as:-*

- Ensuring the District's residents have a good cultural "offer" which encourages a sense of community.
- Providing effective community leadership.
- Promoting active citizen engagement in the democratic process.
- Ensuring people are able to access services whatever their circumstances.

- Ensuring the value and contribution of the diverse communities in our District is recognised and celebrated.
- Improving the social capital of our communities and developing sustainable and cohesive communities.
- Enabling people to enjoy a high quality independent life in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and when this is no longer possible ensuring more intensive care is available.
- Ensuring the Council fully embraces the “Every Child Matters” Agenda: that our children and young people are: healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well being and can access services.
- Reducing crime and the fear of crime within our communities.
- Ensuring access to lifelong learning opportunities for learning and creativity to help everyone achieve their potential for quality of life and prosperity.

*The following two priorities have been identified for this Council Objective:-*

7. *Community Influence*
8. *Community Events*

### **Environment**

*This Council Objective can be defined as:-*

- Ensuring the District offers a quality living environment for everyone, with access to good facilities including clean and attractive open spaces.
- Sustaining this quality living environment for future generations.
- Waste collection, recycling and disposal.
- Maintaining and fostering the District’s biodiversity.
- Maintaining our rural communities.
- Balancing our green belt whilst responding to the economic development needs of the District.

*The following two priorities have been identified for this Council Objective:-*

9. *Clean District*
10. *Planning*

### **Council Values**

The Council will achieve its Vision, Objectives and Priorities through focusing on its Values which are:

- Leadership
- Partnership
- Customer First
- Diversity

Capital is a finite resource and a strict policy therefore is adopted for approval of capital schemes. For the Capital Programme 2007 – 2010 Heads of Service made bids for the inclusion of new capital schemes based on requirements identified in their service business plans, which were then ranked as ‘High’, ‘Medium’ or ‘Low’ priority by the Corporate Management Team, after considering each scheme’s

impact on the Council's corporate objectives and priorities. Only those bids which were ranked as 'High' have received Council approval because of the annual limits placed on the use of the Council's capital receipts.

The Council is concentrating on meeting the service improvements as set out in the Improvement Plan and this has therefore been the main criteria in determining which capital schemes received approval.

## **Capital Strategy Priorities 2007 - 2010**

The new schemes approved reflect the corporate priorities as follows (some schemes meet more than one priority):-

<b>COUNCIL OBJECTIVE 1 - REGENERATION</b>
<b>Priority 1 – Town Centre</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A scheme to regenerate Bromsgrove town centre is to be developed in 2007/08 and will be included in future versions of the Capital Strategy.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Also includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Vehicle Replacement Programme (Refuse Collection, Recycling, Street Cleaning, (see Performance)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Replacement Pay &amp; Display Ticket Machines – (see Performance).</i></li> </ul>
<b>Priority 2 – Longbridge</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are currently no capital schemes for this Priority.</li> </ul>
<b>Priority 3 – Housing</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Homeless Hostels Re-modelling Scheme £325k.</li> <li>➤ Affordable Housing Rented Schemes £250k.</li> <li>➤ Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing Schemes £22k.</li> <li>➤ Housing Schemes to be developed utilising Housing Safety Net Funding £83k.</li> </ul>

<b>COUNCIL OBJECTIVE 2 - IMPROVEMENT</b>
<b>Priority 4 – Customer Service</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Queue Management System at Customer Service Centre £30k.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Also includes:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <i>Replacement Pay &amp; Display Ticket Machines – (see Performance)</i></li> <li>○ <i>Replacement of CCTV Equipment – (see Community Influence)</i></li> </ul>

### Priority 5 – Reputation

- Customer Feedback System £20k.
- Alteration to Council Buildings in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act £300k.

### Priority 6 – Performance

- Vehicle Replacement Programme (Refuse Collection, Street Cleaning, Recycling, Commercial Services, Garage Services, Highways, Grounds Maintenance, Multi-Lift Vehicle) £1.871m
- Replacement Pay & Display Ticket Machines £18k.
- Case Management System £14k.
- Replacement of Desktop Print Fleet £75k.

*Also includes:*

- *Queue Management System at Customer Service Centre – (see Reputation).*
- *Replacement of CCTV Equipment – (see Community Influence)*
- *Alvechurch Youth Scheme – (see Community Influence).*
- *Bromsgrove Youth Scheme – (see Community Influence).*
- *Tutley & Cobley Access Improvements – (see Community Influence).*
- *Homeless Hostels Re-modelling Scheme – (see Housing).*
- *Affordable Housing Rented Schemes – (see Housing).*
- *Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing Schemes – (see Housing).*

## COUNCIL OBJECTIVE 3 - SENSE OF COMMUNITY & WELL BEING

### Priority 7 – Community Influence

- Replacement of CCTV Equipment £454k.
- Alvechurch Youth Scheme £90k.
- Bromsgrove Youth Scheme £85k.
- Tutley & Cobley Access Improvements £25k.
- CCTV Provision at Council House £20k.

*Also includes:*

- *Alteration to Council Buildings – (see Reputation).*
- *Homeless Hostels Re-modelling Scheme – (see Housing).*
- *Affordable Housing Rented Schemes – (see Housing).*
- *Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing Schemes – (see Housing).*

### Priority 8 – Community Events

- There are currently no capital schemes for this Priority.

## COUNCIL OBJECTIVE 4 - ENVIRONMENT

### Priority 9 – Clean District

*Also includes:*

- *Vehicle Replacement Programme (Refuse Collection, Recycling, Street Cleaning) – (see Performance).*

### Priority 10 – Planning

*Also includes:*

- *Homeless Hostels Re-modelling Scheme – (see Housing).*
- *Affordable Housing Rented Schemes – (see Housing).*
- *Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing Schemes – (see Housing).*

## 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 and it has been Council policy for the past few years to limit the use of capital receipts on new schemes to £1m per annum.

The limit has been exceeded in the Capital Programme for 2007 to 2010 mainly because of the need to invest in a series of information technology schemes to modernise methods of working and update our computer infrastructure, and to provide an adequate replacement programme for vehicles and plant. This is to make up for years of underinvestment and is required to enable the Council improve levels of performance and move forward in its plan to become an 'Excellent' Council. Significant expenditure is also required for the provision of extra care social housing.

The main reason for limiting the use of capital receipts has been the use of the interest received on capital investments to help finance the Council's Revenue budget. Also, once funds are borrowed to finance capital expenditure the Council will have to meet the additional cost of external interest payments from its Revenue budget in addition to bearing the loss of interest.

A major regeneration scheme is intended for Bromsgrove town centre and the Council will therefore need to review its debt free status in the medium term because of the declining capital balances and the limited opportunities for obtaining capital receipts in the future.

Estimate of Capital Receipts Remaining after Current Capital Programme  
(excluding the effect of unspent 2006/07 budgets carried forward to 2007/08)

At 01/04/2007	At 01/04/2008	At 01/04/2009	At 01/04/2010
£13.2m	£10.4m	£3.2m	£1.9m

See **Appendix 2** for full details of capital resources.

Annual Loss of Investment Interest  
(on new approved schemes only)

2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
£0.116m	£0.115m	£0.131m

It is estimated that at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 the following capital resources will be available for financing the Capital Programme, but the precise amount will not be known until the accounts have been closed for the year 2006/07. These figures exclude the carry forward of any unspent budgets from 2006/07 to 2007/08 which however can be ignored when considering the availability of resources because they are already committed.

- Capital Receipts £13.1m
- Section 106 Planning Agreement Resources £0.9m
- Government Grants and other contributions £0.1m

The Local Government Act 2003 introduced the new Prudential Code capital controls system which came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> 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 2003 Act 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. Liveability for Recreation, Community Safety (C.C.T.V.), Countryside Agency, Lottery, and partnerships with other Councils.

The traditional Private Finance Initiative (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.

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 Council's Capital Programme for 2007 to 2010 totals £14.1m and is financed from a combination of capital receipts, Government grants, and Section 106 planning agreement funds. See **Appendix 3** for full details.

### Asset Management

A new strategic group known as the Asset Management Group has been formed to ensure the Council's assets are suitably managed and to develop a new Corporate Asset Register. See **Appendix 4** for the strategic objectives and responsibilities of the group.

Membership comprises:

- Corporate Property Officer (Chairman)
- Property and Facilities Manager
- Representative from Financial Services
- Representative from Street Scene and Waste Management Services
- Representative from e-Government and Customer Services
- Representative from Culture and Community Services

Officers with responsibility for major services are invited to attend as appropriate.

All property ultimately falls under the control of the designated Corporate Property Officer, who is the Head of Legal & Democratic Services who is a member of the Corporate Management Team (CMT). She reports to CMT and Executive Cabinet as necessary and is within the Resources Directorate. The Portfolio Holder for Legal and Democratic Services is Member "Champion" for asset management.

The Corporate Property Officer is responsible for:

- Ensuring stakeholder consultation and review takes place regarding assets and that findings are fed into the decision making process.
- Developing the Asset Management Plan (AMP) for consideration and approval by the Council and its subsequent implementation.
- Ensuring its adherence to Corporate Objectives.
- Ensuring that the AMP is coordinated with the Medium Term Financial Plan and considering key actions relating to asset management contained within other relevant strategies.
- Ensuring all asset management issues are properly considered by Corporate Management Team and Executive Cabinet as necessary.
- Reporting twice a year to Corporate Management Team and Executive Cabinet on the performance of the property portfolio as measured against a suite of property performance indicators.
- Chairing the Asset Management Group.
- Champion the current and future approach to matching asset usage with business needs at strategic management level
- Provide the key link ensuring Member involvement in asset management planning and implementation
- Consider the effect of corporate drivers on asset management



The AMP is therefore the key document for ensuring that all capital assets are fit for purpose and used effectively, and on 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2007 the Council approved a new Plan for the period 2006 to 2010 to replace the previous version produced in 2003 which was approved as 'Good' standard by Government Office West Midlands.

The Plan applies primarily to property assets but with the fullness of time will extend to include infrastructure, vehicles, plant, and major equipment. The new plan clearly sets out the requirements and the high level actions which are required to embed effective asset management within the Council.

Bromsgrove District Council is a significant property owner within the District and the AMP is prepared in order to provide a framework that will optimise the use of property assets in terms of service benefits and financial return in order to support the Council's priorities and corporate objectives. Regular condition surveys will highlight areas where capital investment is required and provide the links to the Capital Strategy, Capital Programme, and Medium Term Finance Plan. Other linked plans and strategies include the Community Strategy, the Procurement Strategy, the Customer Care Strategy, and individual service business plans.

The Council can expect the following from the Asset Management Plan:

- Clear corporate responsibility for strategic asset management.
- How the Council will support the delivery of its Vision, values, objectives and priorities.
- Assurance that the assets are suitable and sufficient for the services provided and continue to be so.
- A performance measurement system which relates to the Council's corporate objectives.

In the latest 2007 – 2010 Capital Programme the Council will invest £9m in the improvement of its assets which include:-

- Work on buildings to comply with the Disability Discrimination Act
- Recreation Grounds & Allotments,
- Replacement and New CCTV Systems,
- Investment in ICT Infrastructure & Updating,
- Replacement of Vehicles & Plant.

## **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 5**.

## **The Capital Investment Process**

### **The Capital Programme**

The Council currently has a 'live' three 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.



When the previous year's final capital expenditure is reported to Executive Cabinet approval is sought to carry unspent budgets forward to the new financial year on schemes where unavoidable delays have occurred, and at this time the original budget is revised to include such unspent budgets. Also at this stage any other new schemes which have been approved since the original budget was agreed, are also added to the revised budget.

A flexible approach is followed and new schemes may be added to the capital budget during the year following submission of a detailed robust business case and approval by Executive Cabinet. Normal practice is however that most new schemes receive approval for inclusion in the Capital Programme prior to the start of each year. Schemes can also be rescheduled within the Capital Programme if necessary.

The current Capital Programme covers a period of 3 years and it is proposed that a 5 year projection will be considered as part of the 2008/09 review, and that this is further developed into an overarching 5 year financial strategy.

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.

#### Scheme selection and prioritisation

The following process applies for considering bids for new capital schemes from Heads of Service for inclusion in the Capital Programme, and due consideration will be given to the results of condition surveys undertaken for the Asset Management Plan:

- Members of the Executive Cabinet, the Strategic Management Scheme, and Heads of Service meet to shape priorities for the forthcoming year, to drive the budget process and the formulation of service business plans;
- Capital schemes are identified as part of the business planning process and are included in service business plans;
- Basic feasibility studies are undertaken;

- Heads of Service submit a Capital Funding Request Form to allow an initial assessment to be made of each capital bid, and to seek approval from the Corporate Management Team to develop a business case and detailed financial appraisal as part of the formal request for funding;
- The initial bids are considered by the Council's Corporate Management Team and are ranked into high, medium and low priority categories;
- Corporate Management Team will agree the scheme bids to be included in the draft capital programme for consideration by Members having regard to the merits of each scheme and the overall level of resources available;
- The Scrutiny Steering Board is consulted before finalising the Capital Programme;
- It is Council policy that it consults with the citizens of Bromsgrove on the capital budget proposals through the Customer Panel and focus groups, and in accordance with this, consultation took place with focus groups on the annual capital and revenue budgets for 2007/08;
- Executive Cabinet considers the budget proposals and agree the formal Capital Programme for approval by the Council;
- For all new approved capital schemes Heads of Service are required to complete a full Project Initiation Document (PID) which forms the detailed business case and includes the following essential elements (see **Appendix 6**):
  - Details of proposed scheme;
  - Reason for the project;
  - A definition of what the project is and what it will deliver;
  - The current position and deficiencies found;
  - The risks arising out of deficiencies found;
  - The different options available including doing nothing;
  - Brief details of the costs of each option;
  - The option recommended and reasons why;
  - How the recommended option achieves value for money;
  - How the recommended option achieves the objectives of the business plan;
  - The key drivers in developing the recommendation;
  - An overview of the proposal;
  - A cash flow of the recommended scheme;
  - Depreciation period for the capital asset;
  - Revenue impact of proposed scheme;
  - Demonstration of how the project meets the Vision, Objectives and Values;
  - How the project will help to improve performance;
  - Details of any asset savings generated e.g. a disposal.
- New capital schemes are signed off for commencement by the Executive Cabinet Portfolio Member for Finance and the Head of Financial Services on

receipt of the PID (business case), which needs to be robust, before approval will be given.

### Project Management

Budget holders and budget managers control their capital schemes using the Council's approved Project Management Framework. The Framework is based on eight output documents which are split into three discrete areas:- project initiation, project implementation and project close. The document outputs are categorised as follows:

#### Project Initiation

- Project Initiation Document (PID)
- Business Case
- Project Plan (usually a Gantt Chart produced using MS Project)

#### Project Implementation

- Highlight Reports
- Risk Register
- Issues Log
- Agendas, minutes and general communications

#### Project Closure

- Closure Report including lessons learned

### Financial Monitoring of Capital Schemes

Capital expenditure budgets are profiled over the accounting periods of the financial year and monthly capital monitoring takes place:

- Monthly capital monitoring statements are issued to Heads of Service detailing their schemes with a comparison of planned budget to date with actual expenditure and budget variances to enable action to be taken to keep projects on track;
- Updating of the 'Contract Register' with payments to contractors;
- Quarterly reporting of progress and performance on the capital programme to the Performance Management Board.

### Bench marking:

In order to get the best out of our Capital Strategy it is important that the Council bench marks. The Council does this in a number of ways. Individual schemes are procured and are therefore subject to market testing. The Council is also subject to audit and inspection which includes an examination of our use of resources under the Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE). An area for development in 2007/08 is working with best practice authorities.

### 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 Council Plan brings these together with the Community Plan and the individual departmental Service Plans.

