



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 23RD NOVEMBER 2020
AT 6.00 P.M.

MICROSOFT TEAMS - VIRTUAL

MEMBERS: Councillors M. Thompson (Chairman), J. Till (Vice-Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss, P. M. McDonald and C. J. Spencer

AGENDA

6. District Level Economic Recovery Framework - pre-scrutiny (Pages 1 - 24)
7. Housing Strategy - pre-scrutiny (Pages 25 - 40)
8. Domestic Abuse Policy - pre-scrutiny (Pages 41 - 64)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

17th November 2020

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

25th November 2020

BROMSGROVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships
Portfolio Holder Consulted	✓
Relevant Head of Service	Ostap Paparega, Head of NWedR
Ward(s) Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	N/A
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	Non-Key

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 This report outlines the strategic priorities, key interventions and measures aimed at supporting the district economy throughout the Covid-19 economic recovery effort.
- 1.2 The strategic priorities, key interventions and support measures are detailed in the Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework (2020-2023), which is attached in Appendix 1.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to APPROVE

- 1) **the report and the Bromsgrove Local Economic Recovery Framework (2020-2023) attached at Appendix 1**

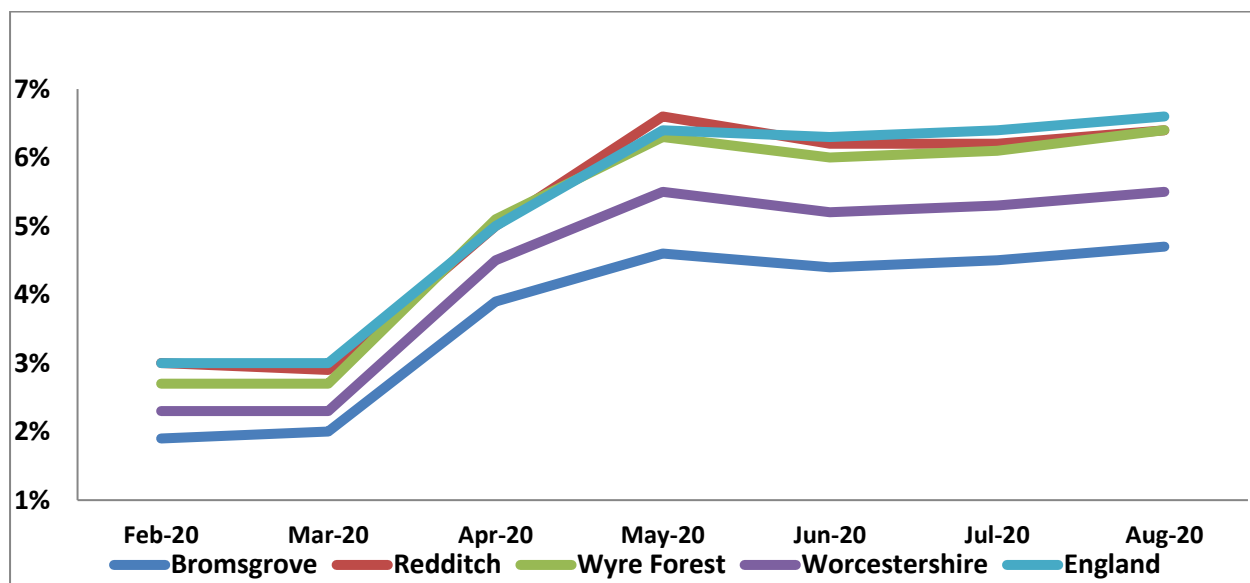
3. Background

- 3.1 The Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework sets out the strategic priorities, key interventions and measures aimed at supporting the local economy throughout the Covid-19 recovery effort. The framework is a live document and will be updated regularly, as new national, regional and local support measures are announced in response to the current pandemic.
- 3.2 The Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework supersedes the North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy for the duration of the economic recovery effort in line with national and regional guidance.
- 3.3 The economic recovery framework focuses on three key priorities:
 - Supporting people

- Supporting businesses
- Improving places

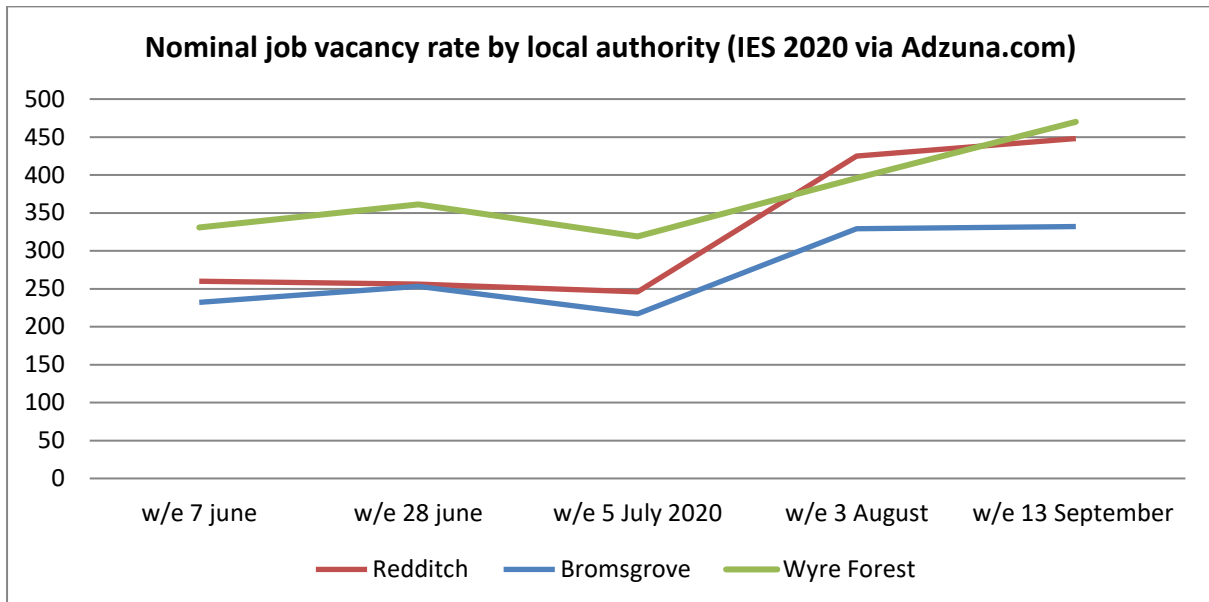
Supporting people

- 3.4 The immediate priority is addressing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jobs and the potential for large scale redundancies. This has been addressed temporarily by the central government through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (which will remain open until 31 March 2021, but will be reviewed in January 2021), but there are major concerns about the likelihood of significant redundancies once the employment support schemes come to an end. Medium and long term, the priority is ensuring those in employment have the relevant skills and knowledge to perform well in an increasingly competitive labour market and access new opportunities in emerging and growth sectors.
- 3.5 The immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jobs and the labour market is measured by looking at data regarding claimant counts, unique job postings and employees on furlough. These are summarised in paragraphs 3.6 to 3.8 below and detailed in Appendix 1 in paragraphs 7 to 10.
- 3.6 The number of people aged 16+ claiming out of work benefits in Bromsgrove increased from 1,145 in February 2020 to 2,675 in October 2020. Graph 1 shows the increase as a percentage of resident population of the same age.



Graph 1 – Claimant counts for people aged 16+ shown as percentages of resident population of the same age.

- 3.7 In terms of job vacancies, Bromsgrove has seen a decrease of 47.30% between 15 March 2020 and 13 September 2020. However, the vacancy rate has improved since August, as illustrated in Graph 2.



Graph 2 – Nominal job vacancy rate by local authority

3.8 The third indicator that reflects the immediate impact of Covid-19 pandemic is the number of employees on furlough. Table 1 shows the number of claims received up to 31 August 2020 in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, West Midlands and the UK and the take up rate, which in Bromsgrove is 11%, the same as the country, West Midlands and UK rate.

Table 1

Claims received up to 31 August 2020	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Bromsgrove	5,200	42,800	11%
Worcestershire County	29,800	274,600	11%
West Midlands	278,400	2,580,400	11%
UK	3,274,900	30,353,200	11%

3.9 The detailed priorities, interventions and measures under the 'Supporting people' theme are described in Appendix 1, paragraphs 11-13.

Supporting businesses

3.10 The interventions under this priority are grouped in four categories:

- Business information, advice and guidance (IAG), including available business grants
- Start-up and enterprise support
- Support for companies with high growth potential
- Support for large / strategic employers

3.11 In addition, attracting inward investment continues to be a key priority and the council is working with the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, Worcestershire

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LEP and the West Midlands Growth Company on targeted programmes to attract private investment to the area.

- 3.12 Table 15 in Appendix 1, paragraph 16, details the key support programmes, including grant funding, available to local businesses, but key examples include:
- Enteprise for Success
 - Enterprising Worcestershire
 - Proof of Concept
 - Business Growth Programme 2
 - Manufacturing Growth Programme
 - Low Carbon Opportunities Programme
 - Skills Support for the Workforce
 - Higher Level Skills Match
 - National and district Apprenticeships Grants
 - Find it Worcestershire

Improving places

- 3.13 Place making will play a key role in the economic recovery effort and it will focus on the re-purposing of the town and local centres; making the town centre a more attractive place to do business and spend time; exploring new ways of mobility; prioritising the health and well-being of residents; putting a clear emphasis on clean growth and a green economy and providing critical digital (gigabit broadband) and mobile (5G) infrastructure.
- 3.14 The key regeneration interventions proposed under this priority are outlined in Appendix 1, Table 16 (paragraph 20). The estimated combined development cost of these key interventions is approximately £31m (council owned sites only).
- 3.15 Also, there are a few plots of serviced employment land and brownfield sites (allocated sites) in private ownership and the council is working with the land owners / developers to explore options to bring these sites forward for devleopemtn.

Delivery partners

- 3.16 The projects, interventions and support measures detailed in the Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework will be delivered by a wide range of partners, as outlined in paragraph 24 (Appendix 1).
- 3.17 In addition, attracting private sector investment will be a critical success factor, especially in the delivery of the key regeneration projects detailed in paragraph 20, Table 16 (Appendix 1).

4. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 4.1 A Bromsgrove Business Advisor post is being created to support the delivery of the business support programmes summarised in this report and detailed in

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Appendix 1, paragraph 16, table 15. The post will be offered on a three-year fixed-term full-time basis. The costs associated with this post will be covered from the economic recovery reserve fund.

- 4.3 The estimated total development cost of the proposed regeneration projects outlined in Appendix 1, paragraph 19, table 16 is approximately £31m (council owned sites). Should the council decide to deliver these key projects directly, there will be clear financial implications in terms of raising the necessary capital funding and the costs associated with that.

Legal implications

- 4.5 Should the council decide to deliver the key regeneration projects outlined in Appendix 1, paragraph 19, table 16 through a joint-venture, then there will be direct legal implications in terms of setting up the JV and the council's share of legal obligations with the JV.

Service / Operational implications

- 4.6 The delivery of capital / regeneration projects has operational implications both in terms of capacity and specialist skills and expertise. These requirements are being assessed regularly and on a case by case basis and appropriate action taken (for example, the appointment of multi-disciplinary teams to prepare masterplans, feasibility studies and development appraisals).

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 4.8 There are no implications.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 5.1 Risk registers / logs are being developed for each regeneration/capital project, updated regularly and monitored by the Project Governance Board, which meets every six weeks.

6. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework (2020-2023)

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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APPENDIX 1

**BROMSGROVE ECONOMIC RECOVERY FRAMEWORK
2020-2023**

SUMMARY

1. The Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework sets out the strategic priorities, key interventions and measures aimed at supporting the local economy throughout the Covid-19 recovery effort. The framework is a live document and will be updated regularly, as new national, regional and local support measures are announced in response to the current pandemic.
2. The Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Framework supersedes the North Worcestershire Economic Growth Strategy for the duration of the economic recovery effort in line with national and regional guidance.
3. The economic recovery framework focuses on three key priorities:
 - Supporting people
 - Supporting businesses
 - Improving places
4. Table 1 outlines the areas of intervention within each of the three key priorities.

Table 1

SUPPORTING PEOPLE	SUPPORTING BUSINESSES	IMPROVING PLACES
Employment support – helping people back into work	Business support – information, advice and guidance (including grants)	Re-purposed town centre and local centres
Skills support – equipping existing workforce with the relevant skills	Start-up and enterprise support	Connectivity and new forms of mobility
Young people – ensuring future workforce has relevant skills & qualifications	Support to large / strategic employers and high growth companies / sectors	Healthier, greener and sustainable communities
<i>Attracting public and private investment</i>		

SUPPORTING PEOPLE

- The immediate priority is addressing the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jobs and the potential for large scale redundancies. This has been addressed temporarily by the central government through the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (which will remain open until 31 March 2021, but will be reviewed in January 2021), but there are major concerns about the likelihood of significant redundancies once these schemes comes to an end. Medium and long term, the priority is ensuring those in employment or seeking employment (including young people) have the relevant skills and knowledge to perform well in an increasingly competitive labour market and access new opportunities in emerging and growth sectors.
- The immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on jobs and the labour market is measured by looking at data regarding claimant counts, unique job postings and employees on furlough at national, regional and local levels, as detailed in Tables 2 – 11 below.

