



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 30TH JUNE 2010 AT 4.00 P.M.

THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Chairman), G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, R. D. Smith, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd June 2010 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 1st June 2010 (Pages 7 - 10)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 7th June 2010 (Pages 11 - 16)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
6. Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 10th June 2010 (Pages 17 - 20)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

7. Minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th June 2010 (Pages 21 - 26)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
8. Minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 24th June 2010 (to follow) (Pages 27 - 28)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
9. Minutes of the Meeting of the Bromsgrove LSP held on 20th May 2010 (Pages 29 - 36)
10. Minutes of the meeting of the Equality and Diversity Forum held on 15th April 2010 (Pages 37 - 46)
11. To receive verbal updates from the Leader and/or other Cabinet Members on any recent meetings attended in an ex-officio capacity (Pages 47 - 48)
12. Community Involvement in the Democratic Process - Overview Board/Task Group Report (Pages 49 - 54)
13. Improving Residents Satisfaction - Scrutiny Board/Task Group Report (Pages 55 - 60)
14. Statement of Accounts 2009/2010 (Pages 61 - 74)
15. Benefit Take Up Strategy (Pages 75 - 80)
16. Improvement Plan 2010/2011 (Pages 81 - 84)
17. Performance Monitoring Report (May 2010) (Pages 85 - 90)
18. Annual Report - National Indicator Outturns 2009/2010 (Pages 91 - 96)
 - Appendix For Agenda Item 12 - Community Involvement In The Democratic Process Task Group (Pages 97 - 162)
 - Appendix For Agenda Item 13 - Improving Residents Satisfaction Task Group (Pages 163 - 196)
 - Appendix For Agenda Item 14 - Statement Of Accounts 2009/2010 (Pages 197 - 288)

- Appendix For Item 15 - Benefit Take Up Strategy (Pages 289 - 296)
 - Appendix For Item 16 - Improvement Plan 2010/2011 (Pages 297 - 334)
 - Appendices For Item 17 - Performance Monitoring Report (May 2010) (Pages 335 - 350)
 - Appendix For Item 18 - Annual Report - National Indicator Outturns 2009/2010 (Pages 351 - 356)
19. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

22nd June 2010

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 2ND JUNE 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Chairman), G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, R. D. Smith and P. J. Whittaker (during part of Minute No. 4/10 to Minute No. 16/10)

Observers: Councillors S. R. Colella, E. J. Murray, D. L. Pardoe, C. R. Scurrall and C. B. Taylor

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. J. Godwin, Ms. A. Heighway, Ms. T. Kristunas, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. R. Cole.

1/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor M.J. A. Webb.

2/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP and R. D. Smith declared a personal and prejudicial interest in agenda item 14 (Artrix – Incorporation of Operating Trust) as Members of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Operating Trust and left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

3/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 28th April 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

4/10 **MULTI-USE GAMES AREA AT SWANS LENGTH OPEN SPACE**

The Cabinet considered a report on issues relating to the Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA) at Swans Length Open Space, Alvechurch.

Complaints had been received from residents in relation to anti social behaviour centred around the MUGA. Public consultation and engagement through a residents' focus group had indicated whilst those living closest to the MUGA supported its removal, other residents felt the facility was important for young people in the area and wished to see it retained.

It was also reported that two petitions had been received one requesting the removal of the MUGA from Swans Length and another (in two parts)

supporting the retention of the facility in its current location. The Council's policy on petitions required that the petitions be referred to the Council's Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

There was discussion on the work undertaken to date by officers to address the problems experienced together with possible further actions which could be taken in conjunction with the local Police and other partners. The Leader referred to discussions which had taken place with the Local Policing Team.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that in accordance with the Council's existing policy, the petitions received in favour and against the retention of the MUGA at Swans Length, Alvechurch be referred to the next meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board for further consideration;
- (c) that the Board be requested to investigate the issue and to make recommendations to the Cabinet within six months; and
- (b) that in the meantime, officers be requested to further consider the position and to work with the local Police, partners and residents to identify ways of alleviating the difficulties at the site .

5/10 **SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

6/10 **OVERVIEW BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 27th April 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

7/10 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 17th May 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

8/10 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

There were no updates on this occasion.

9/10 **EARMARKED RESERVES 2009/2010**

The Cabinet considered a report on the earmarked reserves for 2009/2010 together with a proposal to create new reserves where required in order to support the future plans of the Council.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the establishment of new reserves of £235,000 as set out in section 4.3 of the report be approved;
- (b) that the release of reserves of £599,000 as set out in the appendix to the report, which reflected the approval required for January to March 2010, be approved; and
- (c) that the addition of £366,000 to existing reserves as detailed in the appendix to the report, which reflected the approval required for January to March 2010, be approved.

10/10 **ACCESS POLICY FOR TRANS-PEOPLE (SPORTS AND LEISURE SERVICES AND FACILITIES)**

The Cabinet considered a report on the proposed adoption of a policy in relation to Access for Transitioning People to Sports and Leisure Services and Facilities.

It was reported that the policy established clear guidelines for staff and members of the public when dealing with or meeting a transitioning person in order that access to the sports and leisure services and facilities of their choice could be maintained.

During the discussion of this item Members acknowledged that the policy was another stage in the work undertaken as part of the Council's Equality and Diversity agenda.

RESOLVED that the Access Policy for Transitioning People - Sports and Leisure Services and Facilities, attached as an appendix to the report, be approved.

11/10 **PROPOSED BROMSGROVE MEMORIAL/TRIBUTE**

Consideration was given to a report on a proposal received from the THANKSS charity (To Honour and Acknowledge those Killed and Still Serving) to erect a suitable memorial/tribute to the armed services within the Bromsgrove town area.

It was reported that the charity was seeking the grant of a licence in respect of the Council owned land at Amphlett Hall, Crown Close, Bromsgrove and that the erection of the memorial/tribute would be subject to the grant of planning permission.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the development of a memorial/tribute on land at Amphlett Hall, Crown Close, Bromsgrove to honour all of the armed services be approved in principle;
- (b) that, subject to the charity being registered and producing a business plan to demonstrate the viability of the project, a licence be granted to the THANKSS charity to enable the erection of the memorial/tribute on the land;
- (c) that the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Engagement be authorised to approve the detailed business case and design of the memorial/tribute, and to monitor the delivery of the project.

12/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP TERMS OF ENGAGEMENT**

The Cabinet considered a report on a proposed protocol to be observed by all members of the Worcestershire Partnership when considering future budgets.

RESOLVED that the Worcestershire Partnership – Terms of Engagement be endorsed.

13/10 **PERFORMANCE REPORT (APRIL 2010)**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's performance as at 30th April 2010 (period 1).

Members raised a number of issues on particular indicators, including missed waste collections, processing of new benefit claims, speed of answer of calls at the Customer Service Centre and sickness absence. Some of the reasons for targets not being met were discussed however, as this was the first month of the year it was recognised it was too early at this stage to assume there was particular cause for concern.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the changes to the Performance Indicator set reported corporately and the changes to the structure of the report as set out in section 3.3 of the report be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that 56% of Performance Indicators for which information was available had met their monthly target in April;
- (c) that the performance figures for March 2010 as set out in appendix 2 be noted; and
- (d) that the areas of concern as set out in section 4.3 of the report be noted.

14/10 **ARTRIX - INCORPORATION OF OPERATING TRUST**

The Cabinet considered a report on the proposal of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust (the Operating Trust) to become a charitable company limited by guarantee. It was noted that the incorporation of the Operating Trust would require some consequential amendments to the lease and various agreements relating to the Artrix.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposed incorporation of the Operating Trust be noted;
- (b) that the Licence to Assign and Deed of Variation in respect of the lease be approved and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be authorised to sign these documents;
- (c) that the Deed of Novation of the Overarching Agreement and the Deed of Novation of the Dual User Agreement be approved and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be authorised to sign these documents; and
- (d) that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be authorised to revise the Service Level Agreement in order to reflect the transfer from the Operating Trust to the new company.

15/10 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in part I of schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so.

Minute No.
16/10

Paragraph
3

16/10 **VICTORIA GROUND LEASE**

The Cabinet considered a report on the submissions received in relation to the lease of the Victoria Ground, Bromsgrove. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the contents of the submissions received and the outcome of the scoring matrix exercise be noted;
- (b) that in view of (a) above the lease be offered to Bromsgrove Sporting Limited, subject to the final negotiations as set out in 4.1 of the report; and
- (c) that the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources, the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services and the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be authorised to complete the lease arrangements/agreement.

The meeting closed at 7.48 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW BOARD

TUESDAY, 1ST JUNE 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella, Mrs. M. Bunker, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor D. L. Pardoe and Councillor C. R. Scurrall

Invitees: Ms. A. Jones (Cluster Manager, Extended Services, Worcestershire County Council)

Officers: Mr. J. Godwin, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

1/10 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor S. R. Colella be elected as Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/10 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker be elected Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. R. Dent and Mrs. C. J. Spencer. It was noted that a nomination to the Board had not yet been received from the Labour Group.

4/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

5/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview Board held on 27th April 2010 were submitted. Members referred to Minute No. 71/09 and asked whether a response to the questions asked, had been received from Worcestershire County Council and Network Rail. Officers confirmed that questions had been submitted but that a response had not yet been received through the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulation and Housing Services (PRRH).

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/10 **PPG17 OUT-TURN - BRIEFING PAPER**

The Chairman reminded Members that at the Overview Board meeting held on 2nd June 2009 a report was received on PPG17 Out-Turn and that it had been resolved that the item be referred back to the Overview Board in 12 months' time in order to assess the delivery of services in respect of PPG17.

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services presented an update and responded to Member questions, with particular reference to:

- The works undertaken in respect of parks and gardens.
- Outdoor sports facilities

After discussion it was

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7/10 **ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR AND ALCOHOL FREE ZONES TASK GROUP REVIEW**

The Board considered the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group 12 month review report.

The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services provided additional information and answered Member questions on the recommendations, and in particular on the following areas:

- The effectiveness of Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs) and available alternatives.
- The use of CCTV and the restrictions of the Code of Practice.
- Preventative actions and partnership working.
- The work of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP).
- Communicating to residents the positive actions the Council has taken.

The Board discussed the difficulty in the implementation and measurability of recommendations 2, 3 and 4. Members agreed that residents' concerns in respect of Anti-Social Behaviour could be addressed through the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the update report be noted.

8/10 **COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY TASK GROUP DRAFT REPORT (TASK GROUP CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR L. J. TURNER)**

The Chairman welcomed Ms. Allie Jones, Cluster Manager (East Worcestershire) Extended Services, Worcestershire County Council, who confirmed that she had been involved in the Task Group and her team would be happy to working in partnership with the Council and co-ordinate the work required under recommendations 8 and 9.

Councillor L. J. Turner, the Chairman of the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group presented the draft report to the Board setting out the aims and objectives of the Task Group, evidence and witnesses and topics covered by the recommendations. The Chairman of the Task Group informed Members that the over all financial cost of implementation of the recommendations had been kept to a minimum. The Chairman of the Task Group responded to questions from Members. It was also highlighted that, together with the 16 recommendations, the Task Group had included within the report suggested improvements that could be made to enhance the recommendations further. The Task Group had recommended that a steering group be set up in order to ensure the implementation of the recommendations throughout the year and to maintain the momentum in involving the community in local democracy.

After lengthy discussion, Members agreed that the suggestion for procedures to be considered to allow members of the public to participate at committee meetings, paragraph 4.6 of the report, should be emphasised.

The Board thanked the Task Group Chairman, Members and Scrutiny Officer for producing an excellent report, covering this extensive subject in such a short period of time.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that subject to the minor amendments, requested during the meeting, the report and recommendations be approved; and
- (b) that the report be submitted to Cabinet for approval of the report recommendations.

9/10

WORCESTERSHIRE OLDER PEOPLES' STRATEGY

The Board were advised that a representative from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) would be attending the meeting on 29th June 2010 to give a presentation on the WCC Older Peoples' Strategy and were asked to consider key questions Members would wish to put forward to the representative.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the following questions be raised:
 - 1. Who is the strategy aimed at and what are the priorities?
 - 2. What organisations are involved in the delivery of the strategy? To what extent is district level delivery included in the strategy? How does this relate to Bromsgrove?
 - 3. What are the key targets and performance indicators of the strategy, including LAA targets? What is the current performance trend against these?
 - 4. What is the consultation plan for the strategy? How are district councils involved?
 - 5. What are the funding streams for delivery of the strategy?
 - 6. What is the needs assessment by geographical area?
 - 7. How is housing provision included within this strategy?

8. The Hub is being provided with access to an online directory "Carewise". What information is available in the community and will this include district level information?
- (b) that the relevant Portfolio Holder be invited to attend the Board meeting on 29th June 2010, for this item.

10/10 **GARDEN WASTE SERVICES - FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

The Board were advised that the Head of Environmental Services had been asked to attend the meeting on 29th June 2010 to discuss future developments of the Garden Waste Services and it was felt appropriate for Members to prepare a series of questions that they would like the Head of Environmental Services to answer.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the following questions be raised:
1. What consultation arrangements are planned before any decisions are made on future developments?
 2. What is the optimum take up of these services? How many households?
 3. What are the marginal costs of increased take up? Are there any economies of scale?
 5. Can you provide details of the Income and Expenditure of green waste service?
 6. Are there national targets for green waste services which we have to achieve and if so how are we performing against these?
 7. Is there any customer satisfaction feedback for these services?
- (b) that the relevant Portfolio Holder be invited to attend the Board meeting on 29th June 2010, for this item.

11/10 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST JUNE TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2010 (FOR INFORMATION ONLY)**

The Board considered the Forward Plan. Members raised concerns over the apparent slippage which had occurred with the Arts and Events Strategy. Officers advised Members that the strategy had been reviewed by the Scrutiny Board at a meeting earlier in the year and the cause of the slippage was outside of the Council's control. Officers undertook to provide Members with a copy of the relevant minute for information.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE AUDIT BOARD

MONDAY, 7TH JUNE 2010

AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors J. T. Duddy, D. Hancox, B. Lewis F.CMI, S. R. Peters and C. R. Scurrall (during Minute Nos. 1/10 to (part) 13/10)

Also in attendance: Ms. J. Matheson and Ms. J. Hill, from the Audit Commission (during Minute Nos. 1/10 to 8/10)

Observers: Councillor G. N. Denaro (Portfolio Holder for Resources)

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. M. Wall and Ms. P. Ross

1/10 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor S. R. Peters be elected as Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/10 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor B. Lewis F.CMI be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ms. H. J. Jones. It was noted that a nomination to the Board had not yet been received from the Labour Group.

4/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No interests or whipping arrangements were declared.

5/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 15th March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/10 **AUDIT COMMISSION LETTER REGARDING COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT - CAA**

(The Chairman agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency to be considered, to inform those charged with Governance and to ensure that the Audit Board was aware of the contents of the letter from the Audit Commission.)

The Chairman welcomed Ms. J. Hill and Ms. J. Matheson, from the Audit Commission, to the meeting.

Ms. Hill thanked Members for the inclusion of the item. She then informed Members that the letter highlighted how the Audit Commission proposed to bring work on Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) to a conclusion in light of the new government's recent announcement. Members were advised that all work on updating the area assessment and organisational assessment would cease with immediate effect. The Audit Commission would not issue new scores for the use of resources assessments, the managing performance assessments or the overall organisational assessments for 2010. Ms. Hill highlighted that the Audit Commission Fees Letter would be revised to reflect the cessation of CAA and would be presented to the next Audit Board meeting.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Audit Commission letter regarding the cessation of Comprehensive Area Assessment and the notification of the revised Audit Commission Fees Letter be noted.

7/10

AUDIT COMMISSION SHARED SERVICES REVIEW

A copy of the Audit Commission Shared Service Review February 2010 was considered. Ms. J. Matheson presented the report on doing so she requested that Members note her thanks to all the staff for their help and openness towards her whilst completing the report. She explained that staff had shown an overwhelming desire to make Shared Services work and had displayed a huge amount of commitment.

Ms. Matheson informed Members that the Audit Commission Shared Services Review was a very positive report and had been issued to Redditch Borough Council, Audit and Governance Committee and the Shared Services Board. Ms. Matheson briefly explained 'Why Shared Services' and that '*The Communities and Local Government Department takes the view that local government must always look for ways to improve what it does. It must offer better services in a way that fits modern lifestyles, and it must deliver what matters to people in local communities*'.

Councillor Denaro responded to questions from Members regarding the Chief Executive's Performance Matrix now in place and the Comprehensive Performance Management currently being worked on. Members were informed that the Shared Services Board would give consideration to the risks and reality of having a fall back position or exit strategy as noted in the Shared Service Review.

RESOLVED that the Audit Commission Shared Services Review February 2010 be noted.

8/10 **AUDIT COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT - CERTIFICATION OF CLAIMS**

Ms. J. Hill presented the Board with the Audit Commission Annual Report - Certification of Claims and Returns and Members were asked to note the Council's response to the improvements identified.

Ms. J. Hill presented the report and in doing so she summarised the findings from the certification of 2008/2009 claims including the significant findings as detailed in the report.

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources responded to questions from Members regarding the date stamping of documents received at the Council's main offices in Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove. Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Certification of Claims and Returns - Annual Report and the Council's response to the improvements identified be noted; and
- (b) that the recommendations as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted.

9/10 **RISK MANAGEMENT TRACKER - QUARTER 4**

Members considered a report which presented an end of year overview of the current progress in relation to Actions/Improvements as detailed in the Corporate and service area risk registers for the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources informed Members that a significant amount of actions had been completed during Quarter 4 and that this together with a number of actions excluded from reporting had ensured that the majority of actions had been completed showing a significant improvement from the 2008/2009 financial year.

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources requested that Members noted that the risks associated with the non delivery of the current actions was not deemed as high as the delayed actions were in relation to ongoing projects to ensure improvements were being achieved rather than fundamental problems with processes across the Council.

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources responded to questions from Members regarding Internal Audit monitoring target / extended target dates, the validation of completed targets and the end of year position rating.

RESOLVED that the progress to date against the Corporate and all service area risk register actions for the 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010, Quarter 4, be noted.

10/10 **PROTECTING THE PUBLIC PURSE - LOCAL GOVERNMENT**

The Chairman welcomed Ms. M. Wall, Bromsgrove District Council's Fraud Services Manager, to the meeting.

Ms. Wall presented the report which provided advice to the Board regarding possible fraud and corruption against the Council as raised by the Audit Commission.

Ms. Wall informed Members of the high risk areas currently identified -

- Tenancy Fraud
- Single Person Discount Fraud
- Recruitment Fraud

Ms. Wall responded to questions from Members regarding the costs of identifying, investigating and recovery of fraud. The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources advised Members that it was a statutory responsibility to recover debts and identify fraud.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Audit Commission's Self-Assessment Checklist as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be undertaken, to provide a baseline of where we are and to ensure sound governance and counter fraud arrangements are working as intended;
- (b) to approve the targeting of the risks identified as detailed in the report, as raised nationally. The implementation of this work would assist the Council to do all it can to address fraud and corruption that may be affecting it/or may affect it in the future;
- (c) to ensure that current arrangements are sufficiently robust to reduce the risk of procurement fraud, following the latest Office of Fair Trading guidance to lessen the risk of unlawful practices affecting the award and allocation of contracts;
- (d) to authorise and endorse the issue of a survey to all staff to test their perception of fraud issues and whistle-blowing arrangements, how to report issues and how they feel the Council reacts to the threat of fraud. This would be done on an annual basis, with the first survey providing a baseline of data which could be used to establish knowledge across the Council, but also provide indications of work that may need to be undertaken as a result; and
- (e) that the Cabinet recommend to Council to undertake a commitment to fight possible fraud and corruption against the Council, by initially using the Audit Commission's Self assessment Checklist as set out in Appendix 1 to the report and to consider potential risks to the Council by utilising the Corporate Anti-Fraud Team (CAFT) to identify and prevent such risks.

11/10 **SHARED INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources provided Members with a brief update on the Shared Internal Audit Service.

12/10 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the business the subject of the following minute on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of 'Exempt Information' as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraphs of that part as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
13	3 and 7

13/10 **RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

Members considered a report that presented a summary of progress to date against audit report "priority one" and key "priority two" findings and agreed actions.

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources responded to questions from Members regarding information on Appendices 1 and 2 to the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the 'priority one' and 'priority two' findings and agreed actions as set out in Appendices 1 and 2 to the report be noted;
- (b) that any necessary action and reporting process be agreed; and
- (c) that where targets are identified as 'red' (behind target) the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources be tasked to invite the relevant Head of Service to attend future Audit Board meetings to discuss.

The meeting closed at 7.16 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

THURSDAY, 10TH JUNE 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors A. N. Blagg, D. L. Pardoe, C. R. Scurrall, C. B. Taylor and C. J. Tidmarsh

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

1/10 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor D. L. Pardoe be elected as Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/10 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor C. B. Taylor be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/10 **APOLOGIES**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. J. Deeming. It was noted that a nomination to the Board had not yet been received from the Labour Group.

4/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

5/10 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 22nd April 2010 were submitted. The Chairman brought Members attention to a small discrepancy at Minute No. 88/09 in respect of 17.9c.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/10 **DRAFT REPORT OF THE IMPROVING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION TASK GROUP (TASK GROUP CHAIRMAN: COUNCILLOR S. R. COLELLA)**

The Chairman of the Task Group gave a brief summary of the Task Group's aims and objectives and how he hoped these would be achieved through the implementation of the recommendations and gave specific reference to the diagrams within the Executive Summary of the report, which highlighted the areas which were covered by the recommendations.

The Chairman of the Task Group took the opportunity to thank fellow Members of the Task Group and the Committee Services Officer for their hard work and support. The Task Group Chairman confirmed that the draft report had been presented to both the Corporate Management Team and Leader's Group and, if approved at this meeting, would be presented to Cabinet on 30th June 2010.

The following points were raised by the Board:

- The important role that Councillors should play in improving residents' satisfaction.
- That everyone involved with the Council should be involved in order to make a difference.
- Work should be carried out to promote the good things that the Council does.
- Ensure that all parts of the district feel that they "belong" to Bromsgrove District Council.

After discussion it was agreed that Recommendation 1 needed to be amended and that Recommendation 3a would be incorporated within Recommendation 3.

The Board thanked the Task Group Chairman, Members and Committee Services Officer for the report and thanked the Portfolio Holder for his comments and support of the report.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that subject to the minor amendments requested during the meeting, the report and recommendations be approved; and
- (b) that the report be submitted to Cabinet for approval of the recommendations.

7/10 **CALL-IN PROCEDURE REVIEW - UPDATE REPORT**

The Board considered the Legal Team's comments on the proposed amendments to the Call-In Procedure, which had been put forward at the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 22nd April 2010. The Board agreed a small amendment at 17.4 of the Call-In procedure.

The Senior Solicitor reminded Members that any changes to the Constitution need to be approved by the Full Council. After further discussion it was

RESOLVED that the points raised by the Board in relation to changes to the call-in procedure be referred to the Monitoring Officer for consideration as part of the next review of the Council's Constitution.

8/10

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PROPOSAL - ALMSHOUSES (UPDATE REPORT)

Members considered the report prepared by the Senior Solicitor following their request for further information by the Board at the meeting held on 23rd March 2010. It was confirmed that the Council does not have any statutory responsibilities to residents of almshouses. It was considered that the scrutiny request completed by a member of the public was of a personal nature and therefore it would not be appropriate for the Board to investigate it further.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted;
- (b) that the Legal Team liaise with the Strategic Housing Team and write appropriately to the member of the public concerned; and
- (c) that the Board take no further action.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 15TH JUNE 2010 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors A. N. Blagg, Mrs. M. Bunker, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, D. L. Pardoe, C. R. Scurrill, C. B. Taylor, C. J. Tidmarsh and L. J. Turner

Officers: Mr. H. Bennett, Mrs. A. Heighway, Mrs. S. Sellers, Mr. C. Santoriello-Smith, Mr. M. Carr and Ms. A. Scarce

1/10 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor S. R. Colella be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/10 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor D. L. Pardoe be elected as Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs. C. J. Spencer.

4/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

Councillor Mrs. Griffiths declared a personal interest in item 6 on the agenda; Petitions – Alvechurch Multi-Usage Games Area, as she had been a Member of the Cabinet at the time the decision was taken to install the MUGA and was a Ward Councillor for Alvechurch.

5/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 9th March 2010 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/10 **PETITIONS - ALVECHURCH MULTI-USAGE GAMES AREA (MUGA)**

The Board was presented with three petitions on the Multi-Usage Games Area (MUGA) at Swans Length, Alvechurch. The Chairman explained that one role of the Board was to receive petitions, to determine whether to hold an inquiry and to make recommendations to the Cabinet. He outlined the process for receiving petitions, whereby the petition organiser for each petition is allowed

up to 5 minutes to present their petition.

The first petition was presented by Mrs. Sarah Morgan. The petition was entitled "I, the below, wish the MUGA, at Swans Length Alvechurch, be dismantled and removed". Mrs. Morgan explained that the petition was requesting removal of the MUGA facility and outlined the reasons for this. These included the anti-social behaviour reported to take place in and around the MUGA. The petition contained 90 signatures.

The second petition was presented by Mr. Alex Cooke. The petition was entitled "I sign this digital petition to register my support for saving the Alvechurch MUGA". Mr. Cooke explained that the petition was against demolition and removal of the MUGA facility and outlined the reasons for this. These included that the MUGA was a valued and much used resource for children and families in the area. The petition contained 108 signatures.

The third petition was presented by Miss Emily Wightman. The petition was entitled "Join if you want to keep the MUGA in Alvechurch". Miss Wightman explained that the petition was against demolition and removal of the MUGA facility and outlined the reasons for this. These included that the MUGA was a facility valued by children and young people in the neighbourhood. The petition contained 103 signatures.

The Chairman thanked the petition organisers for presenting their petitions and asked the Head of Community Services to comment. The Board were advised that there had been an increase in reported anti-social behaviour and complaints from residents who lived in the proximity of the MUGA. Public engagement on the issue through a local resident focus group had been carried out to consider the issues and at a meeting of the resident focus group it had been decided that the removal of the MUGA was an option that the group would like the local authority to consider. The matter had been presented to Cabinet on 2nd June 2010, as outlined in Appendix 2 of the report. In the meantime, the petitions on the MUGA had been submitted and the Cabinet had referred consideration of the issue to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board, in accordance with the Council Constitution.

It was moved that an inquiry be carried out by the Board to consider the matter in detail and to interview key witnesses.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that an inquiry be held into the future of the MUGA facility at Swans Length, Alvechurch and the matter be considered at an extra meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board on 22nd July 2010; that key witnesses be invited to this meeting, and the Head of Community Services be asked to provide the key evidence identified in a written report;
- (b) that the terms of reference for the inquiry be:
"Aim:
To investigate the perceived crime and disorder issues and the future options for the Multi Use Games Area facility at Swans Length, Alvechurch.

Objectives:

1. To investigate the crime and disorder issues around the MUGA
 2. To consider the value of the MUGA to local residents
 3. To identify the possible options and associated costs and benefits for the MUGA.”
- (c) that the following key witnesses be interviewed during the enquiries, together with any possible expert advisor on anti-social behaviour (e.g. from the County Council):
- The relevant Portfolio Holder
 - The Head of Service
 - West Mercia Police
 - Ward Councillors
 - The Chairman of Alvechurch Parish Council
 - Bromsgrove District Council CCTV Manager
 - Alvechurch Youth Club,
 - Any Residents Associations
 - Any Neighbourhood Watch organisation in the neighbourhood
 - Young people in the neighbourhood.
- (d) that a site visit be carried out to inspect the MUGA and that this be organised by the Scrutiny Officer;
- (e) that the following key information be provided by the Community Services Department:
- anti social behaviour data for the neighbourhood before and after installation of the MUGA,
 - the cost of installation, the cost of removal, the cost of putting the MUGA into storage and
 - the evidence for the need of the MUGA facility when it was installed.
- (f) that the following be identified as key questions to put to witnesses, together with any further questions that Members may wish to submit to the Scrutiny Officer:
- Q What work has been done elsewhere to deal with similar anti social behaviour problems around other MUGA facilities?
 - Q What options have been explored for alteration of the structure, layout and seating of the MUGA facility to deter anti-social behaviour?
 - Q What alternatives to removal of the MUGA have been identified?
 - Q Is there any way to assess the usage of the MUGA by children and families in the area?
 - Q Are the anti-social problems seasonal, i.e. higher at particular times of year?
 - Q Are there any options for surveillance of the MUGA to deter anti-social behaviour (e.g. police, CCTV, local residents etc).
 - Q Is there any data to compare anti-social behaviour at the Alvechurch MUGA with other MUGA facilities?
 - Q Is there any data to show the incidents of anti-social behaviour reported?
 - Q Where do people reportedly misusing the MUGA and consuming alcohol on the site buy the alcohol? Is there a local off licence where alcohol might be being obtained and is this being

investigated to see if they are selling alcohol to underage customers who are misusing the MUGA?

7/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PLANNING**

Members of the Board received a report of the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services which outlined the process and rationale for Overview and Scrutiny Work Planning for 2010/11 and were asked to consider and identify the priority issues for Overview and Scrutiny for 2010/11.

The Scrutiny Officer gave a short presentation to outline the process for identification and allocation of topics. The potential topics for investigation by the Boards had been identified in the Quarterly meetings with the Leader, proposals by Members of the Council, consultation with the Corporate Management Team, and consultation with the Bromsgrove Partnership (LSP). Members had also been invited to submit topic proposals in advance of the meeting and one topic proposal had been received from Councillor L. J. Turner entitled "Local Food". A list of potential topics had been drawn up and Members were asked to propose any further topics and to identify the top priority topics and refer these to the relevant Boards for inclusion in their work programmes.

Members of the Board considered the proposal from Councillor Turner. The proposal on "Local Food" was:

- "To investigate the availability of locally sourced foods in local shops, supermarkets, restaurants, and in schools and elderly care homes, day centres etc.
- To actively promote local food.
- To ascertain the viability of encouraging additional Local Food/Farmers Markets in District Wards other than Bromsgrove Town.
- Reduction of carbon footprint in the local food economy".

Members of the Board considered the allocation of topics to each Board and each Member nominated up to 8 high priority topics. These were collated and it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the proposal on "Local Food" be designated a high priority topic and referred to the Overview Board for inclusion in its Work Programme; and
- (b) that the Scrutiny Officer, in consultation with the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards, be asked to schedule the topics prioritised around the remaining meetings of the Boards for 2010/11.

8/10 **VERBAL UPDATE ON THE WORCESTERSHIRE HUB JOINT SCRUTINY TASK GROUP (COUNCILLOR C. B. TAYLOR)**

Councillor C. B. Taylor provided the Board with an update on the progress of the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group. He reported that there were some concerns about the planning and direction of the investigation.

RESOLVED that the Chairman of the Worcestershire Hub Joint Scrutiny Task Group be invited, by Councillor Taylor, to a future meeting of the Board.

The meeting closed at 7.46 p.m.