Performance on a set of priority measures is now reported monthly to Corporate Management Team, Executive Cabinet Members, and Performance Management Board. This is now integrated with the financial monitoring report.

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

A range of property related performance indicators have been developed and are included in the new Asset Management Plan and these will be robustly monitored and reported on by Heads of Service and the Corporate Property Manager at Corporate Management Team. The Council is now also a member of the Institute of Public Finance (IPF) Asset Management Planning Network which is an organisation which provides advice on property related matters.

The actual progress on delivery of schemes against the target of the Capital Programme is monitored by the issuing of monthly capital monitoring statements to budget holders, and the details are also reported to Performance Management Board and Executive Cabinet on a quarterly basis. The final capital outturn is also reported following closedown of the accounts.

Once completed there is a review of the effectiveness of schemes. This is carried out under the Performance Management Framework by completion of the project closure report where the scheme is re-evaluated against the original aims and objectives.

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 Local Strategic 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.

### The Bromsgrove Partnership

The Bromsgrove Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) with the lead role of promoting economic, social, and environmental well-being and its 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 (listed below) and full details can be seen at **Appendix 7:-**

- Weaver PLC (Chair);
- Bromsgrove District Council;
- West Mercia Police;
- County Association of Local Councils;
- NEW College;
- Bromsgrove & Redditch Network;
- Worcestershire County Council;
- Worcestershire Primary Care Trust;
- Bromsgrove District Housing Trust.

The Bromsgrove Partnership therefore is a single body that:

- brings together at a local level the different parts of the public sector as well as the private, business, community and voluntary sectors so that different initiatives and services support each other and work together to consider specific issues that require a joined up response;
- is a non-statutory, non-executive organisation. It does not replace the existing decision-making mechanisms of each constituent body but works behind the scenes to deliver outcomes;
- operates at a level which enables strategic decisions to be taken and is close enough to individual neighbourhoods to allow actions to be determined at community level;
- supplements the County LSP.

The Partnership held away-days during 2005/06 and 2006/07 in order to review and refresh its arrangements to make it 'fit for purpose' to deliver priorities identified by our residents, which require partnership working in order to deliver them. For example, complex issues like affordable housing, the town centre and Longbridge.

The purpose was also to ensure the LSP Board was 'fit for purpose' to heed Government direction about the future of LSPs, neighbourhood management and also to deliver the District's contribution to the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The Community Plan 2003 – 2013 originally set out the key aims and targets to be achieved under five theme groups. As part of the review the theme groups have been revised and now consist of:

- Communities that are safe and feel safe;
- A better environment for today and tomorrow;
- Economic success that is shared by all;
- Improving health and well being;
- Meeting the needs of children and young people;
- Stronger communities.

The ideas of these multi agency groups 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 continued need to find additional efficiency savings [Gershon 2004] will provide further impetus to review current levels of partnership working and revise practises to achieve benefits across the authority and the district. Under Government Regulations issued in March 2007 the 2.5% target remains in place for 2007/08, but the target for years 2008/09 to 2010/11 has increased to 3%.

The 2006 Local Government White Paper 'Strong and prosperous communities' places a strong emphasis on partnership working particularly enhanced two tier. This is likely to mean an expansion of shared services and joint working between councils and may well impact on future years capital strategy.

### 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 2003/2007 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;
- ASDA where in exchange for a piece of land, ASDA has provided the Council with its first every multi storey car park; and,
- Birmingham City Council and St Modwen on the redevelopment and regeneration of the old MG Rover site at Longbridge.

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 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 commenced in April 2006. The County LSP 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 has monitored 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 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 the new working practices have been introduced to assist in meeting that objective. Full details are available in the separate Procurement Strategy document.

The new strategy will improve the Council's procurement capacity which should enable the Council 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.

## 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 Council Plan and the Council Results. 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.

The Council is now in a position to move to the second phase of its recovery programme and move towards a strong customer focused culture. As part of this transition, the Council has outsourced its existing in-house managed and self selecting citizen's panel and moved towards a statistically valid, externally run customer panel.

The groups will be statically reliable and balanced across the full range of socio-economic groups across the District. Consultation across the district is vital if we are to ensure we can deliver the services our residents want.

SNAP survey shop will undertake surveys and focus groups on an agreed range of topics across the District on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council to ensure we are well placed to meet the needs and manage the expectations of our customers. Since June 2006 we have held a series of focus groups for residents throughout the district on a range of topics to inform the development of a customer standard and to discuss issues arising from the budget.

It is Council policy that formal consultation with the public will take place on all significant or major capital projects through the customer panels and focus groups. Consultation with focus groups has taken place this year on the annual capital and revenue budgets for 2007/08, and it is planned to take place each year.

### 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 and investment, the Council undertook substantial and varied consultation with residents, registered social landlords, the Housing Corporation, and the Voluntary Sector and other Agencies in developing its Housing Strategy (2006 – 2011). 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.

#### Examples of Key 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;
- Bromsgrove Private Landlords Forum.

#### Examples of Key County Wide Housing Consultation Groups and Partnerships

- Health and Social Care Groups;
- South Housing Market Area Co-ordination Group and Housing Market Assessment;
- North Worcester Care & Repair Agency Consultation Group;
- Supporting People Commissioning Group.

#### Culture and Community Consultation Strategy

Culture and Community Services recognise that the operation of facilities and the planning and implementation for activities/service delivery within the department needs to be driven by the outcomes of valid consultation and user feedback. 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 based on robust information.

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

- Comments and Suggestion Systems;
- User Questionnaires;
- Consultative and Focus Groups;
- Council Complaints Procedure;
- Open meetings;
- User/Non-user General Residents Survey;
- Open Days;
- Meet the Manager Sessions.

## 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 strategic priority are identified through this process.

A yearly survey is conducted by West Mercia Police and it's Community Safety Partnerships on key issues around Fear of Crime. This information is available by County, District or Ward areas. A monthly Tasking Group, supported by a dedicated Analyst, prioritises types of crime & disorder together with geographical areas. Partners put together an action plan and resources to tackle issues highlighted.

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 Council also use residents and young people focus groups for specific issues.

Partners and Communities Together (PACT) is a scheme that looks at the key issues that have the greatest impact on a Ward/Community. Residents prioritise issues and Statutory Organisations or Voluntary Groups deliver them.

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. It undertakes a wide range of consultation through its established Citizens Panels, Community Forums, and other participation groups.

Neighbourhood Forums are being piloted which brings agencies such as Parish, District and County Councils plus key individuals together to tackle a wide range of localised issues.

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 those consulted so that they are aware that their views are being listened to and acted upon.

## **Review of the Capital Strategy**

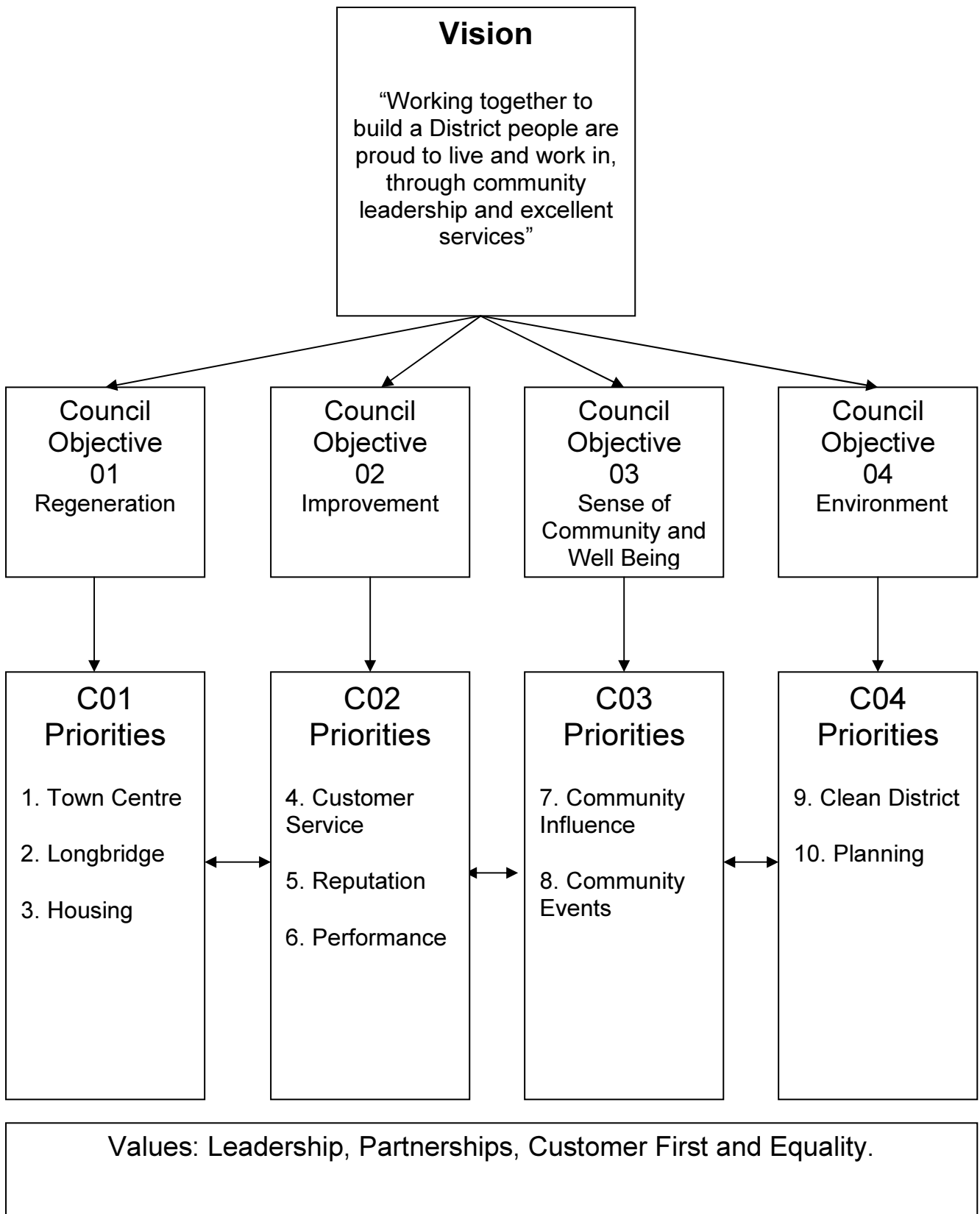
This is the fifth formal Capital Strategy for the Council and will be subject to regular review to ensure that it reflects the Council's priorities and corporate objectives and contributes to the Community Plan.

The new Prudential Code system for control of local authority capital expenditure has been in place since 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

Jayne Pickering  
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**COUNCIL VISION OBJECTIVES PRIORITIES & VALUES**



## PROJECTED USE OF CAPITAL RESOURCES

Capital Resource	Balance Available 01/04/06	ADD Estimated Receipts in 2006/07	LESS Revised Budget & Additions 2006/07	Estimated Balance at 31/03/07	ADD Estimated Receipts in 2007/08	LESS Original Budget 2007/08	Estimated Balance at 31/03/08	ADD Estimated Receipts in 2008/09	LESS Revised Estimate for 2008/09	Estimated Balance at 31/03/09	ADD Estimated Receipts in 2009/10	LESS Revised Estimate for 2009/10	Estimated Balance at 31/03/10
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
All Capital Receipts (Including Low-Cost & Poolable Housing Ring Fenced)	17.495	0.295	4.625	13.165	0.769	3.548	10.386	0.244	7.401	3.229	0.043	1.375	1.897
Section 106 Funds	1.799	0.308	1.214	0.893	0.100	0.668	0.325	0.000	0.130	0.195	0.000	0.000	0.195
Government Grants - IEG	0.082		0.082	0.000		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
Government Grants - SCG (DFG's)	0.053	0.268	0.321	0.000	0.281	0.281	0.000	0.281	0.281	0.000	0.281	0.281	0.000
Government Grants - Liveability	0.259	0.081	0.340	0.000		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
Government Grants - Regional Housing Pot	0.000	0.217	0.217	0.000	0.162	0.162	0.000		0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000
Other Government Grants & Contributions	0.039	0.012	0.000	0.051		0.000	0.051		0.000	0.051		0.000	0.051
	19.727	1.181	6.799	14.109	1.312	4.659	10.762	0.525	7.812	3.475	0.324	1.656	2.143

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007 - 2010

Schemes by Department	Revised Budget & Additions 2006/07 £	Financing Revised Budget & Additions 2006/07	Proposed Budget 2007/08 £	Latest Estimate 2008/09 £	Latest Estimate 2009/10 £	Future Years £	Financing Original Budget 2007/08	Brief Description of Project
<b>HUMAN RESOURCES &amp; ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT</b>								
- New HR Information & Management System.	30,000	Capital 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, assist management users to be continually aware of staffing implications, and enable the Council to meet current and future e-government targets.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>30,000</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>POLICY &amp; PERFORMANCE</b>								
Customer Feedback System (Complaints)			20,000				Capital Receipts	The system (software and server) will enable us to properly manage, track and respond to complaints. The purchase of such a system is consistent with our Improvement Plan and the Customer First Strategy.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>LEGAL &amp; DEMOCRATIC SERVICES</b>								
Replacement Electoral Software	15,000	Capital Receipts						Replacement of the current IT electoral software with a more reliable alternative.
Committee Minutes System	18,000	Capital Receipts						A high priority scheme required to release savings in the revenue budget.
Disabled Discrimination Act Improvements	14,000	Capital 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.
Changes to Council House Reception Area (Ex Service Centre budget carried forward to 2005/06 & 2006/07.	50,000	Capital Receipts						To complete the conversion of the former Council House Reception area to office accommodation.
Case Management System			14,000				Capital Receipts Spend to Save Scheme	Provide a solution for managing legal case loads and increase capacity for operating shared service arrangements. Increase workload within existing SLA with external customer. In turn this would enable the department to investigate further opportunities for the delivery of the service to third parties.

Alterations to Council Buildings in compliance with DDA			150,000	150,000			Capital Receipts	Enable the Council to deliver structural and other alterations to council buildings over a 3 year period as required by the Disability Discrimination Act and following the review of accessibility by SCOPE. The works required have been identified in order to ensure that our buildings and services can be accessed by all of our customers and will ensure we are DDA compliant.
CCTV Provision at Council House			20,000				Capital Receipts	Provision of CCTV facilities at the Council House.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>97,000</b>		<b>184,000</b>	<b>150,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES</b>								
Purchase Order Processing System	197,000	Capital Receipts = £138k Gov't Grant = £59k						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 both to meet the national procurement agenda and its commitments in IEG statements submitted to central government as part of the e-government agenda.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>197,000</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>E-GOVERNMENT &amp; CUSTOMER SERVICES</b>								
Corporate Budget for IT Upgrades	38,000	Capital Receipts	40,000				Capital Receipts	To enable a rolling ICT replacement programme to be undertaken.
Corporate Budget for IT Upgrades (a bid for increased budget)	14,000	Capital Receipts						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).
ICT Infrastructure including Telephones & Equipment for Disaster Recovery. (Invest-to-Save)	441,000	Capital Receipts						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 will be made possible through an integrated technology infrastructure. To introduce 24 x 7 helpdesk facilities to support the infrastructure at all times and ensure on-line facilities are maintained for the citizens. Setup the necessary facilities to create off site Disaster Recovery for Finance, Planning, Revenue and Benefits, Leisure, Cash Receiving and Corporate functions.