National and regional context

- Tables 2 and 3 show the claimant counts for those aged the 16+ in February 2020 (pre-lockdown) and October 2020. In all tables, percentages mean number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age.

Table 2

Claimant counts	West Midlands		England		UK	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
<i>February 2020</i>						
Aged 16+	141,095	3.9	1,050,875	3	1,255,770	3

Table 3

Claimant counts	West Midlands		England		UK	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
<i>October 2020</i>						
Aged 16+	265,670	7.3	2,228,150	6.3	2,612,550	6.3

Tables 4 and 5 show the claimant counts for those aged the 18-24 in February 2020 (pre-lockdown) and October 2020.

Table 4

Claimant counts	West Midlands		England		UK	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
<i>February 2020</i>						
Aged 18-24	27,065	5.1	193,070	4.1	232,620	4.1

Table 5

Claimant counts	West Midlands		England		UK	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
<i>October 2020</i>						
Aged 18-24	54,550	10.3	437,865	9.2	517,600	9.2

Local context

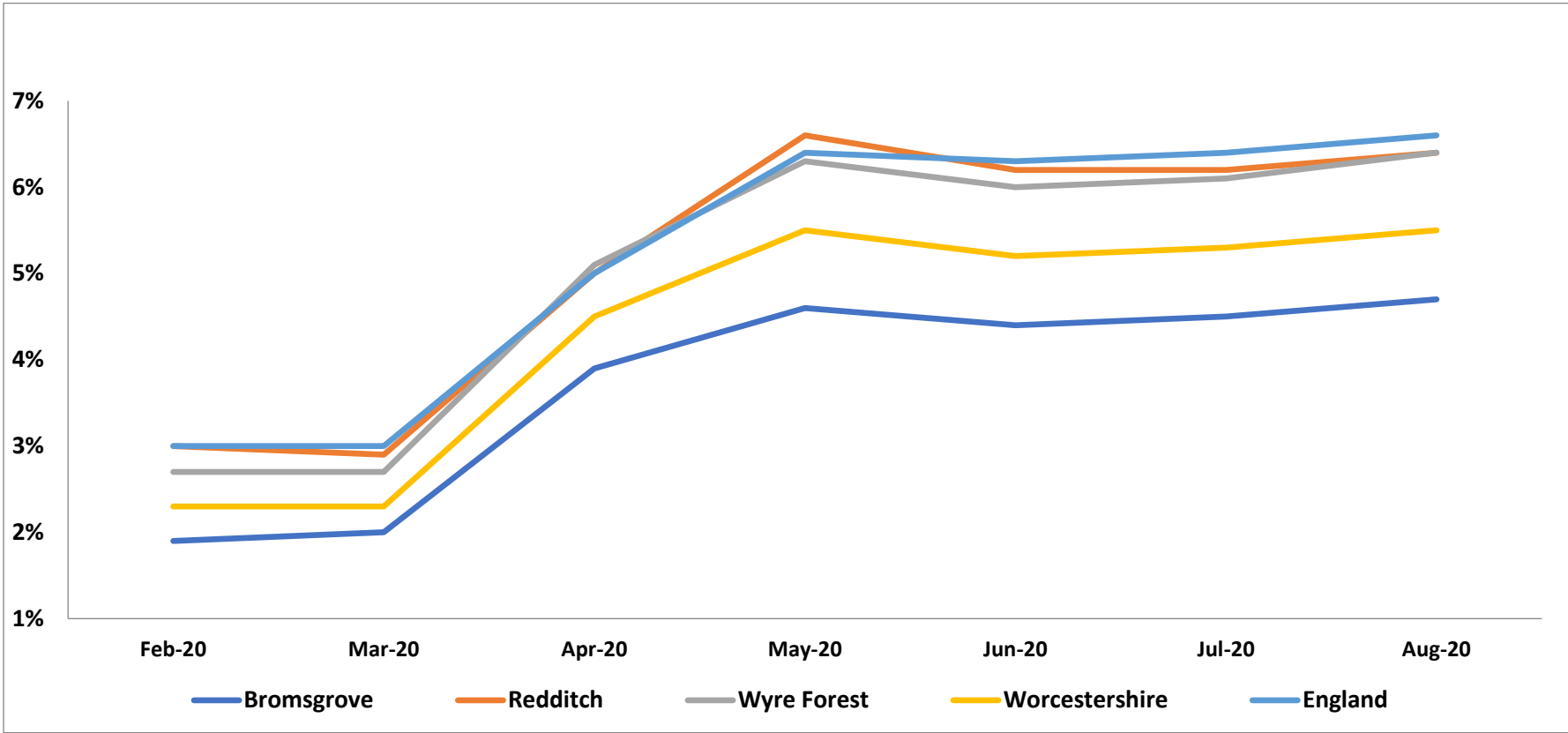
8. Tables 6 and 7 show the claimant counts for those aged the 16+ in February 2020 (pre-lockdown) and October 2020. In all tables, percentages mean number of claimants as a proportion of resident population of the same age.

Table 6

Claimant counts	Bromsgrove		Redditch		Wyre Forest		Worcestershire LEP		GBS LEP	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
<i>February 2020</i>										
Aged 16+	1,145	1.9	1,550	3	1,575	2.7	8,155	2.3	62,485	4.9

Table 7

Claimant counts	Bromsgrove		Redditch		Wyre Forest		Worcestershire LEP		GBS LEP	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
<i>October 2020</i>										
Aged 16+	2,675	4.5	3,245	6.2	3,475	5.9	18,525	5.2	111,765	8.8



Graph 1 – Claimant counts for people aged 16+ shown as percentages of resident population of the same age.

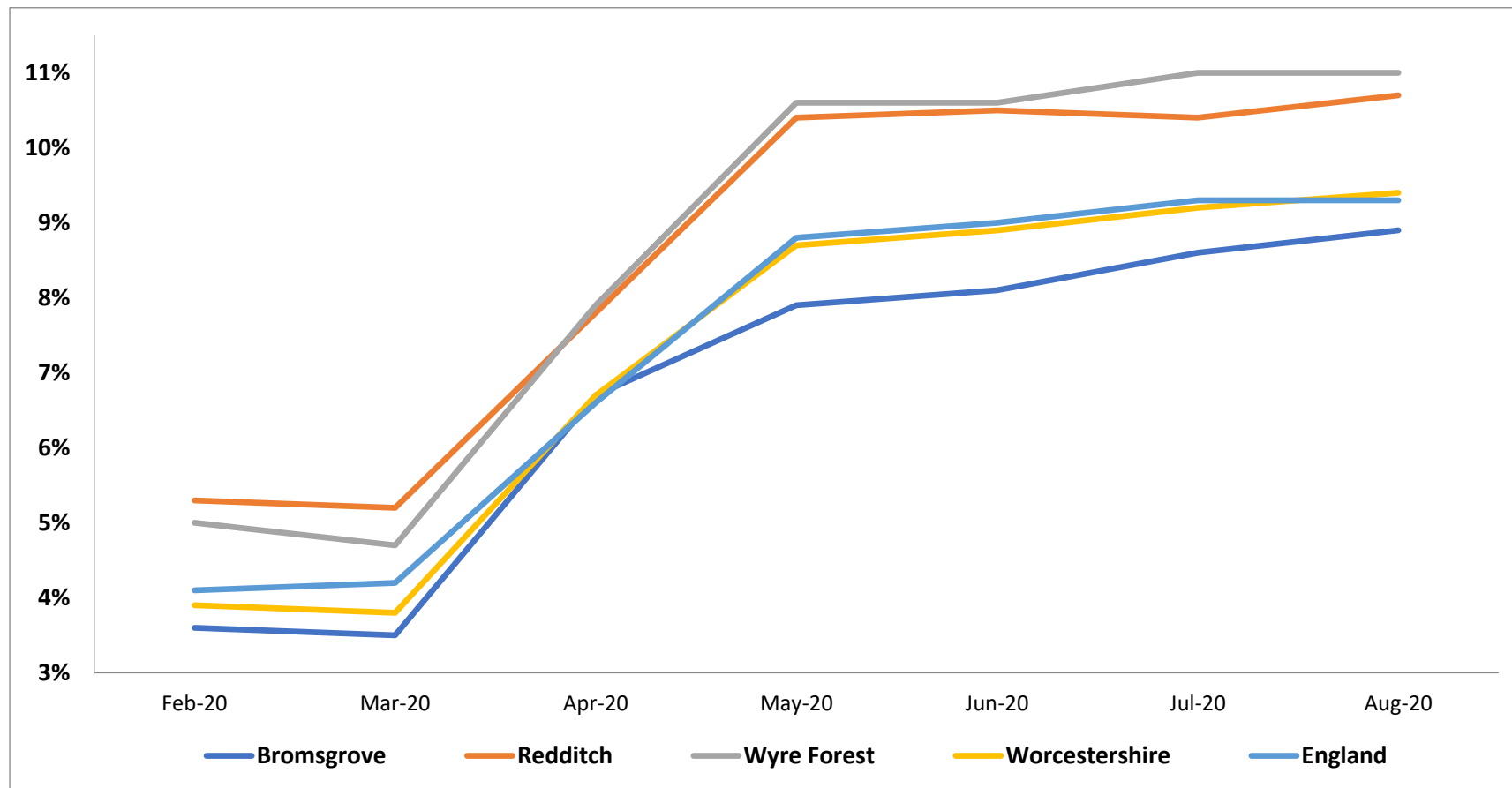
Tables 8 and 9 show the claimant counts for those aged the 18-24 in February 2020 (pre-lockdown) and October 2020.

Table 8

Claimant counts	Bromsgrove		Redditch		Wyre Forest		Worcestershire		GBS LEP	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
February 2020										
Aged 18-24	220	3.6	315	5.3	330	5	1,625	3.9	11,700	5.7

Table 9

Claimant counts	Bromsgrove		Redditch		Wyre Forest		Worcestershire		GBS LEP	
	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%	Level	%
October 2020										
Aged 18-24	530	8.7%	610	10.2	700	10.7	3,735	9.0	22,685	11.1



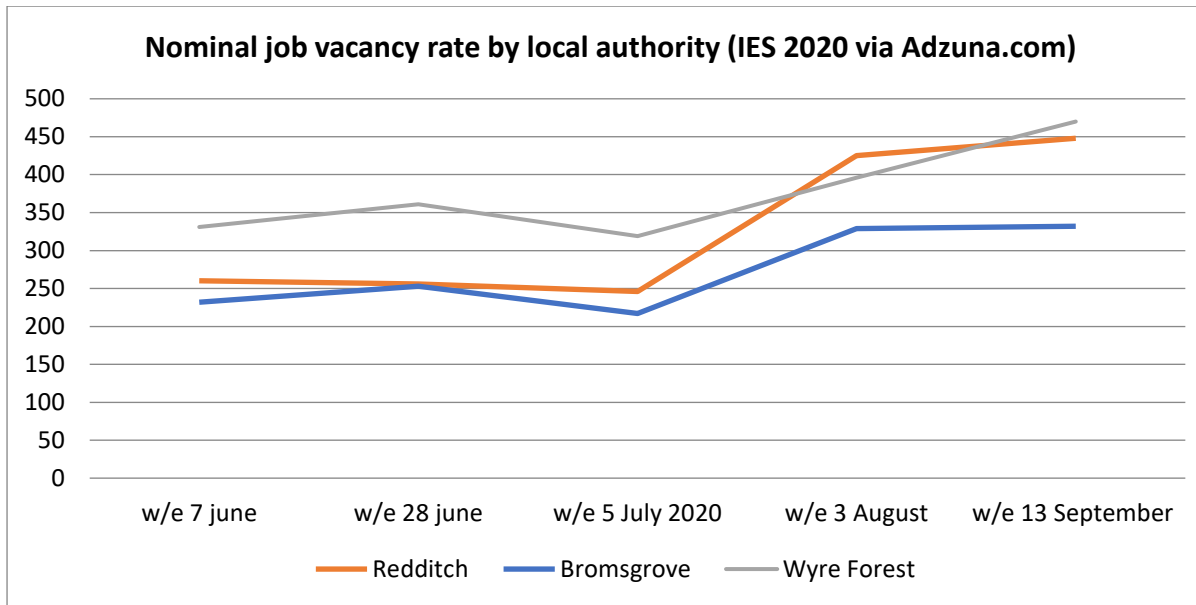
Graph 2 - Claimant counts for people aged 18-24 shown as percentages of resident population of the same age.

9. Table 10 shows the number of local area vacancies and changes since the pandemic began, % change between 15 March and 13 September, last month change (September) and year-on-year change (IES 2020).

(Available at: https://www.employment-studies.co.uk/system/files/resources/files/IES%20Briefing%20-%20w.c%202021.09.2020_1.pdf)

Table 10

	w/e 7 June	w/e 28 June	w/e 5 July 2020	w/e 3 August	w/e 13 September	% since 15 March to 13/09/2020	Change with last month (09 August 2020)	Year on Year change
Redditch	260	256	246	425	448	-35.20%	3.00%	-44.30%
Bromsgrove	232	253	217	329	332	-47.30%	2.60%	-51.00%
Wyre Forest	331	361	319	396	470	-22.20%	13.50%	-33.30%



Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme

10. Table 11 shows the number of furlough claims received by 31 August 2020 per district as well as the county, West Midlands and the UK.