Chairman

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Agenda Item 8

THE ENCLOSURES FOR THIS ITEM WILL FOLLOW ON A
SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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Bromsgrove Partnership Board

20 May 2010 at 2pm

MINUTES

Present:

John	Morgan	Small and Medium Businesses (Vice-Chair in the Chair)
Cllr Roger	Hollingworth	Bromsgrove District Council (Chair) (<i>In attendance from item 7 onwards</i>)
Liz	Altay	NHS Worcestershire
Hugh	Bennett	Bromsgrove District Council
Mike	Brown	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)
Maggie	Bryan	Worcestershire County Council (WCC)
Angela	Burnet	West Mercia Police
Cllr June	Griffiths	Bromsgrove District Council
Richard	Harper	Parish Councils (CALC) (<i>Substituting for John Cypher</i>)
Rachel	Jones	Act on Energy
Della	McCarthy	Bromsgrove District Council
Helen	Mole	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Ed	Moore	Worcestershire County Council (WCC)
Julian	Smith	West Mercia Police (<i>Substituting for David Shaw</i>)
Ann	Sowton	Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN)
John	Staniland	Bromsgrove District Council

Apologies:

Eddie	Clarke	Worcestershire County Council (WCC)
John	Cypher	Parish Councils (CALC)
Kevin	Dicks	Bromsgrove District Council
Marie	Green	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT)
Judy	Hallam	NEW College
Angie	Heighway	Bromsgrove District Council
Elaine	Mortimore	Bromsgrove Youth Homelessness Forum (BYHF)
David	Shaw	West Mercia Police

ACTION

Item 1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

JM welcomed everyone in attendance and each person introduced themselves in turn.

Item 2 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted as listed above. It

was also noted that RHollingworth and EMoore were expected to attend but had indicated they might not be present at the start of the meeting.

Item 3 **MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2010 were approved as a correct record.

Matters Arising

With regards to item 4, Equality and Diversity Forum Minutes, it was confirmed that the Board's comments had been passed on to the District Council's Equalities Officer. It was anticipated that the Chair of the Forum would be invited to LSP Away Days and Board meetings, as and when appropriate.

It was stated that Theme Groups' terms of reference were currently being reviewed by the Groups and it was hoped that they would be submitted to the Board for approval at the next meeting.

In relation to the Successful Neighbourhoods Group update given at the last meeting, it was confirmed that Lynda Price from NEW College had attended the Theme Group Chairs meeting held on 21 April 2010 as requested. However, there was some uncertainty around whether or not the cuts to adult education and the potential impact on the Trunk had been addressed. MBrown agreed to look into this issue with MG and provide a written response which could be circulated to Board members.

MBrown

It was confirmed that the County had received the funding from DCLG (Department of Communities and Local Government) for Bromsgrove District's Areas of Highest Need Project (Successful Neighbourhoods) which was being delivered via the Trunk. Members were reminded that the funding amounted to £100K per year for five years. It was commented that the Trunk was an excellent example of partnership working. It was noted that the project had been nominated in the National Housing Federation 'What we are Proud of Awards 2010' and had been shortlisted at a Regional level. If successful, it would be entered into the National Finals and it was pointed out that the strength of the submission had been based around partnership working.

The discussion around the Regional Spatial Strategy at the last Board meeting was referred to and it was agreed

that this was an important matter. However, due to the uncertainty over what direction the new coalition Government would take, it was agreed that this could be included on the Board's work programme as a possible item for future strategic debate and therefore could be discussed under agenda item 7.

Item 4 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THEME GROUP

JM presented the Economic Development Theme Group Report relating to its terms of reference, membership and revised High Level Action Plan for the key deliverable Economic Development Strategy.

It was pointed out that the very recent changes to the District Council's Cabinet membership had an impact on the Theme Group membership. Therefore, JM stated that he intended to discuss the membership and quorum with the Theme Group at its meeting the following week. It was requested that the Board approved the documents submitted, subject to amendments relating to membership being discussed and finalised by the Theme Group. This was agreed and JM stated that the outcome of the Theme Group meeting would then be reported back to the Board at its next meeting.

JM

Item 5 THEME GROUP PERFORMANCE UPDATES

It was explained that due to the lateness of receiving performance updates, there had been insufficient time to compile an exception report. However, as agreed at a Theme Group Chairs meeting held earlier in the month, it was expected that for future Board meetings, there would be an exception report and the full report would be circulated as background information only. It was confirmed by JM that RHollingworth had agreed to this proposal.

HB

HB pointed out a couple of exceptions, for example, in relation to climate change, provisional figures relating to CO₂ emissions were showing an 8% increase rather than a downward trend. This led to a brief general discussion on climate change.

HB also referred to the Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT) and although the service was going very well, the income was not expected to be as high as initially estimated. Commercial sponsorship was mentioned, however, it was believed that due to legal issues, it was unlikely to be a viable option.

It was suggested that, as the exception report would focus on negative issues, Theme Group Chairs should have the opportunity to inform the Board of a success. Therefore, it was agreed that when Theme Group Chairs submitted their performance updates to the LSP Co-ordinator, they would also indicate if they were intending to provide a success story on behalf of the Theme Group at the Board meeting.

**Theme Group
Leads**

JM asked if anyone wished to share a positive outcome relating to the work of any of the Theme Groups and HB referred to the recent U Decide event where young people decided on how to spend funding. It was believed that it was an example of National Best Practice and it had involved a diverse range of children and young people. It was acknowledged that Rebecca Dunne, Senior Policy and Performance Officer at Bromsgrove District Council, had worked very hard on the project to ensure its success and the Board passed on its thanks.

Item 6 TRUNK HIGH LEVEL ACTION PLAN

Unfortunately, both AH and MG were not in attendance to present this report, however, the report was briefly discussed, including the outcome measures contained within the High Level Action Plan (HLAP). It was decided that the draft HLAP would be approved subject to a further report to the next Board meeting highlighting any amendments that had been agreed between HB, MG and Debbie Roberts.

**HB / MG /
Debbie Roberts**

Item 7 DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME

The report relating to introducing a Board work programme was presented by HB and discussed in detail which incorporated comments from the last Theme Group Chairs meeting held earlier in the month.

It was agreed that:

- Each agenda should include one item for strategic debate;
- Where appropriate, a short five minute presentation should be given to the Board on items for strategic debate;
- Half days be arranged for strategic debate as and when required; and
- Theme Group Chairs meetings continue to be arranged as and when required and one be scheduled in six months time to review performance management arrangements.

HB / DM / HM

It was also suggested that Board development using RIEP (Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership) could be factored into the work programme.

The draft work programme, attached as an appendix to the report, was discussed and various suggestions for strategic debate were made including Climate Change, Housing/Regional Spatial Strategy and joint partnership bids. It was agreed that for the next meeting, the strategic debate should be around the impact of the new coalition Government and Theme Group Chairs were asked to consider: (i) anticipated cuts; (ii) anticipated impact; and (iii) potential mitigation for their areas of responsibility. It was believed that the debate would help inform and develop the work programme further. It was agreed that all other suggestions, including those for strategic half day debates, could be listed within the work programme.

**Theme Group
Leads**

With regards to an Annual Report, it was agreed that a shorter two to four page version could be compiled this year. This led to a deeper discussion around better communication of the work of the LSP. Following this discussion, it was agreed that a standing item could be included on all Board agendas regarding the top three points to be publicised. It was agreed that the Trunk was a good example of partnership working which needed to be communicated and MBrown offered support from his Communications Team at BDHT, if it was required. HB agreed to pick this up with MG and publicise another two items relating to partnership working.

HB / HM

HB / MG

In relation to a Sustainable Community Strategy refresh, it was agreed that the High Level Action Plans should be reviewed and amended by the Theme Groups and agreed by the Board as and when necessary.

**Theme Group
Leads**

It was decided that the Work Programme be updated as discussed and be a standing item on future Board agendas.

DM

Item 8 **BOARD SUBSTITUTION LIST**

It was reported that within the Board's terms of reference, which had been agreed at the last meeting, there was a requirement for permanent substitute representatives to be nominated in advance. Therefore, members were asked to review the Board Contact and Substitution List and inform the LSP Co-ordinator who their nominated substitute would be in future.

ALL

Item 9 **WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP UPDATE**

In KDs absence, MBryan stated that she was currently involved in compiling a report on Governance and Accountability arrangements.

RHollingworth referred to the Worcestershire Partnership's Shenstone Group which had put together eight principles relating to partnership working. RHollingworth had further information that he agreed could be circulated.

RH / DM / HM

At this point in the meeting, LA referred to changes to the PCT and stated that Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Shropshire and Telford PCTs were 'clustering' to form a PCT covering West Mercia and Paul Bates had been designated as the Chief Executive of the new cluster. It was believed that this would have a significant impact on local authorities.

Item 10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROPOSALS**

The report relating to Overview and Scrutiny was considered. It was explained that the Board was being requested to identify key issues for possible inclusion of the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2010/11.

The recent Older People Overview and Scrutiny exercise was referred to as an example where Overview and Scrutiny had assisted the LSP. The Board was informed that AS, as Bromsgrove Partnership's Older People Lead, had been a co-opted member on the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group.

One topic suggested for scrutiny was Climate Change (e.g. scrutinising the draft Climate Change Strategy once compiled).

In order to comply with the deadlines of the Overview and Scrutiny Boards, it was requested that if any member had any further suggestions, they be submitted to DM no later than Friday 28 May 2010.

ALL

Item 11 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY FORUM MINUTES**

The minutes of the last two Equality and Diversity Forums were noted.

Item 12 **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Board was reminded of free Wellbeing Workshops which were open to all staff from partner organisations. It was explained that these had been arranged via the Positive Mental Health Working Group which sat underneath the Health and Wellbeing Theme Group.

Item 13 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Members were reminded that the next meeting was due to be held on Thursday 29 July 2010.

ALL

Meeting closed at 3.35pm

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Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

The Equality and Diversity Forum
Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 15 April 2010
The Committee Room
The Council House

In attendance	Organisation
Mr Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Sabiha Azmi	Bromsgrove Muslim Network
Jackie Benson	BDHT
Mary Collett	Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group and Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Rebecca Dunne	Senior Policy and Performance Officer (Community Engagement) Bromsgrove District Council
Mark Eastwood	Bromsgrove Resident
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Margaret Evans	New Road Group
Nigel Godwin	Bromsgrove Resident
Patricia Hackett - Chair	MENCAP and Bromsgrove Resident
Sarah Hemming	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue
Art Lavelle	Bromsgrove Resident
Councillor D McGrath	Bromsgrove District Council
Julie Moss	Administrative Assistant – Equalities
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Jackie Murrall	Droitwich CVS
Farrah Rehman-Hine	Bromsgrove Muslim Network
Trevor Rigg	Bromsgrove Resident, Chair of Bromsgrove Black History Society
Hazel Robinson	Worcestershire County Council
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Mr G Singh	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line
John Tempest	Mental Health Action

Lynn Ward	Pertemps Disability Consultancy
Julie Wright	Community Support Officer, West Mercia Police

Apologies	
Stuart Bray	Pinke.biz
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Cllr Geoff Denaro	Elected Member and Executive Cabinet Portfolio Holder for Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Kevin Dicks	Joint Chief Executive Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Bal Kular-Taylor	Senior Positive Action Adviser, West Mercia Constabulary Head Quarters
Sonia Hambridge	Citizen's Advice Bureau
Sgt Tim Harper	West Mercia Police
Huw Mosely	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Stephen Peters	Elected Member for Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council, Diversity Champion for elected Members, Bromsgrove District Council
Jayne Pickering	Executive Director of Finance – Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils
Kathleen Roche-Nagi	Approachable Coaching and Bromsgrove Resident
Ivan Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line
Sonia Spurr	Community Engagement Manager - PCT

Attending as Guest Speakers	
Michael Carr	Scrutiny Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Mike Dunphy	Strategic Planning Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

1. Introductions and Apologies

New members were welcomed including Councillor Dave McGrath, Sarah Hemming, Hazel Robinson and Margaret Evans. Michael Carr and Mike Dunphy were welcomed as guest speakers.

Apologies noted as above.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 11 February 2010

The attendance and apologies record has been corrected. The numbering has also been changed.

The minutes were agreed.

3. Matters arising from 11 February if not included on main agenda

Page 5 Item 4: Items from the Forum Chair

The **Traffic Lights Cards** were demonstrated again and it was requested that they are used in meetings from now on.

Over 100 people had attended **The Hate Crime Conference** and although all groups had been invited, some were turned away because of numbers or had not replied. The conference was very thorough, the emphasis being placed on people articulating their own needs. Evaluation sheets showed that some respondents felt the conference should have included all disabilities not just learning disabilities.

The **cost of meetings** was not discussed fully at the February meeting. It was agreed that refreshments be further reduced but that the preliminary part of the meeting be maintained as this provides a valuable networking opportunity.

A copy of the **Finding Funds** presentation has been requested and will be circulated when it arrives.

Equality Highlight Report - the date on this has been corrected.

Patricia explained that following comments from the LSP, (Local Strategic Partnership) future minutes will be shorter and in a slightly different format.

4. Items from the Forum Chair

None today.

5. Redditch Growth Consultation – Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

Mike Dunphy explained that “Redditch Growth” is relevant to Bromsgrove because housing strategy is applied across the region and not just within district boundaries.

The Core Strategy is part of the Development Plan called the Local Development Framework produced by the Council. It interprets policy that comes from central and regional government into the local context. It determines what happens in the District for the next 20 years and is therefore very important. The difficult part is not saying what we want to happen but who is going to deliver it. In the past it was not done by planning and left to the end of the process but now we need to see the whole picture and any public enquiry will be held in front of inspectors. Currently 91% of the district falls within the Green Belt.

“Area of Development Restraint” means that it is highly likely there will ultimately be building. This land has been taken out of the Green Belt so that it can be developed. In future it will be called “Strategic Housing Allocation”. Housing numbers are always controversial and the “West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy” indicates that 7000 new houses must be built to meet the needs of Redditch with 3000 of them within the Bromsgrove District. The numbers are based on projected population. The District’s boundary could be moved at a later date but this is not relevant to the planning process as this is a matter for the Boundary Commission.

A feasibility study on the necessary services and facilities is currently being undertaken. It is still uncertain as to who will pay for all the increases in services required by the new houses. This information will be published as evidence for choosing the sites. The consultation period has not closed and comments are welcomed as to which of the proposed areas should take the new housing. These comments will be taken into account when reaching a consensus on the area or areas chosen for development.

The town centre regeneration is also part of this programme and will be supported by this process as the Core Strategy may attract funding, new businesses etc. The budget at the moment is that of the Council and there is no money upfront from the government to fund the development. However funding streams are available. The developer will be expected to help pay for the infrastructure such as road building.

The number of new houses needed is based on many sources of information including data calculated by the Office for National Statistics who have taken vacant dwellings into account.

Matters are still at an early stage but it is necessary to consult with as many people as possible now. Officers have been asked to bring topics to the forums in both Redditch and Bromsgrove where there is a wide interest in them within the community as a whole. However, an Equality Dimension is needed. It has been noted that such items should be at the end of the agenda.

The consultation will help decide what is important. We also need to assess how our options fit in with policies of partner organisations so guidance is also being given by the LSP. (Local Strategic Partnership)

6. Feedback on Community Involvement in the Democratic Process – Claire Felton, Head of Legal Equalities and Democratic Services for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils and Michael Carr, Scrutiny Officer, Bromsgrove District Council

Members of the Forum and the Disabled Users Group who had participated in the consultation exercise were thanked.

Claire explained that the Council aimed to increase the number of people voting at elections although these are always higher for General Elections. The Council would also like to encourage more people to become involved in local democracy especially younger people. We need to hone in on their interests to make it more attractive and popular. This will lay foundations for the future.

Michael Carr explained that Overview and Scrutiny is part of every council's governance arrangements, where elected councillors can contribute to policy development by undertaking investigations and putting forward recommendations to the Council Cabinet. In Bromsgrove Overview and Scrutiny is carried out through the Overview Board, the Scrutiny Board and the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board. The Boards commission Task Groups to carry out particular investigations in depth.

The Community Involvement in the Democratic Process Task Group was commissioned in February 2010 and is due to conclude with a report and recommendations at the end of April 2010. The Task Group is expected to put forward between 15-20 recommendations and a series of proposals to develop the Council's approach to promoting democracy and improving accessibility and involvement.

The Task Group investigation is envisaged as the beginning of an inclusive process to promote and engage people in the democratic process that will be taken forward by the Council in partnership with other local organisations.

There is a fund which gives young people job opportunities for 6 months which could fund a young person to go out into the community to talk to others.

Fiona emphasised that the Task Group had already involved a substantial consideration of equalities issues and had interviewed a range of community stakeholders. The investigation has revealed some potential obstacles to democratic participation for some sections of the population and possible solutions have already been found to some of these, although it was noted that many aspects of electoral services are prescribed by law. The evidence considered by the Task Group will be reflected in the final report which will be available next month and circulated.

Alternative means of communication and engagement have been considered by the Task Group, such as improved web based interaction. We are to build on our relationships with young people and may consult them in the redesigning of the Council website.

The Task Group will recommend that a Democracy Year Campaign be run throughout 2010-2011, to coincide with the cycle of elections. It is envisaged as a programmed series of events to include as many people as possible so building up relationships with the Council and being a celebration of local democracy and civic participation in Bromsgrove.

Any comments or further ideas should be emailed to Michael Carr at m.carr@bromsgrove.gov.uk as soon as possible.

7. Questions from the floor for the Chief Executive – Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils

None today.

8. Equality Highlight Report -Fiona Scott, Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council.

The date on the report has been changed.

Gender Equality Awareness Campaign

Responses to the consultation are to be compiled in a report to the Council's Cabinet. **Joan** is to make a full report at the June meeting when there will also be feedback on final outcome.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans History Month 2010

This event was well supported by members of the forum and partners. A similar event is to take place next year when the film will be "Priscilla Queen of the Desert".

Equality and Diversity Forum

The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group has yet to be reconvened. In order to ensure that we are compliant with legislation, we need to look at our policies to see that they are equally accessible for all groups.

The 2009 Community Consultation Conference – Saturday 26 September 2009

Ideas for up to 10 priorities for the Council Plan have been agreed. The suggested wording is as follows:

Town Centre Redevelopment – ensure accessibility for all including road and pavement surfaces to be improved and dropped kerbs installed where needed

Parking across dropped kerbs causes problems for scooters and can be very dangerous.

An enforcement campaign in Stourbridge has been very successful.

Under the new parking regulations blue badges are given to person not car and this continues to cause concern for those who travel in different cars. However off street parking is a concession only, although on the street it is a right. Disabled Users experiencing problems could use a pay and display car park. At present there is no technical solution to this problem but the Council are continuing to look for one.

Accessible Public Transport – ensure services are available where needed and lobby for accessible transport

Parking – improve enforcement generally including against people who block dropped kerbs

Housing – housing plans to take account of needs of all age groups and abilities/ housing schemes to enable residents to have choices/ retain independence

Housing is not necessary available in the right area although there is an attempt to have a county wide policy. Aids and adaptations will continue to be very important.

Community Engagement – continue with Equality and Diversity Forum, Disabled Users Group, Black History, Diwali – continue to develop links with LGBT community, Religion/ Belief and Faith groups, migrant workers especially the Polish community.

The Council will continue to focus on building links with migrant workers

Age – ensure that services are responsive to the needs for younger and older people and that services are designed to recognise the needs of those in the “middle” (i.e. people of working age)

Directory of Services and Facilities - to be provided for disabled people and older people

This is supported and already in hand.

Take Action on Climate Change and the Environment - through positive local initiatives in partnership with the community and business recognising urban and rural issues

This is one of the Council's priorities.

Disabled Users Group

The DVD featuring the group filmed during the meeting on 26 March has had very positive responses. This item will be followed up at the June meeting.

Community Transport – BURT

Paragraphs 2 & 3 should read as follows:

“From 5 April there will be a change to the entitlement to a free bus pass for those aged 60 on or after this date. The entitlement to the pass will be based on a changing age qualification for state pension for women. This will be over a 10 year period and the changes are being implemented in two month steps.

Men aged 60 before and up until 4 March can get their free bus passes at age 60 even though they don't get their state pension until 65. Anyone (man or woman) who is 60 on or after 5 April 2010 needs to check their date of birth against the state pension age calculator for women. This will tell you when you can get your free bus pass, and for women (only), it will tell you when you will qualify for your state pension. The state pensionable age for men is not changing.”

Interfaith Week 2010

Bromsgrove Muslim Network will hold an event at this time but it is to be inclusive as the week covers religions, faiths and beliefs. The permitted beliefs are ethical and moral but not political. This also provides an opportunity for partnership working.

9. Agenda Items for Future Meetings

Gender Equality/Trans Access Policy	Joan King and Fiona Scott – June Meeting
Gypsy Roma Traveller History	Debbie German, Romani Roots – June Meeting
Revised Hate Crime Reporting Publicity	Speaker to be confirmed – June meeting
Interfaith Week 2010	Speaker(s) to be confirmed – August meeting
Trips and Falls	Amanda Wilson, Primary Care Trust – August meeting
Community Engagement Toolkit	Rebecca Dunne, Bromsgrove District Council – August meeting
Older People’s Task Group	Follow on, speaker to be confirmed
The Sign Posting Scheme	Speaker and meeting to be confirmed

Time, date and place of next meeting –

**6.30 pm Thursday 10 June 2010 - The Committee Room
Light Refreshments Available from 5.30 pm**



Agenda Item 11

THERE ARE NO ENCLOSURES FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30TH JUNE 2010

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN LOCAL DEMOCRACY TASK GROUP REPORT

Responsible Portfolio Holders	Councillors G. Denaro and R. Smith
Responsible Head of Service For Overview and Scrutiny	Mrs. C. Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations of the attached Overview Board Task Group report.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to:
- (a) consider the attached Overview Board report (Appendix 1) and recommendations contained within it;
 - (b) to either agree, amend or reject each of the Overview Board recommendations contained in the report;
 - (c) provide an Executive Response to the Overview Board report and recommendations, which may include an Action Plan to summarise how and when each of the agreed recommendations will be implemented.
 - (d) request the relevant Portfolio Holders in consultation with appropriate officers to indicate the expected implementation dates, as appropriate.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At the Meeting of the Overview Board on 3rd November 2009, it was decided a Task Group would be established to consider ways to improve community involvement in the democratic process and preparations for Democracy Year 2010-2011 and that Councillor L. Turner would be appointed as Chairman.
- 3.2 The full terms of reference were approved by the Overview Board at its meeting held on 2nd February 2010 when membership of the Task Group was also agreed. .
- 3.3 The 'draft' recommendations were presented to the Corporate Management Team meeting on 20th April 2010 requesting feedback on the feasibility and financial implications of the 'draft' recommendations to the Scrutiny Officer. The 'draft' recommendations were also presented to the Equality and Diversity Forum meeting on 15th April 2010 for comment.

- 3.3 The Task Group report and recommendations were agreed by the Overview Board at its meeting on 1st June 2010 and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the Council's democratic decision making process and enabled non-executive Members of the Council to put forward recommendations for policy development, policy review and service improvement.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Overview and Scrutiny committees do not have decision making powers but make recommendations to the Cabinet and other decision makers. Overview and Scrutiny recommendations are published and presented to the Cabinet in accordance with Part 14.1 of the Council Constitution.
- 5.2 Upon consideration of the recommendations the Cabinet is requested to provide an Executive Response and executive decision in respect of each recommendation.
- 5.3 The recommendations of the Task Group are summarised on page 3 of the Task Group report attached at Appendix 1.

6. THE EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

- 6.1 The Cabinet is asked to provide an Executive Response to the Overview Board report and recommendations and to either agree, reject or amend each of the recommendations set out in the report. The relevant portfolio holder(s) are also requested to present the Executive Response to the next meeting of the Overview Board on 27th July 2010.
- 6.2 The Executive Response should provide clarity about what executive decisions are being made by Cabinet in respect of each recommendation. The Executive Response should also provide a target implementation date or timetable to clarify when each agreed scrutiny recommendation will be implemented.
- 6.3 The Executive Response presented to the Overview Board may include an Action Plan to summarise:
- the Cabinet decision,
 - the service(s) responsible for implementation,
 - any key stages of the implementation process with key dates, and
 - the target implementation date.

This will enable the Overview Board to monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations effectively.

6.4 The Cabinet Decisions made in respect of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations will be monitored and reviewed by the Overview Board to check on how they are being implemented, until each of the recommendations have been fully implemented.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Financial and resource implications of the recommendations are detailed in the Executive Summary of the report (pages 6 – 13).

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no legal implications relating to this report.

9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Overview and Scrutiny recommendations that are agreed by the Cabinet and/or full Council will become Cabinet Decisions and Council policy.

10. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

10.1 This report links to the Council's Objectives of Improvement and One Community.

11. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

11.1 The risk of not implementing the recommendations contained within the attached overview report is that this Council does not continue to improve the promotion of the democratic process.

12. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

12.1 If the recommendations were approved and implemented, residents living in Bromsgrove District would benefit from improved involvement in local democracy.

13. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

13.1 There are no implications directly relating to this report for the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies.

14. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

14.1 There are no value for money implications directly relating to this report.

15. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

15.1 None

16. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

16.1 None for the purpose of this report.

17. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

17.1 None for the purpose of this report.

18. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

18.1 None for the purpose of this report.

19. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

19.1 None for the purpose of this report.

20. LESSONS LEARNT

20.1 None for the purpose of this report.

21. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

21.1 Not relevant to this report.

22. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes at CMT
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes at CMT
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes at CMT
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes at CMT
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes at CMT
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes at CMT
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes

Corporate Procurement Team	No
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23. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

24. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group Report

25. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30th June 2010

IMPROVING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION TASK GROUP REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor R. D. Smith
Relevant Head of Service for Overview and Scrutiny Boards	Mrs. Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Cabinet to consider the findings and recommendations of the attached Scrutiny Board Task Group report.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 The Cabinet is requested to:
- (a) consider the attached Scrutiny Board report (Appendix 1) and recommendations contained within it;
 - (b) to either agree, amend or reject each of the Scrutiny Board recommendations contained in the report;
 - (c) provide an Executive Response to the Scrutiny Board report and recommendations, which may include an Action Plan to summarise how and when each of the agreed recommendations will be implemented;
 - (d) request the Portfolio Holder in consultation with appropriate officers to indicate the expected implementation dates, as appropriate.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group was commissioned by the Scrutiny Board on 27th October 2009. Councillor S. R. Colella was appointed Chairman of the Task Group.
- 3.2 The objectives of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group were to gain:
- An understanding of the statistics behind the current levels of satisfaction;
 - An understanding of good practice in delivery and high levels of satisfaction;
 - Understand the causes of dissatisfaction for particular customer segments; and
 - Identify solutions based on further research.

- 3.3 The full terms of reference for the Task Group investigation are contained within the attached Task Group report.
- 3.4 The Task Group report and recommendations were agreed by the Overview Board at its meeting on 10th June 2010 and referred to Cabinet for consideration.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.5 Overview and Scrutiny committees do not have decision making powers but make recommendations to the Cabinet and other decision makers. Overview and Scrutiny recommendations are published and presented to the Cabinet in accordance with Part 14.1 of the Council Constitution.
- 3.6 Upon consideration of the recommendations the Cabinet is requested to provide an Executive Response and executive decision in respect of each recommendation.
- 3.7 The recommendations of the Task Group are summarised on page 6 of the Task Group report attached at Appendix 1.

THE EXECUTIVE RESPONSE

- 3.8 The Cabinet is asked to provide an Executive Response to the Scrutiny Board report and recommendations and to either agree, reject or amend each of the recommendations set out in the report. The relevant portfolio holder(s) are also requested to present the Executive Response to the meeting of the Scrutiny Board on 28th September 2010.
- 3.9 The Executive Response should provide clarity about what executive decisions are being made by Cabinet in respect of each recommendation. The Executive Response should also provide a target implementation date or timetable to clarify when each agreed scrutiny recommendation will be implemented.
- 3.10 The Executive Response presented to the Scrutiny Board may include an Action Plan to summarise:
- the Cabinet decision,
 - the service(s) responsible for implementation,
 - any key stages of the implementation process with key dates, and
 - the target implementation date.

This will enable the Scrutiny Board to monitor the implementation of agreed recommendations effectively.

- 3.11 The Cabinet Decisions made in respect of Overview and Scrutiny recommendations will be monitored and reviewed by the Scrutiny Board to check on how they are being implemented, until each of the recommendations have been fully implemented.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the Council's democratic decision making process and enabled non-executive Members of the Council to put forward recommendations for policy development, policy review and service improvement.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial and resource implications are detailed in the draft report for each recommendation.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no legal implications for the purpose of this report.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no policy implications for the purpose of this report.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 Council Objective Two – Improvement and Council Objective Three – One Community.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 None for the purpose of this report.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Task Group aim to improve residents' satisfaction with the Council and its services.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None for the purpose of this report.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1 There are no value for money implications directly related to this report.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

13.1 None for the purpose of this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None for the purpose of this report.

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 None for the purpose of this report.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

16.1 None for the purpose of this report.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 None for the purpose of this report.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

18.1 None for the purpose of this report.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 The Overview and Scrutiny process is a vehicle for community and stakeholder engagement.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes

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30th June 2010

Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

22. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Improving Residents’ Satisfaction Task Group Report

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

24. KEY

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

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STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/2010

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro Cabinet Member for Finance
Relevant Head of Service	Jayne Pickering, Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To present members with the financial information for the year ended 31 March 2010. This includes:
- Financial Outturn Information 2009/10
 - Statement of Accounts 2009/10
 - Annual Governance Statement 2009/10

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet;
- 2.2 request Full Council to approve the unaudited Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010
- 2.3 request Full Council to approve the increase in the 2010/11 Capital Programme of £1.192m in relation to the carry forward requests as identified at Appendix 2
- 2.4 note the Annual Governance Statement
- 2.5 note the outturn position on revenue and capital as detailed in this report.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 govern the content of councils' accounts and procedures for their adoption
- 3.2 The Chief Financial Officer is required to prepare the statement in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2009
- 3.3 The Audit Commission is responsible for auditing the statement in accordance with regulation. Audit of the 2009/10 accounts will commence on 12 July 2010.

3.4 The Integrated Finance and Performance Report has been presented to Members on a quarterly basis during 2009/10. This report presents a summary of the final financial position for the financial year.

4. KEY ISSUES

FINANCIAL POSITION FOR THE YEAR

4.1 Revenue Budget

4.1.1 The General Fund Revenue Account produced a year end shortfall of £487k compared to a budgeted shortfall of £731k, an improvement of £244k. This has enabled the Council to reduce the requirement to meet this shortfall from balances to only £487k. This leaves the remaining £1.266m of General Fund Balance available for one off items of expenditure (minimum approved level £850k).

4.1.2 Within these figures the Council has set aside resources to fund potential future payments in a number of areas including costs associated with shared services and extension to recycling services to meet the Councils priorities.

4.1.3 The Council Summary is detailed below. Members can request

Revenue Budget summary – Overall Council 2009/10

Service Head	Revised Budget 2009/10 £'000	Actual spend 2009/10 £'000	Variance 2009/10 £'000 (- underspend)
Street Scene & Community	8,840	8,810	-30
Planning & Environment Services	5,196	5,097	-99
E-Government & Customer Services	107	52	-55
Financial Services	1,465	1,446	-19
Corporate Services	962	948	-14
Legal & Democratic	1,246	1,089	-157
Human Resources & Organisational Development	44	-41	-85
SERVICE TOTAL	17,860	17,401	-459

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Interest on Investments	-166	-89	77
Capital Programme financed by replacement reserve	536	536	0
Other non service income	0	-20	-20
Additional Income from VAT reclaim (4.2.4)	0	-211	-211
General transfer to earmarked reserves	-1,038	-669	369
COUNCIL SUMMARY	17,192	16,948	-244

4.2 Financial Commentary

4.2.1 The table shows an under spend of £244k compared with the revised budget of £17.192m.

4.2.2 Measures were instigated in September 2009 to address the previously reported significant overspend to ensure that the impact of the over spend was mitigated as much as possible and with minimal effect on our service delivery.