Internet/Intranet Development (IEG)	23,000	Gov't Grant IEG						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 the following e-Government indicators: R1, R3, R5, R6, G3, R7, R9, R10, R12, G12, R15, R23, R24 and G20. These are described within the business case. Future proof the website for at least 3 years. Provide a solution that is flexible to citizen requirements
Government Connect Scheme	30,000	Capital 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.
Upgrading to Radius Cash Receipting System	50,000	Capital Receipts						The upgrading and setting up of the Radius Cash Receipting system for all electronic payments to the requirements of Financial Services Department.
Upgrading of Leisure Booking & Receipts/Income Flex-on-Line System	21,000	Capital Receipts						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. This scheme is on hold pending the review of the ways leisure related services can be provided.
Replacement of Academy Revenues & Benefits IT System	400,000	Capital Receipts						Replacement of existing Revenues and Benefits IT system.
Spatial IT Scheme (Local Authority Modernisation Programme)	500,000	Capital Receipts		5,793,000			Capital Receipts (2008/09)	The Spatial Project is a modernising programme involving the procurement of new integrated software to enable the transformation of service delivery and the achievement of full compliance with national E-Government priority outcomes.
Replacement of desktop print fleet at the Council House and Depot			75,000				Capital Receipts (Spend to Save Scheme)	Review of existing print fleet and facilities within the Council House and Depot by NRG, Danwood Group and Xerox under the OGC buying solutions compliant framework contract. Report and proposals for multifunctional devices received from all three companies and NRG selected a preferred bidder based on commercial evaluation of the 3 proposals submitted.
Provision of a Queue Management system at the CSC			30,000				Capital Receipts	Provide a solution for managing customer flow within the Customer Service Centre and in particular the disparate queue that forms in the area in front of the service desks. Provide customers with information regarding where they should wait, their position in the queue and which service desk they should attend.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,517,000</b>		<b>145,000</b>	<b>5,793,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>CULTURE &amp; COMMUNITY SERVICES</b>								
<b>Recreation Grounds</b>								





Improvements to Rubery Park	154,000	Gov't Grant Liveability = £109k. Capital Receipts = £15k. S106 Culture & Community = £30k.						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	217,000	Gov't Grant Liveability =£207k. Capital Receipts= £10k.						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 (Part funded from Government Liveability Fund)	43,000	Gov't Grant Liveability = £20k, S106 Culture & Community = £16k, Capital Receipts = £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	4,000	Gov't Grant Liveability						The budget is for the regeneration of two allotment sites.
Callowbrook Park (Rubery) Improvement Scheme	35,000	S106 Culture & Community						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 St. Chads Park (Rubery) that is being funded from external grant (Liveability) monies.
<b>Sports Development</b>								
New Sporting Pitches (Garrington's/UEF) (Funded from S106 Receipts)	60,000	S106 Culture & Community	150,000	130,000			S106 Culture & Community	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. Discussions have commenced with potential partners re the provision of a new artificial pitch.
Wythall Teenage Sports Facility Scheme	80,000	S106 Culture & Community						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. Officers are currently considering feasibility option sites in association with local stakeholders e.g. police, school, youth service.
<b>Leisure/Sports Centres</b>								



Dolphin Centre - Replacement of Pool Plant	55,000	Capital 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. The scheme has been deferred to 2006/07.
<b>Grant Aid</b>								
Catshill 20:20 Community Project - Refurbishment of Play Area at George Wagstaff Memorial Hall	35,000	Capital Receipts						The refurbishment of the children's play area at the George Wagstaff Memorial Ground
Catshill 20:20 Community Project - Cycle Track/Footpath around field	25,000	Capital Receipts =£15k. S106 Culture & Community= £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 Culture & Community						Refurbishment of the Village Hall by the Catshill Village Hall Management Committee
<b>Community Services</b>								
Restoration of Memorial Headstones in Bromsgrove Cemetery	26,000	Capital 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.
<b>Other Schemes</b>								
Hunters Hill School Blackwell. Contribution towards New Indoor Sports Facilities	129,500	Capital Receipts						Capital grant towards the provision of a new Sports Hall
Alvechurch - Completion of Sports Building at Rowney Green	10,000	S106 Culture & Community						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 Culture & Community						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 Culture & Community						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.	79,000	S106 Culture & Community						Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Barnt Green (Linthurst) - Hewell Road Park Improvements & Bitterell Road Play Area Improvements	2,000	S106 Culture & Community						Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Belbroughton - Improving Play Facilities	40,000	S106 Culture & Community						Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.



Belbroughton Recreation Centre - Sports Storage Facilities & External Toilets	20,000	S106 Culture & Community						Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Bentley Village Hall - Refurbishment of Play Area Equipment	20,000	S106 Culture & Community						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 Culture & Community						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 Culture & Community						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			50,000				S106 Culture & Community	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 Culture & Community						Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Hagley - Play Area Refurbishment	80,000	S106 Culture & Community						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 Culture & Community						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 Culture & Community						Part of an approved programme for new provision and improvements to parks, open spaces, play areas, and recreation areas.
Alvechurch Youth Scheme			90,000				S106 Culture & Community	The project is to enhance the provision of youth facilities in the Alvechurch area following residents consultation of local needs.
Bromsgrove Youth Scheme			85,000				S106 Culture & Community	The project is to enhance the provision of youth facilities in the Bromsgrove area following residents consultation of local needs.
Tutnall & Cobley - Access Improvements			25,000				S106 Culture & Community	The project is to enhance the access to Tardebigge Community Hall to support/ expand the provision of services provided.
<b>Community Safety</b>								
C.C.T.V. Scheme 1 (Wythall/Drakes Cross).	132,000	Capital 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.
Upgrading of C.C.T.V. Facilities at St Chads Park Rubery	29,000	Capital Receipts						Upgrade to CCTV and the multi channel BT link.



Replacement of CCTV Equipment				354,000	100,000	79,000	Capital Receipts	The project is the replacement of all of the Districts CCTV cameras on a 3 year rolling programme to commence in 2008/09, the cameras were designed for a 10 year lifecycle and are due for replacement. Replacement of 26 CCTV cameras and domes in Bromsgrove Town Centre. Replacement of 19 CCTV cameras in Town Centre, Alvechurch, Barnt Green, Hagley, Rubery & Sanders Park. Upgrade the CCTV Control Room to Digital Recording and future proofing for the next 10 years. New monitor wall, display systems and interior building works.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,552,300</b>		<b>400,000</b>	<b>484,000</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>79,000</b>		
<b>PLANNING &amp; ENVIRONMENT SERVICES</b>								
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR RENEWAL GRANTS</b>								
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) (Private & BDHT Grants) Funded by Government SCG Grant & Capital Receipts	535,000	Gov't Grant DFG-SCG = £321k. Capital Receipts = £214k.	786,000	663,000	680,000	700,000	Capital Receipts = £505k, & Gov't Grant DFG-SCG = £281k	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.
Discretionary Home Repair Assistance & Housing Renewal Grants (Private Sector Only)	156,000	Capital Receipts	161,000	164,000	168,000	173,000	Capital Receipts & Gov't Grant Regional Housing Pot = £79k & £82k.	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 own homes. This scheme forms part of our agreed private sector housing strategy.
<b>STRATEGIC HOUSING</b>								
<b>Retained Housing</b>								
Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site - Door & Window Replacements - Amenity Blocks.	8,000	Housing Capital Receipts						Refurbishment of amenity blocks on caravan site.
<b>Homeless Hostels Schemes</b>								
Refurbishment & Modernisation of Homeless Hostels (Holly, Rubery, Burcot, & Wythall Lodges)	19,000	Housing Capital Receipts						
Homeless Hostel Re-modelling Scheme			325,000				Capital Receipts	Grants to RSL's to support and subsidise the provision of Affordable Housing Development in the form of rented tenure.
<b>Strategic &amp; Enabling Housing Schemes</b>								
4 Houses on garage sites (Grafton, Foxwalks) Probable Slippage to 2005/06.	96,000	S106 Affordable Housing						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)	72,000	S106 Affordable Housing						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	32,000	S106 Affordable Housing					Grant funding of 3 houses for letting at affordable rents by Bromford Housing Association.
Grants to RSL - Villiers Road (formerly 38-42 Broad St)	120,000	S106 Affordable Housing					Grant funding of a development of 15 flats for letting at affordable rents by Rooftop Housing Association.
Grants to RSL's - Housing to Rent (New Build)	115,000	Housing Capital Receipts = £30k & S106 Affordable Housing = £85k.					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)	22,000	Housing Capital Receipts					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	58,000	Capital Receipts - (Ring Fenced for Low Cost Hsg)					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 RSL's - Low Cost Housing	160,000	Capital Receipts - (Ring Fenced for Low Cost Hsg)					
Grants to RSL's - Housing for Rent	285,000	Capital Receipts - (Ring Fenced for Low Cost Hsg) = £200k. Housing Capital Receipts = £35k. S106 Affordable Housing = £50k.					
Grants to RSL's - General	40,000	Capital Receipts - (Ring Fenced for Low Cost & Shared Ownership Hsg)	40,000	40,000	0		Capital Receipts - (Ring Fenced for Low Cost & Shared Ownership Hsg)



Extra Care Sheltered Housing - Gilbert Court, Charford.			1,000,000				Capital Receipts	The provision of Local Authority Grant to a Registered Social Landlord towards the joint commissioning or the re-modelling and provision of 27 additional units of affordable housing and community facilities within the planned re-modelling of Gilbert Court Sheltered Housing Scheme to Extra Care Standard.
WM Regional Housing Pot Local Authority Grant Allocation	217,000	Gov't Grant Regional Housing Pot						The Government Office West Midlands has made a cash allowance to housing authorities who are debt free to spend generally on housing capital projects. The £217k allocation has been allocated to 8 separate projects which were approved by Executive Cabinet on 1st Nov 2006.
Grants to RSL's - Affordable Housing Rented Schemes			250,000				S106 Affordable Housing	Grants to RSL's to support and subsidise the provision of Affordable Housing.  Development in the form of rented tenure.
Grants to RSL's - Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing Schemes			11,000				Capital Receipts - Ring Fenced for Low Cost	Grants to RSL's to support and subsidise the provision of Affordable Housing Development in the form of Shared Ownership or Low cost tenures. Where schemes are not forthcoming due to land supply issues, the funding can be utilised to fund Do It Yourself Shared Ownership (DIYSO) or Home Buy Schemes where applicants identify a home on the open market and apply to either part purchase through an RSL or buy at 75% of market value on an equity resale scheme.
Grants to RSL's - Shared Ownership and Low Cost Affordable Housing Schemes			11,000				Housing Capital Receipts - Ring Fenced for Housing Use	Part of above scheme
Housing Safety Net Funding - Scheme to be developed			83,000				Gov't Grant Regional Housing Pot	Government Grant has been provisionally allocated to the Council for use in 2007/08 on a housing capital scheme which will be developed in due course.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,935,000</b>		<b>2,667,000</b>	<b>867,000</b>	<b>848,000</b>	<b>873,000</b>		
<b>STREET SCENE &amp; WASTE MANAGEMENT</b>	-	-						
Pay & Display Car Park Ticket Machines	20,000	Capital Receipts (Spend to Save Scheme)						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. The key service objective is to provide good quality, well maintained, customer focused, and user friendly car parking facilities for the residents of and visitors to the District of Bromsgrove.
Concessionary Fare Implementation of Smart Cards	20,000	Capital Receipts						To implement smart card operation as part of the concessionary fares scheme

Replacement Pay & Display Ticket Machines			18,000					S106 Off-Site Car Parking Provision	The replacement of seven old pay and display machines with brand new ones using S106 monies from development adjacent to Hanover Street car Park.
<b>DEPOT SERVICES</b>									
Rear Loading Refuse Freighters	292,000	Capital Receipts							To obtain 3 rear loading refuse freighters for accessing properties in areas which are difficult to access.
Replacement of Fleet Vehicles (Multi Lift Vehicles)	125,000	Capital 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.
New Tanker for Cesspools Work	58,000	Capital 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.
Pavement Sweepers for Street Cleansing	99,000	Capital Receipts							Budget is for suitable vehicles to sweep the streets and pavements in line with Council specification. To comply with the Environmental Protection Act.
Graffiti Removal System	16,000	Capital Receipts							To obtain a vehicle suitably equipped for the removal of graffiti throughout the District.
Street Cleansing Vehicles & Equipment (Identified within Depot Strategy)	519,000	Capital Receipts							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.	127,000	Capital Receipts							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	Capital Receipts							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					Capital Receipts	The replacement of the two existing mechanical sweepers.
Improvements to Depot Site	50,000	Capital Receipts	50,000					Capital Receipts	Physical improvements to Depot yard and stores to meet HSE recommendations and create suitable parking arrangements for fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Refuse Collection)			63,000	13,000	273,000	2,183,000		Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Street Cleaning)			85,000	186,000	146,000	662,000		Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Recycling)			540,000		13,000	15,000		Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.



Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Commercial Services)			0	106,000	13,000	170,000	Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Garage Services)			59,000	1,000	15,000	28,000	Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Highways)			21,000	23,000	1,000	163,000	Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Grounds)			123,000	59,000	102,000	253,000	Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
Street Scene Depot Vehicle Replacement Programme (Multi-lift Vehicle)			17,000		12,000	7,000	Capital Receipts	To provide a 10 year, on going, vehicle replacement programme for the departmental fleet.
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>1,346,000</b>		<b>1,116,000</b>	<b>388,000</b>	<b>575,000</b>	<b>3,481,000</b>		
<b>SUPPORT SERVICES RECHARGES</b>	-							
SUPPORT SERVICES RECHARGES TO CAPITAL (To be recharged over all schemes in 2006/07, 2007/08 & later year)	124,000	Capital Receipts	127,000	130,000	133,000		Capital Receipts	
<b>SUB-TOTAL</b>	<b>124,000</b>		<b>127,000</b>	<b>130,000</b>	<b>133,000</b>	<b>0</b>		
<b>TOTAL OF EXISTING SCHEMES</b>	<b>6,798,300</b>		<b>4,659,000</b>	<b>7,812,000</b>	<b>1,656,000</b>	<b>4,433,000</b>		

Funding:

Capital Receipts	4,624,500		3,548,000	7,401,000	1,375,000	4,152,000
Section 106 Receipts	1,213,800		668,000	130,000	0	0
Government Grants	960,000		443,000	281,000	281,000	281,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,798,300</b>		<b>4,659,000</b>	<b>7,812,000</b>	<b>1,656,000</b>	<b>4,433,000</b>





**ASSET MANAGEMENT GROUP****Strategic Objectives and Group Responsibilities****1. STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES**

To support the Council's Vision, Objectives and Priorities the group has been set the following as its strategic objectives for asset management:

- To ensure that the Council's asset portfolio support the delivery of its service and objectives.
- To meet the challenge of working in an environment of change.
- To ensure that all assets are demonstrably managed in the most economic, efficient and effective manner.

From these strategic objectives the asset management plan must ensure procedures are implemented and performance measures adopted such that all operational assets must be:

- In the right location to allow customers to access the service and staff to deliver it.
- In good condition to the extent that services can be provided from them in a comfortable environment for both staff and customers without interruption.
- Suitable and sufficient for the purpose for which they are being used in terms of size, type and layout of accommodation – including accessible to people with disabilities.
- Flexible to the extent that they can be adapted economically to adjust to changing services needs, including sharing with partners in service delivery.
- Able to demonstrate “value for money” in terms of balance between efficiency in operation, running costs and long term sustainability.
- Able to convey a positive image of the Council and for the service being provided.
- Able to contribute something positive to the immediate environment, particularly where there is a need for physical regeneration of the locality.
- Good examples of sustainable development if new or extensively refurbished.
- Maintained in such a way so as to minimize reactive maintenance by improving planned maintenance arrangements.
- Managed to mitigate their impact on and effect of climate change.

All non operational assets must be:

- Able to make the maximum contribution to service revenue budgets in terms of rental income; and / or
- Able to make a positive contribution to the social wellbeing of the community either through its presence as a heritage asset or through use by others such as voluntary groups, charity organizations or small businesses.

- Retained reasons of strategic importance, such as to influence the physical and economic regeneration of the District.