Table 11

Area	Employments furloughed	Eligible employments	Take-up rate
Bromsgrove	5,200	45,000	11%
Malvern Hills	3,500	31,700	11%
Redditch	5,200	42,800	12%
Worcester	5,000	52,100	10%
Wychavon	5,900	59,300	10%
Wyre Forest	5,100	43,600	12%
Worcestershire	29,800	274,600	11%
West Midlands	278,400	2,580,400	11%
UK	3,274,900	30,353,200	11%

Key priorities:

11. The immediate priority is to understand the likelihood and scale of potential redundancies in the borough and the medium and long term priorities focus on identifying local employers' skills needs and work with the relevant education and training providers on designing and delivering courses and qualifications that meet those needs . Table 12 summaries the key priorities and Table 13 the key interventions being delivered under the 'Supporting People' theme.

Table 12

Work with local businesses employing 50+ staff to establish the risk of redundancy in those companies.	Work with DWP and other relevant support organisations on providing targeted support for people at risk of redundancies or already made redundant as a result of Covid-19 pandemic	Promote all current employment and training programmes available to the Redditch residents, including the Opening Doors to Business and apprenticeships programmes etc.
Identify employers' skills and employment needs medium and long term (demand) and work with the key education and training providers to align delivery of courses, qualifications and training to match those needs (supply).	Work with WLEP, GBSLEP, WCC and WMCA to ensure NW's employment and skills needs and prioritise are reflected in strategies, action plans and interventions planned by these organisations.	

Key interventions:

12. Table 13 below details the key current and planned interventions, which include business as usual activities and specific projects / programmes. The table is being updated on a regular basis, as some programmes come to an end and new ones are launched.

Table 13

Intervention	Nature of support	Delivery partner
Connecting Communities	1:1 support with an employment advisor. Providing knowledge and insight into how an individual can secure their preferred job	HoW via WMCA
Adult Education Budget	Funding for Further and higher education courses	HoW via WMCA
Digital skills - Coursera	Free online short courses for residents of WM who are facing redundancy, furlough or those looking to re-skill. 3,800 online courses and 400 specialities	Coursera via WMCA
The apprenticeship levy fund - SME	Provide support to SME who do not currently pay the apprenticeship levy but would like funding to train apprentices. £40 million apprenticeship pot to access	WMCA
The Apprenticeship levy fund – large companies (£3 million+ on payroll)	Guidance and support to help large companies use their apprenticeship level contributions	WMCA
The Kickstart scheme	6 month placements are open to those aged 16-24 who are claiming universal credit and at risk of long-term unemployment. Employers will receive funding for 100% of the relevant NMW for 25 hours a week. Accepting expressions of interest	DWP via WMCA/ GBSLEP/ WLEP HW Chamber
Work and Health Programme	Personalised support to enter into employment. To be eligible you must have a health condition or experience certain social barriers. Click here for further details.	DWP
The Skills Toolkit	List of free online courses and resources to develop skills – focussing on digital skills	DfE by various partners
The Supplier Skills programme	Grant for SMEs to upskill their new and existing workforce. Grants of between £500-£18,000 per SME. 50% match funded by ESF.	ESF via Birmingham City Council

Skills4Worcestershire	Career advice website that is designed for young people, parents and schools. The website has detailed information on career pathways and opportunities in Worcestershire.	WCC (WLEP)
16 to 24 training Worcestershire	Providing traineeships to 16-18 year olds, 19-24 year olds with an Education Health care plan and 15 years if they are elected home educated	WCC via 2 Counties Training (funded by ESFA)
Here2Help; Develop - Graduate	Grant support up to £10,000 to Worcestershire SME to offer 12 month graduate placement or internship	WBC (WLEP)
Apprenticeship grant	£1,500 grant for businesses to pay towards the cost of hiring an apprentice who is based in NW	Bromsgrove DC, Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC via NWedR
Booster Grant	£2,500 grant (50% match funding) that can be used towards training for businesses trading more than two years in NW [subject to other eligibility criteria]	Bromsgrove DC, Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC via NWedR
Skills Support for the Workforce (incorporating Skills Support for Redundancy)	Fully funded training for employees. Redundancy support available to at risk employees and those that have recently been made redundant (3 months)	Serco (funded by ESF via WCC)
Opening Doors to Business	Experience of workplaces Encounters with employers and employees	NWedR with OGL, Redditch Business Leaders and Continuu Consortium

Resources and delivery partners

13. The employment and skills support has been coordinated for the past 5 years by a PTE (3 days a week) post within NWedR that covered the three North Worcestershire local authority areas. The post has been advertised now on a full-time (37 hrs per week) basis. The post holder will work in partnership with the partner agencies to ensure the support measures and programmes are promoted locally and accessed by as many residents and employers as possible. In addition, an Employment & Skills Advisor post to provide support exclusively to Bromsgrove residents has been approved and will be advertised on a full-time three-year fixed-term basis. The costs will for this post are covered by Bromsgrove District Council.

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES

14. Table 14 shows the number of businesses in the district categorised by the number of employees and compared to the other two North Worcestershire local authority areas. The data contained in the table are compiled from an extract taken from the Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR) recording the position of units as at March of the reference year. The IDBR contains information on VAT traders and PAYE employers in a statistical register which provides the basis for the Office for National Statistics to conduct surveys of businesses.

Table 14

ENTERPRISES – employee number	BROMSGROVE	REDDITCH	WYRE FOREST	TOTAL
Micro – 0 to 9	5,080	2,575	3,840	11,495
Small – 10 to 49	470	335	315	1,120
Medium – 50 to 249	70	85	40	195
Large – 250 +	20	25	10	55
TOTAL	5,640	3,020	4,205	12,865

UK Business Counts (2019)

15. The key priorities under the ‘Supporting Businesses’ are focused on four key themes:

Business Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) + Grants	Start-up and enterprise support	High Growth Companies support	Strategic / Large employers support (50 plus employees)
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16. Table 15 details the key current and planned interventions, which include business as usual activities (on-going) and specific projects / programmes (time-limited). The table is being updated on a regular basis, as some programmes come to an end and new ones are launched.

Table 15

Intervention	Key Tasks	Support Programmes	Deadlines
Business Information, Advice & Guidance	Maintain an up to date database of active business support programmes	NWedR business support platform	Ongoing
	Undertake diagnostics with businesses and entrepreneurs to identify their needs, issues and growth aspirations / prospects	Delivered by WBS and GBS LEP business advisors on a 1:1 basis	Ongoing
	Promotion of availability of business support programmes, including grants, via networking & social media	Programme specific campaigns delivered in partnership with the Growth Hubs / funding providers / business networks	Ongoing

		Weekly Business Bulletin / social media	
Start-up and Enterprise Support	Provision of pre-start support to entrepreneurs	Enterprise for Success Enterprising Worcestershire	31/3/2023 30/6/2023
	Provision of post-start and early years support to new businesses	Enterprise for Success Enterprising Worcestershire	31/3/2023 30/6/2023
	Access to Finance Support	Enterprising Worcestershire grant NWedR Start-up grant Midlands Engine Investment Fund Start-up Loans Business Growth Programme 2	30/6/2023 Base budget 31/3/2023
	Assistance with funding applications	1:1 support provided by Business Growth Manager and Business Advisors	Ongoing
High Growth Companies Support	Identify high growth companies	Beauhurst Business Data or similar	Ongoing
	Programme of engagement with high growth companies delivering detailed business diagnostic	DIT key account management NW Business Advisor	Ongoing
	Growth Support	Elevate Business Growth Programme 2 Manufacturing Growth Programme NWedR Business Booster Grant Small Business Leadership Programme Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses	30/9/2023 31/3/2023 Base budget
	Innovation Support	Proof of Concept Business Growth Programme 2 Low Carbon Opportunities Programme Betaden WINN – Worcestershire Innovation Innovate UK Innovation Vouchers	30/6/2023 31/3/2023 30/9/2022
	Access to Markets	Department for International Trade Find It in Worcestershire HS2 Commonwealth Games Green Economy	On-going
	Sectoral Support	GBS LEP Sectoral Leads	
Strategic Employers Support	Identify businesses with 50 or more employees locally	Beauhurst Business Data or similar	October 2020

	Deliver a programme of engagement and account management	Meetings (virtual meetings) and calls delivered by Worcestershire Business Central advisors and a GBSLEP North Worcestershire Business Advisor who works exclusively with businesses in North Worcestershire	Ongoing
	Access to Markets	Department for International Trade Find It in Worcestershire HS2 Commonwealth Games Green Economy	Ongoing / programme specific
Employers' Skills Needs	Skills Audits	Supplier Skills Programme	31/3/2023
	Funding for Training	Supplier Skills Programme Skills Support for the Workforce	31/3/2023
	Apprenticeships	National Apprenticeship Grants District Apprenticeship Grants	31/1/2021
	Graduate Recruitment	Higher Level Skills Match Develop Graduate Programme	
Inward Investment	Promotion of key investment sites Preparing bespoke business cases Search for land and premises Workforce skills & recruitment Liaison with regulatory services Liaison with Department for International Trade (DIT) Liaison with WLEP inward investment team Liaison with West Midlands Growth Company Local market intelligence	NWedR website Invest in Worcestershire West Midlands Growth Company UK Capital Investment	Ongoing Programme specific Tailored responses to enquiries
	Respond to enquiries	West Midlands Growth Company Worcestershire LEP Department for International Trade	Ongoing
Visitor Economy	Promotion of North Worcestershire as a place to visit and stay	NWedR Website Visit Worcestershire West Midlands Growth Company Access to national / international campaigns	Ongoing Time limited targeted promotional campaigns on a case by case basis
	Support Businesses in the Visitor Economy	Sectoral support via Worcestershire Business Support Platform	Ongoing

Resources and delivery partners

17. The business support services are being coordinated by the Business Growth Manager (1FTE) within NWedR who covers the three North Worcestershire local authority areas. From September 2020, a North Worcestershire Business Advisor (1FTE), employed by the GBSLEP, has been appointed on a fixed-term basis until 2023. This post also covers the three North Worcestershire local authority areas. These two posts work in partnership with the delivery agencies to ensure the support measures and programmes are promoted locally and accessed by as many businesses and employers as possible. In addition, a Bromsgrove Business Advisor post to provide support exclusively to Bromsgrove businesses has been approved and advertised on a full-time three-year fixed-term basis. The costs for this post are covered by Bromsgrove District Council.

IMPROVING PLACES

18. The place making approach is centred on a number of existing and emerging priorities, as follows:

- Re-purposing / re-imagining high streets and town centres
- Making the town centre a more attractive space to do business (attract high skilled / high paid workers)
- Making the town centre a more attractive place to spend free time - leisure and hospitality
- Making the town centre a destination – providing a wide range of ‘experiences’ and reasons to visit and spend time in the town centre (other than shopping)
- Reflecting the emerging ways of working (hybrid work modes / hub & spokes) in the re-purposing of existing buildings and the design of new developments
- Exploring new ways of mobility
- Emphasis on clean growth and the green economy
- Prioritising the health and well-being of residents and communities
- Providing town-wide gigabit FTTP and 5G coverage

19. The key regeneration interventions include pre-development works (feasibility studies, masterplans, viability appraisals), site assembly, site / premises acquisitions), soft market testing (investors, developers, occupiers) and site development. In addition, the team works on the creation of a project pipeline ready to be submitted to future UK government and LEP funding programmes.

20. Summary of key interventions:

Bromsgrove Regeneration
<i>Former Market Hall site – c£8.2 - £10.8m (development cost)</i>
<i>Former Dolphin Centre site - c£13.4m - £20.2m (development cost)</i>
<i>Former Fire Station site, Windsor Street – development cost (tbc), site not in council ownership</i>
<i>Bromsgrove Enterprise Park – development cost (tbc), serviced site not in council ownership</i>

Table 16

	Project / Activity	Description	Support programmes / grants	Deadlines
	Former Market Hall site	Masterplanning, feasibility and financial viability	GBSLEP SEP Enabling Fund - £40,000 (total grant for both sites – Market Hall and Dolphin Centre)	Report completed by December 2020
	Former Dolphin Centre site	Masterplanning, feasibility and financial viability	GBSLEP SEP Enabling Fund	Report completed by December 2020
	Former Market Hall site	Planning phase, infrastructure phase (pre-development works) and development phase	Tbc	Tbc
	Former Dolphin Centre site	Planning phase, infrastructure phase (pre-development works) and development phase	Tbc	Tbc

	Bromsgrove Town Centre Vision 2040	Town Centre Vision setting out long-term strategic priorities and key interventions	GBSLEP SEP Enabling Fund - £40,000	31 March 2021
	Former Fire Station site, Windsor Street	Phase 1 - Masterplanning, feasibility and financial viability Phase 2 – Planning Phase 3 – Infrastructure (pre-development works) Phase 4 – development	Tbc	Tbc
	Bromsgrove Enterprise Park	Serviced site with planning consent for office and light industrial uses	Tbc	Tbc

21. The planning, infrastructure and development phases on the former Market Hall and Dolphin Centre sites depend on the delivery route / vehicle chosen to implement these schemes.
22. The former Fire Station site and Bromsgrove Enterprise Park are in third party ownership and the council is working with the respective owners / developers to explore options to bring the sites forward for development.