4.2.3 Actions included; a full review of all orders to ensure the essential nature of all procurement and to only spend on areas of critical need to the Council. In addition officers cut back on any general non-essential spend and looked to maximise income opportunities.

4.2.4 Contributory factors to the overall under spend include:

- A refund (£84k) of national non-domestic rates in relation to the Council House, following assessment by the Valuations office dating back to 2005/06. This forms part of the Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services reported under spend.
- A shortfall in investment income amounting to £77k. The potential shortfall was highlighted during the year and is due to the rates of return on acceptable investments being less than originally estimated.
- Net receipts arising from HMRC as a result of the Fleming VAT case amounting to £206k
- HR&OD – release of earmarked reserves not recommended for retention, totalling £93k
- Planning and Environment - includes an additional receipt of planning delivery grant (£98k) combined with savings arising due to a number of vacancies across the department (£34k) and increased income from

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licensing (£27k). This is offset by loss of income from land charges (£100k).

- Due to the VAT monies received and the overall position additional general amounts were transferred back to earmarked reserves, totalling £369k

Capital Budget summary 2009/10

Department	Revised Budget 2009/10 £'000	Actual spend 2009/10 £'000	Variance £'000
Street Scene and Community	2,690	1,807	-883
Planning & Environment (inc Housing)	1,564	1,315	-249
E-Government & Customer Services	312	206	-106
Financial Services	6	2	-4
Legal, Equality & Democratic Services	86	0	-86
Corporate Services	61	16	-45
TOTAL	4,719	3,346	-1,373

Financial Commentary

- The Capital Programme is considered on a monthly basis by the Asset Management Group to ensure projects are on schedule and within budget. In addition Heads of Service meet regularly with Service Accountants to identify and financial management issues within the programme.

The main areas where Capital Schemes are under spent are:

- The sum of £215k earmarked for a new park at the Barnsley Hall site. This project has been subjected to delays due to poor ground conditions. Works are now due to completed

in September 2010.

- The £360k funds allocated for a number of District Wide Sports Enhancements has not been utilised as originally anticipated. This is due to the wider procurement process that has been undertaken to ensure the Council achieves Value for Money. The schemes are now due to be completed in 2010/11.
- The funds allocated to the improvements to the Artix roof were largely underspent (£118k) after it was found that a more cost effective solution could be implemented.
- Within the E-Government and Customer Service area there has been a number of changes in compliance requirements from external agencies over the last 2 years. This has resulted in the delays to projects as officers have had to reschedule to deliver projects within alternative frameworks. It is proposed that these are carried forward to 2010/11.
- As part of the shared service business cases for ICT and CCTV allocations of capital expenditure were approved in 2009/10. The initial focus of the delivery of the shared service projects relates to staff transfers and resource management and therefore the system implementation will undertaken in 2010/11.

4.3 Sundry Debtors

4.3.1 Sundry Debt is raised by the Council to ensure effective recovery of debts owing. The outstanding balance at 31/03/10 was £561k which includes:-

- £52k car parking fines
- £37k lifeline debts
- £27k rents/ hire charges
- £12k building regulations
- £28k trade waste and cesspool emptying
- £52k electoral services
- £82k developer contributions
- £88k other external contributions
- £28k external grants
- £28k housing schemes
- £35k grounds maintenance / grass cutting
- £19k dolphin centre membership
- £9k economic development
- And £64k in respect of other services provided by the Council to other organisations (e.g. contracts with BDHT for legal work)

The age of the debt is represented as follows:

Up to 1 month £372k
1-2 months £33k
3 – 6 months £21k
Over 6 months £135k

Debts over 2 months are currently with the legal department for consideration and further recovery and include £45k of car parking fines.

The outstanding balance at 31/12/09 was £482k.

4.4 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

4.4.1 Investment Interest

For the year to 31 March 2010 the Council received net investment income amounting to £89k against budgeted receipts of £166k. This income arises on interest earned on in-house managed funds (cash currently surplus to cash flow requirements that is placed on short-term deposit).

4.4.2 Due to advice received the Council is maintaining its stance of depositing in ultra low risk investments. In our recent Investment Updates we have been advised to use named UK incorporated institutions as investment counterparties whose long-term ratings are currently in the 'double-A' category.

4.4.3 All funds are now managed internally within the Finance department with support from our advisors Arlingclose.

4.5 EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

4.5.1 As part of the budget round for 2009/10 and ongoing efficiencies a target of £759k was agreed for efficiency savings. These efficiencies were allocated across the difference service areas, as detailed in Appendix 1. The outturn for 09/10 was £726k. The original target included an increased target for licensing income which has not been achieved and the need to employ audit support within the year.

4.6 REVENUE BALANCES AND EARMARKED RESERVES

4.6.1 Revenue Balances

The revenue balances brought forward at 1 April 2009 were reinstated to £1.753m after invoking the DCLG capitalisation direction. The revised budget requirement for use of balances in 2009/10 was £731k. The reduced level of deficit as detailed in this report has meant a limited transfer from balances of £487k. The new level of balances is £1.266m, which can be utilised to fund one off items to deliver the priorities of the Council.

4.6.2 Earmarked Reserves

The Council maintains a number of reserves which have been set up voluntarily to earmark resources for future spending plans. The balance on these reserves is shown below:

Earmarked Reserve	Balance 31 March 2009 £000	Net Movement in Year £000	Balance 31 March 2010 £000	Purpose
Building Control Partnership	10	12	22	Funds associated with partnership arrangements on Building Control
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	54	4	58	Balance remaining of original funding allocated to LNPs. These balances are committed against projects being delivered.
Economic regeneration	49	13	62	Includes Town Centre and regenerative small business grants.
Organisational Development	101	-101	0	Organisational training & development
Shared Services	262	182	444	To fund future shared services opportunities
Single Status/Job Evaluation	309	-163	146	To fund costs associated with the implementation of Single Status
Local Development Framework	143	100	243	Development of Regional Core Strategy – potential costs of public examination

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Housing Schemes	14	-3	11	To fund survey work and expected upturn in homelessness cases due to recession.
Planning Delivery Grant	340	-313	27	Accumulation of unused Planning Delivery Grant
Replacement Reserve	536	-536	0	Sums set aside to fund future replacement of vehicles and ICT equipment – utilised to fund capital programme in 2009/10
Other	28	-16	12	Planned expenditure on other equipment and maintenance
Litigation Reserve	50	0	50	Funds set aside based on potential litigation at 31 March 2010.
Local Strategic Partnership	0	25	25	LAA reward grant for LSP activities
Legal Monitoring Dept	0	24	24	To fund costs associated with Member complaints procedure
Recycling Extension	0	129	129	To extend the recycling into other areas of the district
Community Safety	0	25	25	Community Safety – Funding from LNP & WCC
Leisure/Community Safety Reserve	80	-20	60	Unspent funding to be used for ring fenced leisure/safety programmes
Total	1,976	-638	1,338	

* After reinstating the replacement reserve as a result of the capitalisation direction.

4.7 GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

4.7.1 The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, and that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In discharging this overall duty, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control which facilitates

the effective exercise of its functions and which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

4.7.2 The preparation of an Annual Governance Statement is a statutory requirement and its purpose is to provide and demonstrate that there is a continuous review of the effectiveness of the Council's internal control and risk management systems so as to give assurance on their effectiveness and to produce action plans to address identified weaknesses.

4.7.3 The Governance Statement is included in Appendix 3 to this report.

4.8 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

4.8.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 require that the Statement of Accounts be presented to a relevant Committee or to the Council meeting as a corporate body for approval.

4.8.2 The Statement of Accounts for 2009/10 is being reported to Members within the statutory deadline of 30 June 2010.

4.8.3 The Statement of Accounts 2009/10 is attached at Appendix 4. All figures are subject to external audit examination. It is anticipated that the Audit Commission will begin the audit in July 2010.

The financial statements are:

The Core Accounting Statements:

The Income and Expenditure Account (I&E Account)

This statement is fundamental to the understanding of the Council's activities, in that it reports the net cost for the year of all the functions for which the Council is responsible. It also shows how much is received from council tax payers and from general government grants to help meet the cost of services.

Statement of the Movement on the General Fund Balance

This statement shows the change in the General Fund Balance after taking into account the Council's spending against the Council tax that it raised for the year, items required to be included or excluded by statute, the use of reserves built up in previous years and contributions to Earmarked Reserves for future expenditure.

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses (STRGL)

The I&E Account brings together all of the functions of the Council and summarises all of the resources that the Council has generated, utilised or set aside in providing services during the year. However, the Council may recognise other gains and losses in its Balance Sheet that are not debited or credited to the Income and Expenditure Account. The Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses brings these other gains and losses together with the surplus or deficit on the I&E Account to show the total movement in the Council's net worth for the year.

The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet summarises the Council's financial position as at 31st March 2010. It includes the assets and liabilities of all activities of the Council.

The Cashflow Statement

This summarises the cash received and payments made by the council for revenue and capital purposes in 2009/10.

The supplementary financial statements:

The Collection Fund

The Collection Fund shows the transactions of the Council in relation to the collection of Council Tax, and National Non-Domestic Rates and the way in which these have been distributed to the preceptors, the General Fund and the NNDR Pool. It is a statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain this account.

Statement of Accounts 2009/10 on Display

As required under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003, the Statement of Accounts will be on public display at the Council House for 20 working days from Tuesday 10 August. During that time members of the public will be able to inspect the accounts. The external auditor will be available on Tuesday 7 September to receive questions or objections on the accounts

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None other than those covered in this report.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 require that the Statement of Accounts be presented to a relevant Committee or to the Council meeting as a corporate body for approval.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The delivery of an effective accounts and financial management service is demonstrated by the Statement of Accounts being presented to the statutory deadline.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 The meeting of the deadline and the presentation and completion of the accounts meets the improvement objective across the Council.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The Financial Services risk register includes the preparation of the accounts and the controls in place to ensure the accounts are closed within the deadline and are accurate and transparent.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The effective use of our resources, as detailed in the statement ensures funds are appropriately utilised to meet customer demand.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 None as a direct result of this report.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

- 12.1 None as a direct result of this report.

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

- 13.1 None as a direct result of this report.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None as a direct result of this report

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 The statement of accounts and the controls in place to ensure the accounts are accurate is key to the effective governance arrangements in place within the Council.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

16.1 None as a direct result of this report.

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 None as a direct result of this report.

18. LESSONS LEARNT

18.1 Officers continue to seek advice from best practice authorities and the Audit Commission recommendations to ensure the accounts are presented in a format that is useful to members and stakeholders.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 None as a direct result of this report .

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30TH JUNE 2010

Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	N/A

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards

22. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Efficiency Savings 2009/10
- Appendix 2 Capital Carry Forward Requests 2009/10
- Appendix 3 Annual Governance Statement
- Appendix 4 Statement of Accounts 2009/10

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Detailed working papers for final accounts

24. KEY

n/a

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Take Up Strategy

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Denaro
Relevant Head of Service	Teresa Kristunas – Head of Resources

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The Department of Work and Pensions recommend that all Councils should have an individual benefit take up strategy to underpin the operation of the Benefit Service, which will specifically address local needs and circumstances. This shows that the authority is committed to ensuring that its residents are receiving advice and encouragement to claim any benefit that they may be entitled to. The measured outcome shall be an increase in the number of customers claiming Housing Benefit and / or Council Tax Benefit and increased customer satisfaction.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Housing Benefit & Council Tax Benefit Take Up Strategy attached as Appendix A be approved.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 states the following:

(3) Every authority granting housing benefit—

(a) shall take such steps as appear to them appropriate for the purpose of securing that persons who may be entitled to housing benefit from the authority become aware that they may be entitled to it; and

(4) Each charging authority shall take such steps as appear to it appropriate for the purpose of securing that any person who may be entitled to a community charge benefit as regards a personal or collective community charge of the authority becomes aware that he may be entitled to it.

3.2 The Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) has objectives for councils to ensure that residents receive any benefit that they are entitled to. Joint working with other agencies to ensure that applying for welfare benefits is as seamless as possible, is a key element in their strategy for the improvement of benefit administration. Councils are encouraged to look for innovative ways of assisting this process.

3.3 It is important that Bromsgrove District Council show their commitment to promoting benefit awareness and in encouraging people to claim what they are entitled to. This strategy outlines that commitment and details how we will go about this.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 There are a number of people who are entitled to Benefit who are not claiming Benefit. It is important that this is tackled and that everyone gets the help they are entitled to.

4.2 There are a number of barriers that prevent people from claiming what they are entitled to. The Strategy details these barriers and the services commitment to trying to remove them

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council pays out around £17m in benefit each year and although benefit take up will increase this, the majority of the money is reclaimed from the Department of Work and Pensions in subsidy. Some advice given may result in take up of other welfare benefits which will have no cost to this council.

5.2 There may be additional costs involved to allow the service to improve. In particular around improving the access of the service and having the tools to identify take up area's / groups and to monitor the success.

5.3 There are cost implications for promoting the service such as leaflets, posters and forms. However, all of this should be accounted for in the current budgets.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 states the following:

(3) Every authority granting housing benefit—

(a) shall take such steps as appear to them appropriate for the purpose of securing that persons who may be entitled to housing benefit from the authority become aware that they may be entitled to it; and

(4) Each charging authority shall take such steps as appear to it appropriate for the purpose of securing that any person who may be entitled to a community charge benefit as regards a personal or collective community charge of the authority becomes aware that he may be entitled to it.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Strategy is an existing document.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 Review and approval of this strategy contributes to the Council's corporate objectives because it supports the priorities of improvement in service delivery and improved customer focus.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The risks identified are as follows:

- Increase in benefit customers.
- Not enough staff to deal with the increase.
- Reduced customer satisfaction.

Key Objective 2.1 of the Finance Risk Register 2010 /11 relates to promotion of the Benefits Service and links in to Finance Services Key Deliverables 01 and 02.

- 9.2 Currently the risks identified in 9.1 are not addressed by the risk register in detail however, upon approval of this strategy amendments can be made to show the following:

"To minimise the impact of an increase in benefit caseload, such take up campaigns should be done at times when staffing levels are at their highest. Where possible, holiday seasons and school breaks shall be avoided to take into account staff shortages due to leave being taken"

" Workload of the team and individuals to be closely monitored to ensure any problems are identified early"

"Where the budget allows, if necessary staff shall be offered overtime to allow them to complete any extra work as a result of a Benefit Take Up campaign and contractors shall only be used as a last measure"

"Outstanding work is reported to the Benefits Manager on a weekly basis so it can be quickly and easily identified if the team are struggling to cope with an increase in work due to a take up campaign"

“Where possible and resources allow, any work as a result of a take up campaign shall be ring fenced and dealt with by a particular member of section of the Benefits Service so other customers are not affected”.

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Benefit Take Up campaigns shall mean there will be an increase in the number of customers of the Benefits Service. This in turn could mean the service provided to existing customers could be affected. In the event of this happening, measures shall be taken as mentioned in section 9 to minimise the impact this has.

10.2 A Benefit Take Up Campaign could also impact on the Customer Service Centre due to additional calls / enquiries as well as Housing Associations who have large numbers of Benefit customers. Such campaigns shall be timed, where possible, so that such organisations are able to plan their time to accommodate an increase in their work.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 The Strategy was presented to the Equality and Diversity Forum on June 10th 2010 and there has been no feedback from this. Some Benefit Take Up Campaigns shall be done following consultation of members of this forum and may be aimed at some of their specific groups.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1 None

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

13.1 None

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

15.1 None

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

16.1 None

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 None

18. LESSONS LEARNT

18.1 Benefit Take Up campaigns can be costly and ineffective if not done correctly. Special care must be taken to ensure the right groups and areas are targeted and, in particular, that support is given to those people who wish to claim. Any Take Up campaign must be monitored regarding its effectiveness, results recorded and lessons learnt. Where possible, Benefit Take Up campaigns should be done following consultation with representatives of the groups / area's targeted.

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 The Strategy was presented to the Equality and Diversity Forum on June 10th 2010 and, to date, there has been no feedback.

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	Yes – was present at the E & D Forum
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes – was present at the E & D Forum
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

Head of Service	No
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

22. APPENDICES

Appendix A – The Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Take Up strategy

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

24. KEY

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

30 JUNE 2010

NEW IMPROVEMENT PLAN 2010-2011

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr. Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance & Partnerships
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To provide Cabinet with a draft version of the new Improvement Plan 2010-2011 for consideration (Attached as Appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the amended actions and timescales Directors and Heads of Service submitted for inclusion in the draft Improvement Plan and recommend any alterations, additions or amendments that should be made to the Improvement Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The new Improvement Plan is based on the key deliverables and outcome measures detailed in the Council Plan 2010-13. It is monitored each month on an exception basis and focuses on Council delivery across the Council's priorities and across financial, process and human resources perspectives. As was the case in 2009-10, Heads of Service have been asked to populate the Improvement Plan with the major actions that will be undertaken by their service. Cabinet should therefore ensure that all major areas of work are covered by the Improvement Plan in sufficient detail, and that appropriate and realistic timescales are allocated.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications. The Council's priorities were set in September 2009 and budget bids (included as actions on the Improvement Plan where appropriate) were decided as part of the 2009-10 budget round. The Improvement Plan details the resource available for each action.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications associated with the development of the new Improvement Plan.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The Improvement Plan outlines delivery activities for the coming year in all of the Council's objectives and priority areas.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The Council Plan will be supported by the Council's strategic risk register.

8. OTHER SUB HEADINGS

- 8.1 All the following issues have been reflected in the definitions of the Council Objectives:-

Procurement Issues: None
Personnel Implications
Governance/Performance Management Considerations
Community Safety Considerations
Policy Considerations
Environmental Considerations
Equalities Implications

9. CONSULTATION

- 9.1

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	At CMT
Assistant Chief Executive	At CMT
Head of Service	At CMT
Head of Financial Services <i>(must approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader's Group)</i>	At CMT
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services <i>(for approval of any significant Legal Implications)</i>	At CMT
Head of Organisational Development & HR <i>(for approval of any significant HR Implications)</i>	At CMT
Corporate Procurement Team <i>(for approval of any procurement implications)</i>	No

10. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Draft Improvement Plan 2010-11.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

MAY (PERIOD 2) PERFORMANCE REPORTING

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Hollingworth
Relevant Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet on the Council's performance at 31 May 2010 (period 2).

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes that 61% of PIs are stable or improving.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that that 45% of PI's that have a target are meeting their target as at the month end and 85% are projected to meet their target at the year end.
- 2.3 That Cabinet notes the performance figures for May 2010 as set out in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 That Cabinet notes the particular areas of improvement as summarised in section 4.2.
- 2.5 That Cabinet notes the PI's of particular concern as set out in section 4.3.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The full list of performance indicators due to be reported monthly is set out in **Appendix 2** where:-

	On Target
	Less than 10% from target
	More than 10% from target
	No target set

I	Performance is Improving
S	Performance is Stable
W	Performance is Worsening
N/a	No target set

- 3.2 Comparisons of overall performance improvements this month to last month are shown on Appendix 1.

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The proportion of PI's that have met their monthly target is lower than usual at 45%.
- 4.2 There is no performance worthy of particular mention this month.
- 4.3 There are no particular individual indicators of specific concern. However the overall picture with the majority of indicators not meeting their target in May is concerning, particularly when coupled with the fact that only 61% of indicators are stable or improving and 39% are declining. The overall position has worsened slightly since April. On the other hand, this is only the second month of the year and therefore there is time for performance to be improved and brought up to target.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 8.1 Performance reporting & management links to the Improvement objective

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

- 9.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Data quality problems
- Poor performance

- 9.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Implementation of the Data Quality Strategy
- Robust follow up on performance issues, including performance clinics

9.3 There are no Health & Safety considerations

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Performance Improvement is a Council Objective

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1 None

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

13.1 None

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Sound performance management and data quality are key to achieving improved scores in the Use of resources judgement. This performance report supports that aim.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

16.1 None

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

17.1 None

18. LESSONS LEARNT

18.1 Not applicable

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 None

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	No
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	No
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	No
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All

22. APPENDICES

- Appendix 1 Performance Summary for the period.
- Appendix 2 Detail Performance report for the period.
- Appendix 3 Detailed figures to support the performance report.

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

24. KEY

PI - Performance Indicator

NI - National Indicator (a PI defined by government and used by all Councils)

LPI - Local Performance Indicator – (a PI defined by Bromsgrove, District Council to measure performance on local priorities)

CAA - Corporate Area Assessment – the methodology used by the Audit Commission to judge the performance of Councils and partners

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

NATIONAL INDICATOR PERFORMANCE OUTTURNS 2009/10

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Hollingworth
Relevant Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance & Partnerships
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To report to Cabinet on the Council's performance in 2009/10 for all National Indicators which are collected at District Level.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet notes the changes to the format and timing of the Annual Report as described in section 3.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes the performance outturns for all National Indicators as contained in Appendix 1. Section 4 explains the background to these indicators.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In previous years the Council was required by statute to publish performance results by the end of June each year in the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) which had very proscriptive format and content. That statutory requirement was removed a few years ago, since that time the Council has continued to produce an Annual Report on the same timescale but with a much reduced content than the former BVPP required. Following the implementation of National Indicators (NI's) it has been decided that it would be better to produce two reports at the year end. This report shows the results of all National Indicators that are collected at District level. Some of the NI's (the Place survey ones, e.g. NI 1, 2, 3 etc) are collected every two years. The figures shown in the Appendix for 2009/10 are from the 'viewpoint' survey that was carried out across the county last autumn.
- 3.2 Cabinet has already received a performance report for the end of the year which showed the outturn for all of the corporately reported performance indicator set, which includes a mix of some NI's and local indicators.
- 3.3 A separate Annual Report will be brought to Cabinet in September. The Annual Report will have a more narrative style and will summarise

achievements against priorities and targets, instead of the narrower focus solely on Performance Indicators as in the past.

4. KEY ISSUES

4.1 Appendix 1 shows information for those National Indicators where information is collected at a District level. Where targets were set these are also shown in the report.

4.2 Many of these indicators are gathered by other organisations, e.g. the CDRP, or by government departments. In addition the Council is not the Lead Organisation for managing the performance for many of these. As such they do not necessarily reflect on the performance of the Council, rather they are used to provide an overall picture of the district, which is used in judgements made by, for instance, the Audit Commission, as part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) regime. However, as this report is being finalised we have been advised that the government is to abolish CAA with immediate effect, what this means for the future of the National Indicators is not clear.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

8.1 Performance reporting & management links to the Improvement objective

9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

9.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:

- Data quality problems
- Poor performance

9.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Implementation of the Data Quality Strategy
- Robust follow up on performance issues, including performance clinics

9.3 There are no Health & Safety considerations

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Performance Improvement is a Council Objective

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

12.1 None

13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY

13.1 Performance on emissions has been poor, CO₂ and NO_x emissions from Council activities have increased in 2009/10 (by 4% and 8% respectively), whereas the target was to achieve a 2% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

14.1 None

15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

15.1 Sound performance management and data quality are key to achieving improved scores in the Use of Resources judgement. This performance report supports that aim.

16. COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS INCLUDING SECTION 17 OF CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

16.1 None

17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

CABINET

30 JUNE 2010

17.1 None

18. LESSONS LEARNT

18.1 Not applicable

19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

19.1 None

20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes (at Leaders Group)
Chief Executive	Yes (at CMT)
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	Yes (at CMT)
Executive Director – Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes (at CMT)
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes (at CMT)
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes (at CMT)
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes (at CMT)
Corporate Procurement Team	No

21. WARDS AFFECTED

All

22. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 NI Indicator results

23. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

24. KEY

PI - Performance Indicator

NI - National Indicator (a PI defined by government and used by all Councils)

LPI - Local Performance Indicator – (a PI defined by Bromsgrove, District Council to measure performance on local priorities)

CAA - Corporate Area Assessment – the methodology used by the Audit Commission to judge the performance of Councils and partners

AUTHOR OF REPORT

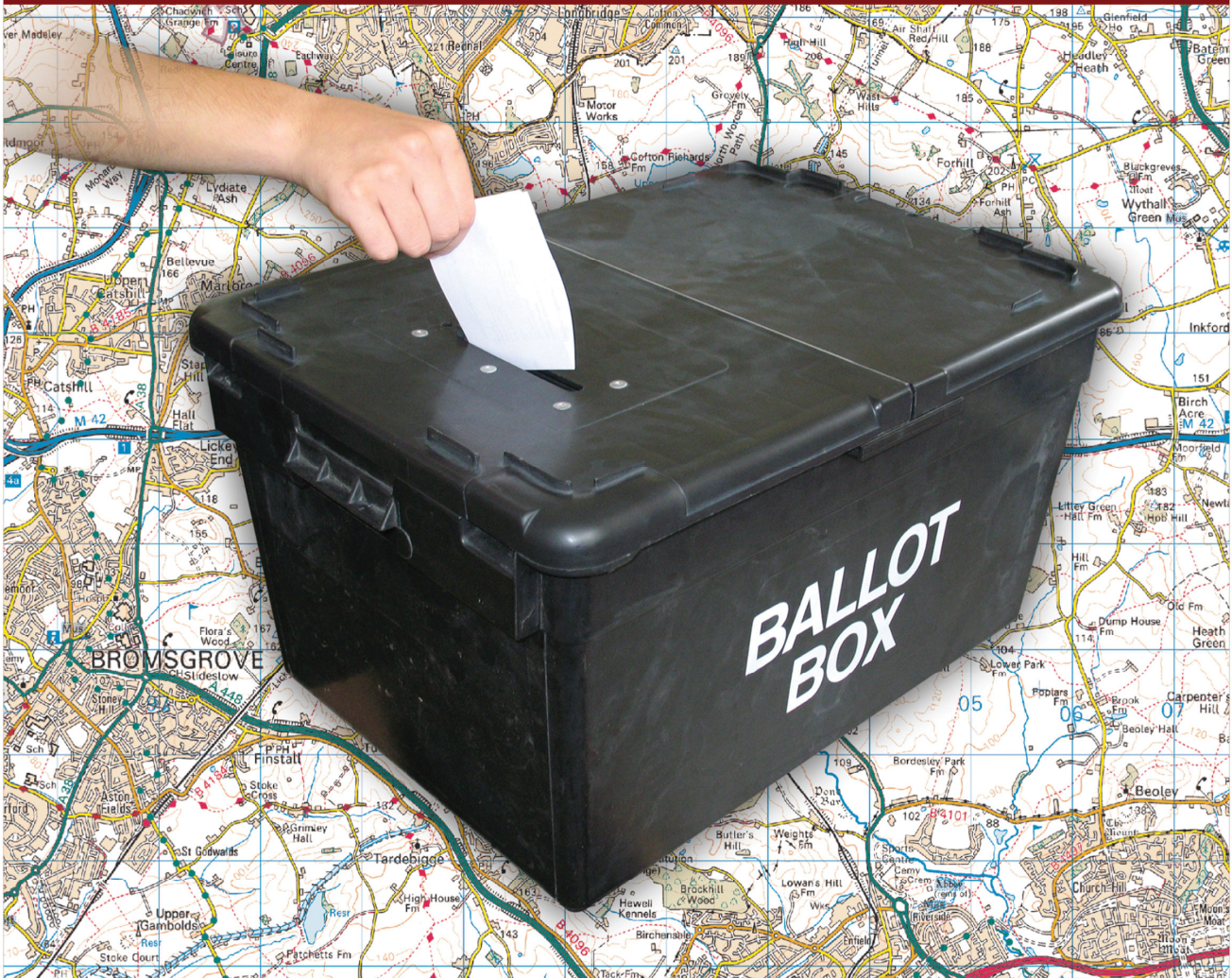
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Bromsgrove District Council **Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services**



Overview Board **Community Involvement in Local Democracy**

JUNE 2010
OVERVIEW BOARD
Supporting Officer: Michael Carr



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



Published June 2010 by Bromsgrove District Council

Report of the Overview Board.

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FOREWORD

Local councils are at the forefront of the drive to reconnect people with democratic decision-making. This democratic renewal is about restoring trust and confidence in government and the democratic process and its starting point is the citizen. The district council elections will take place on 5th May 2011 and we need to engage local people in the democratic life of the community, listening to people and asking them to get involved, including taking on their responsibility as citizens to turn out and vote.

It is at the local level that people can most easily get involved and where they can have a personal stake in civic life. It is at the local level where democracy has the potential to be the most tangible and where local citizens can make a difference to the community in which they live. The relationship between local citizens and local governance is a key part of the well being of local communities, where local people can get involved and take personal responsibility for making communities work.

From the city states of ancient Greece to 21st century Britain democracy is a powerful concept and has the potential to unlock the forces of combined endeavour. Democracy is about rights but it is also about responsibilities and citizens playing an active role in their community.

“Here each individual is interested not only in his own affairs but in the affairs of the state as well: even those who are mostly occupied with their own business are extremely well informed on general politics – this is a peculiarity of ours: we do not say that a man who takes no interest in politics is a man who minds his own business; we say he has no business here at all. We Athenians, in our own persons, take our decisions on policy or submit them to proper discussions: for we do not think there is an incompatibility between words and deeds”.

*Pericles' Funeral Oration*¹.

Democracy is not passive but requires active engagement by citizens and this was as true in the polis of ancient Greece as it is now and I believe that we can strive to emulate those virtues in the conduct of civic life here in the district of Bromsgrove today.

Councillor Les Turner
Chairman of the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bromsgrove District Council's Overview Board set up a Task Group to investigate ways to promote public engagement in the democratic process. It has considered the legal and constitutional framework through which people can participate in democracy through elections and the ways in which people can participate as citizens both by voting in elections and by getting involved in the local decision making process.

It has considered the new duty to promote democracy and the ways in which the council might enhance the promotion of the democratic process. This includes proposals to run events stalls to promote democracy in public forums in town centres, in supermarkets and at community events and improving the publication of statutory public meetings.

Recommendation One

An Invitation to Attend

That the publication of meeting times and venues of the council, the cabinet, overview and scrutiny and other statutory public meetings be enhanced, with an invitation for the public to attend, including a regular slot publicising meetings in the Together Bromsgrove magazine.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

It has considered the statutory requirements for Councillor Calls for Action and put forward proposals for how this might be able to work as something that might actually be a useful tool for elected councillors in raising issues on behalf of their constituents.

Recommendation Two

Councillor Calls for Action

That the Council adopt a procedure for dealing with Councillor Calls for Action to work in concert with the procedures for Councillor Casework Enquiries and providing recourse to Overview and Scrutiny.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

The Task Group considered the ways in which the council promotes democracy and recommended taking the message to vote and get involved out to people in the community.

<p><u>Recommendation Three</u> <i>Promoting Democracy</i> That events stalls be more widely used to promote democracy, to get registered to vote and get involved, including a stall to be set up in the Bromsgrove high street market, in supermarkets and community events.</p>
<p><u>Financial Implications</u> No financial implications are envisaged.</p>
<p><u>Resource Implications</u> There may be resource implications arising if staff are required to spend extra time manning events stalls, especially if at weekends.</p>

The Task Group has looked at the profile of local democracy on the council's website and considered how the content might be enhanced to make it more informative and engaging. Recommendations include a review of the Council's democracy web pages, the use of consultation portals to engage the public in decision making and the inclusion of a web page aimed specifically at young people.