When assets are considered for acquisition it should be for the following reasons:

- They are able to contribute towards the provision of the Council's services.
- A strategic acquisition for redevelopment or tactical purposes.
- To facilitate economic development.
- To generate revenue income.

A cost benefit analysis and risk assessment will be prepared as part of the decision making process in connection with the acquisition of assets.

## **2. GROUP RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Group is responsible for:

- The strategic management of the Council's assets.
- Ensuring that the Council's use and management of its corporate property assets is efficient and effective.
- Reviewing the Council Plan, Council Results, Community Strategy and other associated plans and strategies including service business plans with a view to identifying property implications including future service property requirements and aspirations.
- Considering the recommendations of service reviews and internal or external audits.
- Considering the responses of suitability surveys undertaken by the Property and Facilities Manager.
- Considering responses to the consultations of stakeholders regarding the Asset Management Plan.
- Reviewing data gathered for property performance indicators and from benchmarking exercises and implementing actions required in order to improve performance as necessary.
- Monitoring the amount of surplus and unoccupied properties, unlet investment property and instigating any necessary action
- Considering asset related projects for inclusion in the capital programme.
- Seeking and considering examples of best practice in asset management in the public and private sectors.
- Ensuring that the requirements of service departments including housing, recreational, planning, or corporate needs, and in support of the delivery of those needs taking into account best value principles and corporate priorities.
- Meeting the corporate objectives of the Council insofar as the same are influenced by Asset Management.
- Reviewing land and property holdings to determine ways and means of achieving the Council's objectives through the sale, acquisition, or letting of land, as appropriate.

- To assess the Council's accommodation requirements, based on strategic aims, statutory service provision, Council objectives, and service delivery priorities
- To assess the extent, type, condition, accessibility, and performance of the existing asset portfolio to ensure that it is sufficient, suitable, and fit for purpose
- To ensure continual improvement in asset management, with the establishment of priorities for future investment.
- Considering alternative uses for land and property holdings, as appropriate.
- The maximisation of income from asset holdings.
- The application of robust procedures to the proposed acquisition of assets.
- The maximisation of returns from disposal of surplus assets.
- Updating annually the Asset Management Plan for submission to Corporate Management Team.

Day to day responsibility for property and property matters lies with the Property and Facilities Manager, within Legal and Democratic Services. The Property & Facilities Manager is supported by the handling of responsibility for service-specific operational property by the Heads of Service / service managers of particular departments as follows:

### **Head of Culture & Community Services**

- Parks & Open Spaces
- Cemeteries
- Museum & Tourist Information Centre

### **Head of Street Scene & Waste Management**

- Council's Depot
- Public Conveniences
- Car parks

### **Economic Development Officer**

- Market Hall
- Other Town Centre issues

Responsibility for non-operational property (principally the main Council House at Burcot Lane) rests with the Property & Facilities Manager.

The following are pivotal in the day-to-day management of the Council's property assets:-

- Setting and monitoring repairs and maintenance budgets
- Responding to repair requests and organising maintenance works, on both planned and incident-responsive bases
- Implementing improvement and reinstatement programmes
- Energy Management (i.e., monitoring all fuel usage in operational and non-operational premises)
- Monitoring income (from investment assets)

## APPENDIX 4

- Disposal and acquisitions (both freehold and leasehold)
- Valuations
- Rent Reviews, Lease renewals, assignments
- General property-related queries
- Appointing and monitoring the performance of external property consultants or contractors (where appropriate)

## DEPARTMENTAL CAPITAL INVESTMENT STRATEGIES

### Planning and Environment Services Strategy

The Planning and Environment Services Department comprises the regulatory services of Development Control (and enforcement), Strategic Planning including the Local Development Framework, Trees and Conservation, Building Control, Environmental Health Commercial and Pollution, Licensing, Economic Development Administrative support services and also the Council's Strategic Housing and Enabling role.

#### Planning Strategy

The department has been very successful in the previous 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 29<sup>th</sup> 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 Council was awarded Government Grant of £217k for the financial year 2006/07 from the Regional Housing Capital Pot under the 'safety net' arrangements for use on a range of schemes that support Private sector Housing improvements, energy efficiency work and affordable housing schemes. The Grant was received too late in the financial year for schemes to be developed and will be carrying this forward for use in year 2007/08. We have now also been awarded a further £162k for use in 2007/08.

The Capital Programme for 2007 to 2010, and the current financial year 2006/07, includes various housing schemes totalling some £6.3m, funded from Section 106 Planning agreement resources, general capital receipts and 'ring fenced' housing capital receipts, consisting of:-

- Retained Housing (Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site);
- Homeless Hostels (Refurbishment, Modernisation & Re-modelling schemes);
- Strategic & Enabling Housing Schemes (Grant funding of schemes);
- Affordable Housing Schemes (Grant funding of schemes);
- Extra Care Sheltered Housing (Gilbert Court).

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 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**

Sport and Active Recreation have long been recognised as an important part of modern life, which can provide a contribution to Health Communities, Building Safe, Strong & Sustainable Communities, Economic Vitality & Workforce Development and Meeting the needs of Children & Young People.

Sport, Active Recreation and Art are a major influence on people's lives in terms of what they watch, their lifestyle choices and even what they wear. It impacts on virtually every level of our local community and plays a vital role in defining the life/identity of local residents.

Culture & Community Services currently provides/operates the following services for local residents, The Dolphin Centre, Haybridge Sports Centre, Spadesbourne Suite, Sports & Art Development, Parks, Play Areas, Open Spaces, Fairs, Cemeteries, The Bromsgrove Museum, Tourist Information Centre, CCTV, Lifeline and the Management of the Community Safety Partnership.

As part of the Corporate Improvement Plan a large number of changes have occurred within the Council to allow it to deliver its Corporate Objective and Priorities.

The creation of the Culture and Community Services Department which brought together the former Leisure Services department, Community Safety, CCTV and the Lifeline operation, has allowed the service to focus it's planning, implementation and delivery of services to address the Corporate Objective 04 – Improvement and its priorities of performance, customer service and reputation by creating individual service improvement plans and focusing attention on the key elements of service delivery.

The service as a whole is using the Towards an Excellent Service Framework (TAES) to create a self assessment and improvement plan to ensure the department establishes robust continuous improvement plans, utilises its resources efficiently & effectively and delivers high quality services. Further more this process will continue to imbed the Council wide improvements made to Performance Monitoring and begin the process of addressing the Value for Money debate/agenda.

The department will also play a major role in delivering the Council's Objective 03 - Sense of Community & Well Being through its ongoing work and planned improvements highlighted above. The Community Safety, Sports & Arts development teams will be focusing on the Priority of Community Influence by endeavouring to enhance their current work and by responding the needs of the community as established by the improved consultation systems recently introduced. The Sports, Parks & Events teams will be focusing their attention on the Priority of Community Events and be looking to expand the number of community events/activities we directly deliver or facilitate across the district.

In addition Community and Partnership development has been included to the responsibilities of the department as the Council recognises the benefits that can be achieved by working strategically and operationally with other organisations. Priorities in this area over the coming years will to play an active part in the revised Local Strategic Partnership (Children & Young People and Health & Well Being), develop greater capacity within the voluntary sports & play sector, the creation of a Community Sports Network, support the work of the newly formed North Worcestershire Schools Sport Partnership, review the Council's Section 106 and Grant Application policies and respond to the Challenges of the Children and Young Persons Strategic Partnerships action plan.

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.

### Service Aims

**Culture & Community Services (C&CS)** – Are committed to providing high quality, cost effective and efficient services which meet the needs of the community and contribute to the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan, Objectives and Priorities.

These values are supported by the Individual Services areas Vision Statement as follows:

**Sports Services** - To provide high quality Sport and Active Recreation opportunities throughout the District that are accessible to everyone by removing social and financial barriers to participation, promoting continuous improvement, originality and excellence in all that we do.

**Parks and Community Services** - To provide a diverse range of parks, open spaces, play and community events that meet the needs of the local residents and promote a sense of community & well being.

**Community Safety** - To make the community feel Safe, Help the vulnerable & those at risk by working with and influencing partner organisations to meet the aims of the Community Safety Partnership and Bromsgrove District Council.

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

**What is equality and diversity** - Equality and diversity is about fairness, equality of access, recognizing 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 equality and diversity 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.

(This entirely supports the commitments made in the Council's Inclusive Equalities Scheme)

**External Links** - to establish and contribute to partnerships including the Local Strategic Partnership, which can provide a contribution to:

- Improving the Health of the local Community;
- Build Safe, Strong & Sustainable Communities;
- Promote Economic Vitality & Workforce Development; and
- Meet the needs of Children, Young People & the vulnerable.

**Raising the Profile** - to promote Bromsgrove, the Council and Culture & Community services to everyone who lives, works, visits or attends school or college in the district by providing high quality services which meet the needs of local residents.

### Objectives for 2007/08

As part of the corporate business planning and the service level team planning process a number of key deliverables for 2007 / 2008 including the following items that may impact upon future capital programmes: -

- Increase participation in sport, leisure, active recreation & culture activities;
- Review the current events/activity programmes operated by the service and look to expand the range of events in line with the Council Plan;
- Review the Operation to C&CS to ensure that income generation is maximised and that Fees & Charges reflect the local market and top quartile pricing;
- Review the delivery of Section 106 Schemes across the district and revise the mechanism for agreeing such schemes in relation to neighbourhood management proposals;
- Implement the CCTV improvement action plan, to enhance service delivery;
- Implement a Community Sports Network for the District;
- Develop an action plan for submission to the Big Lottery Fund as part of the Worcestershire Play Strategy to enhance play services with in the District;
- Delivery of the Community Safety Strategy by April 2008 (see below).

The capital programme for 2007 – 2010 contains a number of key projects for Culture and Community Services including:-

- Enhancement of a number of Children's Play areas across the district;
- Provision of a new park and sports facilities at Barnsley Hall;
- The provision of a new artificial pitch (ATP);
- Delivery of the externally funded Dabid projects in Sidemoor and Charford wards and potential schemes elsewhere;
- Improvements to the Council Allotment provision.

Future years schemes are likely to include: -

- Redevelopment and upgrading of CCTV;
- Additional Sport Facilities within the district;
- The implementation of the Play Strategy funded in partnership with the Big Lottery Fund.

### 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/replacement of Closed Circuit Television systems (CCTV) for which the Council has received Government Home Office capital grants in previous years. Schemes recently completed include CCTV systems at Wythall and Alvechurch railway stations, with additional funding from Central Trains, Hagley Playing Fields, with additional funding from Hagley Parish Council and Wythall and Drakes Cross scheme funded from the Council's 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 a 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**

The department delivers the following services to a population of 90,700 (2004 projection) people and 37,647 households (Council Tax Register) within Bromsgrove:-

- Refuse collection;
- Recycling collections;
- Bulky Waste service;
- Trade Waste service;
- Street Cleansing;
- Abandoned vehicles;
- Fly-tipping;
- Cesspool emptying service;
- Highways and general works team;
- Grounds Maintenance;
- Fleet Management;
- Garage services;
- Waste policy and promotions;
- Business Support unit;
- Parking Operations;
- Transportation issues;
- Street furniture and Naming;
- Land Drainage/watercourses; and
- Concessionary Fares.

Approx 140 employees are employed by the Department to deliver a minimum of 7 million customer interactions per year through the above services.

The Depot has suffered over the last 10 years from significant underinvestment. The Council has however invested heavily in its refuse and recycling fleet financed mainly through Government grant funding, and within the last year its street cleansing fleet. Operational practices have now been reviewed and in general are improving against progressive and high performing Council.

A capital programme for the Depot has been developed which will ensure that there are sufficient funds for vehicle replacements in future year. A well-managed fleet is fundamental to the delivery of effective services.

Whilst the life expectancy of the fleet is known at the time of purchase the Council has failed in the past to schedule a robust renewals programme. The proposed Capital Programme however now introduces a schedule of vehicle replacement over a 10 year period which will ensure that the department does not deteriorate into a situation where vehicles become dilapidated shabby and reflecting a poor Council image. This failing of earlier years has been recognised and a new approach has been adopted.

## **Resources Strategy**

### **Support Services**

The Council's support services comprise the following departments:-

- Human Resources & Organisational Development;
- 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 IT computer systems where existing systems were either out of date or non-existent with reliance having to be placed on manual effort.

This was recognised in the financial year 2005/06 and saw the commencement of the £1.8m IT Infrastructure scheme which delivered a sound platform to enable the Council to introduce modern efficient working practices thereby delivering potential savings. The year 2006/07 also included a new Human Resources Information and Management System, a new Committee Minutes System, replacement Electoral Software, and a programme of corporate IT upgrades.

A computerised E-Procurement IT system is currently under development and will enable commitment accounting, electronic purchasing, the streamlining of the procurement/creditor payments processes, and will be a step on the way towards the paperless office.

### **E-Government & Customer Services**

Over the previous 4 years the Council has made substantial investment in Information Technology services under the Government Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) initiative with funding from Home Office Government IEG 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 Estimated Capital expenditure on IT related schemes in 2007 – 2010 is £6.4m.

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.

Ongoing schemes continuing into 2007 – 2010 include:

- The Spatial Project
  - A modernising programme involving the procurement of new integrated software to enable the transformation of service delivery and the achievement of full compliance with national E-Government priority outcomes.



The project covers how we will organize our IT multiple datasets to give the Council clean, accurate and usable data that will form the cornerstone of developing our services. We are proposing radical transformation that will affect all service areas and enhance all points of delivery to our citizens.

- 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);
- 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 (currently on hold pending the outcome of a review of the ways leisure related services can be provided);
- Replacement of the Academy Revenues & Benefits IT System
  - Purchase of a new system was included in the 2006/07 capital budget but replacement is now unlikely to be required until 2008/09 because the contract for the existing system has been extended by 1 further year;
- General IT Upgrades
  - A rolling programme of ICT replacements.

New Bids for 2007 – 2010 include:

### High Priority

- Provision of Queue management system at the Customer Service Centre (CSC)
  - A provide a solution to manage the customer flow within the CSC;
- Provision new desktop printing solution.
  - Replacement of all desktop printers, photocopies & fax machines;
- Provision of Queue Management system at the CSC.

### Medium Priority

- Connection of CCTV centre to corporate network
  - Installation of fibre link between Council building & CCTV centre;
- Refinement of Customer Service Environment at the CSC
  - Alterations at the CSC to improve working conditions;

- Provision of Corporate Intranet solution
  - Development of a corporate Intranet Solution;
- Provision of Queue management system at the Customer Service Centre (CSC)
  - A provide a solution to manage the customer flow within the CSC.

**Low Priority**

- Connection of Shop Mobility Office to Corporate Network
  - Installation of Fibre link & associated equipment between Shop Mobility Office & the Main Council Offices.

For 2007 - 2010 the Council has approved the high priority schemes only.



## Project Initiation Document 2007 – 2010

### Bids for Capital Resources in the 2007 – 2010 Capital Programme

#### 1 Purpose

The purpose of the Project Initiation Document (PID) is to seek approval from Executive Cabinet for the development of a (name of project) solution for the Council.

If the PID is approved the project will progress to the next stage of developing a business case for the recommended option, including a detailed financial appraisal and requirements gathering.

**Prepared by:**

**Date:**

#### 2 Details of Proposed Capital Scheme

<b>Title of Scheme:</b>	<b>Start Year:</b>
-------------------------	--------------------

#### 3 Background

**Briefly provide the reason for this project, Council requirements, meeting Council aims etc.**

##### 3.1 Definition

**Briefly state what the project is and what it will deliver.**

##### 3.2 Current Position

Investigation has found the current position to be (Summary and Bullet points):

**Current position:**

The deficiencies are (Summary and Bullet Points):

**Deficiencies:**

The consequential risks arising from these deficiencies are (Summary and Bullet Points):

**Consequential risks:**

#### 4 The Proposal

This PID considers (enter number of) options: (alternatives considered including doing nothing).