Resources and delivery partners

23. The resource allocation for the work under this priority is 1 FTE and sits within the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWedR).

Key Performance Indicators Dashboard

24. There is limited economic data covering the period since lockdown available at a local level for many economic indicators. Where available, these local indicators will be monitored on a monthly / quarterly basis, but in most cases the data will need to be extrapolated from national figures and turned into local estimates. Table 17 lists a series of proposed indicators to be measured and updated at regular intervals (i.e. when published/made available) and benchmarked against county, regional and national figures.

Table 17

INDICATOR	BASELINE – FEB 2020	LATEST DATA	TREND (graph)	BENCHMARK TO COUNTY, REGION AND UK DATA	COMMENTARY / CONTEXT
Claimants (aged 16+)					
Youth Claimants (aged 16-24)					
Unique job postings					
Number of employees on employment support schemes					
Unique job postings					
Apprenticeships vacancies					
Town centre vacancy levels					
Town centre footfall					
Number of businesses supported / assisted					
Number of business grants approved					
Number of people supported to get a job					
Number of people supported to access new training courses					
GDP					
Inward investment enquiries					

25. The Bromsgrove Local Economic Recovery Frameworks sets out the key regeneration, business support and employment and skills support interventions and projects that will be delivered over the next three years in Bromsgrove in partnership with key local, regional and national partners

to support the local economic recovery process. The framework will be updated regularly, as existing programmes and interventions come to an end and new ones are launched.

Delivery Partners

26. Our ability to deliver this comprehensive economic recovery programme is heavily dependent on the collaboration with and support of our key partners, funders and supporters, as illustrated below. We are grateful for all the support provided so far and will continue to foster deeper and closer working relationships with all our partners to deliver these critical support measures and interventions.



CABINET

25th November 2020

Bromsgrove District Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020-2024

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	No

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council has a statutory duty to have a homelessness strategy and it is now becoming standard practice for local authorities to combine this with an overview of their wider strategic aims in the local housing market, thereby creating a synergised Housing and Homelessness Strategy.
- 1.2 The new draft Bromsgrove District Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy adopts this synergised approach. It looks at some of the main challenges in the national and Worcestershire housing markets and sets out the local position in Bromsgrove, together with the actions the Council intends to take to achieve its strategic purpose of 'Affordable and Sustainable Homes'
- 1.3 The draft strategy also explains how the Council's local housing priorities connect to the wider Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan, a high-level housing plan for the county, which steers the general direction of the travel for all the councils in housing terms. It also makes links with the council's recovery plan in relation to the covid19 pandemic.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Cabinet is asked to approve the draft BDC Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020-2024 for a period of public consultation for four weeks; and**
- 2.2 **Agree that a final version of the Housing Strategy, having considered any relevant consultation responses, will be brought back to Cabinet for approval.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

CABINET

25th November 2020

- 3.1 There are no direct financial implications associated with adopting this draft strategy.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 Under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, the Council has a statutory duty to have a homelessness strategy, and this is contained within the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan, which the Council endorsed in 2017.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 The strategy sets out some of the main challenges in the national housing market and looks at the role of local authorities within this. The document also locates the Bromsgrove market within the county-wide context and considers the specifics around home ownership, private renting, social housing, homelessness, planning and growth. The document contains a summary of the main challenges facing the council locally and sets out a number of actions to tackle these issues, including those relating to the council's aspirations around housing growth. The strategy will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains relevant and that these actions are having a positive impact on the borough, and to explore any blocks to progress. The draft strategy will be the subject of a four-week public consultation prior to formal adoption.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.4 These were covered in the Equality Impact Assessment carried out for the original Housing Partnership Plan. This will be reviewed to consider any additional impacts as a result of the strategy. The provision of good quality, affordable housing should help tackle inequality and support diversity.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Failing to influence the housing market in a strategic way could lead to a rise in homelessness locally, and impact upon the delivery of affordable housing. There are also risks to housing posed by the coronavirus pandemic so this strategy links closely with the council's Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020.

5. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix A – Draft Bromsgrove District Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy 2020-2024

CABINET

25th November 2020

Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan
Strategic purpose of 'Affordable and Sustainable Homes'
Bromsgrove District Council Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020

6. KEY

None.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Bromsgrove District Council Housing and Homelessness Strategy **2020 - 2024**



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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Appendices

- Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan
- Strategic Purpose ‘Affordable and sustainable homes’
- Bromsgrove District Council Recovery and Restoration Plan



Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council has a number of strategic purposes, one of which is “Affordable and sustainable homes’ so we have a key role to play in making sure that the local housing market provides a supply of good quality, affordable accommodation for local residents. This document sets out the council’s strategic approach to helping finding somewhere to live, together with a series of actions designed to enable local people to be well-housed. Getting this right should make Bromsgrove safer, healthier and more prosperous, because housing is central to the wellbeing of individuals, families and the wider community as a whole. Housing also plays a role in helping to meet the Council’s other strategic purposes particularly around business, leisure, and financial independence. This housing strategy sets out an approach to meeting the housing challenges facing the district, with a particular focus at the moment on increasing the supply of affordable homes for people who both live and work locally.



It’s important to recognise that this strategy was put together in advance of the outbreak of Covid19 and it remains to be seen what impact the crisis has on local residents and their housing situations. As a council we have put together a recovery plan to try and reduce the likelihood of homelessness and I will be monitoring this area of work closely to ensure we do everything we can to help Bromsgrove residents stay safely housed during and after the pandemic.

Councillor Shirley Webb

(Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Wellbeing)



The National Housing Context

In recent years, the national housing market has changed considerably, which in turn poses significant challenges for local authorities, who undertake a wide range of statutory housing functions in their area.

The latest MHCLG English Housing Survey 2016-17 reports the key trends. Home ownership remains central to the market, but with prices rising, home ownership is becoming increasingly difficult for young families. In the meantime, 4.7 million households are now renting privately in England, a figure which has doubled since the mid-1990's. Finally, 3.9 million households are living in the social sector, making it a smaller provider than the private rented sector.

Nationally it is widely recognised that there is an acute shortage of housing particularly social and affordable housing and the government itself has described the market as 'broken.' As private rents and house prices continue to increase many households are facing severe affordability issues, with young people and families on low to middle incomes especially affected by the difficulty of affording to buy or rent a decent home.

The government's response to these changing dynamics in the English housing market has been to try to boost the number of new homes being built nationwide, and to speed up the rate at which these units are delivered. To encourage development there have been changes introduced to streamline planning, new building funds launched, and a suite of options designed for households wishing to get on the housing ladder. The Social Housing Green Paper has also tabled a whole series of changes that may need to be implemented by housing providers in the near future, some of which focus on the delivery of new homes, while a new White Paper 'Planning for the Future' indicates other major changes lie ahead for housing and planning with central government exerting more influence at a local level.

Nevertheless, despite these efforts at a national level, housing development is still falling short of demand, According to current projections an average of 210,000 new households will form in England each year between 2014 and 2039. In 2016/17 the total housing stock in England increased by around 217,000 dwellings: 15% higher than the previous year's increase but short of the 240-250,000 new homes needed to keep pace with household formation.

With home ownership increasingly out of reach for many, and the private sector becoming more and more competitive, so the pressure has risen on local authorities to provide help to local residents in housing need.

There has also been considerable debate about the impact of changes made to the welfare benefit system in the last five years, and how these are leading to increased pressure on all housing providers. Broadly speaking the welfare changes introduced have decreased and capped the level of benefits available to low-income households at a time when the overall cost of living has risen.

Local councils are expected to play an increasingly important role in regulating standards and conditions in their private rented sector, while the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act in 2018 places new statutory responsibilities on councils to prevent and relieve homelessness in their areas. Homelessness and temporary accommodation placements have risen nationally in recent years, with MHCLG reporting that rough sleeping is up 169% in the last seven years.

In the local housing market, Bromsgrove is seeing some significant housing-related pressures at the moment, especially in terms of levels of demand for help with housing options. This demand is hard to resolve especially when private rents are high, in comparison with the limited help available via the Local Housing Allowance.



The Worcestershire Context

The Council works in partnership with the other local authorities in the county, primarily around influencing change, working up housing-related funding bids to central government, and the delivery of aids and adaptations in the private residential sector via the county-wide Home Improvement Agency. Most of this joint work is co-ordinated by the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership, which comprises of the main housing providers around the county and those key organisations associated with housing, including health, adult social care, children's services, the Department for Work and Pensions and criminal justice agencies. The Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership has developed a county-wide homelessness strategy, which has been formally adopted by Bromsgrove District Council, in order to meet its statutory duty to have such a policy in place locally. The Strategic Partnership has also developed a high-level housing plan for the county and this steers the general direction of the travel for all the councils in housing terms (Appendix 1).

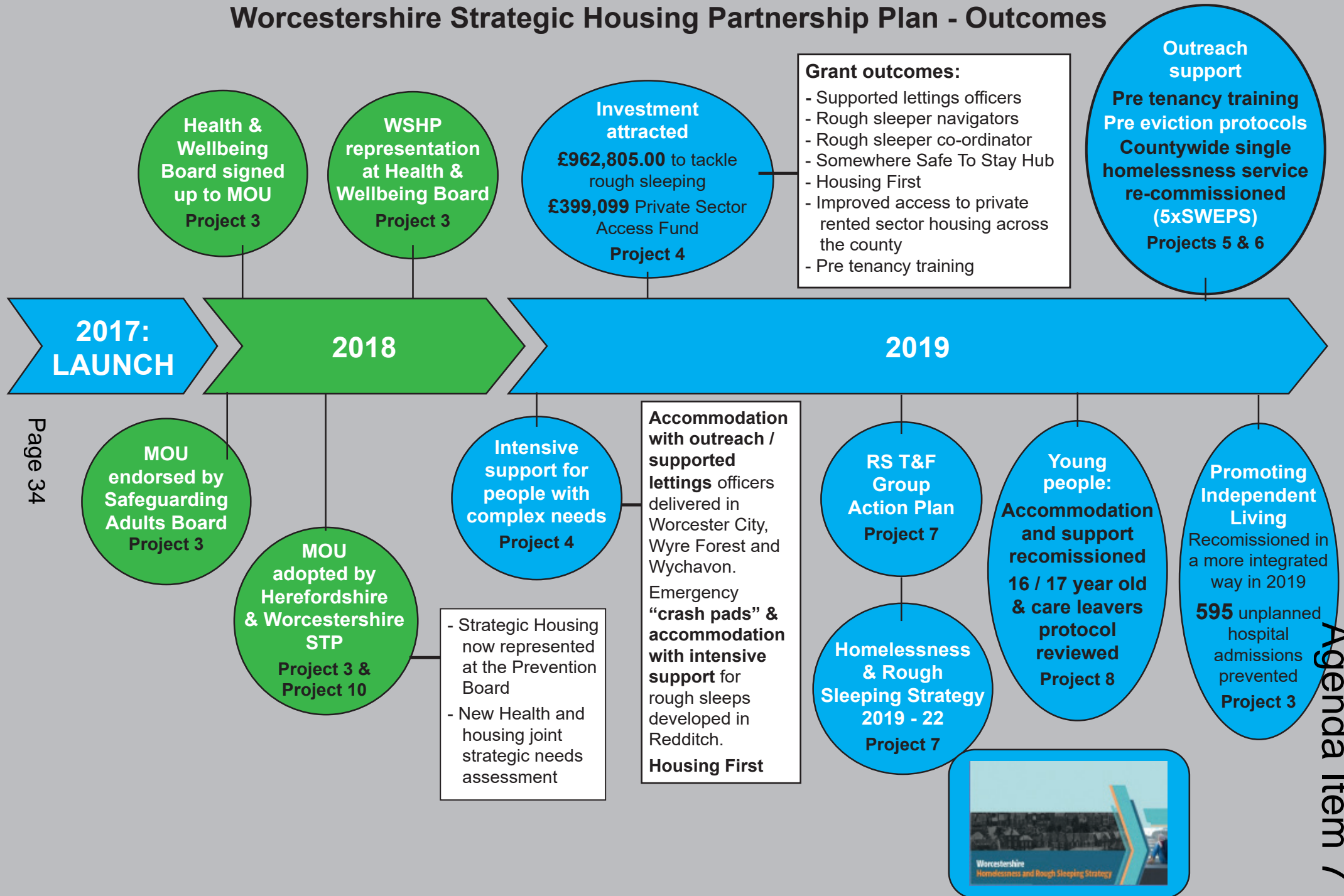
The six key themes in the 2017 high-level plan are:

- **Maximise the delivery of good quality housing of the right type and tenure** by co-ordinating the activities of housing developers, providers and support agencies to meet existing and future housing need in a sustainable way.
 - Build new homes
 - Investigate alternative models of affordable housing delivery to meet the housing and support needs of specific groups and sectors of the housing market
 - Attract funding opportunities to support delivery of identified housing development priorities
- **Improve existing homes** to tackle the personal, social, economic, mental and physical health, and community impacts of poor quality and inaccessible housing (and cold homes) across the private sector.
- **Improve collaboration, coordination and integration of healthcare and housing** in the planning, commissioning and delivery of homes and also services that focus on early intervention.
- **Develop an integrated approach to enable people with multiple and complex needs** to receive the services they need (not limited by existing practice or legislation) to change and support them to achieve resilience, health and well-being and independence within their communities in Worcestershire.
- **Create a simpler and more accessible pathway for all matters relating to disability and vulnerability**, empowering people to make the right choices to enable them to live independently.
- **Promote the strategic and operational impact of the housing sector** and ensure it influences key business planning processes in Worcestershire.