<p><u>Recommendation Four</u> <i>Cyber Democracy</i> That the local democracy pages of the Council website be reviewed to improve the content and to add summary information on how local democracy works in Bromsgrove and how people can get involved, with a special webpage site for the Democracy Year Campaign.</p>
<p><u>Financial Implications</u> No financial implications are envisaged.</p>
<p><u>Resource Implications</u> No significant resource implications are envisaged.</p>

Recommendation Five

Consultation Portals

That the Council's website use consultation portals to gauge opinion on topics of local interest and local decisions and a means to engage and consult the public in the local democratic decision making process.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

Recommendation Six

Young Citizens Webpage

That a Young Citizen page be included on the Council internet site specifically aimed at young people, with fun and exciting content, explaining the democratic process and how to get involved.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to draft the content.

The Task Group has considered how the council handles public petitions, based on both the experience of petitions presented to Bromsgrove in the last year and the new Government Guidance and statutory requirements now coming into force. In addition to the petitions scheme, the Task Group is recommending that the council publish guidance for the public so that people will know the process and what to expect when they present a petition to the Council.

Recommendation Seven

Public Petitions

That the Council adopt a petitions scheme, procedure and guidance to set out how petitions and e petitions will be dealt with and the arrangements for receiving petitions.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

The Task Group has considered ways in which the council might be able to support local schools in delivering the objectives of the national curriculum for Citizenship.

Recommendation Eight

Citizenship

That the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be asked to liaise with Bromsgrove secondary schools to co-ordinate with the Citizenship curriculum being followed in the respective schools to find ways in which the district Council can support the curriculum.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

There will be some resource implications required to liaise with Bromsgrove secondary schools and to support undertaken as agreed by the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services.

It considered ways in which the Council might be able to support the development of the school councils in Bromsgrove secondary schools and to improve students understanding of how democratic processes work and in particular, how local councils operate.

Recommendation Nine

Schools Councils

That the Council work in partnership with Bromsgrove secondary schools to facilitate the Schools Councils' constitutional arrangements and arrangements for making recommendations to the appropriate local decision making bodies.

Financial Implications

Optional extra additional funding required is estimated at £5,000: £2,000 working budget p.a. to support training (annual residential) and £2,000 p.a. for the events. This is *extra* – additional budget, not core or vital to the administration of Schools Council's themselves.

Resource Implications

A small amount of resources in officer time is anticipated, depending on the level of support offered.

These suggested resource allocations are *extra*, not core to the basic implementation of the recommendation or vital to the administration of Schools Council's themselves.

The Task Group heard about the U Decide participatory budgeting project which has successfully engaged with young people in making decisions about locally funded projects and is recommending running further events of this kind.

Draft Recommendation Ten

U Decide

That the Council investigate the possibility of running a further U Decide or similar event in 2011 to involve young people in making decisions on local projects.

Financial Implications

The U Decide scheme 2010 required £50,000 grants from Worcestershire County Council's FLOSS. A further event would require a similar successful bid.

Resource Implications

There would be significant resource implications required to support any future event, comparable to the resources dedicated to the 2010 events.

Task Group is commending a "Democracy Year Campaign" to spearhead the promotion of democracy and link together all the events and activities under a banner that the public can easily identify with and identify the council with. If successful, it is hoped that this will galvanise a positive interest from all sections of the local community and involve a range of community partners, including the college, secondary schools, local arts organisations and the parish councils.

Recommendation Eleven

A Democracy Year Campaign

That there be a Democracy Year Campaign to link together all the events for democracy year under the banner of promoting and involving people in local democracy.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time and commitment will be required to co-ordinate and participate in the Democracy Year Campaign.

To lead this campaign, the Task Group is recommending a Democracy Champion.

Recommendation Twelve

A Democracy Champion

That a Member of the Council be nominated Democracy Champion for one year to champion local democracy.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

To visibly link together the Democracy Year Campaign events under a common banner the Task Group is recommending a Democracy Year emblem to be used in all campaign publicity.

Recommendation Thirteen

Democracy Campaign Emblem

That there be an emblem designed for the Democracy Year Campaign to be used as a part of a democracy year campaign and used on all communications for Democracy Year.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to design the emblem.

To co-ordinate the Democracy Year Campaign the Task Group is recommending a Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group. This should include the key council and community partners necessary to co-ordinate the events and make sure that all of the events fit together as a single campaign and are programmed appropriately throughout the year.

Recommendation Fourteen

Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group

That there be convened a Democracy Year Campaign steering group, to meet at least 4 times a year during 2010-2011, to co-ordinate the Democracy Year Campaign events and activities.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to convene and attend the steering group meetings.

The Task Group has proposed that the Democracy Year Campaign include a programmed series of events organised in co-operation with local community organisations and partners. It is envisaged that this will include incorporating the Democracy Year Campaign into events already within the Council and community events programmes, as well events to promote democracy and local democracy through the arts, films, street theatre, music etc.

Recommendation Fifteen

Celebrating Democracy

That Democracy Year include programmed events to concord with other relevant events in the Council events programme, including International Women's Day 2011, including a celebration of women's suffrage and the history of women's suffrage and Black History Month 2010 celebrating the history and achievements of the black civil rights movement in the USA, South Africa, the British Commonwealth and other parts of the world.

Financial Implications

On advice from Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, an extra £3000 will be required.

Resource Implications

Officer time may be required to co-ordinate and participate in the events.

The Task Group is recommending that the parishes are all formally invited to get involved in the Democracy Year Campaign and that local democratic arrangements are promoted at community events in the parishes not just in the town centres and it is hoped that the parish councils will play an enthusiastic and key role in the Democracy Year Campaign.

Recommendation Sixteen

The Parish Perspective

That the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Engagement write to the Parish Councils to invite them to join in the Democracy Year Campaign in partnership with the district Council.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

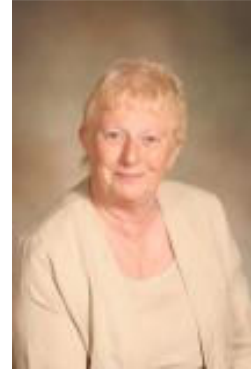
No significant resource implications are envisaged.

The council is being urged to take up the mantle of community leader to champion democracy and civic engagement and people and organisations throughout the community are asked to be active participants in this democratic and civic renewal.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



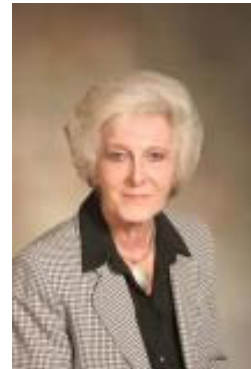
Cllr Les Turner (Chairman)



Cllr Mrs June Griffiths



Cllr Mrs Jean Luck



Cllr Helen Jones



Cllr David McGrath



Cllr Mrs Caroline Spencer

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK GROUP

Aim

To consider ways to improve community involvement in the democratic process and preparations for Democracy Year 2010 – 2011.

Objectives

1. To review the information provided to the local community on how local governance works and what councils and councillors do,
2. To review the ways in which the Council and its community partners facilitate more active civic participation and community involvement in the democratic process,
3. To review the ways in which the Council promotes local democracy, the role of councillor, how to become a councillor and the activities of elected members to the general public,
4. To review the arrangements for Democracy Year 2010-2011.

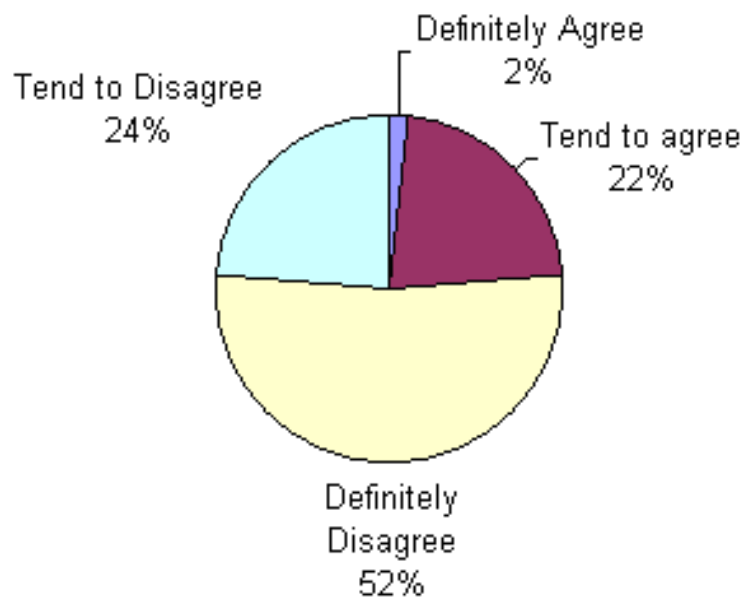
INTRODUCTION

As from April 2009 councils have a 'duty to inform, consult and involve' citizens in decision making. This means providing greater opportunities for local people to get involved and influence the decisions that affect them and it is an opportunity for the council to reinvigorate local democracy and improve the ways in which we involve local citizens.

Most people in Bromsgrove do not feel that they can influence decisions locally and the trend in both national and local elections is for voter turnout to fall. We believe that the council needs to challenge this perception and reverse the apathy and disengagement with the democratic system and we have put forward some proposals for how we can start.

Bromsgrove's Performance

The Place Survey* asked the residents of Bromsgrove "Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?". 76% disagree that they can influence decisions and only 24% agreed that they can have influence².



Compared to other local authority areas in England, Bromsgrove performs just below the average for the West Midlands (28% "agree") and is about average for its nearest statistical neighbours (other demographically similar local authorities).

Bromsgrove's performance against this national indicator has fallen since the 2006-7 survey, when 31% of residents agreed that they could influence local decisions.

* The Place Survey is the new biennial statutory survey that all lower and upper tier local authorities in England are required to carry out.

Despite this, 27% of local residents said that they want greater involvement in local decision making and 65% said that they want more involvement on certain issues.

Turnout in local elections is low. The last elections to Bromsgrove District Council were on 3rd May 2007; the overall turnout was 37.36%. The overall turnout for the Bromsgrove District in the County Council elections on 4th June 2009 was 37.82%³.

It is difficult to pinpoint who is most likely to vote and which groups are least engaged in the democratic process as there is a lack of data for local elections, since voting is strictly confidential.

We have looked what the Council is doing to engage local citizens in the democratic process and has put forward proposals to drive forward a campaign to enthuse and involve people. We particularly want the council to engage with young people and to make sure that the process is accessible and inclusive, but we have highlighted the council's role as community leader to reach out and engage the whole community in local democracy.

How We Involved the Public

Overview and scrutiny is itself part of the democratic process, so we wanted to make sure that the public were given an opportunity to contribute to our investigation. We publicised a questionnaire to allow citizens of Bromsgrove the chance to feed back their views. This was publicised in a press release published in the local newspapers and on the council's website. We sent out posters, flyers and questionnaires in public spaces including the customer service centre and Council House and have reviewed the responses.

A Stakeholder Forum was also held on 2nd March 2010 to allow key community partners and stakeholders to participate and this was attended by a range of different community organisations and local citizens.

We have received evidence from a wide range of different stakeholders, including elected councillors, council officers, parish councillors, and members of the public. We interviewed Cllr Geoff Denaro, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Resources and Cllr Roger Smith, Portfolio Holder for One Community (including Community Engagement) and ask for their views.

A full list of witnesses to the Task Group investigation is given at Appendix 1.

This report sets out 16 recommendations, as well as a series of ***suggestions highlighted in italics***, which it is hoped will be taken up by the people and organisations we have spoken to in the spirit of a positive campaign to promote civic pride and participation throughout the Bromsgrove district.

1 The Democratic Process

- 1.1. Democracy is a big concept and is open to many different interpretations; but we have focused on the democratic process as it relates to voting and participation and representation in the local council decisions making process. This includes electing Members of Parliament (MPs) and local councillors, representation through elected councillors and public involvement with the local democratic decision making process.

Local Government Modernisation

- 1.2. The Local Government Act 2000 changed the way in which local councils in England and Wales are governed by introducing new constitutional models for political decision making, requiring local councils to have an executive to make the key decisions and Council meetings to approve the policy and budgetary framework. Bromsgrove District Council has the Leader and Cabinet model, which broadly mirrors the same arrangements as the UK Parliament and Cabinet. Council constitutions are also required to provide for overview and scrutiny committees to review policy and to hold the executive to account, which are broadly similar in function to House of Commons select committees and standing committees.

Bromsgrove District Council

- 1.3. In Bromsgrove there are 39 councillors, between 1 and 3 elected to each of 23 constituencies throughout the district. The full Council meets to decide the policy and budgetary framework and make appointments to committees. It elects a Leader and Cabinet to make executive decisions and a variety of advisory, regulatory and scrutiny committees.
- 1.4. We believe that local democracy in Bromsgrove is underpinned by clear and effective processes and a high calibre cadre of professional officers consistently applying core values of objectivity, integrity and impartiality in supporting both elected Members of the Council and the general public in the democratic process.
- 1.5. We have reviewed some of the ways in which local democracy is supported at the democratic interface and interviewed democratic services officers involved in administering the democratic process. We have considered the experiences of engaging with local democratic processes both from the perspective of elected councillors and also from the perspective of members of the public.
- 1.6. We have considered the ways in which the public can access information about the local democratic process; who their elected representatives are, where and when meetings are held, what the Council and the various committees are responsible for, how it relates to them and how they can get involved. We have interviewed the Electoral Services Manager to consider the ways in which local

residents are informed about how to register to vote, how and when to vote and how accessible the process is to all sections of the community.

The Electoral Service

- 1.7. We interviewed Mrs Sue Mould, Electoral Services Manager who told us about the Electoral Service and some of the projects that are currently being delivered*. The Electoral Service is responsible for organising all elections in Bromsgrove (European, national, County, District and parish levels). It compiles and publishes the Register of Electors and deals with related matters such as monthly applications to be included on the register or to vote by post. It also deals with boundary and community governance reviews and electoral arrangements and promotes participation in the democratic processes[♥].
- 1.8. There are 4 full time staff in the Electoral Services team and the council employs 25 people within Bromsgrove as canvassers to contact households to encourage them to register to vote. A Worcester Electoral Administrator Group joint working partnership meets once a month to plan a co-ordinated approach and pick up on best practice.

Councillors and Committees

- 1.9. Once elected, councillors represent their constituents at full Council and on a variety of council committees. They also act as an advocate for local citizens in dealing with local issues in their ward. It is important to ensure that councillors can fulfil their role as democratic representatives and that the process is transparent and accountable to local citizens.
- 1.10. For the most part, local citizens views are represented through elected councillors. There are also some opportunities for direct public participation. People can submit petitions, submit proposals to overview and scrutiny Boards, speak at Planning Committee and Licensing Committee meetings or get involved in one of the councils public consultation forums.

The Public Are Welcome to Attend

- 1.11. The democratic process should be open and transparent and committees where elected councillors deliberate are open to the public to attend. We have considered the conduct of committee meetings from the perspective of members of the public attending and have noted the improvements currently being rolled out by committee services to make committee meetings more accessible.

*Performance standards for Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) and Returning Officers (ROs) were introduced following the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EAA) Electoral Registration Officers and Returning Officers are assessed against these standards. REF The Electoral Commission, Performance Standards for Electoral Registration Officers in Great Britain July 2008 and Performance Standards for Returning Officers in Great Britain www.electoralcommission.org.uk/performance-standards.

[♥] From Summer 2009 Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council electoral services departments joined forces to create a combined team which now delivers these services across both authorities.

- 1.12. To people outside the council, the Council House can seem like a private members club rather than a democratic forum. Hitherto, a member of the public attending uninvited to a statutory committee meeting could be forgiven for thinking that the meetings were private and not open to the public.
- 1.13. We note the improvements being made to the signage to meetings during our investigation; this will make it easier for the general public to find a meeting and feel confident that they are allowed to attend uninvited. **We suggest that all statutory public meetings should have a sign on the door of the committee with the committee name on it and the sub-text “the public are welcome to attend”.**
- 1.14. Given the typically low turnout at many of the meetings of the council, **we suggest that committee services make a record of the number of people attending in the public gallery of meetings and set targets for steadily improving attendance.** We are recommending that the meeting times and venues for statutory public meetings be much more widely advertised including a regular slot publicising meetings in the council’s Together Bromsgrove magazine.

<p><u>Recommendation One</u> <i>An Invitation to Attend</i> That the publication of meeting times and venues of the council, the cabinet, overview and scrutiny and other statutory public meetings be enhanced, with an invitation for the public to attend, including a regular slot publicising meetings in the Together Bromsgrove magazine.</p>
<p><u>Financial Implications</u> No financial implications are envisaged.</p>
<p><u>Resource Implications</u> No significant resource implications are envisaged.</p>

- 1.15. In case there are occasional changes to the expected meeting schedule, it may be a good idea to include a brief statement advising people to check the council web pages or telephone to confirm.

Modern Government

- 1.16. We interviewed Mr Andy Stephens, Committee Services Officer at Bromsgrove District Council and reviewed the systems used to administer the publication of reports and decision making. Bromsgrove District Council uses a software application called Modern.Gov to publicise all of the statutory public meetings on the council’s website and to publish all of the associated reports, minutes and decisions of councillors committees. Modern.Gov also facilitates the publication Calendar of Council meetings online. This ensures that members of the public

have access to information for the political decision making process; when and where the meetings are and the information being considered at the meeting.

- 1.17. It is also possible for people to subscribe to updates for agendas and minutes published, through registration over the internet on the Democracy pages of the website. We observed, however, that this facility is not immediately obvious to anyone who was not aware that they could do this or how to register, as the website does not explain this.

The Forward Plan

- 1.18. The Local Government Act 2000 regulations require local authorities in England and Wales to publish a Forward Plan of all the Key Decisions* that are proposed to be taken by the local authority in advance. It is published on a monthly basis covering a four month period.
- 1.19. The purpose of the Forward Plan is to make sure that that members of the public and Members of the Council can find out about Key Decisions being taken. We think that it is important that the existence of the Forward Plan is made more widely known so that people will know where to find out about decisions being made.

Councillor Casework Enquiries

- 1.20. The ward councillor represents the interests of all of his constituents and can flag up issues of local concern in their constituency. Ward councillors can do this by contacting the relevant council departments, by raising the issue with the relevant Cabinet portfolio holder, by raising the issue with the relevant council committee, by submitting a motion to full Council or by submitting a proposal to one of the overview and scrutiny boards. In most cases, issues are raised in first instance with the relevant department as a Councillor Casework Enquiry to get a local neighbourhood issue resolved or to find out information on behalf of residents.
- 1.21. We have noted that Councillor Casework Enquiries are usually dealt with efficiently and effectively. However, we believe that they should be dealt with according to the same high standards of traceability and responsiveness that have been demonstrated through the Customer First process. This would mean that Councillor Casework Enquiries would deliver reliable feedback timescales through elected Councillors and ensure that ongoing enquiries do not get lost in the system. It would also help to ensure that ongoing Councillor Casework Enquiries retain their casework history, which may be useful in uncovering underlying issues and persistent problems.
- 1.22. In fact the Council's Customer First Manual suggests that enquiries from elected Members should already be dealt with through the Customer First procedures.

*Key Decisions are executive decisions which are significant either in terms of expenditure or their impact on the community.

On page 8 it asks “Who are our Customers?” and answers “Everyone we come into contact with – e.g. public, staff, Members, contractors”. On page 9 under “Roles and responsibilities within the Customer Feedback System” it states that one of the roles of Customer Champions is to “assign an officer to investigate a complaint/comment/suggestion/Member/MP enquiry” and “ensure that complaints/compliments/comments and Member/MP enquiries are acknowledged by the relevant service area within 3 working days”⁴.

Councillor Calls for Action

- 1.23. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 together brought in new powers for ward councillors to help them tackle local problems on behalf of their constituents through “Councillor Calls for Action”.
- 1.24. Councillor Calls for Action (CCfA) are intended to provide elected ward Councillors with the enhanced ability to call for debate and discussion a topic of neighbourhood concern. The CCfA powers are designed to sit alongside existing mechanisms already at councillors’ disposal to resolve local issues.
- 1.25. Generally speaking, CCfA becomes relevant when a councillor has exhausted all other steps to resolve an issue in his or her ward. Ultimately unresolved pressing neighbourhood issues are referred to a meeting of a council’s overview and scrutiny committee to investigate.
- 1.26. The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) Guidance on Councillor Call for Action⁵ gives examples of why a ward Councillor might use CCfA including:
 - sustained poor performance at a local school
 - poor maintenance of a park, leading to increased anti-social behaviour
 - a series of complaints about refuse collection services.
- 1.27. It is up to local councils to specify how CCfA will work in their authority and we have considered the approaches taken by a variety of different councils including Redditch Borough Council, Aylesbury Vale District Council and Bournemouth Borough Council. Members also received training on Councillor Calls for Action provided in association with the Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV) at the University of Birmingham.
- 1.28. The CCfA process must allow for local ward issues to be investigated, but according to the guidance, only arrive at an overview and scrutiny committee when all other attempts at resolution have been tried. For this reason, we envisage that all CCfAs will begin as a Councillor Casework Enquiry and that casework enquiries are the beginning of the CCfA process.
- 1.29. At the moment there is no published procedure or guidance for how a CCfA would be handled in Bromsgrove, or how one might be submitted. We recommend that the council adopt a procedure that will empower ward councillors and be a useful tool in responding to issues in their neighbourhoods.

- 1.30. ***In order to make sure that the CCfA process is both workable and efficient, we suggest that the process should link up the process for Councillor Casework Enquiries with the ability to refer issues to overview and scrutiny as an enhanced tool for elected Members to champion issues of local concern within their ward.***

Recommendation Two

Councillor Calls for Action

That the Council adopt a procedure for dealing with Councillor Calls for Action to work in concert with the procedures for Councillor Casework Enquiries and providing recourse to Overview and Scrutiny.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

- 1.31. CCfA needs to be integrated in to the council's Modern Councillor training programme. ***We suggest that, in addition, the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be asked to publish guidance for elected Members, officers and the public to make sure that everyone is aware of how the scheme works and that issues can be dealt with under CCfA quickly and effectively. The Councils website should also be updated.***

2 One Community

- 2.1. We believe that local democracy should be open to all sections of the community and create a strong sense of civic participation and engagement. We have considered how the council reaches out to engage the whole community and removes barriers to participation.

Democracy and Equalities

- 2.2. We have considered various dimensions of equalities and accessibility of the democratic process in Bromsgrove. We have spoken to members of the Bromsgrove District Council Equality and Diversity Forum and we have interviewed Fiona Scott, Equalities Officer at Bromsgrove District Council, to ask about ways in which the Council might improve accessibility of democracy to all sections of the community.
- 2.3. We would like to acknowledge the work already being undertaken to outreach into the community. We heard that the Electoral Services Manager has attended the Bromsgrove Equalities Forum to speak about encouraging people to register to vote and that member organisations have also been contacted individually. Electoral Services provide information on voting and registering to vote in all main alternative formats.
- 2.4. The Equalities Officer told us that there are different levels of awareness in different sections of the community. It may be useful to conduct some further research to find out more information on what groups are more and less engaged. Packs of information and registration forms are taken to residential homes, along with information on postal voting. Visits are made if there are requests by particular groups and venues such as polish clubs and other social centres are targeted to let them know when elections are happening.
- 2.5. We considered how the council might be able to improve accessibility to the democratic process to all sections of the community, including those who are least engaged or suffer barriers to participation. We have made suggestions, where possible, to improve accessibility to the process, although we recognise that there are limitations on local innovations due to the fact that the entire electoral process is prescribed by statute⁶.

Access to Polling Stations

- 2.6. We considered the accessibility of polling stations in the district. All polling stations in Bromsgrove meet the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) standards. We heard that Electoral Services carry out an annual survey of polling stations. An access audit was carried out by SCOPE in 2007 and recommendations from this have been mainly implemented where it was possible to do so⁷. Anyone can also choose to vote through a postal vote or by proxy.

- 2.7. Polling stations are well signposted and car parking spaces for disabled people are provided at every station. Maps showing the polling station location are now printed in 12 point size font on the polling card. In exceptional circumstances the presiding officer at polling stations provides assistance in an appropriate manner in order to allow someone to vote while retaining the principle of the secret ballot.
- 2.8. We asked the Equalities Officer at Bromsgrove District Council her views on the accessibility at polling stations. She said that there are sensory (visually impaired, hearing impaired) barriers and mobility (e.g. wheelchair users) which need to be considered. We discussed the possibility of introducing simple picture signs at polling stations and suggest that this would be worth considering, after it has been tested out on focus groups to make sure that it is useful and effective. We heard that, where English is not a voters first language, language barriers are being tackled by providing a list of languages and asking voters to indicate which one and then taking their phone number and getting a translator to call them later, but there is currently no way of explaining this process to them.

Access to Committees

- 2.9. Council committee meetings are open to anyone to attend at any time* but can be a bit confusing to people who are not used to attending. This is especially the case when people suffer from severe visual impairment, or other disabilities which prevent people from understanding written material.
- 2.10. We believe that more could be done to encourage members of the public in general to feel welcome to attend statutory public meetings and we noted the improvements that are currently being made through the Customer First improvement programme and action plan. These will help all sections of the community to feel more able and more welcome to participate.
- 2.11. ***We suggest that a short review be carried out as part of the Customer First improvement programme, to consider the format and conduct of meetings to introduce a standard to ensure it is easily accessible to visually impaired members of the public and anyone attending who is not familiar with the proceedings. The standard should include the chairman of the committee audibly introducing all members of the committee and other participants and providing extra feedback to explain what's happening.***
- 2.12. To improve accessibility to the general democratic process, the council offers, on request, all committee papers in the main accessible formats, specifically large print, Braille, audio tape or CD. It may also provide foreign language interpretation or British Sign Language interpretation if needed, upon request. This should be clearly stated on agenda papers and on the Democracy pages of the council website.

*Except when certain exempt items are being discussed.

- 2.13. In exceptional cases, where there is a need, we believe the council should consider introducing a policy of providing transport to meetings, where people have severe mobility problems. This should be by application to and at the discretion of the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services.

Different But Equal

- 2.14. Everyone in the community has a right to participate equally in the democratic process, but some people find it harder to participate than others. We believe the council needs to consider, wherever feasible, to do what it can to remove obstacles to participation.
- 2.15. We have consulted the Bromsgrove Equality and Diversity Forum (EDF) for their views on our draft recommendations and to investigate the variety of engagement of accessibility issues that exist from different sections of the community. **We suggest that all of the organisations affiliated to the EDF are invited to get involved in the Democracy Year Campaign.**
- 2.16. We have considered the variety of different possible impediments to participation in the democratic process. In particular we have considered:
- Mobility impairment
 - Visual impairment
 - Hearing impairment
 - Dual sensory impairment
 - Mental health issues and mental impairment
 - Language barriers and literacy

Mobility impairment

- 2.17. Polling stations meet DDA (The Disability Discrimination Act) standards. Porta cabins, where used as polling stations, are now at a lower height than they used to be, which provides much better access for those with mobility impairments. Sometimes the doorway of the portable building is not wide enough for users of mobility scooters or electric wheelchairs to get in.

Visual Impairment

- 2.18. The term 'visual impairment' refers to people with irretrievable sight loss and this simple definition covers a wide spectrum of different impairments. It includes "blind" people and people with complete loss of eyesight, but it does not include those whose sight problems can be corrected by spectacles or contact lenses. There are between one and a half and two million visually impaired people in the UK⁸.
- 2.19. At the moment, an application to register to vote can be produced in large print or Braille on demand and the voter's packs at the Customer Service Centre have all the forms in a number of languages, in large print and in Braille. A template with tactile features numbered 1 – 15 to line up against the ballot paper is part of the

presiding officer's pack at polling stations to assist visually impaired people upon request. **We suggest that prospective candidates and elected MPs and councillors also need to consider how to provide their own information in accessible formats.**

- 2.20. Committee documents can be provided in alternative formats upon request and we heard that the Equalities team are currently looking into ways of improving the format of documents so that they can be accessed on computer through the use of specialist computer software (Browsealoud, Screenreader and Thunder) which read the contents of a document out loud.
- 2.21. Best practice includes avoiding the use of bullet points and automatic paragraph numbering and avoiding the use of block capitals, italics, under-lining, flashing text, moving borders or images and tables to present information, as these formats create difficulties for some visually impaired people.
- 2.22. **We have observed that some committee papers, e mail and web based communications do use small fonts, which can be an unnecessary barrier to a large number of visually impaired people and we suggest that the use of 12 font or above be considered as a standard on all council communications.**
- 2.23. We explored the possibility of introducing extra tactile information such as embossed logos on the postal vote, polling card or on the ballot paper but found this was not possible as electoral documentation formats are prescribed by law⁹.
- 2.24. We have heard from Ms Stephanie Sergeant, a blind service user. She was asked what, if any, impediments she is aware of for visually impaired people. She told us that the electoral registration form can be difficult to complete as she is only aware of being able to do this through a hard copy format in print. She said that peoples' awareness of the need to register could be improved by putting out an advert in the Talking Newspaper¹⁰.
- 2.25. She said that voting can be challenging as this is in print and there is a need to provide embossed writing or a tactile way to identify what is written. She said that she usually votes by postal ballot but that she still needs someone to read this out to her. It would be ideal to have this available in audio.
- 2.26. We have considered the idea of audio links available on the website. Stephanie Sergeant said that this would be "very accessible to blind people". Sight Concern in Worcester can provide more information on how the council can improve and test out improvements for blind people. **We suggest that the Democracy pages of the council website be updated with audio and video links to explain particular processes. This should improve accessibility and make the site more interesting for everybody.**

Hearing Impairment

- 2.27. In Bromsgrove there are approximately 200 people with significant hearing impairment, including people with sight impairment as well. General population figures for Bromsgrove from the 2001 Census show over 12,000 as having some degree of hearing loss.
- 2.28. There is an easy to read pictorial voting booklet which is provided in the presiding officer's pack at polling stations which can be used to guide voters if necessary. People can also contact the Electoral Services team through the use of a text phone. The publication of reports and information over the internet also goes a long way to removing barriers to information for people with hearing impediments.
- 2.29. We have heard that the public attending committee meetings in the council chamber have sometimes complained that they cannot hear the proceedings properly. There is an induction hearing loop system installed in the council chamber to provide hearing assistance to hearing aid users, although people have sometimes complained that this "isn't working properly".

Mental Health

- 2.30. A new national campaign has been launched under the umbrella term of "Rethink" which includes "Rethink Politics" which is designed to increase the engagement of people with mental illness in the political process¹¹. The Bromsgrove Partnership has set up a sub group of the Health and Wellbeing Theme Group to look at the rethink campaign and it is proposed that one local event will be organised in Bromsgrove this year.
- 2.31. "Mental impairment" includes a very wide range of issues, each of which has a wide spectrum from very mild to very severe, including dementia, autism and learning disability. Further detailed research would be needed to identify issues that affect such a wide range of impairments and propose possible improvements.
- 2.32. ***We have heard that evidence has been considered by the Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services department of the council relating to learning difficulties, including dyslexia and the possibilities of introducing simple aids such as the provision of pastel coloured plastic transparencies to place over a ballot paper to assist with reading the names printed. If this is cost effective and feasible, we suggest that this be introduced as soon as possible.***
- 2.33. There is also an easy to read pictorial voting booklet provided in the presiding officer's pack at polling stations, which can be used to assist voters in what to do and should be very useful for a range of people (with and without impairments) to help convey the information about voting in a simple, friendly, easy to understand way.