List option 1 – (one line description only)

List option 2 – (one line description only)

Etc.

**Options Considered:**

#### 4.1 Costs

Brief details (very summarised) of each options costs (possibly estimated costs):

**Cost of Options Considered:**

Option recommended and reason:

**Recommended Option:**

**4.2 Value for Money**

Explain how the recommended option achieves Value for Money (please include forecast improved performance targets and/or customer service measures where appropriate ) and attach copies of your Option Appraisals:

**4.3 Service Business Plan**

Explain how the recommended option achieves the Objectives of your Departmental Business Plan:

**4.4 Support for the proposal**

The key drivers in developing this recommendation are .....

Driver	Consideration

**4.5 Overview of the proposal**

Brief details with no more than 4 bullet points:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

## 5. Cash Flow of Proposed Scheme

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

## 6. 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	£0

## 7. Revenue Impact of Proposed Scheme

Element	Cost £'000			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Ongoing
Employee Costs (describe purpose) (Do not include Internal Design / Supervision Costs) Maintenance Costs Loss of interest on capital expenditure @ 4.75% of total scheme Other Costs (describe purpose)				
<b>Total Revenue Cost</b>				
Income / Savings (describe)				
<b>Total Revenue Income / Savings</b>				
<b>Net Revenue Impact</b>				

## 8. The 'Council Plan'

The 'Council Plan' approved by Executive Cabinet sets out the following Vision, Objectives and Priorities for the Council which are underpinned by two 'strap lines' for the public and for staff ('Building Pride' & 'Zero to Hero'). These criteria will be used for considering bids for Capital resources in the Capital Programme from 2007/08.

## 9. Justification

In order for funds to be released the bid for capital resources must demonstrate a measurable return on investment. Briefly complete the appropriate section(s) below in support of your bid. (Bullet Points) All sections are to be completed, for objectives which do not apply enter 'Not Applicable'.

**10. Vision**

“Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services”

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

**11. Council Objectives**

How will the funds requested be used to help the Council achieve its Objectives (enter details for each relevant priority)?

**1. Regeneration**

Priority 1 – Town Centre

Priority 2 – Longbridge

Priority 3 – Housing

**Regeneration:**

**2. Environment**

Priority 4 – Clean Streets

Priority 5 – Planning

**Environment:**

**3. Sense of Community and Well Being**

Priority 6 – Community Activities

Priority 7 – Community Influence

**Sense of Community and Well Being:**

**4. Improvement**

Priority 8 – Customer Satisfaction

Priority 9 – Reputation

Priority 10 – Performance Improvement

**Improvement:**

**12. Values**

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

1. Leadership
2. Partnership
3. Customer First
4. Diversity

**Values:**

**13. Performance Improvement**

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

**PI's:**

**14. Asset savings**

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

**Board Members (from):**  
 Weaver PLC (Chairman)  
 Bromsgrove District Council  
 West Mercia Police  
 County Association of Local Councils  
 NEW College  
 Bromsgrove & Redditch Network  
 Worcestershire County Council  
 Worcestershire PCT  
 Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

**Support Team:**  
 Acting Chief Executive  
 Assistant Chief Executive  
 Senior Policy & Performance Officer  
 Area Democracy Officer (WCC)

**Project Groups:**  
 Longbridge Town Centre Affordable Housing/Inclusive Living  
 Local Area Agreement

**Bromsgrove Forum**

**Bromsgrove Partnership Board**

**Communities that are safe and feel safe (Local Area Agreement Block A)**

**Better Environment for Today & Tomorrow (Local Area Agreement Block B)**

**Economic Success (Local Area Agreement Block C)**

**Improving Health & Well-Being (Local Area Agreement Block D)**

**Children & Young People (Local Area Agreement Block E)**

**Stronger Communities (Incorporating Culture, Learning Partnership, (Local Area Agreement Block F)**

**THEME GROUP CHAMPIONS**



## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

4th April 2007

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

#### **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT [JANUARY 2007]**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Hollingworth Leader of the Council
Responsible Officer	Hugh Bennett Assistant Chief Executive

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To report to the Executive Cabinet to ask them to consider the attached updated Improvement Plan Exception Report for January 2007.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the Executive Cabinet considers and approves the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report, and the corrective action being taken.
- 2.2 That the Executive Cabinet notes that 67.8 percent of the Improvement Plan is on target [green] 7 percent is one month behind [amber] and 10.7 percent is over one month behind [red]. 14.4 percent of actions have been re scheduled [or suspended] with approval.

#### **3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council overhauled its Recovery Plan in July 2006 in order to give the plan a more outward focus e.g. performance indicators, customer issues, strategic priorities etc. The new plan, renamed the Improvement Plan, was agreed by Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006.
- 3.2 The full Improvement Plan will provide background information only and will be emailed to Members of the Executive Cabinet. The Improvement Plan will also be posted onto the Council website at the address at the end of this report.

#### **4. PROGRESS IN JANUARY 2007**

- 4.1 Overall performance as at the end of January 2007 is as follows: -

**January 2007**

**December 2006**

<b>RED</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>10.7%</b>	<b>RED</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3.5%</b>
<b>AMBER</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.0%</b>	<b>AMBER</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>7.0%</b>
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>67.8%</b>	<b>GREEN</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>89.5%</b>

Where: -

	<b>On Target or completed</b>
	<b>Less than one month behind target</b>
	<b>Over one month behind target</b>
	<b>Original date of planned action</b>
	<b>Re-programmed date.</b>

4.2 An Exception Report detailing corrective actions being under taken for red and amber tasks is attached at **Appendix 1**

## **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 No financial implications.

## **6 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 No Legal Implications.

## **7. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

7.1 The Improvement Plan relates to all of the Council's four objectives and ten priorities as approved on the 19<sup>th</sup> September Full Council.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 The risks associated with the Improvement Plan are covered in the corporate and departmental risk registers.

## **9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

The Improvement Plan is concerned with strategic and operational issues that will affect the customer.

## **10 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues: Delivery of the Improvement Plan involves various procurement exercises.
Personnel Implications: See Section 18 of the Improvement Plan.
Governance/Performance Management: See Section 4 of the Improvement Plan.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: See sections 12.2 and 12.3
Policy: See Section 4 of the Improvement Plan.
Environmental: See Section 8 of the Improvement Plan.
Equalities and Diversity: See Section 3 of Improvement Plan.

## 10 OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	<b>Yes</b>
Acting Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>Yes</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Service <i>(i.e. your own HoS)</i>	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services <i>(<u>must</u> approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader's Group)</i>	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Legal & Democratic Services <i>(for approval of any significant Legal Implications)</i>	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR <i>(for approval of any significant HR Implications)</i>	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Procurement Team <i>(for approval of any procurement implications)</i>	<b>No</b>

## 11 APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Improvement Plan Exception Report January 2007

## 12 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Full Improvement Plan for January will be e- mailed to all Members of the Executive Cabinet and can be found at [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk) under meetings Minutes and Agendas where there is a direct link to the Improvement Plan.

### CONTACT OFFICER

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Tel: (01527) 881668

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

1.5 Improved Public Perception						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
1.1.4	Develop questions for first Customer Panel survey		The questions are in the process of being developed for review by the 28 <sup>th</sup> February 07.	HB	October 31 Oct 06	31 March 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
1.1 Public perception																
1.1.4	Develop questions for first Customer Panel survey	HB														The questions are in the process of being developed and they will be reviewed by the 28 <sup>th</sup> February 07.

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# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>1.5</b>	<b>Modern Council</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
1.5.2	Draft brand style guide and review completed		Timeline will be agreed by the end of February 2007. Mini style review expected to go to CCMT 27 March 2007 and be approved by the Leader and the Deputy Leader on the 2 May 2007. Full audit of communications materials expected to roll into next year's improvement plan.	HB	October 31 Oct 06	2 May 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Public perception</b>															
1.5.2	Draft brand style guide and review completed	HB														Timeline will be agreed by the end of February 2007. Mini style review expected to go to CCMT 27 March 2007 and approved by the Leader on the 2 May 2007 Full audit of communications materials expected to roll into next years improvement plan.

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# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>1</b>	<b>Modern Council</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
1.5.3	Agree actions with CMT		See above	HB	October 31 Oct 06	2 May 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Public perception</b>														
1.5.3	Agree actions with CMT	HB													See above

<b>1.5</b>	<b>Modern Council</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
1.5.4	Agree style guide with the Leader.		To be agreed by leader on the 2 May 07	HB	October 31 Oct 06	2 May 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
<b>1.5</b>	<b>Public perception</b>														
1.5.4	Agree style guide with the Leader.	HB													To be agreed with the Leader by the 2 May 07

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>1</b>	<b>Modern Council</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
1.5.5	Further actions are dependant on the outcomes of the review.		This action will roll forward into the 2007 /2008 Improvement Plan to enable an effective communications audit to take place	HB	October 31 Oct 06	31 October 2007

Ref.	Action	Lead	Corrective Action													
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>1.2</b>	<b>Public perception</b>															
1.5.5	Further outcomes are dependant on the review.	HB														This action will roll forward into next years improvement plan to enable an effective communications audit to take place

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>2</b>	<b>Corporate and External Improvements.</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
2..1.1	Establish Communications forward Plan.		Draft completed for 26 February 2007 revised date for presentation to CMT on 13 March 2007. Delayed to make space on CMT agenda.	KD	October 31 Oct 06	13 March 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>2</b>	<b>Risk management of Press</b>															
2.1.1	Establish Communications forward Plan.	KD														Draft completed 26.Feb 07 revised date for presentation to CMT on 13 March 2007. Delayed to make space on CMT agenda.

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## Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

## Appendix 1

<b>2 Corporate and External Improvements.</b>						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
2..1.2	Monitor Communications Plan		See above	KD	October 31 Oct 06	13 March 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
<b>2</b>	<b>Risk management of Press</b>														
2.1.2	Monitor Communications Plan.	KD													See above.

<b>3 Corporate and External Improvements.</b>						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
3.3.3	Undertake first Customer Panel Survey.		Survey will now take place at the end of March 07.	HB	October 31 Oct 06	31 March 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
<b>3</b>	<b>BME representation</b>														
3.3.3	Undertake first Customer Panel Survey.	HB													Survey will now take place end of March 07.

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>10</b>	<b>Improved Housing for the District</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
10.3.3	Draw up plans for re modelling remaining hostels at Sidemoor and Rubery and submit planning application.		Awaiting submission of plans by BDHT. Delay created by revision to method of approach A meeting took place on the 21 Feb.07 to agree procedure at officer level. Report to Cabinet 4 April 2007 to clear revised approach	PS DH MD	30 Nov 06	31 May 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>10.</b>	<b>Improved Housing for the District</b>															
10.3.3	Draw up plans for re modelling remaining hostels at Sidemoor and Rubery and submit planning application.															Awaiting submission of plans by BDHT. Delay created by revision to method of approach A meeting took place on the 21 Feb.07 to agree procedure at officer level. Report to Cabinet 4 April 2007 to clear revised approach

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

10 Planning and Environment .						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
10.3.5.	Provide Council with a financial analysis of re modelling of 2 hostels.		See above comments.	PS DH MD	30 Nov 06	4 April 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
<b>10. Hostel Accommodation.</b>															
10.3.5	Draw up plans for re modelling and submit planning application														See above comments. Will be incorporated in report to Cabinet April 4 2007

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E-government and Customer Services						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
15.1.3	Purchase and install complaints system.	[Hatched]	A bid for funding has gone forward as part of the business planning process. The recommended system will be purchased if the funding is made available. A new completion date of March 2007 has set, as the budget process is not due to be completed until early 2007.	PS DH MD	30 Nov 06	30 March 07

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Month												Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
15	<b>Complaints system</b>															
15.1.3	Purchase and install complaints system.	DP						[Hatched]	[Hatched]	[Hatched]	[Hatched]				A bid for funding has gone forward as part of the business planning process. The recommended system will be purchased if the funding is made available. A new completion date of March 2007 has set, as the budget process is not due to be completed until early 2007.	

E-government and Customer Services						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
15.1.4	Develop training schedule for staff and implement system.	[Hatched]	A training schedule will be drafted and incorporated into the rollout of the new system. Delivery of training will be included as part of the system installation carried out by the supplier.	PS DH MD	30 Nov 06	30 March 07

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Timeline												Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>15.1</b>																
15.1.4	Develop training schedule for staff and implement system.	DP						[Hatched]	[Hatched]	[Hatched]	[Hatched]				A training schedule will be drafted and incorporated into the rollout of the new system. Delivery of training will be included as part of the system installation carried out by the supplier.	

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>16</b>	<b>Improved Access to Services Electronically.</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
16.1.3	Install queue management software system. Waiting budget approval on 27 Feb 07		The date has been revised to June 30 because of delays in obtaining budget approval. This will be included as part of the queue system installation.	DP	31 Oct 06	30 June 07

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
<b>16.1</b>	<b>Service Requests</b>														
16.1.3	Install queue management software system. Waiting budget approval on 27 Feb	DP													The date has been revised to June 30 because of delays in obtaining budget approval. This will be included as part of the queue system installation.

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<b>16</b>	<b>Improved Access to Services Electronically.</b>					
<b>Ref</b>	<b>January Action</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Original Date</b>	<b>Revised Date</b>
16.1.4	Install large screen for customers at the Customer Service Centre .		The date has been revised to June 30 2007 because of delays in obtaining budget approval. This will be included as part of the queue system installation. Dependent upon 16.1.2 & 16.1.	DP/ HB	31 Oct 06	30 June 07

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
<b>16.1</b>	<b>Service Requests</b>														
16.1.4	Install large screen for customers at the Customer Service Centre .	DP													The date has been revised to June 30 2007 because of delays in obtaining budget approval. Will be included as part of the queue system installation. Dependent upon 16.1.2 & 16.1.

<b>16</b>	<b>Improved Access to Services Electronically.</b>					
<b>Ref</b>	<b>January Action</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Original Date</b>	<b>Revised Date</b>
16.1.5	Improve knowledge base link in e-shop system using new council website.		Work will be carried out in partnership with the Worcestershire Hub once a system has been selected.	DP/ HB	31 Oct 06	30 June 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>16.1</b>	<b>Service Requests</b>															
16.1.5	Improve knowledge base link in e-shop system using new Council website.	DP														Work will be carried out in partnership with the Worcestershire Hub once a system has been selected.

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Note \* The 'e shop' is the software used by Customer Service Officers at the Hub. Its function is to strengthen the link between all sites and the information the Council holds of the website.



# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

<b>17</b>	<b>Improved Access to Services Electronically.</b>					
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
17.3.1	Introduce letter answering guidelines.		Guidelines to be introduced in the complaints handling procedure. This action is linked to 15.1.3 A new completion date of 30 June 2007 has been agreed. Finally launching them will need to be fixed into the roll out of the complaints system	DP	31 July 06	30 June 07

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sept	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
<b>17.3</b>	<b>Letter Answering</b>														
17.3.1	Introduce letter answering guidelines	DP/HB													Guidelines will be included in the complaints handling procedure in the future. This action is linked to 15.1.3 A new completion date of 30 June 2007 has been agreed. Final launch of them will need to be fixed into the roll out of the complaints system.