The high-level plan is accompanied by a number of actions to be undertaken by councils in relation to their local housing markets. The Partnership has also achieved a number of outcomes since its launch in 2017.



Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership Plan - Outcomes



Given that each council also has its challenges locally, and that delivery models vary across the districts, the authorities go on to determine their own specific priorities and this strategic document sets these out and how they will be progressed. The themes of the strategic purpose 'Affordable and sustainable homes' for Bromsgrove (Appendix 2) are:

- **Support the development and delivery of appropriate housing in the district**
- **Assist in making best use of all housing across the district**
- **Prevent and respond to homelessness**

The Bromsgrove Context

Bromsgrove District is in the north of Worcestershire and over 90% of its 217 square kilometres is greenbelt. With 95,768 residents, there are population clusters including Hagley, Rubery and Wythall, with the town of Bromsgrove accounting for just over a third of the total population of the District. Approximately 20% of the population are children and 21% are over 65 years old. Bromsgrove also has an aging population, as evidenced by the latest Worcestershire County Council JSNA profile on Health and Housing. This brings its own challenges in terms of producing the right mix of tenure and support, including digital enablement, to help residents who are living longer remain independent for as long as possible. The Council is also focussed on ensuring that careful consideration is given to the environment so green/Eco Home themes form part of its green thread thinking going forwards.

In housing terms the Council currently plays a largely strategic role, having transferred its stock to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) which was set up in 2004. There are approximately 39000 properties in the district, and around 12% of these homes are owned by Registered Providers in the area. BDHT is the largest of these, with 4172 properties in its portfolio. The Council has strong relationships and works closely with all Registered Providers in the district.

Bromsgrove has a particularly competitive and expensive private rented sector, which comparatively, is the smallest in the county. Around 3000 households rent privately. There are very few licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation. Home ownership is also an important part of the local housing market – there are some 31000 privately-owned homes in Bromsgrove.

Home Ownership in Bromsgrove

Currently home ownership levels are relatively stable in Bromsgrove, which has the highest levels of home ownership in Worcestershire, although this figure has declined slightly in recent years. The most marked contrast in home ownership terms can be seen in the differing ability of local residents to be able to purchase depending on whether they work locally or outside of the district where wages tend to be higher. Data analysis by the North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration Unit indicates there is an imbalanced housing market in Bromsgrove, with rising affordability issues particularly for low earner and median income householders; the property to annual income ratio in Bromsgrove is approximately 10.8:1, so residents living and working locally struggle to afford to purchase in the district.



The Private Rented Sector in Bromsgrove

The private rented sector in Bromsgrove is experiencing similar pressures to other parts of the country. It provides a home to some 3000 households locally but it is becoming an increasingly expensive housing option for local residents. Local rents are significantly higher than the Local Housing Allowance so affordability and accessibility is an issue for a number of residents in this sector. Analysis in 2017 showed that 373 of 755 households in receipt of LHA were topping up their rent whilst living in the private rented sector in Bromsgrove.

The financial pressures faced by local people living in the private rented sector, particularly on low incomes, are being felt in other parts of the housing system especially in terms of homelessness – at times, loss of an assured shorthold tenancy can now be the biggest cause of homelessness in Bromsgrove.

Analysis of the local sector shows that most landlords are ‘incidental’ landlords, rather than larger-scale portfolio landlords. The number of Lettings Agents is also high – there are over 12 agents operating across the district. Standards and conditions fluctuate and the council’s Private Sector Housing Team receives over 80 complaints a year from tenants who are dissatisfied with either the behaviour of their landlord or, more regularly, the condition of their property.

The Social Housing Sector in Bromsgrove

The Council currently has a strategic influence on the local housing market, and Bromsgrove is a popular place for social housing providers who operate across the area, providing in the region of 5000 homes locally.

Given the financial pressures and competitive nature of the private rented sector, demand for social housing is high and the housing waiting list has nearly 3000 households on it at any given time.

The Council works closely with registered providers to facilitate an ongoing pipeline of affordable housing in the district but with land in relatively short supply this is a constant challenge for all parties.

As part of its response to these issues the council has decided, in partnership with Homes England, to utilise the site of its former headquarters at Burcot Lane to build 61 units of accommodation to boost housing supply near the town centre. The council plans to retain a number of these units which will be affordable for local residents. As a result of this activity the council has also engaged the services of a private sector property company Baily Garner to work up plans for the scheme, and consideration is being given to further expansion of this new direction of travel, if sufficient resources can be identified to make this feasible.



Homelessness

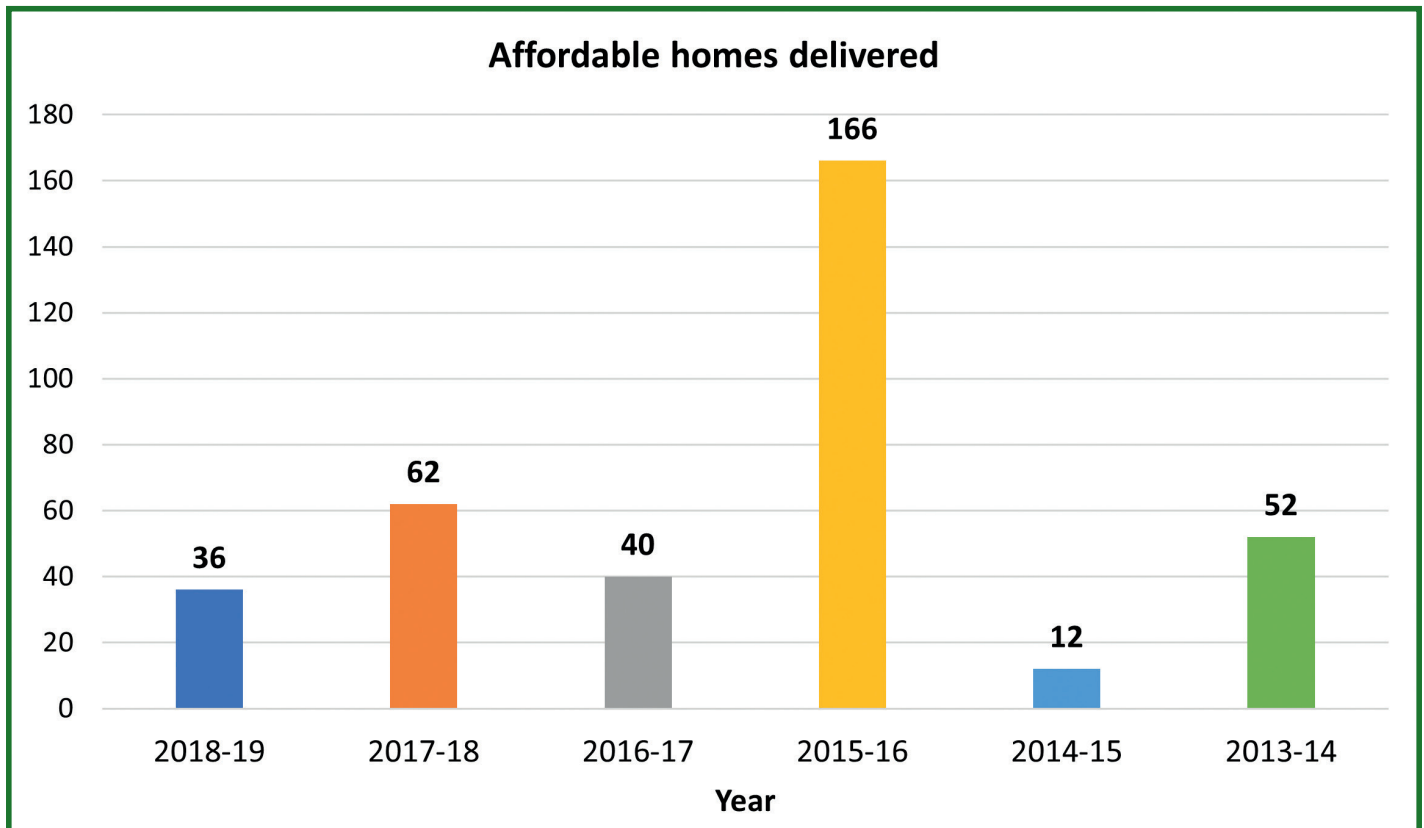
Annually, Bromsgrove only has a small number of people rough sleeping, but during the last couple of years some of these individuals have had a high street profile in Bromsgrove town centre. The council has worked extensively with various partner agencies including the Town Centre Partnership in order to secure housing for them where necessary. Together with Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council co-funds a rapid-response team from Caring for Communities and People (CCP) to ensure anyone on the streets receives immediate support to them avoid becoming entrenched rough sleepers.

More broadly, the Housing Options Team at BDHT continues to receive enquiries from potentially homeless households in Bromsgrove as part of its work delivering the Housing Agency Contract on behalf of the Council. Loss of private sector tenancy now figures more regularly as the cause of homelessness, together with parents/relatives refusing to accommodate and incidents of domestic violence.



Planning and future housing growth

The Council has a duty, through its District Plan, to ensure that sufficient land is available to meet its housing need over any given Plan period. The supporting measures which sit below this overarching measure, record how many dwellings have been provided in each monitoring period, based on type and tenure. The monitoring period for this purpose runs from 1 April to 31 March. The current Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) period runs from 2011 to 2030. The housing requirement for the BDP Plan period is 7000 dwellings, which equates to an average of 368 completions per annum. The district is currently behind its target for delivery of housing by 678 houses.



There are currently a total of 57 sites under construction this monitoring year, with 66 sites which have been completed. A further 97 development sites within the District benefit from planning permission but have not yet started, and it will be important to increase the supply of smaller units in the market, given that they are in short supply overall.

Work is also taking place at a senior level to explore creating a new county-wide housing delivery plan, and consideration is also being given to the use of local authority assets within the 'One Public Estate' approach.



Summary of the key strategic housing challenges facing Bromsgrove District Council and actions being taken to influence the local housing market

Home ownership	
Ensuring home ownership levels underpinning local market are maintained and developed	<p>Joint approach from Strategic Housing and planning officers to incoming applications for housing development in the district in line with 'Planning for the Future'</p> <p>Review funding streams for growth, build and development and working with partners contribute to creating county-wide housing delivery plan, to include use of assets under One Public Estate approach</p>
Ensuring government-sponsored products are available locally	Strategic Housing and planning staff to review current range of products being delivered and offered locally and ensure these are factored into plans for Burcot Lane
Being alert to any Brexit-related impacts on local housing market	Discuss potential for increase in incoming demand from home owners with other council teams and BDHT and monitor via relevant council measures
Potential for interest rate rises in the future	Strategic Housing to monitor on an ongoing basis

Social Housing	
Size of the housing waiting list	Continue with annual reviews
Build out at Burcot Lane in partnership with Homes England- affordable rents and alternative asset management vehicle - for example a Housing Company	Determine potential/viability of housing development role for council as a means of income generation and rebalancing local housing market



Private rental sector	
Variable standards and conditions	Private Sector Team to review current practice and explore options to expand influence within current resource constraints
High number of landlords and agents combined with increased focus on regulation	As above - explore Accreditation/incentive schemes for increasing partnerships with landlords and reducing non-compliance
Lack of security for tenants	Ensure any government changes to tenant security are implemented across the borough
Rising rents/affordability issues	Research efforts to tackle high rents in other parts of the country

Homelessness	
Lack of housing resources to resolve homelessness	Work with BDHT Housing Options team to review provision of temporary accommodation and operational effectiveness and efficiency now new legislation has bedded in
Increased duties and expectations of Homelessness Reduction Act including Duty to Cooperate	Ensure BDHT team fully supported by council and that financial resources required to tackle homelessness remain available
Utilising new government resources to maximum effect and maintaining existing support services	Strategic Housing staff to work with colleagues county-wide on securing additional resources available nationally
Risks to housing created by Covid19	Implement local recovery plan and continue to work with county colleagues on Worcestershire-wide recovery themes



DOMESTIC ABUSE POLICY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Shirley Webb
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Community & Housing Services
Ward(s) Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) Consulted	No
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	No

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend the approval and adoption of the Bromsgrove District Council Domestic Abuse Policy set out in Appendix A.
- 1.2 The Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 passed by the House of Commons on 6th July will introduce a new law when it is due to come into force in April 2021. The new law will place a duty on councils to support victims of domestic abuse, including amongst other legislation, a requirement for councils to assess and provide support and safe accommodation to victims and their children.
- 1.3 Thousands more people are expected to be helped when the new law comes into force and this draft policy reflects Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHCLG) guidance; which states that housing authorities should have policies in place to identify and respond to domestic abuse. The guidance also states that alongside their role in tackling homelessness, councils should take an active role in identifying abuse victims and referring them for help and support.
- 1.4 Alongside this, under the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, Housing Authorities must take account of the current cross-government definition of domestic violence and abuse when designing and delivering services and; under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the council has a statutory duty to work with the police and other partner agencies to reduce crime, ASB and re-offending in its area. Section 17 of the Act also places a duty on councils to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime, disorder and ASB.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that

- 2.1 The draft Domestic Abuse Policy (as set out at Appendix A) is adopted.**
- 2.2 The Head of Housing and Community Services be given delegated authority to update and amend the policy in line with any new legislation and guidance, as and when required.**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The cost of domestic abuse for victims in England and Wales for the year ending March 2017 was estimated to be approximately £66bn.
- 3.2 A Home Office research report into the economic and social costs of domestic abuse also states that the biggest component of the estimated cost is the physical and emotional harms incurred by victims (£47 billion), particularly the emotional harms (the fear, anxiety and depression experienced by victims as a result of domestic abuse), which account for the overwhelming majority of the overall costs.
- 3.3 The cost to the economy is also considerable, with an estimated £14 billion arising from lost output due to time off work and reduced productivity as a consequence of domestic abuse. Some of the costs are borne by statutory authorities such as the costs to health services (£2.3 billion) and the police (£1.3 billion). Some of the cost of victim services will also fall to local authorities, such as housing costs totalling £550 million, which includes temporary housing, homelessness services and repairs & maintenance. Victim services costs also include expenditure by charities and the time given up by volunteers to support victims.
- 3.4 It is clear that addressing Domestic Abuse early and effectively, as well as providing much needed support and care to victims and their children, could lead to reductions in costs to a variety of public services that respond to and deal with the consequences of domestic violence and abuse
- 3.5 There is a direct cost to the council associated with providing staff training required to implement the Domestic Abuse Policy. The cost of training will be met within existing training budgets.