Migrant Workers

- 2.34. Many people come to live and work in the UK from other countries and some are entitled to vote in different elections in the UK, depending on their nationality. Commonwealth citizens and citizens of the Republic of Ireland are entitled to vote in UK General Elections and local elections*. European Union citizens are eligible to vote in European Union parliamentary elections and local elections but not General Elections¹².
- 2.35. There are no reliable figures as to how many migrant workers are living in the district, but the number of National Insurance numbers issued provides an indication. More than 41% of the National Insurance number allocations in 2008/09 were to people from Poland¹³. The Worcestershire County Economic Assessment 2009/2010 provides data for Bromsgrove over the years 2002/03 to 2008/09 and level peaked at just 200 people in Bromsgrove in 2006/07.

Language Barriers

- 2.36. There is new Interpreting Service, due to open on 1st April 2010 and this will be available to polling stations for emergency immediate foreign language interpretation. All presiding officers are required to have a mobile phone with them at polling stations and so they will be able to access this service as and when required. ***We suggest that this service be extended to assistance for residents to access their Councillors for non political meetings or discussions.***

Democracy for All

- 2.37. We believe that the council needs to actively engage the whole community, reaching out to people who don't participate and involving those who alienated from civic life. Local democracy needs to feel open and transparent and we need to build the relationship with the community through elected councillors and democratic engagement.
- 2.38. This includes all sections of the community; young people and older people, parish communities, ethnic minorities: The council is the community leader in bringing everyone together in constructive democratic participation and dialogue, building civic pride and a sense of One Community. We believe that local democracy and the elected councillor are the foundation for building that relationship.

*Qualifying Commonwealth citizens are Commonwealth citizens resident in the UK who are entitled to register to vote provided that they also fulfil the age requirement for registration and are not subject to any other legal incapacity.

3 The Duty to Promote Democracy

- 3.1. Councils need to actively promote a better understanding of how local democracy works. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 places a duty on local authorities to promote understanding among local people of the opportunities that exist for members of the public to get involved in and influence the decisions made by local councils and other local public bodies. Section 1 of the Act places a duty on principal local authorities* (including district councils) to promote understanding of their functions and their democratic arrangements. This includes opportunities for people to participate by:
- standing and serving as a councillor;
 - voting to elect representatives;
 - making representations to councillors and other directly elected representatives, including by submitting petitions;
 - taking part in consultations, formal forums, panels and public meetings, including attending the public parts of council meetings;
 - taking on a civic role such as school governor or independent custody visitor¹⁴.
- 3.2. The Act also places a duty on principal local authorities to promote understanding among local people of other public bodies that relate to the authority's area; what these bodies do and their democratic arrangements. These are public bodies or persons that have a strong local presence, making decisions that are directly relevant to local people in the local authority's area and including the county council, parish councils and parish council meetings, police authorities, health bodies, schools and further education colleges and transport authorities[♥].
- 3.3. We have put forward recommendations to improve the promotion of democracy and local democracy in Bromsgrove. These include a Democracy Year Campaign starting in June 2010 to lead up to next district elections in 2011 and beyond and proposals to improve peoples knowledge on how to get involved to increase voter turn out, developing the ward councillor role, raising the profile of elected councillors to the public, promoting a better understanding of what councillors do to help people find out more about becoming a councillor.

Be a Councillor

- 3.4. In the United Kingdom, all local authorities are governed by elected councillors[▲]. Councillors may or may not be affiliated to a political party, but once elected are meant to represent all their constituents and not just those who voted for them.

*"Principal local authority" means; (a) a county or district council in England; (b) a London borough council; (c) the Common Council of the City of London in its capacity as a local authority; (d) a county or county borough council in Wales.

♥ The Act places a duty on principal local authorities to promote understanding of "connected authorities" including health bodies; police bodies; fire and rescue authorities; waste bodies; schools and FE colleges; national park and broads authorities; transport authorities; economic prosperity boards and combined authorities; probation services; parish councils and meetings; for a county council in a two-tier area, a district council; for a district council in a two-tier area, a county council (ref The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, Part 1: Democracy and Involvement).

▲ This includes: Unitary authorities, County councils, District councils Parish Councils, town and community councils.

- 3.5. Councillors can come from many different walks of life and may have many different skills and aptitudes. Whilst we recognise that a good councillor can represent constituents from any background, we think it is generally desirable that there should be a mix of different people, which helps to represent the different people in the local community. Some types of people, such as young people, may be less likely to come forward and be elected councillors and there can be barriers that make it more difficult for some people to become councillors.
- 3.6. ***We believe that we need to let everyone in the community know that they could consider standing as a local councillor and we suggest that a special “open day” event be held during the Democracy Year Campaign to enable people to come and find out more about it. We also suggest the provision of more information on the council website to explain what a councillor does and how to seek election.***
- 3.7. The 2007 Local Elections in the UK saw the age limit for councillors fall to 18, and we suggest that that younger people from age 18 should now be encouraged to stand to encourage a younger generation of councillors to come forward.
- 3.8. ***For more information on becoming a local councillor see www.beacouncillor.org.uk***

Promoting Voting

- 3.9. The council needs to encourage more people to turn out and vote. The council already uses events stalls occasionally in the run up to elections, to provide information to people on registering to vote. We have heard from Redditch Borough Council about their experiments in setting up stalls in supermarkets, in order to catch the attention of as many people as possible. We are recommending that the council roll out more events stalls to promote the democratic process, including voter registration, in conjunction with the Democracy Year Campaign. These should be held in civic spaces and forums where there are lot of people, including in the town centre market place, in supermarkets and at parish fairs and events.



Recommendation Three

Promoting Democracy

That events stalls be more widely used to promote democracy, to get registered to vote and get involved, including a stall to be set up in the Bromsgrove high street market, in supermarkets and community events.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

There may be resource implications arising if staff are required to spend extra time manning events stalls, especially if at weekends.

- 3.10. ***We noted that councillors are also able to give out electoral registration forms and postal vote applications forms and we suggest that all councillors receive training on all aspects of voting and registration, including proxy voting, postal voting.***

Communicating Democracy

- 3.11. The way that citizens see the council and their local representatives is often shaped by the local media. Informing residents about how local democracy works can be a matter of getting the right messages across through the local newspapers, newsletters and community internet sites. We need to make sure that the media is a place where people can be properly informed with positive messages about how local democracy works.
- 3.12. A lot of the coverage that local councils get in local news media is corporately orientated and excludes the political/democratic face of elected representatives, especially when compared to national government, which is almost exclusively politically led in the media. Very often council services are “fronted” by officers not elected community leaders. So residents might be forgiven for not knowing who their elected representatives in office are and ultimately, who to hold to account for the services they provide. This poses a problem for democratic accountability.

Together Bromsgrove

- 3.13. The council has its own publication; the Together Bromsgrove magazine that delivers news and original features to residents, direct from Bromsgrove District Council. Every household in the Bromsgrove district is



sent the magazine up to three times a year and it covers the council's key priorities, activities and messages for residents. We have looked at editions of Together Bromsgrove to see how local democracy and democratic representatives are profiled in the magazine. We have also looked at other council's magazines to see how it compares.

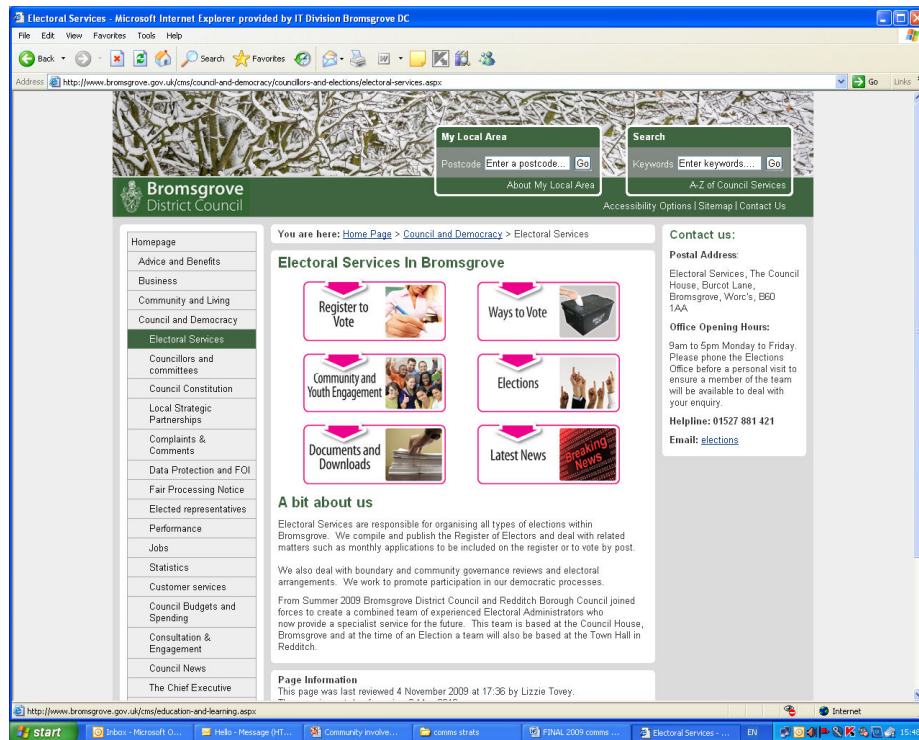
- 3.14. Redditch Borough Council has a magazine called Redditch Matters, similar to the Together Bromsgrove publication. We noticed that compared to most other council magazines Together Bromsgrove does not feature elected Members or say much about the democratic process. Where the magazine features council services it is usually fronted by a council officer. In other council's magazines we noticed that there will be profiles of elected Members, including typically a Leaders column and comments from portfolio holders responsible for the services being profiled. We believe this helps people connect with the councillors representing them and who are responsible for the services the council provides.
- 3.15. Parish councils usually also have their own local newsletters, which they publish and distribute themselves. **We suggest that the possibility of including parish council newsletters with the distribution of the Together Bromsgrove be investigated, provided that this can be achieved with less cost overall.**

Read All About It

- 3.16. We have interviewed Mr Peter John, Publisher at the Stourbridge division of the Newsquest publishing group, which includes the Bromsgrove Advertiser. Mr John said that the philosophy of Newsquest is no longer that of a "newspaper company" but a "media company" and that newspaper distribution is falling whilst alternative media on the web is growing. Channels for news messages are no longer just what is being published in the newspaper but also what is published on the web.
- 3.17. We commend the council's communications team for the work they have done to improve the image of Bromsgrove District Council in the public media. We believe that the roles and responsibilities of elected portfolio holders and other representatives needs to be given a higher profile in the local media and through the communications strategy, so that people know who is responsible for the services the council provides.
- 3.18. We also need to make sure we are getting the message across to the whole community. Traditional print media remains very important and certain sections of the population are likely to read it, but 16-25 year olds often do not read newspapers. This age group do however explore internet and social networking sites and we need to improve the profile of our local democracy over the web and other media.

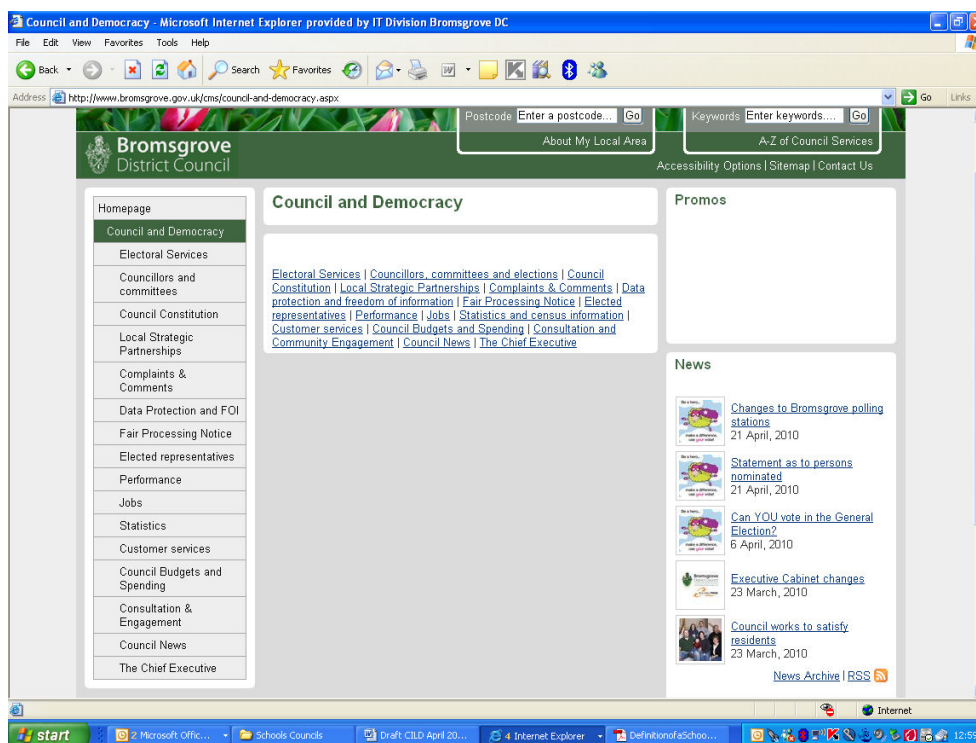
Cyber Democracy

- 3.19. One of the main media for communications is now the internet and we have reviewed the council's democracy pages of the website to see how democracy is presented and how accessible and interesting it is. In addition to the expanding home internet usage, there is public access to the internet in libraries and some village halls, which makes the internet a powerful tool for reaching a wide cross section of people and especially younger people.



www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/electoral-services.aspx

- 3.20. We have looked at the profile of local democracy on the council's website in comparison with other councils and considered how the content might be enhanced to make it more informative and attractive. We have noted the new Electoral Services pages of the website which feature clear visual messages and development with easy access buttons and more visual information.
- 3.21. We believe that the local democracy pages could be improved with images and a brief description of what local democracy in Bromsgrove is. Some of the links may not be intelligible to someone unfamiliar with the council operations and may include links that are seemingly irrelevant to local democracy such as "Fair Processing Notice", "Complaints and Comments" and "Jobs".



www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy.aspx

- 3.22. We are recommending that a review of the Council's democracy web pages be carried out to improve the content on how local democracy works, make it easier to navigate and use some exciting images, audio and video content rather than just text. We suggest that there should be a high profile link to the Democracy Year Campaign on the home page and the democracy pages. **We also suggest that the web address www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/democracy be used to link directly to the democracy web page.**

Recommendation Four
Cyber Democracy
 That the local democracy pages of the Council website be reviewed to improve the content and to add summary information on how local democracy works in Bromsgrove and how people can get involved, with a special webpage site for the Democracy Year Campaign.

Financial Implications
 No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications
 No significant resource implications are envisaged.

- 3.22. We believe the council web pages on democracy could be enhanced to make them more attractive and engaging. Content should be upgraded to include a description of the political decision making arrangements, to encourage the public to attend Council and committee meetings, explain how to present a petition, information on Councillor Calls for Action, Councillor Casework Enquiries and how to make proposals to overview and scrutiny committees. We are also recommending the use of the website to engage and consult on particular issues using consultation portals.

Recommendation Five

Consultation Portals

That the Council's website use consultation portals to gauge opinion on topics of local interest and local decisions and a means to engage and consult the public in the local democratic decision making process.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

- 3.23. ***We suggest that short "You Tube" style video links be included on the council website to make it more fun and interactive. These could include elected councillors talking about their roles, young people and other local citizens talking about community issues.***

- 3.24. In addition, we suggest that the Democracy pages on the council website should be given a higher profile and advertised more widely, including through the Together Bromsgrove magazine and on the front sheet of published agendas. This will help people to link to the information on the website and find out more about how local Democracy in Bromsgrove works.

Young Citizens Webpage

- 3.25. To reach young people we need to get the message across in different ways, such as via the internet (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Bebo social networking internet sites), or through subscribed text phone messages. It also needs to be managed by someone who can "speak their language" and run in a way that engages and interests young people. Bromsgrove District Council already uses Facebook and Twitter internet based social networking sites, although this needs to be further developed.
- 3.26. We also recommend that the Democracy pages of the council's web site include a page specifically aimed at young people. This should include lots of interesting and exciting content on issues that are relevant to young people and

communicating with young people in a way that they respond to. It should include links to the school councils, the Youth Cabinet and the UK Youth Parliament, as well as consultation with young people on particular topics using internet consultation portals. The success of such a page will depend upon how interesting and relevant it is to young people and if possible, it would be good to involve young people in the design and content of these pages.

Recommendation Six

Young Citizens Webpage

That a Young Citizen page be included on the Council internet site specifically aimed at young people, with fun and exciting content, explaining the democratic process and how to get involved.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to draft the content.

Councillor Blogs

- 3.27. Many citizens do not know who their local ward representatives are. This is important because the ability of councillors to represent their constituents is dependent upon the relationship a councillor has with his constituents. ***We have considered the profile of elected representatives on the council website and we suggest that this be enhanced to provide “personalised” profiles of who councillors are and what responsibilities they have providing details of how to contact them, any special responsibilities they may have, what committees they serve on. It should also provide a short personal statement from each councillor.***
- 3.28. We discussed the idea of Members setting up their own internet blogs to communicate with residents. This seems to be a good idea, however, the council may not be able to directly host this as it may be considered too “political” and it may be difficult for the council to be held responsible for content. The council website may however be able to feature links to external sites blogged by councillors themselves and we suggest that this be investigated.

The Art of Democracy

- 3.29. Arts media can be an exciting and engaging way to promote local democracy, and especially to young people. We have considered some of the ways the council and its community partners might communicate the importance of democracy through the arts, particularly for events linked to the Democracy Year Campaign. This might include street theatre events, cinema, music and it is

envisaged that arts events could involve young people and other citizens in the events as well as promoting civic engagement in an entertaining way. The Arts present a different and powerful way through which the council can engage with residents.

- 3.30. We interviewed Mr Huw Moseley, the Arts Development and Special Events Officer at Bromsgrove District Council and Mr Andy Woods, Director of Artrix to ask them how arts and events might be linked to the promotion of democracy. The Artrix is a community arts centre which runs in partnership with the council. On occasion, particular events run by the council are hosted at the Artrix and the Artrix also has good linkages with other community groups such as the North East Worcestershire (NEW) Collage and schools, which can help the council engage with the community.
- 3.31. ***We suggest that the list of arts events for 2010-2011 be checked to identify events which might link to the Democracy Year Campaign. Young people at North East Worcestershire (NEW) Collage, schools and other young peoples groups could be involved in projects to promote democracy. One idea is to involve young people in making short films clips. The best of these could be shown before the main films showing at the Artrix and showcased on the council internet site.***
- 3.32. We also envisage that the Democracy Year Campaign will involve street theatre events, music events and engage other art forms in partnership with the Artrix, NEW College, local schools and other community groups.

4 Community Involvement in Local Democracy

- 4.1. Local councils have a duty to involve residents in decision making and we have considered the ways in which the council and its community partners can encourage community engagement, civic participation and community involvement in local democracy.
- 4.2. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 places duties “to inform, consult and involve” local people in local decision making process. This means providing greater opportunities for local people to get involved and influence the decisions that affect them. The duty to involve is an opportunity to reinvigorate local democracy and improve the quality of both decision making and the services that local people receive.
- 4.3. According to the Act, involving people means making sure that citizens and local representatives are:
 - provided with information about the exercise of a function,
 - consulted about the exercise of the function, or
 - involved in another way¹⁵.

Opening Up Democracy



- 4.4. Engaging citizens through the local democratic process where decisions are being made is one of the ways we need to involve local people. We believe that the council needs to open up the democratic process by encouraging local people to attend meetings and where possible, to play a role as active citizens in the decision making process.
- 4.5. In Bromsgrove, citizens can already address the Planning Committee and the Licensing Committee if they wish to make their views known on particular planning and licensing applications. They can also submit a petition to the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board, where the lead petitioners have been able to address members of the board. In addition, members of the public can participate (by invitation or application) in overview and scrutiny meetings to give evidence on a particular topic, or to make a topic proposal.
- 4.6. ***We believe there is scope to do more; through existing procedures, through greater efforts to engage and involve, especially at full Council, Cabinet and in overview and scrutiny committees. In particular, we suggest that the council consider introducing procedures to allow members of the public to submit questions at full Council and Cabinet to portfolio holders and to present public petitions.***

Petitions

- 4.7. Bromsgrove District Council already allows members of the public to submit petitions for consideration by elected councillors. New legislation means that this will soon become a requirement for all local authorities and for the first time councils will be required to respond to petitions and tell local people what action is going to be taken to address their concerns.
- 4.8. The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 has introduced a requirement for councils to receive petitions and e petitions. During our investigation the Government Guidance “Listening to communities: Statutory guidance on the duty to respond to petitions” was published and councils are now required to introduce a petitions scheme before 15th June 2010. Councils are also required, from 15th December 2010 to introduce an e-petitions facility.
- 4.9. We have considered the arrangements currently in place for dealing with petitions. To date 3 petitions have been received. On 19th January 2010 the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board received 2 petitions, one on the demolition of the market hall and another on the fair trade campaign. This enabled the board to try out provisional procedures for dealing with petitions. The procedure that was followed afforded the petition spokesmen the chance to present the case to the committee and reflected the function of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board as an investigatory review body independent of the Cabinet.
- 4.10. We have noted that the very act of receiving petitions seems to raise expectations on the part of some local campaigners that their cause will change council policy, but inevitably this will not always be the case. The way in which the council dealt with the petitions did however demonstrate the willingness of the council to engage with local groups in the democratic process and considered their views in an objective and fair way. We suggest that the council could help to manage expectations and improve access by publishing clear guidance and procedures.
- 4.11. We believe that the process followed on 19th January 2010 was successful in dealing with the petitions properly and fairly and that this same or similar process should be used to regulate the way petitions are dealt with in the future.

Recommendation Seven

Public Petitions

That the Council adopt a petitions scheme, procedure and guidance to set out how petitions and e petitions will be dealt with and the arrangements for receiving petitions.

Financial Implications

No financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

- 4.12. We are suggesting that the department use the Modern.Gov software system to manage the electronic petitions scheme on the council website at minimal extra cost. We suggest that the e petitions submitted online include a postcode field to ensure that “signatures” are only counted from verifiable addresses.
- 4.13. We are recommending that the council publish guidance for members of the public along with the scheme on the council website and available upon request. We noted that petitions received by the JOSB have been presented in formats that can make it difficult to verify the number of signatures and do not always provide personal signatures. We suggest that a standard petitions form be included with the petitions scheme to provide people with a standard template.
- 4.14. Local authorities are permitted to impose thresholds of up to 5% of the population to trigger a debate at full Council. We suggest that the petition scheme require somewhat less than this (eg between 1000 – 2000 signatures) to make it feasible for petitioners to get enough signatures, especially where it concerns large areas with small populations. On average, at least one petition a year might reasonably be expected. ***We suggest that the scheme is reviewed after 12 months to make sure that there are a balanced number of petitions reaching full council for debate.***

The Parish Perspective

- 4.15. A parish council is a type of local authority found in England and the most local tier of local government. They are elected bodies and have variable tax raising powers. Parish councils are responsible for areas known as civil parishes. There are approximately 8,500 councils in England and there are 20 parish councils in the Bromsgrove district, based around the local villages¹⁶.
- 4.16. We made sure that parish councils were involved our investigation and all parish councils in the district were asked for their views. We also interviewed Mr. John Cypher, Chairman of Alvechurch Parish Council and Mrs Sue Baxter, Chairman

of Wythall Parish Council. A clear message that came across was that parish councils want to be involved in promoting and engaging with citizens on local democracy. In fact, we need to consider promotion of democracy across all 3 levels of local government: county, district and parish. We also need to improve peoples understanding of the different functions and responsibilities of each of these.

- 4.17. Parish councils can be useful partners in promoting democracy as they have close links with the grass roots in local communities and with local community activists and volunteers and have a strong sense of civic participation.
- 4.18. There is a need to encourage more people to stand for election as parish councillors. Very often parish councillors stand unopposed and this can mean, effectively, that local citizens have no choice about who represents them at parish level and this could undermine the democratic legitimacy of parish councils. ***We suggest that parish councils be invited to be fully involved in programmes to promote local democracy and information about parish councils needs to be embellished on the council website.***
- 4.19. ***To find out more about parish councils see www.nalc.gov.uk. Bromsgrove district parish councils are listed on the Democracy pages of the council's website.***

5 Young People

- 5.1. We believe that the council needs to engage and involve young people in the democratic process and in decisions that affect young people and encourage them to play an active role as citizens and in the civic life of their community. Not all young people will engage in the same way or through the same social networks so it is use a wide variety of different approaches.
- 5.2. Young people are often disengaged from the mainstream political process. In a study carried out by the Electoral Commission only 56% of those aged between 17 and 24 were registered to vote¹⁷. MORI estimates that just 39% of young people (aged 18-24) registered to vote in the 2001 General Election voted and just 37% at the 2005 general election¹⁸.



Happy 18th Birthday!

- 5.3. Most young people do not view local politics as important to them. Research for the Local Government Association by Ipsos MORI shows that just a quarter of 11-16 year olds believe that their local councillor is the best person to approach in order to change something in their community and when asked who they respect most outside their family, only 1% chose politicians. The same percentage number chose their dog!¹⁹.
- 5.4. In the past becoming eligible to vote was a sign of coming of age, but in modern times it has lost this significance. **We suggest that all residents should be sent a birthday card from the council on their 18th birthday, congratulating them that they are now eligible to vote and telling them how to register.**

Sending the Councillor Back to School

- 5.5. We need to promote engagement and understanding of the mainstream democratic process and this means engaging young people where they meet and communicating in a way they relate to. We need to promote the democratic process in schools and colleges, through community groups and through social forums where young people congregate, both in the real world and online.
- 5.6. Research for the Local Government Association by Ipsos MORI shows that just one in three 11-16 year olds have ever met a councillor or MP, and states that those who have 'are more likely to express feelings of political engagement and interest²⁰. **We suggest that the council investigate the possibility of arranging presentations on local democracy to Citizenship classes from council officers and elected Members of the Council.**
- 5.7. **For more information about this, see the guides published on the LGA Local Democracy Campaign website: www.localdemocracy.lga.gov.uk**

The National Curriculum

- 5.8. We have heard from Clare Baylis, Citizenship Advisor Worcestershire County Council and considered the National Curriculum Citizenship key stages 3 and 4, specifically areas of the curriculum which support the development of local democracy projects and partnerships with schools. Education for citizenship aims to equip young people with the knowledge, skills and understanding to play an effective role in public life. Citizenship encourages them to take an interest in topical and controversial issues and engage in discussion and debate. Pupils learn about their rights, responsibilities, duties and freedoms and about laws, justice and democracy. They learn to take part in decision making and different forms of action and they should be encouraged to play an active role in the life of their schools, neighbourhoods, communities and wider society as active local citizens.
- 5.9. The National Curriculum for Citizenship is taught through different approaches in different schools but in all cases aims to provide young people with an understanding of the key concepts and institutional processes that can underpin democratic participation. The concepts explored at KS3 and KS4 are:
- Participating actively in different kinds of decision-making and voting in order to influence public life.
 - Considering how democracy, justice, diversity, toleration, respect and freedom are valued by people with different beliefs, backgrounds and traditions within a changing democratic society.
 - Understanding and exploring the roles of citizens and parliament in holding government and those in power to account.
 - Exploring different kinds of rights and obligations and how these affect both individuals and communities.
 - Understanding that individuals, organisations and governments have responsibilities to ensure that rights are balanced, supported and protected.
 - Investigating ways in which rights can compete and conflict, and understanding that hard decisions have to be made to try to balance these²¹.
- 5.10. The National Curriculum for Citizenship explores the key features of parliamentary democracy and local government in the UK, including voting and elections and the actions citizens can take in the democratic and electoral processes to influence decisions locally, nationally and beyond. The curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to participate in both school-based and community-based citizenship activities and work with a range of community partners. It is a way that we can foster a greater understanding of and participation in the democratic process, including a better understanding of local councils.
- 5.11. We have considered ways in which the promotion of local democracy might be able to support and concord with the objectives of the national curriculum for

Citizenship and is recommending that the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be asked to liaise with Bromsgrove secondary schools to find ways in which the district council can support the Citizenship curriculum.

Recommendation Eight

Citizenship

That the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be asked to liaise with Bromsgrove secondary schools to co-ordinate with the Citizenship curriculum being followed in the respective schools to find ways in which the district Council can support the curriculum.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

There will be some resource implications required to liaise with Bromsgrove secondary schools and to support undertaken as agreed by the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services.

School Councils

- 5.12. We have considered the role of school councils, which are run throughout the UK, including Bromsgrove schools. A school council is group of students who are elected to represent the views of all pupils and to improve their school. There is no uniform approach to how they are run and practice varies from school to school and includes all kinds of school based groups run by students, including student forums and youth parliaments.
- 5.13. Typical arrangements are that each year, every class will elect 2 representatives to be members of the school council. The school council will then meet to elect officers such as Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and other elected portfolios.
- 5.14. A typical school council will hold school council meetings, usually with a teacher present, to discuss and sort out issues and problems in their school or local neighbourhood. These may include the quality of school dinners, pupil behaviour or ideas for fundraising events. Members of the school council may be given responsibility for carrying out the ideas that have been agreed, such as planning discos, writing newspaper articles, or meeting with catering staff, or can make recommendations to the head teacher.
- 5.15. A good school council is one that represents the views of all students and gets things done. We have not attempted to review the effectiveness of school



councils in Bromsgrove, but we suggest that these are some things that make a school council effective:

- Regular meetings
- A council that is not too big
- Clear constitutional arrangements
- Class/Form councils that meet regularly
- Good communication between representatives and their class
- Training for school council members
- Smaller groups (subcommittees) working on specific events or issues
- A bank account or budget
- Annual evaluations²².

5.16. **More information on school councils is available from School Councils UK at www.schoolcouncils.org**

Redditch Student Council

- 5.17. We received evidence on the Redditch Student Council from Mr Steve Skinner, Democratic Services Manager at Redditch Borough Council. Redditch Borough Council established a Student Council in 1996 and has played a supporting role to the participating schools in their area since 1996. Their arrangements for supporting the Student Council are currently under review.
- 5.18. Redditch Student Council was set up as a body independent of both the participating schools and the partner local authorities, comprising of 28 elected student councillors, from 6 local high schools. Each councillor has a 2 year term of office. The initiative has been delivered in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, who had been successful in winning substantial FLOSS (Funding Lots of Super Stuff) donations*. Within Redditch Borough Council's committee team, one designated committee person coordinated the Student Council's work and the County Council have taken over responsibility for both the elections and for student support.
- 5.19. Student councillors are elected by their peers within each school, and Student Council meetings have also been arranged to take place in the borough's Council Chamber, which introduces the young people involved to the physical setting and protocols of council meetings. Activities also took place at Youth House, assisted by the Worcestershire County Council Youth Team.
- 5.20. We believe that school councils provide a great opportunity to engage young people into the democratic process in line with the national curriculum on Citizenship. They can also help to give young people a better understanding of the mainstream democracy nationally and locally, depending on how well they mirror parliaments and councils. We suggest that Bromsgrove school councils

* FLOSS is aimed at giving 13 to 19-year-olds the chance to provide their local area with activities and projects their peers will benefit from. The final decision as to where the money will be allocated will be made by the FLOSS Management Group, which comprises of 12 young people from around Worcestershire.

should make sure that their constitutional and procedural arrangements teach students about how councils and parliaments work by running in a similar way.