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<b>17</b>	<b>Improved Access to Services Electronically.</b>					
<b>Ref</b>	<b>January Action</b>	<b>Colour</b>	<b>Corrective Action</b>	<b>Who</b>	<b>Original Date</b>	<b>Revised Date</b>
17.3.2	Introduce method of monitoring letter answering and produce stats to support process.		Based on recent report to CMT this action needs either to be removed or linked to the project for scanning of mail. <b>This action is now suspended.</b>	DP	31 July 06	<b>Suspended</b>

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
<b>17.3</b>	<b>Letter Answering</b>															
17.3.2	Introduce method of monitoring letter answering and producing statistics to support monitoring process	DP/HB														Based on recent report to CMT this action needs either to be removed or linked to the project for scanning of mail. <b>This action has now been suspended</b>

Human resources and Organisational Development						
Improved Governance						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original date	Revised Date
18.1.2	Group leaders to undertake 1:1 interviews with Councillors for training needs analysis.		A review of the outstanding forms was sent to Group Leaders on 3 Jan 2007 so they could take remedial action. Fourteen forms had been received on the 21 February 2007. In light of the impending local elections a comprehensive training Needs Analysis will be undertaken once the new intake are in place. <b>This action has now been suspended</b>	JP	31 Aug 06	<b>Suspended</b>

Human Resources and Organisational Development.														
Action	Lead													Corrective Action
		July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	
<b>18.1</b>		<b>Improved Relations</b>												
Group leaders to undertake 1:1 interviews with Councillors for training needs analysis.	JP													In light of the impending local elections a comprehensive training Needs Analysis will be undertaken once the new intake are in place. <b>This action has now been suspended</b>

Improved Financial Management and Improved Services						
21.2 DWP Performance Standard / Performance Measures						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
21.2.5	Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due is correct PM6 – 98%-99%.		Accuracy as reported by the DWP at 92 % for Oct -Dec This is a 3.2% decrease on July-Sept. The decline is disappointing to the team and the errors vary and do not reflect a specific training need. The teams have completed training competency forms and we have a trainer on site 3 days per week to address any issues. Although the performance in accuracy remains at the lowest standard, it represents a low rating in the DWP standard [6%] and in this quarter, the 8% incorrect consisted of 10 errors with a weekly value of £48. 76 paid incorrectly. The Benefits Manager continues to stress the importance of accuracy within the team and will be increasing the management checks again after the year-end.	JLP	31 Oct 06	30 April 07

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
21.2	<b>DWP Performance Standard / Performance Measures</b>														
21.2.5	Percentage of cases for which the calculation of the amount of benefit due is correct PM6 – 98%-99%.	AB/ HL													Accuracy as reported by the DWP at 92 % for Oct –Dec. This is a 3.2% decrease on July-Sept. The decline is disappointing to the team and the errors vary and do not reflect a specific training need. The teams have completed training competency forms and we have a trainer on site 3 days per week to address any issues. Although the performance in accuracy remains at the lowest standard, it represents a low rating in the DWP standard [6%] and in this quarter, the 8% incorrect consisted of 10 errors with a weekly value of £48 76 paid incorrectly. The Benefits Manager continues to stress the importance of accuracy within the team and will be increasing the management checks again after the year-end.

# Exception Report for January 2007 Improvement Plan

# Appendix 1

21.2 DWP Performance Standard / Performance Measures						
Ref	January Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
21.2.19	PM19 % of appeals submitted to the tribunal service within 3 months 90%-95%		A number of appeals were outstanding outside the three-month period. This has now been cleared, but because the appeals were outside the deadline this has not influenced the figures: however now the backlog has been cleared, we can expect to see an improvement in April 2007.	JLP	31 Oct 06	30 April 07

Ref.	Action	Lead													Corrective Action	
			July	August	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June		
21.2	DWP Performance Standard / Performance Measures															
21.2.19	PM19 % of appeals submitted to the tribunal service within 3 months 90%-95%															A number of appeals were outstanding outside the three-month period. This has now been cleared, but because the appeals were outside the deadline this has not influenced the figures: however now the backlog has been cleared, we can expect to see an improvement in April 2007.

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

April 4<sup>th</sup> 2007

#### UPDATE REPORT DEVELOPMENT OF A SUB REGIONAL CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	David Hammond

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report revisits the Council's plans for implementing Choice Based Lettings. This is the Government's policy for the allocation of social housing which it aims to have in place nationwide by 2010.
- 1.2 The report advises of the progress that has been made by the sub regional officer steering group in developing a cross authority Choice Based Lettings Scheme for the South Housing Market Area (Worcestershire, Stratford and Warwick) and the successful result of a bid made to the CLG for financial support towards its implementation.
- 1.3 In September 2006, the Executive Cabinet approved the submission of a countywide bid for government funding towards the implementation of Choice Based Lettings Scheme across Worcestershire.
- 1.4 The bid for funding has been successful and the full bid amount of £207,892 has been awarded towards the implementation of the proposed sub regional scheme.
- 1.5 In order for the sub regional scheme to proceed, all participating councils are being asked to sign up to the scheme by April 2007.
- 1.6 This report now seeks member approval of the implementation proposals set out below.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the proposals for the implementation of Choice-Based Lettings for the allocation of social housing set out in the report be approved.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 **'Choice Based Lettings'** is a Government lead new method of allocating social housing that is designed to replace the conventional points driven housing waiting list approach. The aim of the new approach is to offer people more choice and control over where they live with the objective of creating more settled and sustainable communities.
- 3.2 A Choice Based Lettings (CBL) Scheme allows people to apply for vacancies which are advertised (e.g. in the press or through an interactive website). Unlike the conventional method where RSL / Council officers choose tenants from the waiting list for vacant dwellings, under a CBL scheme applicants can see the full range of available properties and can apply for any home to which they are matched (e.g. A single person would not be eligible for a 3 bed house). Priority is given to those with urgent needs, but where possible, properties are allocated on the basis of who has been waiting the longest. The successful bidder is the one with the highest priority under the scheme. CBL schemes were designed primarily for the allocation of social housing (rented and shared ownership/low cost), but more recently schemes include the availability of privately rented accommodation to promote further choice and to help supplement the availability of social units. Research shows that social housing customers welcome the choice, control and transparency of CBL.
- 3.3 **"Homes for All", the Government's 5-year housing plan, set out the Government's plans for taking forward its choice-based lettings (CBL) policy. The aim is to have in place nationwide choice by 2010. "Homes for All" also made clear that the Government is keen that choice-based lettings systems should operate sub-regionally or regionally, recognising that housing markets do not follow local authority boundaries.**
- 3.4 CLG is therefore committed to ensuring that social housing tenants have more choice and control over where they live. They want to see CBL schemes developed which span local authority boundaries and which bring together all social landlords in an area to offer the widest possible housing choices for tenants and landlords.
- 3.5 **The CLG has set targets for the introduction of Choice Based Lettings. By 2010 all local authorities will have to have adopted a choice based lettings system.**
- 3.6 This Council's new Housing Strategy 2006 – 2011 contains an action to *'consider implementation of Choice Based Lettings at a local or South Housing Market Area level by 2010'* The target for this action to be carried out is September 2006.



4.0 **OUTCOME OF THE BID SUBMITTED FOR GOVERNMENT FUNDING TO ASSIST IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF CBL IN THE SOUTH HOUSING MARKET AREA**

4.1 The South Housing Market Area Partnership (Worcestershire, Stratford and Warwick housing authorities and partner RSL's) submitted a bid to CLG in September 2006 for £207,892 capital and revenue funding to implement a sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme. On the 12<sup>th</sup> December 2006 we received confirmation that the bid had been successful and that the South Housing Market Area had been awarded the full bid amount of £207,892.

4.2 A Sub Regional Implementation Group was established in January 2007 to lead on the implementation of the sub regional scheme.

5.0 **DETAILS OF THE PROPOSED CBL SCHEME**

5.1 **key objectives of the scheme**

- To provide a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme across the 8 L.As, providing consistency in the home seeking process cross authority
- To enable home seekers to be empowered to make their own choices about where they want to live
- To ensure the scheme is accessible by all those in housing need, particularly the more vulnerable
- To make the process simpler, more transparent, fair and easy to use.
- To support mobility within the sub-region particularly where local connections are evidenced, in line with the regional Housing Strategy
- To enable applicants to make realistic choices about their housing options with social rented, intermediate and private housing all available via the CBL scheme
- To prevent and reduce the placement of homeless households in temporary accommodation by giving people realistic choices
- Improve the mix and sustainability of local communities

5.2 Currently two authorities in the South Housing Market Area operate a CBL system (Wychavon and Warwick). For both schemes the process starts with an applicant registering for the scheme. Properties are advertised showing a photograph, details of the property and any eligibility criteria. Currently properties include socially rented and shared ownership. Both schemes use a range of advertising routes such as internet / Council offices / Town and Parish Council offices / one stop shops & libraries/ telephone. Warwick also advertises in the local newspaper and Wychavon in RSL offices and local supermarkets.

- 5.3 Properties are advertised on a bidding cycle which for Warwick is fortnightly and Wychavon is weekly. Home seekers can bid for properties via the internet / integrated telephony and in Wychavon by text messaging. Vulnerable people are assisted to bid by local support agencies or housing officers. There is a cap on the number of properties an applicant can bid for within any cycle – Warwick limit to 5 bids and Wychavon to 2 bids but with the ability to check their position and to change bids at anytime.
- 5.4 Both schemes operate on bandings – the Warwick scheme is based upon two bands according to need; within each band, points are applied. Band 1 (highest needs) applicants are considered in date order and in Band 2 (lower needs) considered in points priority – the Wychavon scheme operates on three bands according to need and within bands priority is given based on the time registered. The band and date of successful applicants are published to help applicants make informed choices about their housing options
- 5.5 Within the sub-region, 6 of the 8 Local Authorities (L.A.s) have transferred their stock to Registered Social Landlords. Many of the RSLs have stock across a number of the 8 L.A.s as well as other sub-regional areas. It is anticipated that the sub-regional scheme will involve approximately 75 – 100% of the RSL and LA stock. Properties advertised will be socially rented, shared ownership properties and other low cost home ownership. It is anticipated that local private landlords will work with us to advertise their vacancies. This may start on a fairly small scale but will increase with time.
- 5.6 **Greater choice to applicants** - The sub-regional CBL scheme will provide a consistent approach to assisting home seekers across the 8 L.A.'s with a range of tenure options. There will be a common housing application form, allocations policy and banding system for all L.A. areas so that there is consistency in the way that customers apply and are prioritised for housing, with flexibility built in for the individual housing providers, primarily via the advertising of properties, to be able to continue to offer management moves or direct matching to those who need special consideration. This will be particularly beneficial in matching adapted properties to households with a disabled member in housing need.

Adverts will include a photograph of the property, rental/mortgage costs and the eligibility criteria specific to the property. Eventually it is hoped that links can be established to GIS to enable people to view the general area and the nearest facilities e.g. schools, leisure centres etc helping them to make the best choice to suit their needs. Short listed applicants will be offered a viewing prior to accepting the property to give the opportunity for questions and to ensure the home is right to meet their needs.

The partnership has consulted local stakeholders e.g. black & minority ethnic, gypsies, no fixed abodes, disabled people, people with learning disabilities etc and has made contact with relevant organisations such as Ethnic Access, Social Services, and Primary Care Trusts to ensure our communication networks are appropriate to meet the needs of vulnerable and minority groups.

- 5.7 **Greater Choice to the homeless** - The CBL scheme will be a key tool in preventing homelessness by offering people realistic housing options in an open and transparent way, helping people to make choices. Access is identical whether threatened with homelessness or homeless and in temporary accommodation. Priority will be given to statutory homeless applicants to bid for dwellings within the L.A. where they have been accepted as homeless but at the same time they will be able to bid for other properties within the sub-region via the normal banding system.
- 5.8 CLG research has shown that CBL improves the housing prospects of statutory homeless households which will help to reduce the number of households currently in temporary accommodation and meet the government target of a 50% reduction by 2010
- 5.9 **Implementation** – It is anticipated that the sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme will be rolled out within the next 12 months. The recent implementation of CBL within the Wychavon district was achieved within a 6 month period. This approach and lessons learned are to be applied to enable smooth roll out in partner L.A. areas. The Project Coordinator who implemented the scheme at Wychavon has been seconded to project manage the implementation across the sub-region.
- 5.10 BDC and BDHT have identified key staff members to form a local project group with Amanda Glennie having strategic responsibility and Graeme Anderson, IT Manager at BDHT having technical responsibility and direct liaison with the Project Manager at Wychavon. Both officers are confident that the Dec 2007 implementation date is achievable.
- 5.11 The Council's IT officers have been consulted and it has been confirmed that as the CBL system is a specialised stand alone system there is no requirement for an interface with the Council's systems other than GIS.
- 5.12 As the Council has recently installed a facility for emailing and texting customers, it is envisaged that the revenue running costs may be less than those estimated at Section 7.6 of the report.

## 6.0 **Consultation**

- 6.1 Consultation with partners, stakeholders and other voluntary organisations was carried out in June and September 2006. Locally, Bromsgrove officers consulted with attendees of the Equalities Seminar on the 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2006 and received positive and constructive feedback to the proposed scheme.
- 6.2 The local project group which includes officers from BDC and BDHT are planning more consultation with applicants and residents to raise awareness, give opportunities for feedback and address concerns.

## **7.0 Financial Implications**

- 7.1 Financial budgeting is being developed on the basis of costing provided by the implementation consultancy commissioned by Wychavon following their tendering process.
- 7.2 The indicative costs associated with Choice Based Lettings fall into four key areas:
- Initial cost of system – estimated to be in the region of £27,200 per authority.
  - Initial cost of a person to implement the scheme £9,000 per authority.
  - Annual system maintenance, support and use of a central server – approx £5,000 pa
  - Annual cost of freephone and SMS customer access – approx £3,000 pa
- 7.3 CLG funding will contribute 60% towards Capital funding and 40% towards Revenue funding for setting up the scheme.
- 7.4 BDC are working collaboratively with BDHT to achieve the tight timescale for implementation which is anticipated for Dec 2007. BDHT have made commitment of staff time to carry out the necessary data cleansing, consultation with applicants and residents and the identification of information for transfer to the new system. Once the new scheme is in place we will expect BDHT to contribute 25% towards ongoing revenue funding in recognition of the 25% of lettings that they currently offer to their own transfer or waiting list applicants.
- 7.5 **Estimated Capital Set Up Costs to BDC:**

Initial cost of system	£27,200
Share of Implementation staff	£9,000
Total	<u>£36,200</u>
Less 60% grant from CLG	£21,270

**Capital cost to BDC** **£14,930**

A capital budget of £25,000 (from the Regional Housing Single Pot Allocation) was approved by the Executive Cabinet in November to meet the capital set up costs.

**7.6 Estimated Revenue Costs to BDC**

At present it is unclear if there will be any revenue costs in the set up process. Any that are identified will benefit from 40% of CLG grant contribution.

Revenue impact for the current financial year (2007 / 08) is likely to be minimal and will be met from within existing budgets.

The estimated longer term revenue costs of running the scheme will fall upon BDC however it would be reasonable for BDHT to contribute 25% towards the running costs to reflect the potential for them to utilise the scheme to allocate 25% of their lettings (as BDC has 75% nomination rights)

Annual Cost of Freephone and SMS customer access	£3,000 pa
Annual system maintenance, support and central server	£5,000 pa
Estimated Total	<u>£8,000pa</u>
Less 25% (BDHT)	£2,000

**Estimated annual revenue cost to BDC (08/09 onwards) £6,000pa**

A budget bid was submitted in the bidding round for 07/08, but was unfortunately not approved by Executive Cabinet in February. A full year's revenue expense will not be applicable for 07/08 as implementation does not take place until December 2007. It may also be possible to apply 40% subsidy through use of the CLG grant for any revenue costs in the initial set up period and the balance will be met from within existing budgets.

There will however be a full year revenue requirement to support the scheme from April 2008 onwards.

7.6 Revenue costs may be partly offset by benefit to other costs as research has shown that CBL is followed by an improvement in tenancy sustainment which will impact positively on homelessness and BDHT's management costs.