Legal Implications

- 3.6 The Council has a number of legislative requirements to address Domestic Abuse and provide appropriate support to victims and their families. Alongside, the requirements of the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill, this policy also links to the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.
- 3.7 The policy meets the requirements of the Public Sector duty of the Equality Act 2010 which provides a framework to ensure council services are not provided in a discriminatory manner, having due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people from all communities
- 3.8 The policy is underpinned by the Council's legal obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998) and the European Convention on Human Rights to protect life

and to protect individuals from inhuman and degrading treatment. A comprehensive list of wider legislation to be considered in implementation is contained within the policy document.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.9 The Domestic Abuse policy directly supports a number of the council’s strategic purposes such as, “Living independent, active, healthy lives”, “Affordable and sustainable homes” and “Communities which are safe, well maintained & green”. The policy also contributes to North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership’s priorities to “Reduce violence and abuse” and “Protect vulnerable communities”.

- 3.10 Reducing crime and disorder and improving community safety is a corporate priority and introducing this policy will demonstrate how the council will appropriately and effectively support victims of domestic abuse, making the process clearer for staff, customers and service users.

- 3.11 The policy outlines the council’s commitment to ensuring that domestic abuse is recognised as a potential risk and considered in employee’s interactions with customers and service users. It seeks to ensure that staff are provided with the correct information and support to be able to minimise risk and promote recovery

- 3.12 The policy reflects the current cross-government definition of domestic abuse:

“Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality”

Recognising that abuse can be psychological, physical, sexual, financial, and emotional and can encompass tactics such as controlling and coercive behaviour, ‘honour’ based violence, female genital mutilation and forced marriage

- 3.13 The policy is clear on the council’s commitment to preventing all forms of abuse and identifying concerns safely and sensitively wherever possible.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.14 The Council recognises that its staff provide a wide variety of services to people, some of whom may be affected by domestic abuse. A council officer or Councillor may be the first, or indeed only, person in authority who has recognised the abuse or received a disclosure. As such, all staff and Members are required to have due regard to the provisions of this policy in their dealings with customers, service users and colleagues who may be affected by domestic abuse.

- 3.15 The Equality Act 2010 provides people with a protected characteristic with safeguards from direct or indirect discrimination, harassment and victimisation.

The policy recognises and details how domestic violence and abuse can disproportionately impact on people with protected characteristics and how staff can ensure that they provide support to all victims, appropriately and with sensitivity.

- 3.16 Once the policy is agreed, communication and training for staff will be implemented focusing on how to recognise domestic abuse, appropriately identify risks and offer effective support and information to victims.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 This policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to providing appropriate care and support to our customers and service users who may be experiencing abuse. It outlines how the Council's will respond when dealing with disclosures, ensuring this is carried out appropriately and safely as staff undertake their roles as providers of public services.
- 4.2 The policy seeks to ensure that all council staff are aware of their responsibilities towards anyone affected by domestic abuse, including customers, service users and fellow employees in order to support disclosures, assess and manage risk; keeping the victim safety at the forefront of all interactions with council services
- 4.3 An officer's failure to recognise a victim who may be at risk or staff not being aware of the signs and indicators of domestic abuse, when interacting with customers and service users presents a significant risk to the Council. This is significantly mitigated by having a robust policy, agreed procedures and regular training in place.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix A – Draft Bromsgrove District Council Domestic Abuse Policy

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Domestic Abuse Bill 2020 Overarching Factsheet - [Policy Paper - August 2020](#)

Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 - [Homelessness Code-of Guidance for Local Authorities - Chapter 21: Domestic Abuse](#)

The Economic and Social Costs of Domestic Abuse, Jan 2019 - [Home Office Research Report 107](#)

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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Bromsgrove
 District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Domestic Abuse Policy

Identifying abuse & responding effectively

Document Version Control

Created By	Judith Willis			
Date Approved				
Date Published				
Maintained By				
Review Date				
Version Number	Modified By	Modifications Made	Date Modified	Status

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1. Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council believes that everyone has the right to live without fear of violence or abuse. We acknowledge the devastating and lasting effects violence, abuse and coercion have on the lives of women, men and children and we recognise the importance of supporting all victims and survivors of Domestic Abuse.

The Council condemns all forms of domestic abuse and will work to minimise the risks faced by victims and promote their recovery and wellbeing. This policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to providing support to our customers and service users who may be experiencing abuse, outlining our response to dealing with disclosures appropriately and safely in our role as a provider of public services.

2. Aims and Objectives

- 2.1 This policy seeks to ensure that all council staff are aware of their responsibilities towards anyone affected by domestic abuse, including customers, service users and fellow employees.
- 2.2 This policy aims to promote a safe and effective approach to victims and survivors of domestic abuse and their families.
- 2.3 This policy also aims to provide guidance for staff on dealing with people who are suspected or known to be perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 2.4 The Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in its services and has procedures in place to ensure that all residents are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination. The Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to ensure council services are not provided in a discriminatory manner, having due regard to eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation, advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people from all communities.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 **Protecting customers, service users and employees from harm**

Domestic abuse is the abuse of power and control by one person over another and can take many different forms.

For the purposes of this policy, we define Domestic Abuse as:

Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality.

This can include but is not limited to the following tactics:

Agenda Item 8

- Emotional or psychological abuse – intimidation, isolation, verbal abuse, humiliation, not allowing friends / relatives to visit, destruction of belongings, threats of legal action and denial of the abuse
- Harassment and Stalking
- Sanctions e.g. deportations, custody of children etc
- Financial abuse – denial of rights or restrictions of personal freedom e.g. withholding money, preventing access to account information, preventing use of debit/credit cards
- Physical abuse – slapping, pushing, kicking, punching, stabbing, abduction, murder or attempted murder
- Sexual abuse – rape and non-consensual sexual acts.

Many of the acts above can also present in the form of: -

- Controlling behaviour - a range of acts designed to make a person subordinate and/or dependent by isolating them from sources of support, exploiting their resources and capacities for personal gain, depriving them of the means needed for independence, resistance and escape, and regulating their everyday behaviour.
- Coercive behaviour - an act or a pattern of acts of assault, threats, humiliation and intimidation or other abuse that is used to harm, punish, or frighten their victim.
- 'Honour' Based Violence (HBV) – a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called 'honour'. It occurs when perpetrators perceive that a relative has shamed the family and/or community by breaking their honour code. The honour code referred to is set at the discretion of male relatives and those who do not abide by the 'rules' are punished for bringing 'shame' on the family. Infringements may include a woman having a boyfriend; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; interfaith relationships; seeking divorce, inappropriate dress or make-up and even kissing in a public place. It refers to a collection of practices used to control behaviour within families including forced marriage and female genital mutilation. Perceived violations of this 'honour' code are punishable by murder.
- Forced marriage – where a marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties and where duress is a factor.
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) - a procedure where the female genitals are deliberately cut, injured or changed where there is no medical reason for this to be done.

3.2 Safeguarding, reducing risk and improving health and mental well-being

Domestic abuse affects a substantial proportion of the population over the course of their lives. Domestic abuse has a significant effect on victims' health including serious injury or loss of life through murder or suicide, exacerbation of other medical conditions, mental ill health and severe stress.

Domestic abuse has negative impacts on all aspects of victims' lives including housing/homelessness; education, training and employment; family and friendships; involvement in the arts, leisure and culture. These effects may persist in differing degrees long after the abuse has stopped. Victims may use drugs, alcohol and other substances in an attempt to cope with their situation. Victims may deny or minimise the harm caused by the perpetrator.

Perpetrators of domestic abuse come from all different areas of society. They target victims regardless of their age, sex, disability, ethnicity, sexual orientation, nationality, religion, educational level, income or employment status. Domestic abuse is more commonly inflicted by men on women. This is particularly true for severe and repeated violence and sexual assault. The risk that perpetrators pose also increases markedly for people who are disabled or pregnant.

Perpetrators frequently cause harm to children, both directly and by having them witness abuse to a parent, carer or another family member. Domestic abuse undermines the family as a base of care & support and increases the risk of other forms of abuse and neglect.

As a community leader, the Council condemns all forms of domestic abuse and is committed to ensuring that service users and staff are provided with the right information and support to minimise risks and promote recovery.

This policy applies to all Bromsgrove District Council employees and Elected Members

3.3 Providing appropriate support, information and advice to victims

The Council recognises that its staff will provide a variety of services to people affected by domestic abuse. A council officer or Councillor may be the first, or indeed only, person in authority who has recognised the abuse or received a disclosure. As such, all staff and Members are required to have due regard to the provisions of this policy in their dealings with customers, service users and colleagues who may be affected by domestic abuse

Certain members of staff in key designated roles are more likely to interact directly and regularly with service users and hold a job role with a specific remit to provide customer support and advice. It is these officers that will be the most likely to identify a potential risk of abuse or receive a disclosure. As such, all staff in designated roles are required to:

- Be aware of their own attitudes and beliefs relating to domestic abuse
- Have knowledge of how domestic abuse occurs and the risks to victims & children

- Understand how these dynamics affect victims' behaviour
- Empower and support victims to be safe
- Demonstrate the skills required to initiate a conversation about domestic abuse and – if a disclosure is made – receive this sensitively
- Assess the level of risk to victims and children utilising, where appropriate, apply the national recognised DASH checklist tool (Appendix 1) with the service user
- Refer to other services within the Council and partner agencies
- Understand the circumstances in which information must be shared with other agencies and the processes for doing so
- Hold perpetrators accountable for abuse
- Make appropriate referrals to North Worcestershire MARAC or Worcestershire DAPP (Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme) meeting
- Challenge acts or statements that blame victims for their abuse
- Collect & record information that may be used as evidence in criminal or civil proceedings
- Complete all allocated training and development activities relating to domestic abuse
- Be aware of how their own wellbeing may be impacted by working with people affected by domestic abuse and know how to seek appropriate support for this.

All staff and Members will receive awareness training to enable them to understand the importance of recognising domestic abuse and its links to statutory Safeguarding and Health & Safety procedures.

Staff employed in “designated roles” will receive enhanced training to support understanding of the signs and effects of domestic abuse and how to manage and respond to disclosures appropriately. Some staff will also receive training in identifying and working safely with perpetrators as necessary to the requirements of their job roles.

Heads of Service will determine which job roles within their service are “designated roles” for the purposes of this policy and identify the training and development needs of the staff in these roles.

3.4 Protecting the most vulnerable

Domestic violence and abuse are significant safeguarding and child protection issues and the safety and well-being of children living with domestic violence and abuse is recognised as a matter of concern in its own right by both Central Government and key children's services and agencies. Where it is suspected that a child is suffering significant harm or living in circumstances where maltreatment is resulting in a lack of safe and effective care; or causing impairment to health or development, then an immediate referral to Worcestershire Children First Social Care Service is required. Details of the referral procedure and guidance can be found in the council's Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults with Care and Support Needs Policy.

Adults with additional care and support needs can be subjected to domestic abuse and we must take reasonable steps to offer protection. An adult with care

and support needs can include people with learning disabilities, older people, people with physical or sensory disabilities, people with mental ill health, people with certain physical illnesses or people with drug or alcohol problems. People with disabilities or additional care needs may not report or disclose domestic abuse due to their own understanding of what is happening, the fear of losing the independence of living in their own home or if the alleged abuser is their main or only carer. Again, details of the referral process can be found in the council's safeguarding policy.

The Council acknowledges the importance of diversity and equality in operating this policy, recognising the cultural pressures that may exist for Black, Asian and other Minority Ethnic communities and Refugees and the need to be sensitive when dealing with matters related to domestic abuse. Those from Black, Asian, other Minority Ethnic communities and Refugees may be reluctant to approach statutory or voluntary organisations due to additional and legitimate fears of racist reactions, language and cultural barriers or concerns about immigration status. It is imperative that council officers ensure that equal levels of support and protection are offered in each case, treating all customers fairly and supportively, according to their individual circumstances.