- 5.21. ***We suggest that Bromsgrove District Council, in partnership with the schools and the county council, work with the school councils to improve their operation and to reinforce the education of the structure and process of council institutions.*** We suggest that the council work in partnership with Bromsgrove secondary schools and Worcestershire County Council to support Bromsgrove school councils along similar lines to the support offered by Redditch Borough Council to their Student Council. There is a need to engage with schools on this and to improve planning and co-ordination. The timing of School Council elections need to be thought out carefully because of school commitments, especially for older pupils preparing for exams.

Recommendation Nine

Schools Councils

That the Council work in partnership with Bromsgrove secondary schools to facilitate the Schools Councils' constitutional arrangements and arrangements for making recommendations to the appropriate local decision making bodies.

Financial Implications

Optional extra additional funding required is estimated at £5,000: £2,000 working budget p.a. to support training (annual residential) and £2,000 p.a. for the events. This is *extra* – additional budget, not core or vital to the administration of Schools Council's themselves.

Resource Implications

A small amount of resources in officer time is anticipated, depending on the level of support officered.

These suggested resource allocations are *extra*, not core to the basic implementation of the recommendation or vital to the administration of Schools Council's themselves.

- 5.22. The council can support the schools councils to help them run in a way that is reflective of local government councils and to more effectively represent young people and help students learn about local democracy. The council could also assist in advising on constitutional processes.
- 5.23. ***If possible we suggest the council should invite school councils to meet in the council chamber, as they have done in Redditch, to introduce the young people to the formal setting of council meetings. Student representatives could also be invited to the council to meet Cabinet portfolio holders and other Members of the Council to learn about their roles. This could include meeting the Chairman, the Leader of the Council***

Members of the Cabinet and this could be reported back to the School Council and help to develop the roles students elected with similar responsibilities at the school councils.

- 5.24. The council may also be able to support school councils by assisting with the provision of clear statements and school publicity to make sure all students in the school understand what a school council is, how it represents them and how they can get involved.
- 5.25. **We suggest that it would also be advantageous to find ways to extend the influence of school councils on projects in their local neighbourhood.** The County, District and Parish councils in cooperation with the schools could offer school councils some tangible choices about projects in their local areas and consult them on local choices affecting young people in their neighbourhood through a democratic process. These could be projects connected to local parks or environmental projects, engaging with young people in a neighbourhood, intergenerational projects or local events. This could be through fostering community links with local community partners, including the parish councils and other local organisations. The more influence the school council can be seen to have the more credible it will be to young people.

The Worcester Youth Cabinet


- 5.26. The Worcestershire Youth Cabinet is a group of young people elected by young people to represent their views. The county is separated into 6 districts; Worcester City, Wychavon, Redditch, Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest and Malvern Hills. Each district votes for candidates to represent them. Elected representatives have access to decision makers and authorities at all levels of society and government.
- 5.27. Cabinet members attend meetings and public forums to discuss the concerns and issues of young constituents. The issues considered by the Worcester Youth Cabinet can vary greatly from the accessibility of public transport and facilities to young people's rights and opinions. The Worcester Youth Cabinet works alongside the 3 Worcestershire Members of the UK Youth Parliament, who are automatically co-opted onto the Youth Cabinet. The Worcestershire Youth Cabinet campaigning objectives are published in the Worcester Youth Manifesto²³.
- 5.28. **For more information on the Worcestershire Youth Cabinet see www.ycworcs.org.uk**

The UK Youth Parliament

- 5.29. The UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) has 600 elected Members of the Youth Parliament (MYPs) aged 11-18. MYPs are elected in annual youth elections throughout the UK. Any young person aged 11-18 can stand or vote. In the past two years one million young people have voted in UK Youth Parliament elections.

- 5.30. MYPs are involved in nation-wide projects to ensure that the voices of Worcestershire's Young People can be heard at the highest levels of government and organise events and projects, run campaigns and influence decision makers on the issues which matter most to young people. All MYPs meet once a year at the UK Youth Parliament Annual Sitting.
- 5.31. Run by young people for young people, UKYP gives young people between the age of 11 and 18 a voice, which is heard and listened to by local and national government, providers of services for young people and other agencies that have an interest in the views and needs of young people.
- 5.32. **For more information on UKYP see www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk**
- 5.33. **We suggest that, in addition to school councils, the Bromsgrove Worcestershire Youth Cabinet Members and the local UK Youth Parliament representatives also need to be involved in events for the Democracy Year Campaign. They could, along with other young people, be asked for their views on the review of the democracy pages of the council website, particularly our proposal for pages especially aimed at young people.**

U Decide

- 5.34. We interviewed Rebecca Dunne, Senior Corporate Policy and Performance Officer who told us about projects currently running to engage young people in the democratic process, including a local democracy magazine aimed at young people, which will be sent out to every 6th form in the District (16-17 year olds), young peoples focus groups and questionnaires and the U Decide project. "U Decide", or participatory budgeting, is a way of giving local people the power to spend some public money to benefit their communities. This means they can share some of the responsibility for what happens where they live, and make some real changes.
- 
- 5.35. U Decide provided young people in Bromsgrove District to get funding for projects for young people designed by young people, and decided how money will be spent. Young people aged 7-13 and 13-19 (or up to 25 for young people with disabilities) were able to apply and applications from schools, community and voluntary groups were also encouraged.
- 5.36. The scheme made grants from Worcestershire County Council's FLOSS scheme available to young people across Bromsgrove District. £50,000 was made available to distribute; £10,000 for 7 to 13 year olds and £40,000 for 13 to 19 year olds. Grants of up to £5,000 were available for each individual group of 13 to 19 year olds and up to £1,250 for 7 to 13 year olds. A group of young assessors drew up a short list of project applications and these were taken

forward to U Decide events at the end of March, where more young people voted on which should receive funding.

- 5.37. We believe that it is important that the council open up different routes of engagement, especially for young people. Projects like the U Decide event can engage with young people that may otherwise not engage through other mainstream projects such as schools councils.

Draft Recommendation Ten

U Decide

That the Council investigate the possibility of running a further U Decide or similar event in 2011 to involve young people in making decisions on local projects.

Financial Implications

The U Decide scheme 2010 required £50,000 grants from Worcestershire County Council's FLOSS. A further event would require a similar successful bid.

Resource Implications

There would be significant resource implications required to support any future event, comparable to the resources dedicated to the 2010 events.

- 5.38. We would like to see the council engage young people in democracy through a spectrum of different community organisations and networks, including through schools, the Trunk, the Scouts and Girl Guides and youth clubs.

The Trunk

- 5.39. "The Trunk is a community recourse centre based in Charford that delivers a wide variety of community support and recourses across neighbourhoods through the Bromsgrove District". Debbie Roberts, Managing Director, Empowering People in Communities [EPIC]
- 5.40. Activities at the Trunk are another good way of engaging with young people. Club Youth at the Trunk has a youth committee which elects young people to certain roles, for example, to represent them on the EPIC Advisory Team. We suggest that the council seek to involve young people at the Trunk in local democracy projects and the Local Democracy Year Campaign.

- 5.41. **To find out more about the Trunk and EPIC see www.epic-se.co.uk**

Scouting for Democracy

- 5.42. The Scout Association has launched a campaign to encourage young people to vote. This year around 10,000 scouts will be old enough to vote for the first time in the General Election and the association set up a website to encourage them

and others to do so. The Scout Association's Active Citizen website explains why politics matters to young people, alongside advice on registering and volunteering and includes a forum for politicians to take part in online discussions with young voters. The association is also sending information by post to 50,000 members in an attempt to boost turnout.

5.43. "In scouting we believe it is extremely important for young people to engage in democracy. Every vote counts..... We not only want our young members to see why they should vote but how politics impacts on the causes and concerns that they have." Wayne Bulpitt, The Scout Association's UK Chief Commissioner²⁴.

5.44. **To find out more see www.activecitizens.net**

5.45. ***We suggest that the Scouts and Girl Guides be invited to participate in Local Democracy Year Campaign events.***

6 A Local Democracy Campaign

- 6.1. We would like to see an assertive campaign to promote local democracy in the run up to the local elections in 2011 and beyond, which engages the whole community and invites a spectrum of different community organisations to participate, including the college, the schools, parish councils and other community organisations. The Democracy Year Campaign should link together all the events for the promotion of democracy under a common banner that the public can identify with.

Recommendation Eleven

A Democracy Year Campaign

That there be a Democracy Year Campaign to link together all the events for democracy year under the banner of promoting and involving people in local democracy.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time and commitment will be required to co-ordinate and participate in the Democracy Year Campaign.

- 6.2. The Democracy Year Campaign should involve a range of different events and activities, including a programmed series of visits to secondary schools, Democracy Open Days for people to find out more about standing as a councillor, street theatre events, local democracy market stalls and stalls at parish events.
- 6.3. ***To find out about the Local Government Association's Local Democracy Campaign see www.localdemocracy.lga.gov.uk***

A Champion for Democracy

- 6.4. So that a Democracy Year Campaign can be taken forward both within the council and within the community we are recommending that an elected councillor be nominated a Democracy Champion for the period of the Democracy Year Campaign. This should be high profile, led from the council and yet totally non-party political. ***We suggest this role could be carried out by the Chairman of the Council. We also suggest that this role should continue in future years after the Democracy Year Campaign.***

<p><u>Recommendation Twelve</u> <i>A Democracy Champion</i> That a Member of the Council be nominated Democracy Champion for one year to champion local democracy.</p>
<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>No financial implications are envisaged.</p>
<p><u>Resource Implications</u></p> <p>No significant resource implications are envisaged.</p>

A Democracy Campaign Banner

- 6.5. The Democracy Year Campaign should visibly link together all of the events to promote democracy under a common banner that can easily be identified by the public, so we are recommending a Democracy Year Campaign emblem to be used on all banners and publicity for the Democracy Year Campaign. This could be designed by young people, or at any rate, with young people in mind.



<p><u>Recommendation Thirteen</u> <i>Democracy Campaign Emblem</i> That there be an emblem designed for the Democracy Year Campaign to be used as a part of a democracy year campaign and used on all communications for Democracy Year.</p>
<p><u>Financial Implications</u></p> <p>There are no direct financial implications arising.</p>
<p><u>Resource Implications</u></p> <p>Officer time will be required to design the emblem.</p>

Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group

- 6.6. In order to take forward the Democracy Year Campaign events to promote local democracy we are recommending a Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group. This should include the key council and community partners necessary to co-ordinate the events and make sure that all of the events fit together as a single campaign and are programmed appropriately throughout the year.

Recommendation Fourteen

Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group

That there be convened a Democracy Year Campaign steering group, to meet at least 4 times a year during 2010-2011, to co-ordinate the Democracy Year Campaign events and activities.

Financial Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to convene and attend the steering group meetings.

- 6.7. It is suggested that the Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group will have cross party representation and include the relevant portfolio holders, the Democracy Champion, representatives from the relevant council departments, and external partners, including representatives from the County Council, parish councils, the Artrix and NEW College and local schools.
- 6.8. ***We suggest that the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Engagement write to external partners including NEW College, Bromsgrove High Schools and the Artrix to invite them to nominate suitable representatives to participate in a Democracy Year Campaign Steering Group to co-ordinate events for Democracy Year 2010-2011.***

Democracy Year Events

- 6.9. We are proposing that the Democracy Year Campaign include a programmed series of events organised in co-operation with local community organisations and partners. It is envisaged that this will include incorporating the Democracy Year Campaign into events already within the Council and community events programmes, as well as a series of events to promote democracy and local democracy through the arts, films, street theatre, music etc.

Recommendation Fifteen

Celebrating Democracy

That Democracy Year include programmed events to concord with other relevant events in the Council events programme, including International Women's Day 2011, including a celebration of women's suffrage and the history of women's suffrage and Black History Month 2010 celebrating the history and achievements of the black civil rights movement in the USA, South Africa, the British Commonwealth and other parts of the world.

Financial Implications

On advice from Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, an extra £3000 will be required.

Resource Implications

Officer time may be required to co-ordinate and participate in the events.

- 6.10. It is envisaged that key note speakers be invited to speak on democracy at Democracy Year events including on International Women's Day and Black History Month.

Young Question Time

- 6.11. The Democracy Year Campaign could include a Question Time event for young people either in the schools or hosted by the District Council or other local venue, based along the same concept at the BBC TV programme. The Question Time panel could include members of the Schools Councils, elected Members of Bromsgrove District Council and the County Council, as well as other panellists of interest to young people, including young people themselves.

Parish Participation

- 6.12. We have engaged with parish councils both through the County Association of Local Councils and through speaking to parish councillors to ask for their views on how to improve community involvement in local democracy. We believe that parish councils should be key partners promote local democracy. So we are suggesting that the parishes are all formally invited to get involved in the Democracy Year Campaign and that local democratic arrangements are promoted at community events in the parishes not just in the town centres. It is hoped that the parish councils will play an enthusiastic and key role in the Democracy Year Campaign and that in turn this will help to improve the understanding of the role of the parishes and to encourage more people to stand for election at parish level.

Recommendation Sixteen

The Parish Perspective

That the Portfolio Holder for Community Cohesion and Engagement write to the Parish Councils to invite them to join in the Democracy Year Campaign in partnership with the district Council.

Financial Implications

No financial implications arising.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

Get Involved!

- 6.13. ***The council can provide the community leadership for a Democracy Year Campaign and to engage people in local democracy, but its success will depend upon people and organisations throughout the community getting involved and taking joint ownership in the civic life of their community.***
- 6.14. Democracy is not something that is done to us, it is something that we have to do and we hope that what we have started here will be able to gather momentum to galvanise people throughout the District to get involved and play their part as active citizens in the local community.

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Witnesses

Internal Witnesses

Councillors:

Cllr Geoff Denaro, Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Resources
Cllr Roger Smith Portfolio Holder for One Community (Including Community Engagement).

Officers:

Claire Felton - Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council
Anne-Marie Darroch - Communications and Customer First Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
Rebecca Dunne - Senior Corporate Policy & Performance Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Huw Mosely – Arts Development and Special Events Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Ms Susan Mould – Electoral Services Manager Electoral Shared Services for Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council
Sarah Sellers – Senior Solicitor, Bromsgrove District Council
Mr. Andy Stephens - Committee Services Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Fiona Scott - Equality Officer, Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services Bromsgrove District Council
Mr. D. Webley – ICT Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

External Witnesses and Partner Agencies

County Association of Local Councils (CALC)
Ms. Clare Baylis, Teacher Adviser for PSHE/Citizenship, Worcestershire County Council
Mrs Sue Baxter - Chairman of Wythall Parish Council
Mr. John Cypher - Chairman of Alvechurch Parish Council
Kim Joy Edmunds – Deafblind Services Co-ordinator, Sensory Impairment Team, Worcestershire County Council
Kirsty Fraser - Youth Voice Development Worker, Worcestershire County Council
Debbie Germany – Romany Roots
Patricia Hacket - Chair of the Equality and Diversity Forum
Amrit Johal - Extended Services, Worcestershire County Council
Mr. Peter John - Newsquest Stourbridge
Allie Jones - Cluster Manager - East Worcestershire Extended Services, Worcestershire County Council

Jenny Mundy – Youth Voice Support Worker, Worcestershire County Council
Claire Nock - Extended Services, Worcestershire County Council
Debbie Roberts, Managing Director, Empowering People in Communities
Mr Steve Skinner, Democratic Services, Manager and Deputy Returning Officer /
Deputy Electoral Registration Officer) at Redditch Borough Council.
Stephanie Sergeant, a blind service user
Helen Young – Community Support Services Manager, Sense, West Midlands.
Alex White (Chairman) and other members of the Worcester Youth Cabinet
Mr Andy Woods - Director of Artrix.

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Bromsgrove District Council **Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services**



Scrutiny Board **Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group**

MAY 2010

SCRUTINY BOARD

Supporting Officer: Amanda Scarce



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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FOREWORD

It is pleasing to know that over 80% of respondents in the Place Survey thought that the district of Bromsgrove was a great place to live and 79% of 65s and over were satisfied with their home and neighbourhood.

It was also reassuring that the survey has recognised the positive role that the District Council plays in ensuring that Bromsgrove residents enjoy a quality of life that is amongst the highest in the County.

Although these facts are cause for celebration and no small degree of pride, the perception is that only 34% of respondents were satisfied with the way in which the Council ran things.

Therefore the Task Group had a clear aim to 'drill' down into these results and explore these perceptions with an ultimate goal to specifically look at improving residents' satisfaction with services provided by the Council and to recommend actions that are acceptable to Cabinet and that will assist in moving the Council towards an "excellent" status.

The results were supported by the report 'Mind the Gap: Frontiers of Performance in local Government (V)', an analysis based on the findings of the Place Survey. This report produced a "predicted" level of satisfaction with key outcomes given the circumstances of a local area. By comparing these predicted levels to actual perceptions, a "gap" score is calculated which shows whether perceptions are more or less positive than would be expected given local circumstances. In the Council's case the "gap" for the way in which it operated was -15%.

Providing efficient effective services to residents across the district is a primary Council priority and is continually evolving. Meeting customer expectation can only be achieved through continual improvement and self assessment if Bromsgrove District Council is to improve residents' perception and satisfaction levels. This is particularly important in the light of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment performance regime, which provides a new framework where, local public services are collectively held to account for delivering improved outcomes for local people.

One of the improvements in the Council's administration is the willingness to look inward to ensure how its services can be improved and using the recommendations within this report will no doubt improve public perception further.

Councillor Steve Colella
Chairman of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The conclusions drawn from this extensive piece of research shows that improving residents' satisfaction is within the authority's gift but requires a strategic customer focused approach from all aspects of the Council's services and from both Members and officers. It is important for the Council to remember how far it has come in a short period of time. We are still suffering a "reputation hangover" from our past "poor" rating and from a range of difficult decisions we have had to take to help turn around the Council.

Having made most of the difficult decisions, the Council needs to continue its positive journey and start delivering more visible outcomes for our residents, combined with improved customer service and community engagement/communications. Diagrams 1 and 2 overleaf provide good examples of the interdependencies for delivering an improved reputation and increased satisfaction.

The report recommends a number of simple changes to how the Council promotes itself, but these must be supported by strategic service delivery that is more customer led, customer focused and delivers visible outcomes.

It also became clear that residents appreciate the direct interaction with Council staff, Portfolio Holders and Councillors. Being approachable and open gives added value to customer service and reflects the view that news travels fast, be it good or bad. Building a brand takes many years but it can instantly be destroyed.

Building pride in services begins with building pride with staff. Training, communication and enhancing identity are the main corner stones of the major high street retailers, something that is recommended for the Council to build on within this report.

From the investigations undertaken, it was clearly highlighted that the Council has not taken the opportunity to 'publicise' the work it already does in a more dynamic way. A prime example is recent tree works in the new cemetery and recognition of the excellent Sanders Park. Both examples of the highest professional management but to the passing resident they would be little or no recognition of the Council's role in them.

Street cleaning, sports events, grounds maintenance and litter collection are celebrated Council services all with high public interactions and along with its role within schools, Parish Councils and County Council partnerships demonstrate the involvement in the everyday life of the district's residents.

The Place Survey is a national indicator and as such is an important "yard stick". This should be underpinned with 'local' surveys of service delivery, for both internal and external customers. Knowing your customers and their needs is self perpetuating and leads to self improvement.

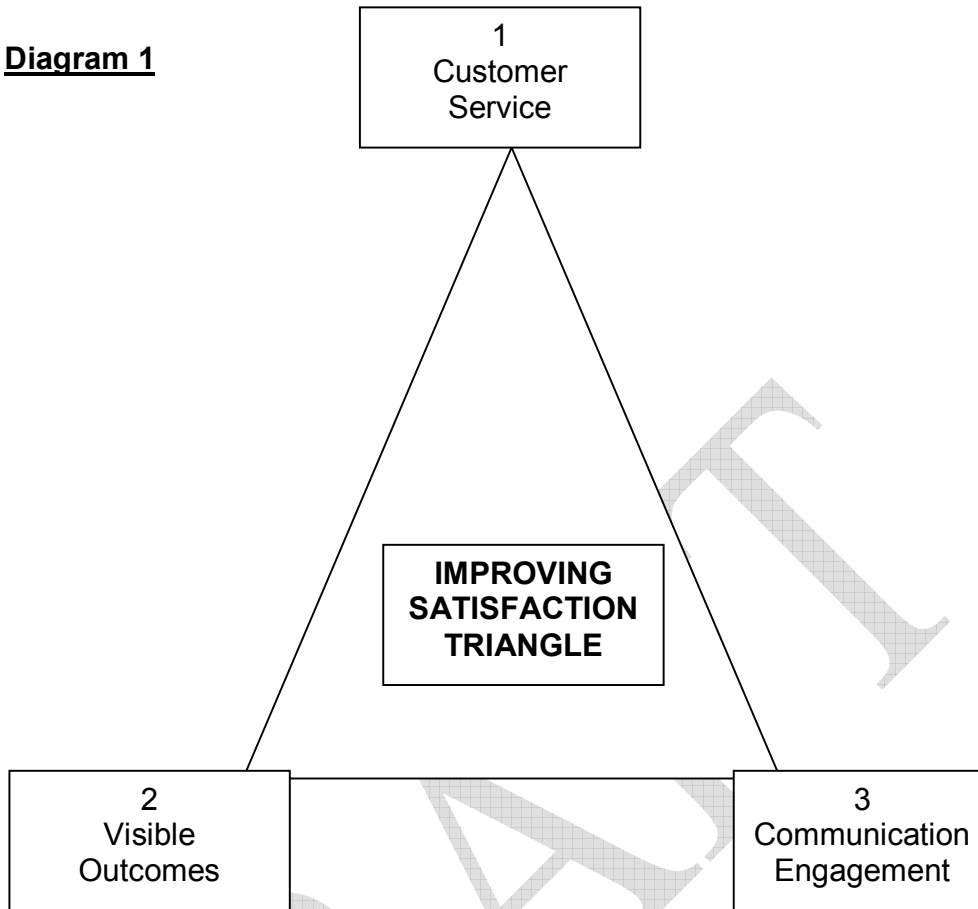
It is also clear that nothing in the recommendations adds significant costs to the Council's expenditure and much of the likely costs are embedded in current budgets. Working smarter is a primary requirement at a time of budget constraint whilst still recognising the importance of delivering excellent services.

Improving residents' satisfaction is not one person's responsibility but depends on every staff member of the Council recognising their role in service delivery, whether they are front line or back office support and how the Council communicates with its stakeholders.

Finally it is hoped that the recommendations made in this report are clear and achievable and will be universally embraced. It is clear that the first steps have been taken by the scrutiny of the Place Survey results and a willingness to look inward by Bromsgrove District Council.

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Diagram 1



**1
Customer Service**

e.g.

Customer First Parts 4, 5, 6 Training
Customer Service Excellence Accreditation
Project Management

**2
Visible Outcomes**

e.g.

Railway Station development
Town Centre re-development
Car Parking
Wide range of retail outlets

**3
Communication/ Engagement**

e.g.

Published programme of engagement
Re-launch of brand
Older People's Service Directory
Children & Young People magazine
More out of town communications
Value for Money Campaign
Community groups engagement

Diagram 2

The Task Group was provided with background information on key marketing principles and how applying those principles could help the Council satisfy residents. The area that the Task Group felt was of most interest to them was the 4P's which, was part of the scope of the complete marketing mix.

The "Marketing Mix"

Product Managing products. Developing new products. Identifying products to customers (i.e. branding). Presenting products to customers (i.e. physical appearance).	Place Organising of products and their added value. Customer care/service. Organising actual delivery of product.
Price Determining product price levels. Incentives to buy products. Contractual arrangements.	Promotion Advertising and promoting products. PR and communications. Relationship marketing.

The interesting thing to note is that promotion is only one of the four Ps of the marketing mix. In order to market something well (and therefore improve our reputation and perception) we also need to ensure we price at the right level for our customers, produce a product that they want (based on customer engagement/market research) and place the product correctly. In local government speak, place is akin to customer access, ensuring we provide access channels or services in such a way that is best for our customer.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

PLACE SURVEY ANALYSIS

The bi-annual Place Survey was used as the primary evidence to establish the Council's current standing in terms of meeting residents' expectations and how this is reflected in terms of satisfaction with Bromsgrove District Council's services.

Recommendation 1

That Cabinet understand that achieving a high level of satisfaction is a combination of visible outcomes, good customer service, regular and clear communication and public engagement and requires all aspects of the Council to be fully committed and working to the same outcomes.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications arising from this.

Recommendation 2

That MORI be invited to present the findings of the Place Survey to Corporate Management Team, Officers and all Members to demonstrate what are the current perceptions of the Council's services, where they stand in relation to councils with similar demographic and geographic characteristics and where the Council should actually be.

Financial Implications

£1,250 (+ VAT)

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

THEORY AND BEST PRACTICE ON SATISFACTION

The Task Group recognised the improvements that the Council had achieved in a relatively short space of time to turn around its overall performance. This achievement has been positively reflected in subsequent Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) reports, official recognition that the Council has come out of engagement and moved to "fair" council status.

A status of “excellence” requires a co-ordinated approach to the next level of service delivery. In many ways the Council is getting there already, however, from the research on the theory of marketing and building brands it was apparent to the Members of the Task Group that positive and regular communication played a vital role in both maintaining and improving residents’ satisfaction and raising the perception of the services delivered.

Recommendation 3

That a small corporate working group (officers) be set up to support the delivery of corporate communications in a standard style for the Council's priority campaigns and develop closer working with the lead teams so that the Communications Team are more involved from the beginning of campaigns.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to support this working group.

Recommendation 3(a)

That the Council ensures it receives credit for its work through strict brand management and enforced brand and style guidelines.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

Recommendation 4

That internal communication is kept high on the agenda, particular in the light of the shared services and strict budget control. This should also include the regular communication of the Council's achievements to staff.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

Recommendation 4(a)

That in order to improve residents’ satisfaction with the Council's services regular newsletters be provided to Parish Councils and businesses and Portfolio Holders along with Officers playing a greater visible role in their area of customer interface.

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to support this.

Recommendation 4(b)

That a web design style is created that is user friendly and embraces the principles of writing in “plain English”.

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required in order to implement this recommendation.

LOCAL PRACTICE AND LOCAL ISSUES

The Task Group looked at Streetscene and Community Services (the biggest department within the Council) and Customer Service, to identify measures that could be taken in order to enhance customer satisfaction.

It was again clear that the Council “under sells” its achievements and there are many quick and easy wins that can be done at little or no cost. Being proud of the every day services provided and letting the customer know who is behind them is the basis of good customer service, regularly demonstrated in the retail trade. From this point forward being satisfied with this and overall Council services becomes subliminal. Equally a bad experience in one service affects the overall perception of the Council, its staff and Members, even if they are totally unrelated.

Recommendation 5

That a review of the use of the Council’s crest and Building Pride logo be carried out in order to increase their usage and promote the message behind them throughout all Council departments and services.

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required in order to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

That the Communications Team work more closely with Cabinet, through the Communications Plan in order to identify any difficult decisions at an early stage in order to involve residents as soon as possible.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required in order to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 7

That the Council Aim for Excellence with Customer Service, to include Customer First parts 4, 5 and 6 and by providing the relevant training to all staff.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost of the award is £5,000.

Resource Implications

The new single management team will take account of this with the appointment of the new Head of Customer Service.

Recommendation 7 (a)

That the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnership and the new Head of Customer Service work together to co-ordinate detailed customer feedback on services from both external and internal customers, which will enable the Council to understand how they are doing, what they must do better, why particular services are not used or why customers may have stopped using the service.

Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

The new single management team will take account of this with the appointment of the new Head of Customer Service.

MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP

Membership of the Task Group was confirmed at the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th November 2009 and was made up of the following Councillors:

S. R. Colella (Chairman)
Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths
D. Hancox
Ms. H. J. Jones
C. R. Scurrall
C. J. Tidmarsh

The Task Group wishes to acknowledge the assistance received from the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and his team, who have helped the Task Group from the start of the investigations and all the way through to the end of the investigation when this report was finalised.

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE TASK GROUP

At the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 27th October 2009, it was decided a Task Group would be established to scrutinise issues relating to improving residents' satisfaction with the Council. Councillor S. R. Colella was also appointed as Chairman of the Task Group at this meeting.

The Task Group's terms of reference were approved by the Board at its meeting held on 24th November 2009. The full terms of reference are attached at **Appendix 1**. The Task Group was given 4 months (from the date of its first meeting) to complete its work.

Following publication of the results of the Place Survey 2008/09 conducted on behalf of the Audit Commission and a key tool for measuring satisfaction and perception, it was apparent that although residents were satisfied with the local area, this was not the case when asked if they were satisfied with the Council.

The aim of the task group was therefore to improve residents' satisfaction with the Council.

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INTRODUCTION

The aim of this Task Group was to identify ways in which the Council could achieve higher levels of satisfaction amongst local residents. Residents' should be the main Council priority and Members felt there was a need to investigate the underlying reasons why some residents appeared to be "dissatisfied" and recommend ways in which the Council can improve both residents' perception of council services and their satisfaction levels. This was felt particularly important in the light of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) performance indications, which give greater focus and importance to these outputs.

Witnesses

The Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group worked closely with the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the following officers provided the Task Group with information on specific areas; the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, Communications and Customer First Manager, Marketing Officer, Senior Corporate Policy & Performance Officer.

Information was also provided by –

Ms. Fiona Narburgh, Head of Strategy and Communications (Wychavon District Council)

Mr. Peter John, Publisher (Stourbridge Division of Newsquest)

Mr. Bob Poston, Chairman (Rubery PACT)

Research

Task Group Members were provided with the following documentation –

Ipsos MORI Place Survey 2008/2009 carried out on behalf of the Audit Commission and a key tool for measuring satisfaction and perception.

Wychavon District Council Communications Strategy 2009/10 and Campaign Strategies 2009/10. As a neighbouring authority and with a similar demographic and geographical make-up, these documents were used as part of a benchmarking and comparison exercise.

Selby District Council Communications Strategy 2009/11. As a District Council with an excellent rating the Council have used Selby in the past for benchmarking our services and on this occasion were used as part of a comparison exercise.

Bromsgrove District Council Communications Strategy Review 2009/10. The Task Group compared the Council's Communications Strategy with that of excellent rated councils.

Areas Covered

There were a total of five Task Group meetings. During the first meeting a schedule of work was devised and the scoping checklist was considered and the following areas of investigation were agreed:

- Place Survey Analysis (to include a literature search and comparative analysis with Wychavon District Council and Selby District Council and segment analysis by age and economic group)
- Theory and Best Practice on Satisfaction (including a review and comparison of communication strategies, theory on marketing and an overview of the Mosaic tool)
- Local Practice and Local Issues (Customer Service including improvements that could enhance customer satisfaction and Leisure and Cultural Services including enhancement of customer satisfaction)

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CHAPTER 1 - PLACE SURVEY ANALYSIS

The Council's 2008/09 Place Survey results, published in June 2009, are highly mixed. For certain issues, such as reducing aspects of crime and anti-social behaviour, and general satisfaction with the area, the District has shown substantial improvements and it outperforms Worcestershire overall in several areas, such as health and community cohesion. However, there has been a general decline in satisfaction with the Council and with the services it offers, often putting current satisfaction ratings lower than the average for all Districts surveyed by Ipsos MORI.

Bromsgrove is a good place to live. It is relatively wealthy, mostly rural, has good transport links, good quality schools and a Council that is officially recognised as improving. The 2008/09 Place Survey results show that whilst 81.2% of residents are satisfied with their local area; over the last 3 years satisfaction with the Council has fallen from 51% (2006/07) to 34% (2008/09).

The 34% level of satisfaction is 12 percentage points lower than the district council average of 46%. This very low level of satisfaction is supported by a range of other disappointing measures, for example the percentage of residents who think the Council delivers value for money is 23%, compared to a district average of 36%, 31% feeling informed about council services, compared to a district average of 38%.