7.7 CBL has been shown to improve the housing prospects of statutory homeless households which will help to reduce the number of households currently in temporary accommodation and meet the government target of a 50% reduction by 2010.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY**

- 8.1 CLG research established that most CBL case studies have seen some diffusion of minority ethnic settlement away from existing areas of concentration and towards 'non-traditional' areas. Consequently, CBL contributes to relieving rather than exacerbating ethnic segregation. The research also found that minority ethnic applicants with little or no English find it difficult to use CBL without the assistance from family and friends or community and voluntary groups. An internet link for customer use at the Customer Service Centre would be required.
- 8.2 Research carried out Festival housing group identified that households from ethnic minority groups were less likely to have internet access at home.
- 8.3 The needs of all diversity groups will be considered during through policy development over the next few months. Voluntary organisations and the caring professions will be briefed to raise awareness of the scheme rules and processes.

## **9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Which, if any, legislation covers what is proposed.

## **10. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

### **10.1 Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre, Longbridge and Housing)**

Empowering those in housing need to understand the supply and demand issues for social housing in Bromsgrove and to have access to a range of housing options beyond social housing that could meet their needs.

Develop a stronger connection with the private rented sector and increase housing options to those in housing need.

### **10.2 Objective 2 – Improvement (Customer Service, Reputation and Performance)**

Offer greater opportunities for mobility through the sub regional scheme. Improve mobility through the advertisement of mutual exchange opportunities. Increase accessibility for minority ethnic and vulnerable groups.

### **10.3 Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing (Community Influence and Community Events)**

In most cases research has shown that the introduction of CBL has been followed by improved tenancy sustainment. The tendency for

improved tenancy sustainment should be seen as reflecting improved tenant satisfaction with lettings outcomes. It should also contribute to greater residential stability in what were previously unstable neighbourhoods.

#### 10.4 **Priority 4 – Environment – Clean District and Planning**

As per 10.3 above.

### 11. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

11.1 Implementation is dependent upon the cooperation of BDHT who carry out the Housing Register and nominations work for the Council under an SLA.

### 12. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The implementation plan of CBL includes consultation and awareness raising exercises for residents our first press release was issued on the 22<sup>nd</sup> Jan 07. The need for staff to be trained in CBL is Included in the implementation plan and is an identified cost included in the Capital funding of the scheme.

### 13. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Please include the following table and spell out any particular implications in the relevant box. If there are no implications under a particular heading, please state 'None':-

<p><b>Procurement Issues</b> – Advice has been sought from Alex Haslum. Because of the nature of the scheme it would be impractical to separately tender and therefore to make best use of system implemented at Wychavon DC all Districts are supporting extension of this system to the sub region. A tender waiver report will therefore be presented for CEO to consider.</p>
<p><b>Personnel Implications</b> – None as implementation staffing to be supplied by Wychavon and shared Sub Regionally. Experience elsewhere indicates that CBL can reduce staff inputting time.</p>
<p><b>Governance/Performance Management</b>  "Homes for All", the Government's 5-year housing plan, set out the Government's plans for taking forward its choice-based lettings (CBL) policy. The aim is to have in place nationwide choice by 2010. "Homes for All" also made clear that the Government is keen that choice-based lettings systems should operate sub-regionally or regionally, recognising that housing markets do not follow local authority boundaries.</p> <p>CLG is therefore committed to ensuring that social housing tenants have more choice and control over where they live. They want to</p>

see CBL schemes developed which span local authority boundaries and which bring together all social landlords in an area to offer the widest possible housing choices for tenants and landlords.

The CLG has set targets for the introduction of Choice Based Lettings. By 2010 all local authorities will have to have adopted a choice based lettings system.

**Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Providing people with choice where they live promotes personal investment and greater sustainability of communities.

**Policy**

Introduction of the CBL scheme will necessitate the re writing of the Council's housing allocations policy.

**Government Policy**

In the Secretary of State's view all housing authorities should adopt an allocation scheme which offers a choice of accommodation and she has set a target for all housing authorities to have done so by 2010. Whilst the 1996 housing act does not specify how authorities should offer a choice of accommodation in the Secretary of State's view the most effective way of doing so is by adopting an advertising scheme.

In January 2005, ODPM published 'Sustainable Communities: Homes for All' the Government's five year housing plan for England. Paragraphs 5.18 to 5.21 of that document set out the Government's choice based lettings policy objectives.

These objectives are:

- To make it as easy as possible for applicants and tenants to move between local authority, housing association and privately owned accommodation by encouraging the extension of choice-based lettings to cover low cost home ownership options and properties for rent from private landlords, as well as social housing;
- To develop choice based lettings schemes on a regional and/or sub regional basis, recognising that housing markets do not follow local authority boundaries;
- To support prospective applicants to choose the housing option which is best for them, including promoting a wide range of options within the district (including low cost home ownership, mutual exchange, the private sector); providing information about 'staying put' options such as aids and adaptations; mobility schemes, including moves from high to low demand areas; property shops and housing advice centres.



<b>Environmental</b> More sustainable communities and potentially better managed estates.
<b>Equalities and Diversity</b> See Sect 8. above

#### 14. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

Portfolio Holder	<b>Yes</b>
Acting Chief Executive	
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>Yes</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	
Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>Yes</b>

#### 11. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1    Project Plan

#### 12. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

#### **CONTACT OFFICER**

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# Bromsgrove Choice Based Lettings Project Plan Feb 07

# Appendix I

= Anticipated    
  = Actual

Action	Lead	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
<b>Funding</b>													
BDC Capital Funding Agreed	A. Glennie												
BDC Revenue Funding	A. Coel												
BDHT Revenue Funding	A. Glennie												
Other RSL Funding	A. Glennie												
<b>Procurement</b>													
Agree software requirement	A. Glennie/G Anderson												
Waivering Report Approved	A. Glennie												
Arrange procedure for transfer of monies from Wychavon	A. Glennie												
<b>Policy</b>													
Develop Allocations Policy	A. Glennie/Wendy Price												
Agree Application Form	A. Glennie/Wendy Price												
Other RSL Voids/nominations	A. Glennie/Wendy Price												
<b>Information Technology</b>													
Data Cleansing Programme	G. Anderson												
Identify Information Fields for Data Transfer	G. Anderson												
Consider interfacing v manual input	G. Anderson												
Do test run of data before Go Live Date													
<b>Consultation</b>													
Press Release	A. Glennie												
Consultation Programme	Marie Green												
Publicity	Marie Green												
Review/Update Register	Wendy Price												



## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

#### PROGRESS REPORT AND REVISED STRATEGY FOR DE-COMMISSIONING COUNCIL OWNED HOSTELS PROVIDING TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION FOR PERSONS EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	David Hammond

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Members will recall that in September 2006, the Council approved a strategy for the de-commissioning of three of the Council owned hostels that provide temporary accommodation for the homeless and are managed under a Service Level Agreement by BDHT.
- 1.2 This report provides members with information regarding the progress that has been made on this strategy involving the closure of Wythall Hostel and the development of more detailed proposals for re-modelling the hostels at Rubery and Sidemoor. The report seeks member approval to these more detailed proposals to the supply of additional dispersed accommodation through a 'buy back' scheme to assist in replacing the loss of hostel spaces.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the progress made in closing Wythall Hostel be noted.
- 2.2 That delegated authority to be granted to the Corporate Property Officer and the Corporate Director – Services through the Asset Management Group for the disposal and settlement of the terms of sale of Wythall Hostel.
- 2.3 That Sidemoor and Rubery Hostels be conveyed to BDHT for nil capital receipt to the Council for re-modelling into self contained units of affordable housing to rent and the revised scheme proposals as set out in sections 5 and 6 of the report be approved.
- 2.4 That the Grant funding to BDHT for the development of self contained flats on the Sidemoor and Rubery sites and for the purchase of 'buy backs' as detailed in sections 5 and 6 of the report be approved.

### 3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 On the 6<sup>th</sup> September 2006, the Executive Cabinet considered a report on a proposed strategy for the phased de-commissioning of the Council's four hostels for persons experiencing homelessness and their partial replacement with better quality self contained units of temporary accommodation. The report explained why there was a need to de-commission the hostels, highlighted the potential risks to the Council arising from the proposals and identified actions that would assist in minimising such risks. During the discussion, the Leader of the Council emphasised the need for good working relations between Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and the Council.

3.2 It was resolved that:

- a) The Council commit to working in partnership with BDHT on the de-commissioning of Council owned hostels;
- b) that the strategy be approved in principle on the basis of option a) as detailed in Sect 6.4 of the report (*this is explained at 3.3 of this report*) subject to further consideration of financial and design proposals and to an assurance from BDHT that it will make available two units of temporary accommodation for emergency use by the Council in the Wythall area on the basis that the Council will consider allocating grant funding towards conversion costs;
- c) that in the event that the Council withdraws from the strategy, any abortive design and plan preparation costs (commissioned following the approval of the strategy in principle) experienced by BDHT be met in accordance with arrangements to be mutually agreed by the Council and BDHT.

3.3 As stated above, the strategy was approved in principle on the basis of option a) as detailed in Sect 6.4 of the September report. To summarise, the approval was therefore based upon:

- Three of the four hostels being de-commissioning:

Holly Lodge (Sidemoor)	7 Rooms
Rubery Lodge	10 Rooms
Wythall Lodge	10 Rooms
- As a first step, Wythall Lodge hostel was to be de-commissioned and sold on the open market as two separate 3 bedroom houses or as a potential site for the re-development of new open market housing. The capital receipt would be ring fenced and utilised to enable the greater benefit of providing self contained units of affordable accommodation on the Sidemoor and Rubery sites.

3.4 The report considered by members in September proposed that:

- BDHT would investigate the conversion of the Sidemoor and Rubery hostels into self contained one bedroom flats specifically designed as temporary accommodation for allocation on short term agreements to persons owed a duty by the Council.
- Sites at Sidemoor and Rubery be conveyed to BDHT at zero or a reduced value sufficient to enable re-modelling into self contained flats.
- An application would be made by BDHT to the Housing Corporation for development funding to re-model the Sidemoor and Rubery sites based upon a joint commissioning approach whereby the Council would be contributing the sites and subject to financial appraisal contribute a proportion towards the development costs from the capital receipt gained from the sale of Wythall hostel.
- Consideration of the Council's fourth hostel, Burcot Lodge be deferred pending the successful de-commissioning of Wythall, Rubery and Sidemoor hostels and that proposals for a Foyer type scheme with a high level of supervision are being considered for North Worcestershire could provide a specialised service for younger homeless people on this site.

#### **4. PROGRESS TO DATE**

- 4.1 Since September the reduced use of Wythall Hostel has enabled it to be closed and preparation for marketing has been undertaken. Guideline valuations have been received from three estate agents all of which would be subject to planning permission being granted for private residential use. The current permission on the property covers institutional use only and as identified in the September report, re-instatement of residential permission would be contrary to SPG 10 and subject to the consideration of the Planning Committee as a change of use from the existing institutional use would be required.
- 4.2 Interest has been expressed by RSL's for the development of affordable housing on the site (permission for which is not restricted under SPG 10) and a bid has been submitted by two RSLs. Recommendation 2.2 of this report therefore asks for member's approval for delegated authority to be granted to the Corporate Director (Services) and the Corporate Property Officer to agree the terms of the sale.
- 4.3 Discussions have taken place with the Housing Corporation to assess the likelihood of funding being available towards the hostel re-modelling scheme. The outcome of these discussions has established

that funding for one bedroom units is unlikely to be supported and that generally the scheme does not address the Housing Corporation regional investment priorities. Small scale schemes of this nature are seen to be more appropriate for local funding and in the event of Housing Corporation funding being approved it is unlikely to be released until after 2008.

- 4.4 A Hostel De-commissioning Officer Working Group has been meeting regularly to monitor de-commissioning progress and develop the detail of the re-modelling proposals in respect of the Sidemoor and Rubery hostels. The outcome and views of these discussions now provide the outline financial and design proposals for the scheme to move forward. These are set out below in Sect 5 for member approval.
- 4.5 In formulating the proposals, a realistic view has been taken by the working group upon the uncertainty of gaining Housing Corporation Grant bearing in mind the identified urgency to move forward with the scheme without unnecessary delay. Lengthy consideration of the original proposal to remodel the existing hostel sites into small self contained flats for the homeless has lead to an agreed view that a preferred option is to disperse homeless clients into self contained flats in BDHT's housing stock across the District. It is therefore proposed that the two hostel sites (Sidemoor and Rubery) be converted into affordable flats (for rent) for mainly general needs allocation with a maximum of two units at each site being let as temporary accommodation for the homeless.

## **5. REVISED PROPOSALS FOR HOSTEL RE-MODELLING**

- 5.1 The proposals are for the hostel de-commissioning scheme to proceed on the following basis:
- Subject to successful re-location of temporary hostel occupants, the land and buildings comprising of Sidemoor and Rubery hostels be transferred to BDHT for nil capital receipt to the Council.
  - It be agreed that subject to planning permission, BDHT to convert each of the two sites (Sidemoor and Rubery) into self contained blocks of primarily 2 bedroomed flats (for rent) for a mix of mainly general needs but also temporary accommodation.
  - That a total of two additional one bedroom flats be provided at either Rubery and/or Sidemoor sites through extension of the premises for allocation as temporary tenancies for the homeless. If this cannot be provided then a minimum of one of the 2 bedroom flats at each location must be equally as affordable as a one bedroom flat for allocation on a temporary basis to meet the needs of smaller family units.



- The Council utilise the ring fenced capital income from the sale of Wythall Hostel (as previously agreed) to partnership fund the re-modelling of the remaining hostels on an open book basis up to the following maximum amounts:
  - For the conversion of hostel buildings to 2 bed flats (8 in total) and new build of one bed flats (2 in total), a partnership funding allocation not exceeding £290,000 be granted to BDHT on an open book basis. (This equates to an average of £25k per conversion and £45k for new build units)
  
- For each of the eight two bedroom flats that BDHT are grant funded to deliver through conversion on the Sidemoor and Rubery sites and let as general needs accommodation, BDHT are to match with a dispersed dwelling from their wider housing stock for allocation to the temporary accommodation pool.
  
- As per the original Cabinet approval – BDHT are to provide a minimum of two units of temporary accommodation at Wythall either through conversion/improvement of guest room facilities or by re-designation of older person's accommodation. BDC to continue to make available up to £12k grant to assist with the conversion. In preference to the conversion of sheltered housing office / guest accommodation BDHT are proposing to re-designate four older persons flats as temporary accommodation.
  
- In addition, to assist in meeting the temporary accommodation needs of the Council in addressing its statutory duty, BDHT are to provide a minimum of twelve one and/or two bedroom units of accommodation through a continuing programme of 'buy backs' funded from the Council's Capital programme on a non matched basis. (Ten to be delivered by March 08 and the remaining 2, subject to future BDC funding, by December 2008).
  
- Maximum grant funding for buy backs is to be allocated at the following rates: Grant funding of up to £45k per unit (open book). Such dwellings will be situated within the District however where geographically (not exceeding 4 miles from Bromsgrove town centre or a radius of two miles from Rubery or Wythall) or financially suitable, dwellings may be considered outside of the District on a case by case basis if approved by the Strategic Housing Manager.
  
- BDHT to manage the enlarging pool of temporary accommodation and the phased closure of Rubery and Sidemoor Hostels in a manner that continually minimises the risk of clients being placed in B&B.
  
- The pool of dwellings within the scheme are to be protected from the occupants being made long term secure tenants to ensure that there is a continuing supply of appropriate temporary accommodation. Occupants of temporary units will only be made permanent tenants

with the authority of the Strategic Housing Manager and then only when a replacement pool dwelling is made available by BDHT.