Similar concerns exist for LGBTQ+ service users and customers, who may also be reluctant to disclose abuse due to fears of discrimination, prejudice or unauthorised disclosures and breaches of confidentiality. Again, the Council will not tolerate discriminatory practice and will treat all customers and service users who seek our support and assistance with respect and sensitivity.

3.5 Employees as Victims as Domestic Abuse

The Council acknowledges that domestic abuse can critically affect many people's lives, including its own employees. Abuse can affect an individual's physical and mental health and significantly impact on work performance and as an employer the Council has a responsibility for its employees' health, safety and welfare at work.

The Council is committed to addressing domestic abuse whenever its effects become apparent in the workplace. Domestic abuse can negatively influence the health, well-being and self-confidence of staff who may in turn feel unable to confide in others or seek help. Many of those that experience domestic abuse have difficulty attending work regularly and demonstrate longer term symptoms such as depression, anxiety, or stress that consequently affect work performance. It is important for all staff to be aware of domestic abuse as a possible cause when colleagues are depressed, distracted, lacking in self-confidence or appear visibly injured. As a council, we strive to create a working environment that promotes the view that everyone has the right to a life free from abuse in any form and that violence and abuse against any person is unacceptable. Separate guidance is available to employees regarding domestic abuse, for more information, contact Human Resources & Organisational Development

3.7 Employees as Perpetrators of Domestic Abuse

Employees are expected at all times to conduct themselves in a way that will not adversely reflect on the Council and its reputation. Domestic abuse perpetrated by employees will not be condoned under any circumstances nor will it be treated as a purely private matter. Perpetrating domestic abuse whilst in the workplace may be a breach of Code of Conduct. If a colleague is found to be assisting an abuser in perpetrating the abuse by giving them access to facilities such as telephone numbers, contact details or email, then this could be considered a disciplinary offence.

The Council will treat any allegation, disclosure or conviction of a domestic abuse related offence on a case-by-case basis. Our aim is to reduce risk and support change; recognising our role in encouraging and supporting employees to address violent and abusive behaviour of all kinds. If an employee approaches a colleague with concerns about their own abusive behaviour, information about services and support available will be provided. Confidentiality will be maintained, and information restricted only to those who have a need-to-know.

However, there are some circumstances in which confidentiality cannot be assured and this is when there are concerns about children or vulnerable adults or where an employer needs to act to protect the safety of other employees. As above, for more employee information, contact Human Resources & Organisational Development.

3.8 Working in Partnership

This policy forms part of the wider Community Safety and Safeguarding agenda aimed at supporting employees to identify risks, receive disclosures and support victims appropriately and sensitively.

Domestic violence and many acts of abuse are crimes, and the Council is committed to preventing and reducing crime and disorder in line with our role as a statutory member of the Community Safety Partnership. Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council must work with the Police, Probation Services, Public Health Bodies, Clinical Commissioning Groups and other statutory agencies to reduce crime and disorder in Bromsgrove.

The Council works in partnership with other agencies to meet these objectives and fulfil all of its legal obligations in relation to domestic abuse.

The Council supports the [Worcestershire Forum against Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence](#), the commissioned Domestic Abuse Service for the county [West Mercia Women's Aid](#) and all staff must have due regard to the information and guidance provided by these key services when supporting customers, service users and colleagues.

North Worcestershire MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) is a victim focused information sharing and risk management meeting attended by all key agencies, where high risk cases of domestic abuse are discussed. The role

of the MARAC is to facilitate, monitor and evaluate effective information sharing to enable appropriate actions to be taken to increase public safety. In a single meeting, MARAC combines up to date risk information with a timely assessment of a victim's needs and links those directly to the provision of appropriate services for all those involved in a domestic abuse case: victim, children and perpetrator.

In line with national best practice, the Council has a designated single point of contact for the purposes of MARAC. The designated officer attends the MARAC and is able to provide information and updates, addressing any concerns raised about cases. Outside agencies and internal departments are often unsure who to contact in relation to high risk referrals and the designated officer can act as a liaison, responding promptly with requests/queries for information from all parties. It is the role of the designated officer to ensure that any MARAC cases are flagged appropriately on authority systems.

Any officer subsequently engaging with someone identified as being subject to MARAC must liaise with the designated officer as soon as practically possible, so that relevant information is appropriately shared with MARAC in a timely manner. For more information about the North Worcestershire MARAC meeting and to discuss how to make a referral, contact the Council's designated officer in the Community Safety team.

[Worcestershire Drive](#) is a voluntary Domestic Abuse Perpetrator programme (DAPP) which aims to reduce the number of child and adult victims of domestic abuse by deterring perpetrator behaviour. Drive provides a case manager who acts as a single point of contact for perpetrators on a 1-2-1 basis. The case manager then works closely with all statutory agencies including the Police, Probation and Children's Services to maximise the impact of the criminal justice system, developing and agreeing strategies to limit the opportunities for the perpetrator to continue abusing. The service has been developed to knit together existing services, complementing and enhancing existing interventions. Worcestershire Drive was established in 2018 as a pilot project funded by the West Mercia PCC and Worcestershire County Councils' Public Health team. For more information about Drive and to discuss how to make a referral, contact the Council's Community Safety team.

North Worcestershire Integrated Offender Management (IOM) Scheme is the term used to describe the multi-agency approach to tackling persistent offenders who commit a lot of crime, causing damage and nuisance to communities. The approach recognises that repeat offenders have multiple problems which contribute to their offending which cannot be addressed by a single agency. Agencies involved in IOM include probation, police, local authorities, drugs and alcohol services and health providers.

The IOM scheme also seeks to work with offenders who have been released from prison. These offenders often pose a high risk of offending because they will usually require support to get their lives back on track and address issues which have contributed to their criminal lifestyle such as drug and alcohol addiction, homelessness, unemployment, health problems and access to benefits. A high proportion of the cohort of offenders managed under the North

Worcestershire IOM scheme are identified as perpetrators of Domestic Abuse. For more information about the local IOM scheme and to discuss how to make a referral, contact the Council's Community Safety team.

4. Legislation and Guidance

- 4.1 Alongside the forthcoming Domestic Abuse Bill, this policy is also underpinned by the Council's legal obligations under the Human Rights Act (1998) and the European Convention on Human Rights to protect life and to protect individuals from inhuman and degrading treatment.
- 4.2 Alongside the Domestic Abuse Bill and the Human Rights Act 1998, the following legislation will also be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:
- Housing Act 1996
 - Homeless Reduction Act 2017
 - Care Act 2014
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Children's Act 2004
 - Harassment Act 1997
 - Data Protection Act 1998, 2003 and 2018 (GDPR)
 - Local Government Act 2000
 - Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
 - Crime and Disorder Act 1998
 - ASB, Crime & Policing Act 2014

4.3 Confidentiality and information sharing

Where appropriate, the Council will share information with the Police and other key agencies under joint information sharing protocols, so that all agencies can carry out their function and duties in accordance with the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

The Council works within the provisions of the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) / Data Protection Act 2018 which provide the framework for the sharing of information and the need for confidentiality and privacy. There is more information on how we use your information in our Privacy Policy, which is available on our website.

5. Related Policies and Procedures

5.1 Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following Bromsgrove District Council corporate policies and strategies:

- Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults with Care and Support Needs Policy
- Bromsgrove Housing Strategy
- Community Safety Partnership Plan
- Lone Working Policy

- Disciplinary Policy

5.2 There are many partner agencies that we work with to develop a better understanding of domestic abuse and improve protection for victims, their families and the wider community, such as:

- North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership members - [NWCSP](#)
- West Mercia Women's Aid
- Worcestershire Rape and Sexual Assault Centre
- West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner
- Other Housing Associations
- Neighbouring Local Authorities
- Schools and Colleges
- Victim Support
- Other voluntary and community organisations

6. Appendices

6.1 DASH (Domestic abuse, stalking & honour based violence) Checklist – produced by [SafeLives](#) - the UK-wide charity dedicated to ending domestic abuse, for everyone and for good.



Ending domestic abuse

SafeLives Dash risk checklist Quick start guidance

You may be looking at this checklist because you are working in a professional capacity with a victim of domestic abuse. These notes are to help you understand the significance of the questions on the checklist. Domestic abuse can take many forms, but it is usually perpetrated by men towards women in an intimate relationship such as boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife. This checklist can also be used for lesbian, gay, bisexual relationships and for situations of 'honour'-based violence or family violence. Domestic abuse can include physical, emotional, mental, sexual or financial abuse as well as stalking and harassment. They might be experiencing one or all types of abuse; each situation is unique. It is the combination of behaviours that can be so intimidating. It can occur both during a relationship or after it has ended.

The purpose of the Dash risk checklist is to give a consistent and simple tool for practitioners who work with adult victims of domestic abuse in order to help them identify those who are at high risk of harm and whose cases should be referred to a Marac meeting in order to manage their risk. If you are concerned about risk to a child or children, you should make a referral to ensure that a full assessment of their safety and welfare is made.

The Dash risk checklist should be introduced to the victim within the framework of your agency's:

- Confidentiality policy
- Information sharing policy and protocols
- Marac referral policies and protocols

Before you begin to ask the questions in the Dash risk checklist:

- Establish how much time the victim has to talk to you: is it safe to talk now? What are safe contact details?
- Establish the whereabouts of the perpetrator and children
- Explain why you are asking these questions and how it relates to the Marac

While you are asking the questions in the Dash risk checklist:

- Identify early on who the victim is frightened of – ex-partner/partner/family member
- Use gender neutral terms such as partner/ex-partner. By creating a safe, accessible environment LGBT victims accessing the service will feel able to disclose both domestic abuse and their sexual orientation or gender identity.

Revealing the results of the Dash risk checklist to the victim

Telling someone that they are at high risk of serious harm or homicide may be frightening and overwhelming for them to hear. It is important that you state what your concerns are by using the answers they gave to you and your professional judgement. It is then important that you follow your area's protocols when referring to Marac and Children's Services. Equally, identifying that someone is not currently high risk needs to be managed carefully to ensure that the person doesn't feel that their situation is being minimised and that they don't feel embarrassed about asking for help. Explain that these factors are linked to homicide and serious harm and that if s/he experiences any of them in future, that they should get back in touch with your service or with the emergency services on 999 in an immediate crisis.

Please pay particular attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a

Marac or in another way. **The responsibility for identifying your local referral threshold rests with your local Marac.**

Resources

Be sure that you have an awareness of the safety planning measures you can offer, both within your own agency and other agencies. Be familiar with local and national resources to refer the victim to, including specialist services. The following websites and contact details may be useful to you:

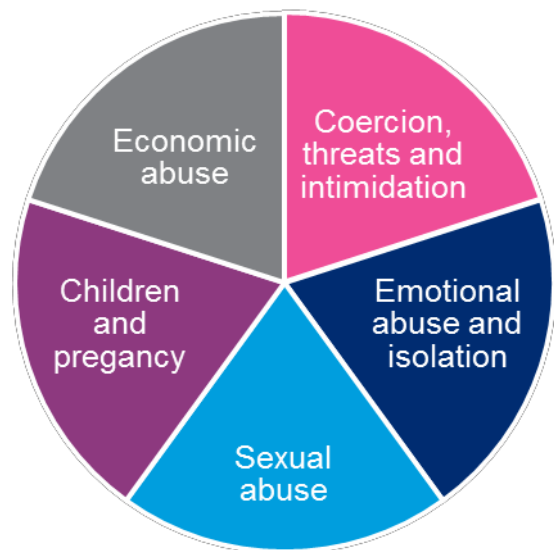
- **National Domestic Violence Helpline** (Tel: 0808 2000 247) for assistance with refuge accommodation and advice.
- **'Honour' Helpline** (Tel: 0800 5999247) for advice on forced marriage and 'honour' based violence.
- **Sexual Assault Referral Centres** ([visit the Rape Crisis website](#)) for details on SARCs and to locate your nearest centre.
- **Galop** (National LGBT+ Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0800 999 5428 / [visit the Galop website](#) for advice for LGBT victims) for advice and support for LGBT victims of domestic abuse.

Asking about types of abuse and risk factors

Physical abuse

We ask about physical abuse in questions 1, 10, 11, 13, 15, 18, 19 and 23.

- Physical abuse can take many forms from a push or shove to a punch, use of weapons, choking or strangulation.
- You should try and establish if the abuse is getting worse, or happening more often, or the incidents themselves are more serious. If your client is not sure, ask them to document how many incidents there have been in the last year and what took place. They should also consider keeping a diary marking when physical and other incidents take place.
- Try and get a picture of the range of physical abuse that has taken place. The incident that is currently being disclosed may not be the worst thing to have happened.
- The abuse might also be happening to other people in their household, such as their children or siblings or elderly relatives.
- Sometimes violence will be used against a family pet.
- If an incident has just occurred, the victim should call 999 for assistance from the police. If the victim has injuries, they should try and get them seen and documented by a health professional such as a GP or A&E nurse.



Sexual abuse

We ask about whether the victim is experiencing any form of sexual abuse in question 16.