The Council should be concerned about these figures. Whilst the Council has done well to improve its Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) rating from "poor" to "fair", CPA has now been replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). MORI believe that CAA represents "a fundamental shift in emphasis" away from output measure, to measure of outcome and perceptions, about how people feel about the place in which they live. Eighteen of the new National Indicators (NIs) are now perception or satisfaction indicators, measured through the Place Survey. If the Council aspires to excellence, then it must understand how to influence these measures.

In January 2010 Ipsos MORI published a further report, "Mind the Gap". The aim of this report was to look at the Place Survey results and apply some contextual information to give an estimate of how well a local authority should have done within the Place Survey; a ranking was then produced based on what percentages should have been achieved. Based on this information MORI say that the Council should have scored the following:

Satisfaction with the local area		
Actual score 81%	MORI 86%	Gap -5%
Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things		
Actual score 34%	MORI 49%	Gap -15%
Agreement that the Council offers value for money		
Actual score 24%	MORI 36%	Gap -12%

It is clear from these figures that residents do not relate their satisfaction with the area to anything which the Council does.

MORI does identify things we can do:

- **Local services really matter to a sense of place** (by local services, MORI invariably mean services provided by district councils).
- **Understand and target local priorities** (the Audit Commission scored the Council 3 out of 4 for prioritisation in the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment, which suggests the Council is doing well on this, but the MORI report also suggests that the Council look to use increasing numbers of measures which matter to its customers, rather than central government measures).
- **Communicate what councils are doing** and proactively seek views (MORI note that no councils rated well on communications are rated poorly overall. MORI also note that it must be “better communications that reach a much wider group”, which may be a particular problem in Bromsgrove District, given the local paper coverage across the District is fragmented. MORI also suggest that partnerships need to examine their respective communications and engagement programmes).
- **Parenting and respect** MORI note that focusing on young people and family/parental support seems to “yield particular dividends in resident satisfaction”. The Council was considering a young people’s equivalent to Together Bromsgrove, but the economic climate and expected reductions in revenue meant this budget bid was not successful.
- **Targeting individual neighbourhoods** (finally, the report identified that the Place Survey data was not sufficient for ward level analysis, but analysis at a sub-district level was possible and that this should be mapped. There are tools available for this analysis in the market). The mapping tool offered by MORI costs £3,000 and enables councils to overlay data on different areas and identify whether, for example, an area of low satisfaction has particularly low satisfaction with ASB, but higher levels of satisfaction with being informed, which would suggest a focus on the former.

The Council needs to understand what drives perception and satisfaction and focus on these. In the tightening financial climate this makes even more sense, as the ability to deliver new services will be reduced or severely hindered. MORI identify that many of the variations between levels of satisfaction with an area and with a council are beyond the Council’s control, for example, deprivation, ethnicity, how young the population is etc. Bromsgrove District has a noticeable

statistical anomaly in that its older people seem relatively less satisfied than neighbouring districts in Worcestershire.

There are drivers of perception over which the Council has direct control or some influence. These include: area satisfaction, crime and liveability (ASB, open spaces, waste collection, car parks), how the Council delivers services (customer service and equalities) and information to residents. MORI recommend a focus on “highly visible issues” and on information, rather than community engagement.

Despite the Council’s clear improvement in recent years, it has had a difficult recent past, both in terms of performance and Member/Member relations. The Council has also had a recent history of taking difficult political decisions, for example, increasing car parking charges, charging for green waste and closing the museum. It is inevitable that these “highly visible issues” will feed through into the satisfaction with the Council. These decisions have been important to re-align the budget to the Council priorities, but the Council has yet to deliver highly visible outcomes on our new priorities e.g. the town centre, train station or climate change etc.

Improved communications will help, but improving the Council’s satisfaction rating is more fundamental than improved communications. The Council needs a better story to communicate.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 1

That Cabinet understand that achieving a high level of satisfaction is a combination of visible outcomes, good customer service, regular, clear communication and public engagement and requires all aspects of the Council to be fully committed and working to the same outcomes.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

There are no resource implications arising from this.

Recommendation 2

That MORI be invited to present the findings of the Place Survey to Corporate Management Team, Officers and all Members to demonstrate what are the current perceptions of the Council’s services, where they stand in relation to councils with similar demographic and geographic characteristics and where the Council should actually be.

Financial Implications

£1,250 (+ VAT)

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

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CHAPTER 2 - THEORY AND BEST PRACTICE ON SATISFACTION

Task Group Members requested a review and comparison of BDC's communications strategy with that of "excellent" councils, together with information on key marketing principles and how applying those principles could help BDC's objective of improving residents' satisfaction. Members also felt it would be useful to have an overview of the Mosaic Tool.

Communications Strategy Review

Selby District Council (SDC) and Wychavon District Council (WDC) were ranked 'excellent' under CPA and since the new CAA scores were announced, Selby has still maintained its position in the top ranking. As a neighbouring authority and with a similar demographic and geographical make-up WDC provided a good benchmarking opportunity. As Ipsos MORI suggested a link between how informed residents were and a Council's subsequent CPA/CAA ranking, a comparison of the communications strategy with those of WDC and SDC was felt to be useful.

Whilst BDC's strategy mirrors a lot that WDC and SDC do, it appears that the basics are right using less resource. BDC's strategy was robust, covered a wide range of areas and subjects and boasted detailed operational action plans. WDC and SDC's strategic communications plans were shorter and less detailed, and did not contain action plans. The difference seemed to be that at those councils all communications are managed centrally, in a single strategic context. Operational tactics and actions come in a level down from that strategic context but are then passed back through the centralised communications for delivery to the customer. The management of communications at BDC was not the same, with several interlinked but autonomous departmental communications strategies in place. This fragmented approach still had a single impact and that was on the reputation and image of the Council. If the message is not delivered correctly it is seemed to be 'implausible' or even 'dishonest' putting the Council into further disrepute.

From both of these strategies there are some useful actions which can be implemented, for example:

- Targeted newsletters
- Reaching out to 'out of town' centres
- Design and create information stands and expand on road shows and community events.
- Promote and establish a standardised centralised communications strategy through a small CMT working group

Most importantly the creation of a consistent and timely communications strategy that all departments fed into and adhered to would be imperative to enhance the Council's reputation and so residents' satisfaction. This would become even

more prevalent as the Council moves forward with the Shared Services Agenda with Redditch Borough Council.

Marketing Communications

From the information provided to the Task Group it was noticeable that the matter of improving satisfaction levels was a key marketing issue and National Indicators (NI) were obviously a key measure of the Council's success. The Council scored well and above national benchmarks on NIs, which means that addressing dissatisfaction with the Council's performance was not necessarily connected to improving actual performance but was more of a perception issue.

In terms of the Council's corporate profile, BDC worked to ensure the local press profile indicator (LPI - CCP12) was as positive as possible. The Council was overwhelmingly successful in this regard. Between April and December of 2009 less than 8% of actual press articles related to BDC were negative in nature, disregarding the almost universally negative letters pages (which were measured against a different NI). The majority of the 8% negative stories were politically motivated rather than actual service issues.

A measured strategic approach to wider consultation and public engagement would ensure more effective resource management and begin to breakdown difficult to reach audiences and dilute the suspicion that exists in certain quarters. This is achievable by utilising the wide variety of media channels, events and customer interfaces in conjunction with a more visible staff, CMT and Portfolio relationship with residents. A particularly strong message that came from witnesses was how important it was to see senior officers, staff and Portfolio Holders on the 'shop floor', 'front of house' or 'walking the floor'.

Co-ordinating marketing and communications around key decisions within Council plans at the earliest opportunity would alleviate and tackle the view that the Council tells the public what has happened rather than asking what should happen. Throughout the Task Group's work a clear message emerged. By simply informing residents or stakeholder what was going to happen results in wide spread misunderstanding and criticism. By explaining the issue in more detail and involving the residents or stakeholders at an early stage, gives them a greater understanding and acceptance of the decision making process. There are many benefits to be had from the Council bringing people in and working through disagreements and misconceptions early on, allowing them to understand how people feel and acting appropriately.

Overview of the Mosaic Tool

The Task Group were provided with information on Mosaic Public Sector which is a classification system that provides a comprehensive, up-to-date and needs based view of society down to a household level, enabling policy decisions, communications and resources to be targeted and applied where most relevant or effective. Data comes from a wide range of public and private sources and is

updated annually, giving greater insight into the nature and needs of residents. It is also a widely used classification across the public sector, which allowed for residents to be viewed in the same way by different bodies, which will assist joined-up and partnership working.

In the Council Plan 2010-13 a high priority budget bid was successful, which will enable the Corporate Communications Team to purchase Mosaic for 1 year. In Mosaic, the Council will have access to a valuable tool for understanding the demographic of its district(s) which will have a positive effect on service delivery and public perception and satisfaction. It will assist in providing value for money through cost savings or channel shifts, as service development, communications and policy will be able to utilise up-to-date and segmented information, which will be crucial in implementing potential budget changes.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 3

That a small corporate working group (officers) to be set up to support the delivery of corporate communications in a standard style for the Council's priority campaigns and develop closer working with the lead teams so that the Communications Team are more involved from the beginning of campaigns.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to support this group.

Recommendation 3(a)

That the Council ensures it receives credit for its work through strict brand management and enforced brand and style guidelines.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to ensure this recommendation is carried through.

Recommendation 4

That internal communication is kept high on the agenda, particular in the light of the shares services and strict budget control. This should also include the regular communication of the Council's achievements to staff.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

No significant resource implications are envisaged.

Recommendation 4(a)

That in order to improve residents' satisfaction with the Council's services regular newsletters be provided to Parish Councils and businesses and Portfolio Holders along with Officers playing a greater visible role in their area of customer interface.

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required to support this.

Recommendation 4(b)

That a web design style is created that is user friendly and embraces the principals of writing in "plain English".

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required in order to implement this recommendation.

CHAPTER 3 - LOCAL PRACTICE AND LOCAL ISSUES

The Task Group looked at Streetscene and Community Services (the biggest department within the Council) and Customer Service to identify measures that could be taken in order to enhance customer satisfaction.

The Task Group was informed that the Council had previously been focused on moving from a “poor” to “fair” rating. This has meant that it had concentrated on corporate governance, systems, procedures and budget management, none of which were of particular interest to residents. It was expected that the Council would have these in place as a matter of course. In essence, 10 years of bad news had been compressed into 3 years. The Council was now progressing well and receiving positive feedback, had reached a period where it had the opportunity to build on that reputation and image because much of the bad news has now been dealt with. Although it is important for the Council to remember how far it had come in a short period of time, it must demonstrate continued forward motion and learn from the past. The Council was now “ahead of the game” in terms of its financial management with cost savings and efficiencies through the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier system (WETT) and Shared Services. A firm platform has been created from which to deliver a programme of visible changes that are likely to improve satisfaction, in the long term.

Taking the authority towards a status of excellence and improved customer satisfaction will require support and direction from a recognised customer service standard. This will include working towards the Customer Service Excellence award, which will drive a culture of excellence within the organisation and provide ongoing training, which will involve Customer First parts 4, 5 and 6.

From the information provided to the Task Group and from listening to various witnesses, it was apparent that the Council needs to interact more with residents. This could involve the production of an Engagement Planner which will include priorities, deliverables and budgetary requirements, and allow the authority to identify potential problems and engage with residents at an earlier stage in the decision making process. The Council could also be much clearer with residents as to how they can get involved. The Council will shortly be producing an Older People’s Services directory and should look at producing a similar directory or magazine for Children and Young People or make greater use of local media (radio and newspaper ‘wrap rounds’ etc) to cover current issues and provide relevant information for residents. It was also noted that face to face contact with residents’ was one of the most effective ways of changing perception, for example stalls in the high street and using the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust bus to take information out into the rural areas more frequently would be an excellent way of reaching the “wider audience”.

The current Communication Plan that is considered by the Corporate Management Team should be reviewed to take account of campaigns in the future which will then give a greater opportunity to plan in advance.

Members of the Task Group were advised that they should be cautious of surveys which asked questions about services provided as often people responded negatively even if they did not use the service. A good example of this related to the use of the Dolphin Centre, the Sport England Active Places survey showed a 55% satisfaction rate with people who used the services, which is higher than the Place Survey, as it was specific to people who used the facility and again when a survey was completed by the Dolphin Centre itself this increased to over 80%.

The Task Group recognised this as an excellent way of measuring customer (resident or user) satisfaction and recommends that a similar approach be adopted throughout the authority to measure the service delivery between both internal and external customers. Once measured this allows further enhancements to training or system appraisal.

It was felt that it would be appropriate for a piece of work to be carried out, across the authority, on understanding why people do not use some services in order to maximise attendance or use of services and improve satisfaction further. Members were also advised that residents in other areas of the district would, particularly in respect of leisure facilities, not always use facilities provided by BDC and therefore they may be commenting negatively on a survey for BDC about a service which BDC had not provided. It is therefore important that the authority recognises the need for localised survey and intelligence information.

The Task Group therefore recommend the following:

Recommendation 5

That a review of the use of the Council's crest and Building Pride logo be carried out in order to increase their usage and promote the message behind them throughout all Council departments and services.

Financial Implications

No significant financial implications are envisaged.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required in order to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 6

That the Communications Team work more closely with Cabinet, through the Communications Plan in order to identify any difficult decisions at an early stage in order to involve residents as soon as possible.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

Officer time will be required in order to implement this recommendation.

Recommendation 7

That the Council aim for Excellence with Customer Service, to include Customer First parts 4, 5 and 6 and by providing the relevant training to all staff.

Financial Implications

The estimated cost of the award is £5,000.

Resource Implications

The new single management team will take account of this with the appointment of the new Head of Customer Service.

Recommendation 7 (a)

That the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships and the new Head of Customer Service work together to co-ordinate detailed customer feedback on services from both external and internal customers, which will enable the Council to understand how they are doing, what they must do better, why particular services are not used or why customers may have stopped using the service.

Financial Implications

There are no significant financial implications arising from this.

Resource Implications

The new single management team will take account of this with the appointment of the new Head of Customer Service.

CONCLUSION

The role of the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group was:

- To carry out a scrutiny exercise to explore options to improve residents' perception of and satisfaction with the Council and the services it provides;
 - This was successfully achieved with a recommendation to enhance the reputation of the Council through wider public engagement and consultation with a particular emphasis on a corporate buy-in and re-building the 'pride' logo throughout the authority's services.
- To understand why there is a 15% gap in the satisfaction rate with the Council even when inflated for local circumstances;
 - It has been recognised that the Council has 'suffered' in the perception stakes because of the difficult decisions taken over the last 5 or 6 years.
- To consider whether the Council was concerned about the low level of satisfaction?
 - The recent changes to how the Council is measured against its peers mean that there is an absolute need for the authority to strive towards excellent status. Recent experience of a failing Council is still very clear and is still a regular reminder from its critics.
- If they are, produce a programme that delivers an improved satisfaction level in a way that the Council know will have an impact.
 - This will be through delegated duties to the CMT who will cascade the recommendations down through all levels of the Council and equally through all Portfolio Holders and Cabinet. An update will be reported back to the Task Group and Overview and Scrutiny Boards as part of the annual update.

Bibliography

1. Place Survey 2008/2009

The Council has recently received the results of the national Place Survey, conducted on behalf of the Audit Commission and a key tool for measuring satisfaction and perception.

2. Ipsos MORI Local People, Perceptions and Place (June 2009)

This is a national report on the initial Place Survey results.

3. The State of Worcestershire

This is a more specific report by MORI on the results for the six districts and County Council in Worcestershire.

4. Mind the Gap: Frontiers of Performance in Local Government V

Analyses based on the findings of the 2008/09 Place Surveys. This report applied contextual information to give an estimate of where a local authority should be within the Place Survey; a ranking was then produced based on what percentages should have been achieved.

5. Wychavon District Council Communications Strategy 2009/10

6. Wychavon District Council Campaign Strategies 2009/10

As a neighbouring authority and with a similar demographic and geographical make-up, this was used as part of a benchmarking exercise.

7. Selby District Council Communications Strategy 2009/11

As a District Council with an excellent rating we have used Selby in the past for benchmarking our services.

8. Bromsgrove District Council Communications Strategy Review 2009/10

IMPROVING RESIDENTS' SATISFACTION TASK GROUP

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE TASK GROUP

The attached scrutiny exercise scoping checklist, which will act as the Improving Residents' Satisfaction Task Group's terms of reference, was approved by the Scrutiny Board, as follows:

- An understanding of the statistics behind the current levels of satisfaction
- An understanding of good practice in delivery and high levels of satisfaction
- Understand the causes of dissatisfaction for particular customer segments
- Identify solutions based on further research

DRAFT



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EXERCISE SCOPING CHECKLIST

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

- Topic: **Improving Residents' Satisfaction**

- Specific subject areas to be investigated:

- An understanding of the statistics behind the current levels of satisfaction
- An understanding of good practice in delivery and high levels of satisfaction
- Understand the causes of dissatisfaction for particular customer segments
- Identify solutions based on further research

- Possible key outcomes:

(i.e. please state what Members hope to achieve through this investigation):

- A set of recommendations based on the segments looked at that would identify priorities
- A possible corporate marketing plan
- A possible approach to be used continually
- To improve resident satisfaction over the medium term

- Should the relevant Portfolio Holder(s) be invited to give evidence? **YES**

- Which officers should be invited to give evidence?

(Please state name of officer and/or job title)

This would be dependent upon initial literature search and outcomes of investigation.

- Should any external witnesses be invited to give evidence?

YES/NO*

If so, who and from which organisations?

To be identified as the investigation progresses.

- What key documents/data/reports will be required?

Place Survey, Customer Panel, Focus Groups, National Comparative Statistics and Reports, Complaints system data, Ward data

- Is it anticipated that any site visits will be required? **YES/NO ***
If so, where should members visit?

It may emerge through the literature search that a visit is relevant.

- Should a period of public consultation form part of the exercise? **YES**
If so, on what should the public be consulted?

This will be done through the use of a focus group or similar resource.

(Please Note: A separate press release requesting general comments/suggestions from the public will be issued in the normal way at the beginning of the investigation.)

- Have other authorities carried out similar overview and scrutiny exercises? **NO**
If so, which authorities?

- Will the investigation cross the District boundary?
YES/NO*
If so, should any other authorities be invited to participate?
YES/NO*
If yes, please state which authorities:

There may be some overlap with services provide at county level.

- Would it be appropriate to co-opt anyone on to the Task Group/Board whilst the Overview and Scrutiny exercise is being carried out? **NO**
If so, who and from which organisations?

- What do you anticipate the timetable will be for the Overview and Scrutiny exercise?

It is anticipated that the investigation will take 4 months.

WITNESSES

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

External Witnesses:

- Ms. Fiona Narburgh Head of Strategy and Communications (Wychavon District Council)
- Mr. Peter John Publisher (Stourbridge Division of Newsquest)
- Mr. Bob Poston Chairman (Rubery PACT)

Internal Witnesses:

- Hugh Bennett Director Of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
- John Godwin Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
- Anne-Marie Darroch Communications and Customer First Manager

Councillors:

- G. N. Denaro Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources
- R. Smith Portfolio Holder for One Community

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**This report can be provided
in large print, braille, CD, audio tape
and computer disc.**



Bromsgrove
District Council

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EQUALITY
FRAMEWORK
FOR LOCAL
GOVERNMENT
ACHIEVING

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1AA.

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Appendix

VFM Efficiencies 2009-10

APPENDIX 1

	Ongoing 2008/09 £'000	New Efficiencies 2009/10 £'000	Total Ongoing Efficiencies £'000	Outturn Efficiency 2009/10 £'000
<u>SAVINGS IDENTIFIED</u>				
<u>Council Wide</u>				
Alternative methods of service delivery	19	75	94	94
Improved procurement - printing & stationery	15	0	15	15
Paper savings	20	0	20	20
Pertemps contract	12	0	12	12
Office depot	1	0	1	1
Premiere people	12	0	12	12
Income from procurement officer	26	0	26	24
Purchase of second hand vehicle	0	60	60	60
Childcare	14	0	14	14
Insurance Saving	0	61	61	61
Sale of Industrial Units	0	10	10	10
OD support to Redditch	0	8	8	7
	119	214	333	330
<u>Legal and Democratic</u>				
Share of Equalities and Diversity with Redditch	0	4	4	4
	0	4	4	4
<u>E-Government</u>				
Share disaster recovery with Redditch	0	0	0	0
	0	0	0	0
<u>Planning and Environment</u>				
Savings from advertising	20	0	20	20
Additional income from licensing	0	10	10	5
Saving on stationery	0	4	4	4
	20	14	34	29
<u>Financial Services</u>				
Accountancy Restructure	0	41	41	41
Benefits additional claims processed	0	65	65	65
Audit Restructure	0	27	27	10
	0	133	133	116
<u>Street Scene & Community</u>				
Framework contract - play areas - capital cost reduction	5	5	10	5
Additional gym income to target	0	100	100	100
Framework contract - play areas - staff time savings	3	3	6	3
Catering at Dolphin Centre - Improved Contract Processes	0	22	22	22
Restructure Dolphin Centre	0	50	50	50
Service reviews - Grounds Maintenance and Street Cleansing	0	44	44	44
Street Scene & Comm merging service (reduction in admin	23	0	23	23
	31	224	255	247
Total Efficiency Savings	170	589	759	726

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Capital Carry Forward Request from 2009-10 to 2010-11

Scheme Name	Carry Forward Amount £
Alterations to Council Buildings	36,000
Remedial work to Council Buildings	50,000
Internet/ Intranet Development	3,000
Government Connect Scheme	1,000
Spatial Project	1,000
Spatial Project Phase 2	5,000
Councillors Remote Access	4,000
Increase Bandwidth for Internet Link	10,000
ICT Shared Services- Phase 1	69,000
Improvements to Depot Site	5,000
Vehicle Replacement Programme- Street Cleaning	21,000
Vehicle Replacement Programme- Garage	5,000
Co Mingled Delivery	51,000
Repairs and Maintenance of Bridges	33,000
Disabled Facilities Grant	85,000
Discretionary Home Repair Assistance	33,000
Grants To RSLs - Low Cost Housing/ Shared Ownership	50,000
Improvements To Houndsfield Lane Site	1,000
Grants to owners in Multiple Occupation	2,000
Choiced Based Lettings	5,000
Town Centre Development	70,000
Energy Efficiency Grants- Home Insulation Project	18,000
Low Carbon - Renewable Energy Grants	8,000
Barnsley Hall- new play area	7,000
Wythall Teenage Sports Facility	11,000
New Park at Barnsley Hall- Football Pitches	215,000
District Wide Sports- Meadow Park/ Harris Brush	50,000
District Wide Sports- Barnsley Hall	45,000
District Wide Sports- St Chads Park	15,000
District Wide Sports- Braces Lane	20,000
District Wide Sports- Aston Fields Recreation Ground	15,000
PCN5 Lifeline	54,000
Briar Close Play Area	28,000
Lickey Recreation Grounds	1,000
Parks and Cemeteries	15,000
C.C.T.V Shared Services contribution	150,000
Total	1,192,000

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APPENDIX 3

Annual Governance Statement

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

To this effect, the Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4 (2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 in relation to the publication of a statement of internal control.

Purpose of the Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes and culture and values for the direction and control of the Council and its activities, through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. Our governance framework enables us to monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can only provide reasonable (not absolute) assurances of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our policies, aims and objectives. Through it we evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact, should they be realised, to enable us to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Governance Framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended March 2010 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

The Governance Environment

Purpose and Vision

A clear statement of the Council's purpose, vision and priorities for the next three years is set out in the Council Plan 2010/13. For each priority there are clear outcomes for residents and service users, together with identified actions that will deliver the vision. These are translated into more specific aims and objectives through the Council's Improvement Plan and each department's service business plan. Progress against the Council Plan's targets and actions are monitored monthly at Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and the Performance Management Board. In addition key projects are managed through the Project Management Board and the Transformational project Board.

The Council's vision, priorities and strategic key deliverables are developed through the production of the Council Plan Part One report, which is reported to Cabinet, Performance Management Board, Scrutiny and Full Council in September each year. This report brings together the national, regional and local agenda, in terms of policy, performance and customer feedback, and sets out the recommended priorities and strategic key deliverables for the year ahead, so that they provide a strategic framework for setting the Council's budget.

Partnership Working

The Council is committed to improving the effectiveness of partnership working. Partnership working is one of the Council's four values. The Council strongly believes that in order to meet the aspirations of its residents, it is critical that the three tiers of local government and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations work together on shared objectives.

The Council has established a local strategic partnership, the Bromsgrove Partnership. The Bromsgrove Partnership has a Board, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and is made up of representatives from the three tiers of local government, the voluntary sector, commercial sector and main public agencies e.g. Police, health etc. The Bromsgrove Partnership has a Governance Framework and a Performance Management Framework.

The key document produced by the Bromsgrove Partnership is its Sustainable Community Strategy, which is in effect, the 10 year vision for the District and business plan for delivering the Vision. Progress against the Strategy is reported to the Bromsgrove Partnership Board bi-monthly. An Annual Report is also produced. The Strategy and the Annual Report are examined by Members at the Performance Management Board each year and approved by Full Council each November. The Strategy is updated every year and fundamentally reviewed every three years.

The fundamental review every three years will include the production of a "locality evaluation", which is also considered by the Performance Management Board and provides the evidence for the selection of the Strategy's priorities. The priorities are also determined by reference to the County wide Local Area Agreement, a contract for improved quality of life outcomes between central government and the Worcestershire Partnership. The Leader of the Council (and

Chair of the Bromsgrove Partnership) and Chief Executive represent the Bromsgrove Partnership on the Worcestershire Partnership. The Strategy is currently subject to a fundamental review.

The Bromsgrove Partnership also has a formal arrangement (Compact) with the voluntary sector, which contains a set of protocols to govern the interaction of the Council with the voluntary sector. The District Council has a small service level agreement with the voluntary sector infrastructure organisation, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) to support the Compact and enable BARN to attend Bromsgrove Partnership Board meetings.

Delivery Partnerships

The Bromsgrove Partnership Board interfaces with 15 theme groups and sub-groups. These are the delivery arms of the Bromsgrove Partnership and include very established theme groups like the Crime and Reduction Disorder Partnership, through to relatively new groups like the Community Transport Sub-Group. The Theme Groups have been established for approximately four years and as per the Bromsgrove Partnership Performance Management Framework, report their performance to the Bromsgrove Partnership Board bi-monthly.

As part of the fundamental review of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the District Council, which supports the Bromsgrove Partnership through the employment of a dedicated officer, is carrying out a review of the Theme Groups and Sub-Theme Groups with the aim of improving their governance.

Service Level Agreements

The Council and its partners make use of service level agreements (SLAs) to deliver specific aspects of each Theme Group's work, when it is multi-agency and involves paying for a service. For example, the Council operates SLAs for the Artrix, community transport and the Compact work with BARN. In addition there are SLAs in place for services delivered by Bromsgrove District Council to Redditch Borough Council. These SLAs are subject to consideration by the Council's S151 officer and Monitoring Officer.

The Member's Performance Management Board considers the larger SLAs and progress against them, for example the Artrix SLA.

Effective Service Delivery

The Council operates a clear annual business cycle, which was agreed by Cabinet. The Council also has a clear performance management framework, which is linked to the business cycle. The Council also has a performance management strategy, which brings both of these together. The annual business cycle ensures that a strategic framework is set each year that drives the budget round, production of the Council Plan, production of service business plans, team action plans and individual personal development reviews (appraisals). The

Council reports progress against the Council Plan each month and also produces and publishes an Annual Report by the 30 June each year. This is also subsequently published in a more user friendly format for residents, either in the Council's magazine "Together Bromsgrove" or in the local press.

Councillors usually receive integrated financial and performance information formally i.e. at Cabinet and Performance Management Board, approximately 1 month after the month end. This time lag is to allow the collection of information and for managers to manage, so in the first instance the performance information is considered at each departmental management team, then at the Corporate Management Team. Each Cabinet portfolio holder also has a monthly meeting with their relevant Head of Service / Director to discuss performance, service development and financial management issues. The quality of the data produced and the quality of documents like service business plans are reviewed by the Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team. This team is also responsible for the delivery of a Data Quality Strategy, which ensures the information reported to Councillors is accurate and reliable for decision making purposes.

The basket of performance indicators and the actions reported on to Councillors are reviewed annually through the production of the Council Plan and the Improvement Plan, which flows from the Council Plan. These reflect the County Local Area Agreement. The Council operates a very simple performance management system using Excel. A formal review of the system will be undertaken during the next two years, as set out in the Performance Management Strategy.

Value for Money

The Council has a Value for Money Strategy which is due to be revised during 2010/11. The Council actively strives for ways to improve its service delivery to achieve better Value for Money for its customers.

The programme of transformation and shared services demonstrates that the Council is aiming to provide quality services at best cost. The single management team are developing a 3 year plan to transform the majority of services across the Council and to ensure that Value for Money is delivered in services provided.

Clarity of Roles, Responsibilities and Required Behaviours

The Council's Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Councillors, and the procedural rules for Full Council, Cabinet and the other committees operated by the Council. Working groups have clear terms of reference, for example scrutiny task groups. Councillors' roles and responsibilities are defined in job descriptions. A clear scheme of Councillor/officer delegation exists to provide clarity on the powers entrusted to those appointed to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

The behaviour of Councillors is regulated by the Member Code of Conduct and is supported by a number of protocols. The Standards Committee ensures standards of conduct are maintained. It monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of the Code of Conduct and makes recommendations in relation to any breach of the Code. The Council makes an annual return to the Standards for England and were identified within the Standards for England Annual Review 2008/9 as having made demonstrable improvements to its approach to Standards and Ethics.

The roles and responsibilities of Councillors are underpinned by an extensive Member Development Programme.

Employee behaviour is also subject to a range of specific policies, including a Code of Conduct, Hospitality Policy, Capability Procedure, Retirement Policy, Sickness Policy etc.

Financial and Risk Management

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources is designated the responsible officer for the administration of the Council's financial affairs under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972. This includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making; providing advice, particularly on financial impropriety, publicity and budget issues, giving financial information; and acting as the Council money laundering reporting officer.

The Council operates a strong financial management framework. Financial regulations are supported by effective financial procedures, underpinned by the work of internal and external audit. Financial regulations and contract procedure rules are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective in supporting sound internal control.

The Council has a robust risk management framework which has been recognised by the Audit Commission.

The Council operates a corporate risk register, departmental risk registers and risk registers for each key project linked to the delivery of the objectives of the Council and Department. Each register has an action plan that flows from the risks identified, designed to mitigate risk through improved management practices. The Corporate Risk Register is reported to Councillors on the Audit Board, which also receives summary information on each departmental risk register. This work is also underpinned by the Risk Management Steering Group chaired by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. Each departmental risk register, cross references to the key deliverables set out in the departmental business plans. Every Cabinet decision includes a report that sets out the associated risks, cross referenced to the appropriate risk register.

The Council has a project management methodology and a Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive. This group has monitored the delivery of key projects against the planned timescale and outcome and has ensured closure and lessons learned reports have been included in the project completion documents.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations is ensured by the requirements of the constitution, to give the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer (Head of Equalities, Legal and Democratic Services) and the S151 officer (Executive Director of Finance and Resources), the opportunity to comment on every report submitted to a decision making body. The Monitoring Officer has a legal duty to ensure the lawfulness and fairness of decision making.