- To ensure that temporary accommodation is available BDHT will identify 'dwellings undergoing repair pending re-letting' that can be brought into the temporary pool at short notice as emergency accommodation.
- All dispersed temporary units within the scheme to be equipped with white goods, flooring and blinds.
- Rents / service charges applicable to the pool of temporary dwellings is to be set to provide for internal fittings and equipment and to make allowance for more regular turn over and higher than average void periods.
- Arrangements be agreed to ensure that the pool of temporary accommodation is replenished whenever a temporary tenancy is made secure by the replacement tenancy being made available before the outgoing tenant is made secure.
- In the event that BDC do not have a suitable nomination to a vacant temporary property, within five days of it being available for letting, BDHT reserve the right to convert the property to a permanent tenancy, subject to an alternative property being made available to BDC for temporary use in the future, if the need arises.
- In the event that all temporary units are occupied by genuine temporary tenants, within the homelessness process, BDHT will make available on a temporary basis (not exceeding 4 months in any twelve month period) a further five units of accommodation for BDC's use.
- BDHT to manage the dispersed stock of temporary accommodation through the re-designation of staff resources within the existing SLA released as a result of the closure of Wythall, Sidemoor and Rubery hostels.
- BDC will transfer its B&B budget of £21,000 per annum to BDHT to manage for two years in the first instance and BDHT will guarantee to pay any expenditure in excess of the Council's existing B&B budget for two years from the closure of Sidemoor and Rubery hostels.
- Grant to be payable to BDHT in four tranches representing 50% of the grant payable appropriate to each hostel site on commencement of works and 50% of the grant payable appropriate to each hostel site on completion of works on each site.

## **6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 Projected grant expenditure for the scheme is as follows:

Grant for 8 x 2 bed flats @ £25K	£200,000
Grant for 2x 1 bed flats @ £45k	£90,000
Grant for 10 buy backs @ £45k	£450,000
<b>Total Cost of Grant support to scheme</b>	<b>£740,000</b>

6.2 Projected income available to fund the proposed scheme:

Projected minimum income from sale of Wythall Hostel.	£300,000
Grant available for Affordable Housing 'For Rent' schemes in 07/08 Cap Prog (inc unallocated c/f from 06/07)	£394,000
Regional Housing Single Pot Safety Net Funding (07/08)	£83,000
<b>Total Funding Available in 07/08</b>	<b>£777,000</b>

## **7.0 RISK MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS - POTENTIAL EFFECTS AND RISKS OF THE PROPOSALS**

7.1 The proposals present a number of potential risks to the Council both during the de-commissioning process (whilst there will be potential loss of up to two hostels being out of commission) and also following re-modelling when the total number of hostel places is not likely to be equally matched by newly remodelled / developed flats. The potential risks therefore are:

- Inability to meet the statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in the district thus necessitating placement in B&B accommodation outside of the District.
- Increased B&B costs.
- Weakened performance against BV 183a (number of families placed in B&B) which is currently zero.
- Increased difficulties in finding temporary accommodation for problematic households unacceptable to B&B establishments.

## **8.0 RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 8.1 To minimise the risks set out at 7.1 above and to reduce the impact upon the customers as a result of losing a hostel facilities, the following proposals are being incorporated:
- BDHT are being required to provide a minimum of two units of temporary accommodation for homeless in Wythall.
  - BDHT are guaranteeing to meet the cost of any increase in the use of B&B for a period of two years in the first instance in excess of the Council's existing budget.
  - Revenue funding of a Rent Deposit Scheme for persons over 25 years of age and a Spend To Save Scheme to assist in reducing homelessness have both been approved
  - Support has been given for an increased level of early intervention homeless prevention work to avert the need to provide temporary accommodation in the first place and support work to clients in temporary accommodation to encourage them to pursue alternative housing options, other than just waiting for social housing to be allocated.

## **9.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The Homelessness legislation (Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996) places a general duty on housing authorities requiring them to assist individuals and families who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and apply for help. The legislation also places a general duty on housing authorities to ensure that advice and information about homelessness and preventing homelessness is available to everyone in their district free of charge.
- 9.2 The Homelessness Act 2002 and the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation)(England) Order 2002 amended the previous legislation to ensure that a more strategic approach to tackling and preventing homelessness is taken. It also extended the priority need category of clients to include homeless 16 and 17 year olds, care leavers aged 18,19 and 20; people who are vulnerable as a result of time spent in care, the armed forces, prison or custody, and people who have fled their home because of violence.
- 9.3 Failure to maintain an appropriate supply of temporary accommodation would impact upon the Council's ability to respond to the statutory duties place upon it.

## 10. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

### 10.1 **Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre, Longbridge and Housing)**

Improved standard of temporary housing for homeless people avoiding shared facilities and increased housing options to those in housing need.

### 10.2 **Objective 2 – Improvement (Customer Service, Reputation and Performance)**

Improved service to customers by the ability to provide a higher standard of temporary accommodation.

### 10.3 **Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing (Community Influence and Community Events)**

Dispersal of homeless clients into better standard self contained accommodation aims to improved tenancy sustainment and should be reflected in improved tenant satisfaction with lettings outcomes. stability.

### 10.4 **Priority 4 – Environment – Clean District and Planning**

A policy of dispersal of homeless clients is aimed at supporting better neighbourhood integration and therefore reduce any negative impact upon the environment.

## 11. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 The strategy is aimed at improving the service to homeless clients by providing self contained temporary accommodation that minimises the impact of becoming homeless and provides a more stable environment in which to live whilst awaiting the allocation of permanently settled accommodation.

## 12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

<b>Personnel Implications</b> – Closure of three hostels will impact upon the staff management requirement
<b>Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998</b> Providing people with choice were they live promotes personal investment and greater sustainability of communities.
<b>Environmental</b> More sustainable communities and potentially better managed estates.
<b>Equalities and Diversity</b> Provision of self contained dispersed accommodation will be more flexible to the meeting the diverse needs and requirements of homeless clients. Ground floor flats in the scheme will be wheelchair accessible.

### 13. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	<b>Yes</b>
Acting Chief Executive	
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>Yes</b>
Assistant Chief Executive	
Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>Yes</b>

### 14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Audit Commission Inspection Report upon Strategic Housing Services.

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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **EXECUTIVE CABINET**

**4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007**

#### **District Council's Emergency Plan**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Phil Street

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The report provides an introduction to the District Council's Emergency Plan. The District Council's previous emergency plan was audited and regarded as unsatisfactory. The plan has now been substantially revised in association with advice from the Worcestershire County Council Emergency Planning Officer. The plan now conforms to the expectations of the Civil Contingency Act 2004. This report provides background to the plan.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 To receive the report and approve the plan copies of which can be found on the District Council's website and a hard copy can be viewed in the Members' Room.
- 2.2 That senior officers be given delegated authority to make expenditure decisions in the event of an emergency, subject to a report being submitted to the Executive Cabinet immediately following the emergency detailing any financial implications for retrospective approval.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The District Council has had an emergency plan, but following an audit of the plan by KPMG it was regarded as unsatisfactory and insufficiently robust in the case of an emergency.
- 3.2 The Council is expected to fulfil certain roles in the event of an emergency situation. According to the scale of an emergency the Council's precise role will vary. However, the Council has to have procedures in place to respond to being called upon in an emergency.
- 3.3 The Civil Contingencies Act 2004, and accompanying guidance and regulations sets out clear expectations and responsibilities for front line responders at the local level to ensure that they are prepared to deal

effectively with the full range of emergencies from localised incidents through to catastrophic emergencies. Bromsgrove District Council is a Category 1 responder under the Act, and has the following duties placed upon it:

- Assess local risks and use this to inform emergency planning;
- Put in place emergency plans;
- Put in place Business Continuity Management arrangements;
- Put in place arrangements to make information available to the public about civil protection matters and maintain arrangements to warn, inform and advise the public in the event of an emergency;
- Share information with other local responders to enhance co-ordination;
- Co-operate with other local responders to enhance co-ordination and efficiency; and
- Provide advice and assistance to businesses and voluntary organisations about business continuity management. (Local Authorities only).

3.4 The plan details the approach Bromsgrove District Council would adopt in the case of an emergency. In addition to the plan the Council has produced an activation file that guides the exact actions necessary should an emergency occur.

3.5 Members are asked to receive the report and be aware that the emergency plan has been accepted by Worcestershire County Council Emergency Planning Unit and that the plan has been tested with a simulation exercise in December 2006.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no immediate financial implications. In the case of emergency Council would need to identify resources to pay for personnel to act as assistants in the rest centres or as drivers and other support staff for transporting equipment and supplies.

4.2 In the instance of a severe and prolonged emergency there is the potential for assistance from the Bellwin Fund which is administered by the Government.

4.3 In the case of an emergency authority for expenditure decisions would be delegated to officers and a report would be presented to Executive Cabinet immediately following the emergency detailing any financial implications for retrospective approval by Executive Cabinet.



**5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The District Council is required by the Civil Contingency Act 2004 to have an emergency plan.

**6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

6.1 It links to the Council's objectives to meet its statutory requirements.

**7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 The Emergency Plan has to take account of a substantial range of risks and the Council has to possess the capability and procedures to respond to local or more wide scale emergency.

**8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The Emergency Plan is designed to preserve well-being and provide the Council with the capability to protect, relieve and address issues of disruption, danger or threat to the running of the life of the community.

Procurement Issues - None
Personnel Implications – There is the need for a list of staff who could be called upon in the case of an emergency
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - None
Policy – Statutorily required
Environmental – Central to protecting the environment
Equalities and Diversity – Has to take account of the requirements of elderly, frail, people with a disability and speakers of other languages.

**10. OFFICERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Director (Services)	<b>Yes</b>

Assistant Chief Executive	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Service	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Financial Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	<b>Yes</b>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<b>Yes</b>
Corporate Procurement Team	<b>No</b>

## 11. **APPENDICES**

None

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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **Executive Cabinet**

**4<sup>th</sup> April 2007**

#### **BROMSGROVE ROVERS**

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Acting Chief Executive

#### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To clarify the position with regard to the Victoria Ground which is currently leased to Bromsgrove Rovers Football Club.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note and endorse the current position with regard to the Victoria Ground.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 On 6<sup>th</sup> August 2003 the Council granted a lease to Bromsgrove Rovers Football Club Limited for the premises at the Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove. The lease was for 6 years and 364 days at a peppercorn rent and is due to expire in 2009. This is the lease that is currently in place.
- 3.2 In July 2005 the Executive Cabinet considered a request from the Club to grant a new lease, for a period of 10 years (the existing lease would then be surrendered). The reason for the request was that the Club would be able to seek grant aid from the Football League if the lease was for at least 10 years. The Cabinet agreed to the granting of a new lease for a term of 14 years at a rent of £13,700 per annum. Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 provides that a council cannot dispose of land otherwise than by way of a short tenancy (under 7 years) for less than market value unless either the consent of the Secretary of State is obtained or the grant of this lease would fall within the terms of the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003. The Cabinet agreed at that point to the payment of a grant to cover the rent.
- 3.3 No specific consideration has been given to making an application to the Secretary of State, and it is considered unlikely that the grant of this lease would fall within the terms of the General Disposal Consent (England) 2003.
- 3.4 The Council is currently in negotiations with the Club over the new lease (as agreed by Cabinet in July 2005). It should be pointed out that the terms of the lease and any potential grant aid are completely separate matters – as noted earlier the Council cannot normally provide a lease for a peppercorn rent where the terms of the lease are for more than 7 years. If the Football Club wants to

submit an application to the Council for a grant to cover the rent it can do so but this would need to be considered by the appropriate Committee of the Council in accordance with the Constitution – this Committee would be the Executive Cabinet.

- 3.5 The reason for the matter coming to light is because under the review of all budgets under the medium term financial plan it was identified that no income budget had been included. This has now been quite rightly rectified, in light of the Executive Cabinet's decision in July 2005. As stated earlier this does not preclude the club from applying for grant aid to cover the rent but in the spirit of open and transparent governance this needs to be considered separately and if the grant was agreed funds would have to be identified from within the revenue budget.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

- 4.1 There have been 2 meetings between the Council and Mr Herbert, the Chairman of the Football Club, to discuss the issue. The position with regard to the lease has been clarified with Mr Herbert i.e., that the current lease is the one that expires in 2009 and that if the Club still requires a longer lease this will require the annual rent to be paid. It has been further clarified that the Club can submit a grant application however this would have to be considered by Executive Cabinet.
- 4.2 At one of the meetings Mr. Herbert explained that a community youth football programme is being developed by a committee operating under the umbrella of BRFC in conjunction with Bromsgrove Town FC (which comprises 22 youth teams), the County Council and other community representatives and the possibility of BDC joining that programme was explored on the basis that BDC might provide funding for one year. Mr. Herbert was invited to present a business plan which met one or more of the Council's objectives and priorities and which should be prepared in conjunction with the Community Safety Team and the Sports Development Team which could then be considered by the Council with a view to the Council joining this partnership.

- 4.3 Mr Herbert is currently considering how he wants to proceed.

#### **5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 If the Council considered and accepted a grant application from Bromsgrove Rovers it would have to identify savings from within the revenue budget to fund it.

#### **6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Included above.

#### **7. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

- 7.1 Any grant application would have to demonstrate how it helped the Council achieve its objectives.

**8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

8.1 None with this report as it simply seeks to clarify the position. Any risks would have to be identified with regard to any grant application if and when it is considered.

**9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 None with this report as it simply seeks to clarify the position. Any risks would have to be identified with regard to any grant application if and when it is considered.

**10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues
None
Personnel Implications
None
Governance/Performance Management
None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998
None
Policy
None
Environmental
None
Equalities and Diversity
None

**11. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes

(i.e. your own HoS)	
Head of Financial Services ( <u>must</u> approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader's Group)	Yes
Head of Legal & Democratic Services (for approval of any significant Legal Implications)	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR (for approval of any significant HR Implications)	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team (for approval of any procurement implications)	No

## 12. **APPENDICES**

None

## 13. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE CABINET

4<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007

#### PARCELS FOR BRITISH FORCES OVERSEAS

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor R. Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Acting Chief Executive

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To note the contents of a Motion agreed by Tewkesbury Borough Council with regard to parcels for British families and their families who are stationed overseas and to ask the Cabinet to consider whether it wishes to support this Motion.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That, if so minded, the Cabinet resolve:

- (a) that the Motion agreed by Tewkesbury Borough Council as set out in paragraph 3.1 of the report be supported;
- (b) that the Acting Chief Executive be requested to write to the appropriate Government Minister to express such support;
- (c) that the Acting Chief Executive be requested to forward the letter received from Tewkesbury Borough Council to all Parish Councils within Bromsgrove District to seek their support in writing to the Government Minister.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 A letter has recently been received from Tewkesbury Borough Council which advises that at a meeting of its Council on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2007 the following Motion was agreed:

“This Council is aware of the situation in which British forces and their families who are stationed overseas cannot receive parcels free of charge as they could in 2003.

This Council believes that the situation is both an appalling and disgraceful way to treat our dedicated and hardworking troops and their families given the hardships that they face in the world's hotspots and war zones and therefore asks that the Government reinstates this service as a matter of urgency.

In addition this Council calls upon:

1. Each of its Town and Parish Councils to offer their support to the Motion
2. Each Local Authority in the Country to offer their support to this Motion
3. Each Local Authority across the country to invite the town and Parish Councils in their area to support this Motion”.

3.2 Tewkesbury Borough Council was overwhelmingly in support of this Motion which resulted in letters being sent to the various bodies referred to above seeking support and asking that such support be conveyed in writing to the appropriate Government Minister (the Rt Hon Des Browne MP, Secretary of State for Defence).

3.3 Members are therefore asked to consider whether they wish to support Tewkesbury Borough Council in this matter.

#### **4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no legal implications.

#### **6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES**

6.1 There is no direct link to any of the Council's objectives.

#### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

#### **8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There are no direct customer implications.

#### **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues – None
Personnel Implications – None
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – None
Policy – None
Environmental - None
Equalities and Diversity – None



**10. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Acting Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**11. APPENDICES**

None

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Letter received from Tewkesbury Borough Council dated 26<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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