- Sexual abuse can include the use of threats, force or intimidation to obtain sex, deliberately inflicting pain during sex, or combining sex and violence and using weapons.
- If the victim has suffered sexual abuse you should encourage them to get medical attention and to report this to the police. See above for advice on finding a Sexual Assault Referral Centre which can assist with medical and legal investigations.

Coercion, threats and intimidation

Coercion, threats and intimidation are covered in questions 2, 3, 6, 8, 14, 17, 18, 19, 23 and 24.

- It is important to understand and establish: the fears of the victim/victims in relation to what the perpetrator/s may do, who they are frightened of and who they are frightened for (e.g.

children/siblings). Victims usually know the abuser's behaviour better than anyone else which is why this question is significant.

- In cases of 'honour' based violence there may be more than one abuser living in the home or belonging to the wider family and community. This could also include female relatives.
- Stalking and harassment becomes more significant when the abuser is also making threats to harm themselves, the victim or others. They might use phrases such as "If I can't have you no one else can..."
- Other examples of behaviour that can indicate future harm include obsessive phone calls, texts or emails, uninvited visits to the victim's home or workplace, loitering and destroying/vandalising property.
- Advise the victim to keep a diary of these threats, when and where they happen, if anyone else was with them and if the threats made them feel frightened.
- Separation is a dangerous time: establish if the victim has tried to separate from the abuser or has been threatened about the consequences of leaving. Being pursued after separation can be particularly dangerous.
- Victims of domestic abuse sometimes tell us that the perpetrators harm pets, damage furniture and this alone makes them frightened without the perpetrator needing to physically hurt them. This kind of intimidation is common and often used as a way to control and frighten.
- Some perpetrators of domestic abuse do not follow court orders or contact arrangements with children. Previous violations may be associated with an increase in risk of future violence.
- Some victims feel frightened and intimidated by the criminal history of their partner/ex-partner. It is important to remember that offenders with a history of violence are at increased risk of harming their partner, even if the past violence was not directed towards intimate partners or family members, except for 'honour'-based violence, where the perpetrator(s) will commonly have no other recorded criminal history.

Emotional abuse and isolation

We ask about emotional abuse and isolation in questions 4, 5 and 12. This can be experienced at the same time as the other types of abuse. It may be present on its own or it may have started long before any physical violence began. The result of this abuse is that victims can blame themselves and, in order to live with what is happening, minimise and deny how serious it is. As a professional you can assist the victim in beginning to consider the risks the victim and any children may be facing.

- The victim may be being prevented from seeing family or friends, from creating any support networks or prevented from having access to any money.
- Victims of 'honour' based violence talk about extreme levels of isolation and being 'policed' in the home. This is a significant indicator of future harm and should be taken seriously.
- Due to the abuse and isolation being suffered victims feel like they have no choice but to continue living with the abuser and fear what may happen if they try and leave. This can often have an impact on the victim's mental health, and they might feel depressed or even suicidal.
- Equally the risk to the victim is greater if their partner/ex-partner has mental health problems such as depression and if they abuse drugs or alcohol. This can increase the level of isolation as victims can feel like agencies won't understand and will judge them. They may feel frightened that revealing this information will get them and their partner into trouble and, if they have children, they may worry that they will be removed. These risks are addressed in questions 21 & 22.

Children and pregnancy

Questions 7, 9 and 18 refer to being pregnant and children and whether there is conflict over child contact.

- The presence of children including stepchildren can increase the risk of domestic abuse for the mother. They too can get caught up in the violence and suffer directly.
- Physical violence can occur for the first time or get worse during pregnancy or for the first few years of the child's life. There are usually lots of professionals involved during this time, such as health visitors or midwives, who need to be aware of the risks to the victim and children, including an unborn child.
- The perpetrator may use the children to have access to the victim, abusive incidents may occur during child contact visits or there may be a lot of fear and anxiety that the children may be harmed.
- Please follow your local Child Protection Procedures and Guidelines for identifying and making referrals to Children's Services.

Economic abuse

Economic abuse is covered in question 20.

- Victims of domestic abuse often tell us that they are financially controlled by their partners/ex- partners. Consider how the financial control impacts on the safety options available to them. For example, they may rely on their partner/ex-partner for an income or do not have access to benefits in their own right. The victim might feel like the situation has become worse since their partner/ex- partner lost their job.
- The Citizens Advice Bureau or the local specialist domestic abuse support service will be able to outline to the victim the options relating to their current financial situation and how they might be able to access funds in their own right.

We also have a library of resources and information about training for frontline practitioners at <http://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-frontline-domestic-abuse-workers-and-idvas>

Other Marac toolkits and resources

If you or someone from your agency attends the Marac meeting, you can download a **Marac Representative's Toolkit** here:

http://www.safelives.org.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Representatives%20toolkit_0_1.pdf. This essential document troubleshoots practical issues around the whole Marac process.

Other **frontline Practitioner Toolkits** are also available from <http://safelives.org.uk/practice-support/resources-marac-meetings/resources-people-referring>. These offer a practical introduction to Marac within the context of a professional role. Please signpost colleagues and other agency staff to these toolkits where relevant:

A&E	LGBT Services
Ambulance Service	Marac Chair
BAMER Services	Marac Coordinator
Children and Young People's Services	Mental Health Services for Adults
Drug and Alcohol	Police Officer
Education	Probation
Fire and Rescue Services	Social Care Services for Adults
Family Intervention Projects	Sexual Violence Services
Health Visitors, School Nurses & Community	Specialist Domestic Violence Services
Midwives	Victim Support
Housing	Women's Safety Officer
Independent Domestic Violence Advisors	

For additional information and materials on Multi-agency risk assessment conferences (Maracs), please visit the [Resources for Marac meetings](#) section on SafeLives website. In particular, [10 Principle of an effective Marac](#) provides guidance on the Marac process and forms the basis of the Marac quality assurance process and national standards for Marac.



Ending domestic abuse

SafeLives Dash risk checklist

Aim of the form

- To help front line practitioners identify high risk cases of domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'- based violence.
- To decide which cases should be referred to Marac and what other support might be required. A completed form becomes an active record that can be referred to in future for case management.
- To offer a common tool to agencies that are part of the Marac¹ process and provide a shared understanding of risk in relation to domestic abuse, stalking and 'honour'-based violence.
- To enable agencies to make defensible decisions based on the evidence from extensive research of cases, including domestic homicides and 'near misses', which underpins most recognised models of risk assessment.

How to use the form

Before completing the form for the first time we recommend that you read the [full practice guidance](#) and [FAQs](#). These can be downloaded from the '[Resources for identifying the risk victims face](#)' section on the SafeLives website. Risk is dynamic and can change very quickly. It is good practice to review the checklist after a new incident.

Recommended referral criteria to Marac

1. **Professional judgement:** if a professional has serious concerns about a victim's situation, they should refer the case to Marac. There will be occasions where the particular context of a case gives rise to serious concerns even if the victim has been unable to disclose the information that might highlight their risk more clearly. *This could reflect extreme levels of fear, cultural barriers to disclosure, immigration issues or language barriers particularly in cases of 'honour'-based violence.* This judgement would be based on the professional's experience and/or the victim's perception of their risk even if they do not meet criteria 2 and/or 3 below.
2. **'Visible High Risk':** the number of 'ticks' on this checklist. If you have ticked 14 or more 'yes' boxes the case would normally meet the Marac referral criteria.
3. **Potential Escalation:** the number of police callouts to the victim as a result of domestic violence in the past 12 months. This criterion can be used to identify cases where there is not a positive identification of a majority of the risk factors on the list, but where abuse appears to be escalating and where it is appropriate to assess the situation more fully by sharing information at Marac. It is common practice to start with 3 or more police callouts in a 12-month period, but **this will need to be reviewed depending on your local volume and your level of police reporting.**

Please pay attention to a practitioner's professional judgement in all cases. The results from a checklist are not a definitive assessment of risk. They should provide you with a structure to inform your judgement and act as prompts to further questioning, analysis and risk management whether via a Marac or in another way. **The responsibility for identifying your local referral threshold rests with your local Marac.**

What this form is not

This form will provide valuable information about the risks that children are living with, but it is not a full risk assessment for children. The presence of children increases the wider risks of domestic violence and stepchildren are particularly at risk. If risk towards children is highlighted, you should consider what referral you need to make to obtain a full assessment of the children's situation.

¹ For further information about Marac please refer to the 10 principles of an effective Marac: <http://www.safelives.org.uk/node/361>

Name of victim:

Date:

SafeLives Dash risk checklist for use by Idvas and other non-police agencies² for identification of risks when domestic abuse, 'honour'- based violence and/or stalking are disclosed

Please explain that the purpose of asking these questions is for the safety and protection of the individual concerned. Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer. It is assumed that your main source of information is the victim. If this is <u>not the case</u> , please indicate in the right-hand column	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	State source of info if not the victim (e.g. police officer)
1. Has the current incident resulted in injury? Please state what and whether this is the first injury.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Are you very frightened? Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. What are you afraid of? Is it further injury or violence? Please give an indication of what you think [name of abuser(s)] might do and to whom, including children. Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Do you feel isolated from family/friends? I.e., does [name of abuser(s)] try to stop you from seeing friends/family/doctor or others? Comment:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Are you feeling depressed or having suicidal thoughts?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Have you separated or tried to separate from [name of abuser(s)] within the past year?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Is there conflict over child contact?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8. Does [name of abuser(s)] constantly text, call, contact, follow, stalk or harass you? Please expand to identify what and whether you believe that this is done deliberately to intimidate you? Consider the context and behaviour of what is being done.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9. Are you pregnant or have you recently had a baby (within the last 18 months)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10. Is the abuse happening more often?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11. Is the abuse getting worse?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12. Does [name of abuser(s)] try to control everything you do and/or are they excessively jealous? For example: in terms of relationships; who you see; being 'policed' at home; telling you what to wear. Consider 'honour'-based violence (HBV) and specify behaviour.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
13. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever used weapons or objects to hurt you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever threatened to kill you or someone else and you believed them? If yes, tick who:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
You <input type="checkbox"/> Children <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>				

² Note: This checklist is consistent with the ACPO endorsed risk assessment model DASH 2009 for the police service.

Name of victim:

Date:

Tick the box if the factor is present. Please use the comment box at the end of the form to expand on any answer.	YES	NO	DON'T KNOW	State source of info
15. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever attempted to strangle / choke / suffocate / drown you?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16. Does [name of abuser(s)] do or say things of a sexual nature that make you feel bad or that physically hurt you or someone else? If someone else, specify who.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17. Is there any other person who has threatened you or who you are afraid of? If yes, please specify whom and why. Consider extended family if HBV.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18. Do you know if [name of abuser(s)] has hurt anyone else? Consider HBV. Please specify whom, including the children, siblings or elderly relatives: Children <input type="checkbox"/> Another family member <input type="checkbox"/> Someone from a previous relationship <input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify) <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever mistreated an animal or the family pet?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
20. Are there any financial issues? For example, are you dependent on [name of abuser(s)] for money/have they recently lost their job/other financial issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
21. Has [name of abuser(s)] had problems in the past year with drugs (prescription or other), alcohol or mental health leading to problems in leading a normal life? If yes, please specify which and give relevant details if known. Drugs <input type="checkbox"/> Alcohol <input type="checkbox"/> Mental health <input type="checkbox"/>				
22. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever threatened or attempted suicide?				
23. Has [name of abuser(s)] ever broken bail/an injunction and/or formal agreement for when they can see you and/or the children? You may wish to consider this in relation to an ex-partner of the perpetrator if relevant. Bail conditions <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Molestation/Occupation Order <input type="checkbox"/> Child contact arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> Forced Marriage Protection Order <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>				
24. Do you know if [name of abuser(s)] has ever been in trouble with the police or has a criminal history? If yes, please specify: Domestic abuse <input type="checkbox"/> Sexual violence <input type="checkbox"/> Other violence <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Total 'yes' responses				

Name of victim:

Date:

For consideration by professional

<p>Is there any other relevant information (from victim or professional) which may increase risk levels? Consider victim's situation in relation to disability, substance misuse, mental health issues, cultural / language barriers, 'honour'-based systems, geographic isolation and minimisation. Are they willing to engage with your service? Describe.</p>	
<p>Consider abuser's occupation / interests. Could this give them unique access to weapons? Describe.</p>	
<p>What are the victim's greatest priorities to address their safety?</p>	

<p>Do you believe that there are reasonable grounds for referring this case to Marac?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, have you made a referral?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Signed</p>	<p>Date</p>
<p>Do you believe that there are risks facing the children in the family?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If yes, please confirm if you have made a referral to safeguard the children?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Signed</p>	<p>Date referral made</p>
<p>Name</p>	<p>Date</p>

Name of victim:

Date:

Practitioner's notes

This document reflects work undertaken by SafeLives in partnership with Laura Richards, Consultant Violence Adviser to ACPO. We would like to thank Advance, Blackburn with Darwen Women's Aid and Berkshire East Family Safety Unit and all the partners of the Blackpool Marac for their contribution in piloting the revised checklist without which we could not have amended the original SafeLives risk identification checklist. We are very grateful to Elizabeth Hall of CAF/CASS and Neil Blacklock of Respect for their advice and encouragement and for the expert input we received from Jan Pickles, Dr Amanda Robinson and Jasvinder Sanghera.