Member and Officer Development

The Council operates a Member Development Programme, overseen by a cross party Member Development Steering Group. The Programme is extensive and includes: induction, chairmanship training, performance training, portfolio holder training and mock Full Councils. The Council has been awarded primary status of the member development charter in recognition of this

The Council is Investors in People accredited and is committed to developing managers and staff. The Council operates a Modern Managers Framework, which sets out the standards required of managers. The framework is supported by a comprehensive training programme. All staff has the opportunity to attend training courses, provided through the staff training directory. Individual's training needs are discussed formally at the annual Personal Development Review and at the 6 month review. Each member of staff also receives a monthly one to one with their manager, at which training is also discussed.

Community Engagement and Equalities

The Council operates a Consultation Policy, which is updated annually and reported to Cabinet. The Consultation Policy includes five levels of consultation, ranging from: A – Information Gathering, to E – Participation/Joint Decision Making. Each departmental service business plan includes a community engagement plan. Corporately, the Council works with its partners, in particular the Police on the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) community meetings. The Council ensures its ward councillors and a senior officer from the Council attends these meetings. The Council also operates two pilot Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs). The Council also has a specific Statement of Community Involvement, which guides engagement relating to the production of planning documents.

One of the Council's four values is Equalities. The Council has an Inclusive Equalities Scheme, operates an Equalities and Diversity Forum and Disabled

Users' Forum, holds an annual equalities conference and has a range of equalities outcomes in the Improvement Plan and service business plans, designed to improve service delivery to our customers.

The Council has recently achieved Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard through the validation of our self assessment by the Diversity Peer Challenge team. This means that the Council will migrate to Level 2 of the Equality Framework for Local Government (out of 3) which is defined as "Achieving".

Reviewing the Governance Framework's Effectiveness

The Council operates an extensive improvement agenda. The annually updated Council Plan includes the key deliverables for the Council's five priorities, but also what actions are planned on the "enablers" that underpin these priorities. The "enablers" are split into three perspectives: financial, process and human resource and organisational development. The key deliverables for all of these are cross referenced to the feedback the Council receives on its performance and governance, from its own systems, but also external audit and inspection. Aspects of the governance framework are then updated in line with the Council Plan.

The Audit Board has responsibility for advising on the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, but both the Performance Management Board and Scrutiny Steering Board can also make recommendations to Cabinet on the appropriateness of arrangements that they find through their work. The Audit Board considers the recommendations from external audit, inspection and internal audit and makes sure recommendations are implemented.

The Head of Financial Services provides an Internal Audit Service, which monitors the effectiveness of the control environment and reports specific recommendations to the Chief Executive and Audit Board.

Significant Governance Issues

During 2009/10 the Standards Committee received a high number of complaints against elected members. These were managed through the formal assessment process and where appropriate referred for investigation. Notwithstanding this, the process for managing complaints against elected members at Bromsgrove has been acknowledged by Standards for England as being an example of good practice.

To support good governance and the improvements required, the Council has developed an Improvement Programme to address a number of areas that have been identified by Members and officers. This will enable the Council to further improve our Governance arrangements and services provided to the public.

The following actions include a number of those included in the Plans:

- Develop a plan and funding arrangement with Network Rail and Worcester County Council in relation to Bromsgrove Railway station.
- Identifying cost base for comparison with other organisations to assess our value for money provided
- Review events package to increase engagement / involvement / participation of children & young people across the district
- Develop Service Level Agreement for working with the Housing Improvement Agency
- Create links with Health Improvement funding bid in relation to older people
- Report to Council on new governance arrangements required by Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 with proposed consultation arrangements
- Harmonise HR policies and processes with Redditch Borough Council to support future shared service arrangements
- Review of new Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for Strategic Housing.
- Develop climate change strategy following consultation
- Develop budget jury for supporting budget process and consultation with the wider public
- Agree and publish a policy for petitions
- Develop the Service Level agreements for Internal Audit and Property services with hosting authorities.
- Review proposals and agreements that need to be undertaken for development of the Longbridge works

Kevin Dicks
Chief Executive

Councillor Roger Hollingworth
Leader of the Council

Date

Date

APPENDIX 4

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REVIEW AND STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2009/10

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GLOSSARY OF TERMS

ABBREVIATIONS

The symbol “k” following a figure represents thousand.
The symbol “m” following a figure represents million.

ACCRUALS

This is the accounting concept that income and expenditure are shown in the financial year they are earned or incurred, not as money is received or paid.

ADDED YEARS

Additional years of service awarded to increase benefits of employees taking early retirement. This is no longer provided as a benefit by Bromsgrove District Council.

BUDGET

The Council's statement of spending plans for both revenue and capital for a financial year, expressed in financial terms.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Capital expenditure is expenditure on acquisition or construction of assets which have a value to the Council for more than one year. Examples are land, buildings, vehicle, plant and equipment and computer software. Capital Expenditure can also be used to enhance existing assets so as to significantly prolong their useful life, increase their market value or increase the use of the asset.

CAPITAL FINANCING

This term describes the method of financing capital expenditure. The principal methods are loan financing, leasing, capital receipts, capital grants and contributions from third parties.

CAPITAL RECEIPTS

Income received from the sale of the Council's fixed assets such as land and buildings. This money is available, subject to rules laid down by Central Government to finance new capital expenditure or to repay debt.

COLLECTION FUND

The Collection Fund is a statutory fund set up under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988. The fund accounts for income which is collectable from Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates (NNDR) payers and for payments to the major precepting authorities and to the Government in relation to NNDR.

CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

Potential losses for which a future event will establish whether a liability exists and for which it is inappropriate to set up a provision in the accounts.

COUNCIL TAX

The Council Tax is the main form of local taxation in England, Scotland and Wales and is used to fund the service provided by local Council's and Police and Fire Authorities. The base for the tax is residential property. Each dwelling is allocated to one of eight bands coded by letters A through H on the basis of its assumed capital value as of 1st April 1991. The basic

amount of Council tax, expressed as the annual levy on a Band D property, is calculated by dividing the revenue expenditure requirement by the Council tax base. The Council tax amounts of properties in other bands are calculated by applying ratios set by central Government to the basic amount of Council tax.

CREDITORS

This is monies owed by the Council to others for goods and services that have been supplied but not paid for by the end of the financial year.

CURTAILMENT

This relates to transactions for retirement benefits (pensions) and reflects the costs associated with an event that reduces the expected years of future service of present employees or reduces for a number of employees the accrual of defined benefits for some or all of their future service. The cost of curtailments is reflected in the employer's net cost of service in the income & expenditure account (in non distributed costs).

DEBTORS

This is sums owing to the Council from others for goods and services that they have received but have not been paid for by the end of the financial year.

DEFERRED CAPITAL RECEIPTS

These transactions arise when fixed assets are sold and the amounts owed by the purchasers are repaid over a number of years. The balance is reduced by the amount repayable in any financial year.

DEFERRED GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND CONTRIBUTIONS

These represent amounts received to fund capital expenditure, which are released to the Income & Expenditure Account to offset depreciation in respect of the asset to which it relates.

DEFERRED LIABILITIES

These are creditor balances repayable after at least one year.

DEPRECIATION

Depreciation reflects in the Revenue Account, the cost of the use of an asset during an accounting period.

EARMARKED RESERVES

These are reserves set aside for a specific purpose, a particular service or type of expenditure.

FIXED ASSETS

These are tangible assets that yield benefit to the Council and the services it provides for a period of more than a year.

GROSS EXPENDITURE, GROSS INCOME AND NET EXPENDITURE

Gross Expenditure and Gross Income arise from the provision of services as show in the General Fund. Net Expenditure is the cost of service provision after the income is taken into account.

HOUSING SUBSIDY

This represents a Government grant payable towards the cost of providing Local Council housing and the management and maintenance of that housing.

IMPAIRMENT

This is when the carrying value of an asset, whether it is carried at historical cost or valuation, would no longer be recoverable. Examples of events and changes in circumstances that indicate an impairment are; a significant decline in a fixed asset's market value during the period; or evidence of obsolescence or physical damage to the asset.

INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Intangible assets relate to capital expenditure which does not create a physical asset for the Council, e.g. computer software, but which provides benefit for a period of more than one year.

LEASING

This is a method of financing capital expenditure where a rental charge for an asset is paid for a specific period. There are two forms of lease, 'finance leases' which transfer substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership to the lessee and other leases which are known as 'operating leases'.

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE POOL (NNDR/POOL)

Businesses pay national non domestic rates instead of Council Tax. It is a levy calculated by multiplying the national rate in the pound set by central Government by the rateable value of the property the business occupies. It is also often referred to as business rates. Non domestic rates are collected from businesses by billing authorities and paid over to the national pool. These monies are then redistributed back to the Council and other authorities based on a standard amount per head of local adult population. The amount is fixed at the beginning of each financial year.

PRECEPT

A precept is a charge raised by one authority on another authority to meet its net expenditure. The major precepting authorities for this Council which precept on the Collection Fund are Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority and Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority. The local precepting authorities, which precept directly on the Council's General Fund, are the 20 Parish Councils within the Bromsgrove area.

PROVISIONS

These are sums of money set aside to meet specific expenses which are likely or certain to be incurred, but where the amounts cannot be accurately determined or dates on which they will arise.

RESERVES

These are sums of money set aside to meet the cost of specific future expenditure.

REVENUE SUPPORT GRANT

This is the Government Grant provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG), which is based on the Government's perception as to what should be

spent on local services via the Formula Spending Share. The amount provided by the DCLG is fixed at the beginning of each financial year.

REVENUE BALANCES

These reserves represent surplus accumulated from previous years which can be used in the future.

REVENUE EXPENDITURE FUNDED FROM CAPITAL UNDER STATUTE

Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital Under Statute is expenditure which does not create a tangible asset for the Council. An example would be a grant made to another organisation for them to use for capital expenditure.

STATEMENT OF RECOMMENDED PRACTICE (SORP)

The purpose of the SORP is to act as a guide to preparing and presenting the Council's accounts so that they conform to various legal requirements and so that the accounts present fairly the council's financial activities and financial position.

Subject to Audit

Introduction from Portfolio Holder for Finance

Welcome to the Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2010, which are set out in detail on pages 20 to 79. We do hope that you will find the accounts interesting and informative. These pages, together with the accompanying notes, explain the Council's services and how it spent your Council Tax during the year.

2009/10 has been a challenging and exciting time for the Council. The formal ending of our period of engagement with the Government in October 2009 was a great achievement for both members and officers and demonstrated that all the hard work and improvements we have made were recognised. The joint Chief Executive, single management team and transformational arrangements that we have agreed with Redditch Borough Council have put us at the forefront of new initiatives nationally and will ensure that we will deliver significant savings over the next 5 years. Furthermore the approval of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) projects demonstrates that we are looking to work with all our neighbours to improve services to our customers. The success in being selected as the "host" authority for the Regulatory Shared Service across the County shows that Bromsgrove is seen as having the capacity and capability of hosting a number of complex services to residents, county wide.

Against these new and exciting initiatives the Council and its customers has had to balance increasing service demand within a difficult financial climate. Benefits claims have increased together with the demand on the concessionary fares service. The income received from our investments has seen a dramatic reduction from £1,434k to £89k together with a sharp decline in the search fee income generated. Despite this financial climate the Council has continued to deliver quality services to our customers and when agreeing future years' budgets we have ensured our priorities are funded.

The Audit Commission has formally recognised the significant improvements the Council has made in awarding a score of "fair" in the Comprehensive Area Assessment that was undertaken during 2009/10. In addition the Council was judged as 2 (out of 4) against the tougher new Use of Resources framework.

2009/10 has been a very successful year for the Council in delivering improvements to our services. The Council has six priorities and some of our headline achievements against each of these are set out below:-

Economic Development

- The Council ran its successful "Fit for Biz" conference and seminars to support companies through the credit crunch.
- We helped a record 50 new business start ups during 2009/2010.
- We helped businesses' cashflow by paying 98% of our invoices within 30 days (and 84% within just 10 days).
- We contacted local businesses we thought may be eligible for small business rate relief.

- We upgraded the Christmas Lights on the Bromsgrove High Street and the market, which was moved to the High Street in March 2009, has been a success.

Value for Money

- During 2009/10 we set a budget for 2010/11, which will deliver planned savings of £1,119,000.
- We formally agreed to a shared services project between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, so that we are ready to respond to the expected reductions in public expenditure.
- As part of this, we merged the two management teams of Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, into a single management team.
- We have been successful in winning the hosting of the new county wide Regulatory Services function, as part of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) project.
- Our Customer Service Centre continued to deliver an excellent standard of service, with our targets for the percentage of calls answered and the percentage of calls resolved at first point of contact being exceeded
- Members and senior management focused on sickness absence levels, which were too high, and in the second half of 2009/2010 we saw them drop to a level that if projected for a whole year, would give a figure of 7.16 days per full time equivalent member of staff.

One Community

- After listening to our residents, we launched BURT (Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport) community transport scheme.
- BURT, along with our work on the new toilets in the town centre, community bids, which have helped fund DIWALI celebrations and Black History Month, helped us achieve Level 3 of the Local Government Equalities Standard.
- We worked with the County Council to run an innovative “U Decide” participatory budgeting event for children and young people, which enabled them to decide how to spend £50,000 on activities for children and young people.
- We have worked hard with our partners to get “The Trunk” up and running in Charford, which offers a range of local services to the Charford community and other communities in the District.
- We had 24,000 residents attend our various events across the District, like Street Theatre, Bonfire Night etc.

Housing

- We gave planning permission for 165 units of affordable housing in Perryfields.
- We exceeded our target of 80 units of affordable housing per annum.
- We worked hard to keep to a minimum the number of families in temporary accommodation and kept the number down to 14, compared to a Government target of 34.

Climate Change

- We recycled 37% of domestic waste.
- We calculated the Council's CO2 emissions for the first time, so that we have a baseline from which to focus our efforts on reducing our emissions.
- We appointed a Joint Climate Change Manager with Redditch Borough Council.

Town Centre

- Regenerating our town centre is a long term project, but we continue to work towards an area action plan or master plan for the town centre.
- Work has started on the Parkside Medical Centre.
- We opened new state of the art toilets in the town centre and with the County Council's help, refurbished the bus station.

The Shared Service, Joint Working and WETT projects will deliver significant savings and improve resilience in services provided to our residents. The savings from the single management team across Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils will save £1.2m over 5 years with the aim to identify further savings to be achieved during this period.

The Council has reviewed the cost of a number of our services and will be continuing to undertake detailed analysis and comparison of services to ensure we are providing best quality and price services to our customers.

To enable us to support the priorities a full review of the medium term financial plan (the budget) was undertaken during July 2009 – January 2010. Significant efficiency savings were identified to enable more money to be realigned to our priorities. The efficiency savings detailed above, together with improved procurement practices have enabled us to fund a number of new developments including:

- The establishment of an older persons directory to enable customers to gain access and information to projects across the County

- To develop a strategic plan for flooding in the District to protect homes and businesses in the future
- To increase the funding to the Local Strategic Partnership to provide services to residents in priority areas

The Capital Programme provides a replacement programme of fleet vehicles to ensure the quality provision of the refuse and recycling service and supports our registered social landlords in the provision of affordable housing across the District.

The medium term financial plan gives clear and strategic direction to the Council's finances through to the end of 2012/13. It will continue to be reviewed and updated on an annual basis. As part of this approach the Council will continue to drive forward plans to improve efficiency and value for money throughout the Council.

In addition to collecting Council Tax for the services provided by the District Council, tax is collected on behalf of other organisations including the County Council, West Mercia Police, the combined Fire Authority and Parish Councils

The District Council's element of the Council Tax for a Band D property (£188.15) represented less than 13% of the total bill of £1,447.06 in 2009/10.

The Statement of Accounts gives more detail of the total revenue and capital position for the 2009/10 year and further information on the finances and performance can be found on our website at bromsgrove.whub.org.uk.

The Council is committed to improving its presentation of financial information to enable a better public understanding of its reporting and welcomes readers' suggestions for improvements. These should be sent to Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Resources at The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA.

We would like to express our thanks to our Principal Accountant, Sib Moss and the accountancy teams for all their hard work in achieving the deadlines for the production of the Annual Accounts.

Cllr Geoff Denaro

Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

VALUE FOR MONEY (VFM)

The Use of Resources assessment by the Audit Commission in December 2009 included a scoring of 2 out of 4 against the harder framework of judgement criteria.

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to providing Value for Money in all services it provides and will continue to focus on this area in the following ways:

- Recruitment of the single management team with Redditch Borough Council to deliver significant savings over the next 5 years
- Develop a plan of transformation and shared services for a number of other services provided by the Council to realise efficiencies and improve services to the customer
- Transfer services under the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier project to improve resilience and achieve savings
- Successfully host the regulatory service for all Councils in the Worcestershire County and to transform the service provision and generate significant cash savings
- Further development of priorities in conjunction with our stakeholders (PCT, voluntary sector) and our customers (Customer Panel, Customer surveys, Budget Jury to be re-established for 2011/12)
- Improvements to the links between funding and priority to ensure the Council realigns financial resource to key areas of priority
- Cash savings delivered from entering into joint contracts and agreements with other councils across Worcestershire
- Developing joint procurement opportunities across the wider County network to realise cash efficiencies
- Value for Money and procurement training delivered to Members and officers
- Supplier seminars undertaken to raise awareness of how to trade with the Council and to support local businesses
- Review of vending contracts to eliminate subsidy on provision of food
- Procurement savings of £80k achieved and sharing of procurement officer with Redditch Council

The significant savings delivered from sharing services across the County and in particular with Redditch Borough Council will further reduce the cost of services provided by the Council. This initiative will be the main focus for the future to improve the value for money achieved by this Council.

In addition to this main focus there are a number of other actions that will be undertaken during 2010/11:

Cost analysis and Benchmarking: further calculation of the cost basis for a number of the services provided by the Council and to benchmark cost, performance and satisfaction against other District Councils to ensure the Council is providing best use of our resources.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Council is responsible for ensuring that its business is conducted in accordance with the law and proper standards, that public money is safeguarded and properly accounted for, used economically, efficiently and effectively. The Council also has a duty under the Local Government Act 1999 to make arrangements to secure continuous improvement in the way in which its functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In discharging this overall responsibility, the Council is also responsible for ensuring that there is a sound system of governance which includes arrangements for the management of risk.

To this effect, the Council has approved and adopted a code of corporate governance, which is consistent with the principles of the CIPFA/SOLACE Framework for Delivering Good Governance in Local Government.

This statement explains how the Council has complied with the code and also meets the requirements of regulation 4 (2) of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 as amended by the Accounts and Audit (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2006 in relation to the publication of a statement of internal control.

Purpose of the Governance Framework

The Governance Framework comprises the systems and processes and culture and values for the direction and control of the Council and its activities, through which it accounts to, engages with and leads the community. Our governance framework enables us to monitor the achievement of our strategic objectives and to consider whether those objectives have led to the delivery of appropriate, cost effective services.

The system of internal control is a significant part of that framework and is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level. It cannot eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives and can only provide reasonable (not absolute) assurances of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an on-going process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of our policies, aims and objectives. Through it we evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact, should they be realised, to enable us to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically.

The Governance Framework has been in place at the Council for the year ended March 2010 and up to the date of approval of the Statement of Accounts.

The Governance Environment

Purpose and Vision

A clear statement of the Council's purpose, vision and priorities for the next three years is set out in the Council Plan 2010/13. For each priority there are clear outcomes for residents and service users, together with identified actions that will deliver the vision. These are translated into more specific aims and objectives through the Council's Improvement Plan and each department's service business plan. Progress against the Council Plan's targets and actions

are monitored monthly at Corporate Management Team, Cabinet and the Performance Management Board. In addition key projects are managed through the Project Management Board and the Transformational project Board.

The Council's vision, priorities and strategic key deliverables are developed through the production of the Council Plan Part One report, which is reported to Cabinet, Performance Management Board, Scrutiny and Full Council in September each year. This report brings together the national, regional and local agenda, in terms of policy, performance and customer feedback, and sets out the recommended priorities and strategic key deliverables for the year ahead, so that they provide a strategic framework for setting the Council's budget.

Partnership Working

The Council is committed to improving the effectiveness of partnership working. Partnership working is one of the Council's four values. The Council strongly believes that in order to meet the aspirations of its residents, it is critical that the three tiers of local government and other public, private and voluntary sector organisations work together on shared objectives.

The Council has established a local strategic partnership, the Bromsgrove Partnership. The Bromsgrove Partnership has a Board, which is chaired by the Leader of the Council and is made up of representatives from the three tiers of local government, the voluntary sector, commercial sector and main public agencies e.g. Police, health etc. The Bromsgrove Partnership has a Governance Framework and a Performance Management Framework.

The key document produced by the Bromsgrove Partnership is its Sustainable Community Strategy, which is in effect, the 10 year vision for the District and business plan for delivering the Vision. Progress against the Strategy is reported to the Bromsgrove Partnership Board bi-monthly. An Annual Report is also produced. The Strategy and the Annual Report are examined by Members at the Performance Management Board each year and approved by Full Council each November. The Strategy is updated every year and fundamentally reviewed every three years.

The fundamental review every three years will include the production of a "locality evaluation", which is also considered by the Performance Management Board and provides the evidence for the selection of the Strategy's priorities. The priorities are also determined by reference to the County wide Local Area Agreement, a contract for improved quality of life outcomes between central government and the Worcestershire Partnership. The Leader of the Council (and Chair of the Bromsgrove Partnership) and Chief Executive represent the Bromsgrove Partnership on the Worcestershire Partnership. The Strategy is currently subject to a fundamental review.

The Bromsgrove Partnership also has a formal arrangement (Compact) with the voluntary sector, which contains a set of protocols to govern the interaction of the Council with the voluntary sector. The District Council has a small service level agreement with the voluntary sector infrastructure organisation, Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN) to support the Compact and enable BARN to attend Bromsgrove Partnership Board meetings.

Delivery Partnerships

The Bromsgrove Partnership Board interfaces with 15 theme groups and sub-groups. These are the delivery arms of the Bromsgrove Partnership and include very established theme groups like the Crime and Reduction Disorder Partnership, through to relatively new groups like the Community Transport Sub-Group. The Theme Groups have been established for approximately four years and as per the Bromsgrove Partnership Performance Management Framework, report their performance to the Bromsgrove Partnership Board bi-monthly.

As part of the fundamental review of the Sustainable Community Strategy, the District Council, which supports the Bromsgrove Partnership through the employment of a dedicated officer, is carrying out a review of the Theme Groups and Sub-Theme Groups with the aim of improving their governance.

Service Level Agreements

The Council and its partners make use of service level agreements (SLAs) to deliver specific aspects of each Theme Group's work, when it is multi-agency and involves paying for a service. For example, the Council operates SLAs for the Artrix, community transport and the Compact work with BARN. In addition there are SLAs in place for services delivered by Bromsgrove District Council to Redditch Borough Council. These SLAs are subject to consideration by the Council's S151 officer and Monitoring Officer.

The Member's Performance Management Board considers the larger SLAs and progress against them, for example the Artrix SLA.

Effective Service Delivery

The Council operates a clear annual business cycle, which was agreed by Cabinet. The Council also has a clear performance management framework, which is linked to the business cycle. The Council also has a performance management strategy, which brings both of these together. The annual business cycle ensures that a strategic framework is set each year that drives the budget round, production of the Council Plan, production of service business plans, team action plans and individual personal development reviews (appraisals). The Council reports progress against the Council Plan each month and also produces and publishes an Annual Report by the 30 June each year. This is also subsequently published in a more user friendly format for residents, either in the Council's magazine "Together Bromsgrove" or in the local press.

Councillors usually receive integrated financial and performance information formally i.e. at Cabinet and Performance Management Board, approximately 1 month after the month end. This time lag is to allow the collection of information and for managers to manage, so in the first instance the performance information is considered at each departmental management team, then at the Corporate Management Team. Each Cabinet portfolio holder also has a monthly meeting with their relevant Head of Service / Director to discuss performance, service development and financial management issues. The quality of the data produced and the quality of documents like service business plans are reviewed by the Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team. This team is also responsible for the delivery of a Data Quality Strategy, which ensures the information reported to Councillors is accurate and reliable for decision making purposes.

The basket of performance indicators and the actions reported on to Councillors are reviewed annually through the production of the Council Plan and the Improvement Plan, which flows from the Council Plan. These reflect the County Local Area Agreement. The Council operates a very simple performance management system using Excel. A formal review of the system will be undertaken during the next two years, as set out in the Performance Management Strategy.

Value for Money

The Council has a Value for Money Strategy which is due to be revised during 2010/11. The Council actively strives for ways to improve its service delivery to achieve better Value for Money for its customers.

The programme of transformation and shared services demonstrates that the Council is aiming to provide quality services at best cost. The single management team are developing a 3 year plan to transform the majority of services across the Council and to ensure that Value for Money is delivered in services provided.

Clarity of Roles, Responsibilities and Required Behaviours

The Council's Constitution sets out the roles and responsibilities of Councillors, and the procedural rules for Full Council, Cabinet and the other committees operated by the Council. Working groups have clear terms of reference, for example scrutiny task groups. Councillors' roles and responsibilities are defined in job descriptions. A clear scheme of Councillor/officer delegation exists to provide clarity on the powers entrusted to those appointed to make decisions on behalf of the Council.

The behaviour of Councillors is regulated by the Member Code of Conduct and is supported by a number of protocols. The Standards Committee ensures standards of conduct are maintained. It monitors the effectiveness of the implementation of the Code of Conduct and makes recommendations in relation to any breach of the Code. The Council makes an annual return to the Standards for England and were identified within the Standards for England Annual Review 2008/9 as having made demonstrable improvements to its approach to Standards and Ethics.

The roles and responsibilities of Councillors are underpinned by an extensive Member Development Programme.

Employee behaviour is also subject to a range of specific policies, including a Code of Conduct, Hospitality Policy, Capability Procedure, Retirement Policy, Sickness Policy etc.

Financial and Risk Management

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources is designated the responsible officer for the administration of the Council's financial affairs under S151 of the Local Government Act 1972. This includes ensuring the lawfulness and financial prudence of decision making; providing advice, particularly on financial impropriety, publicity and budget

issues, giving financial information; and acting as the Council money laundering reporting officer.

The Council operates a strong financial management framework. Financial regulations are supported by effective financial procedures, underpinned by the work of internal and external audit. Financial regulations and contract procedure rules are regularly reviewed to ensure they remain effective in supporting sound internal control.

The Council has a robust risk management framework which has been recognised by the Audit Commission.

The Council operates a corporate risk register, departmental risk registers and risk registers for each key project linked to the delivery of the objectives of the Council and Department. Each register has an action plan that flows from the risks identified, designed to mitigate risk through improved management practices. The Corporate Risk Register is reported to Councillors on the Audit Board, which also receives summary information on each departmental risk register. This work is also underpinned by the Risk Management Steering Group chaired by the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources. Each departmental risk register, cross references to the key deliverables set out in the departmental business plans. Every Cabinet decision includes a report that sets out the associated risks, cross referenced to the appropriate risk register.

The Council has a project management methodology and a Programme Board, chaired by the Chief Executive. This group has monitored the delivery of key projects against the planned timescale and outcome and has ensured closure and lessons learned reports have been included in the project completion documents.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Compliance with established policies, procedures, laws and regulations is ensured by the requirements of the constitution, to give the Chief Executive, the Monitoring Officer (Head of Equalities, Legal and Democratic Services) and the S151 officer (Executive Director of Finance and Resources), the opportunity to comment on every report submitted to a decision making body. The Monitoring Officer has a legal duty to ensure the lawfulness and fairness of decision making.

Member and Officer Development

The Council operates a Member Development Programme, overseen by a cross party Member Development Steering Group. The Programme is extensive and includes: induction, chairmanship training, performance training, portfolio holder training and mock Full Councils. The Council has been awarded primary status of the member development charter in recognition of this

The Council is Investors in People accredited and is committed to developing managers and staff. The Council operates a Modern Managers Framework, which sets out the standards required of managers. The framework is supported by a comprehensive training programme. All staff has the opportunity to attend training courses, provided through the staff training directory. Individual's training needs are discussed formally at the annual Personal

Development Review and at the 6 month review. Each member of staff also receives a monthly one to one with their manager, at which training is also discussed.

Community Engagement and Equalities

The Council operates a Consultation Policy, which is updated annually and reported to Cabinet. The Consultation Policy includes five levels of consultation, ranging from: A – Information Gathering, to E – Participation/Joint Decision Making. Each departmental service business plan includes a community engagement plan. Corporately, the Council works with its partners, in particular the Police on the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) community meetings. The Council ensures its ward councillors and a senior officer from the Council attends these meetings. The Council also operates two pilot Neighbourhood Area Committees (NACs). The Council also has a specific Statement of Community Involvement, which guides engagement relating to the production of planning documents.

One of the Council's four values is Equalities. The Council has an Inclusive Equalities Scheme, operates an Equalities and Diversity Forum and Disabled Users' Forum, holds an annual equalities conference and has a range of equalities outcomes in the Improvement Plan and service business plans, designed to improve service delivery to our customers.

The Council has recently achieved Level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard through the validation of our self assessment by the Diversity Peer Challenge team. This means that the Council will migrate to Level 2 of the Equality Framework for Local Government (out of 3) which is defined as "Achieving".

Reviewing the Governance Framework's Effectiveness

The Council operates an extensive improvement agenda. The annually updated Council Plan includes the key deliverables for the Council's five priorities, but also what actions are planned on the "enablers" that underpin these priorities. The "enablers" are split into three perspectives: financial, process and human resource and organisational development. The key deliverables for all of these are cross referenced to the feedback the Council receives on its performance and governance, from its own systems, but also external audit and inspection. Aspects of the governance framework are then updated in line with the Council Plan.

The Audit Board has responsibility for advising on the effectiveness of the Council's governance arrangements, but both the Performance Management Board and Scrutiny Steering Board can also make recommendations to Cabinet on the appropriateness of arrangements that they find through their work. The Audit Board considers the recommendations from external audit, inspection and internal audit and makes sure recommendations are implemented.

The Head of Financial Services provides an Internal Audit Service, which monitors the effectiveness of the control environment and reports specific recommendations to the Chief Executive and Audit Board.

Significant Governance Issues

During 2009/10 the Standards Committee received a high number of complaints against elected members. These were managed through the formal assessment process and where appropriate referred for investigation. Notwithstanding this, the process for managing complaints against elected members at Bromsgrove has been acknowledged by Standards for England as being an example of good practice.

To support good governance and the improvements required, the Council has developed an Improvement Programme to address a number of areas that have been identified by Members and officers. This will enable the Council to further improve our Governance arrangements and services provided to the public.

The following actions include a number of those included in the Plans:

- Develop a plan and funding arrangement with Network Rail and Worcester County Council in relation to Bromsgrove Railway station.
- Identifying cost base for comparison with other organisations to assess our value for money provided
- Review events package to increase engagement / involvement / participation of children & young people across the district
- Develop Service Level Agreement for working with the Housing Improvement Agency
- Create links with Health Improvement funding bid in relation to older people
- Report to Council on new governance arrangements required by Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 with proposed consultation arrangements
- Harmonise HR policies and processes with Redditch Borough Council to support future shared service arrangements
- Review of new Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for Strategic Housing.
- Develop climate change strategy following consultation
- Develop budget jury for supporting budget process and consultation with the wider public
- Agree and publish a policy for petitions
- Develop the Service Level agreements for Internal Audit and Property services with hosting authorities.
- Review proposals and agreements that need to be undertaken for development of the Longbridge works

Kevin Dicks
Chief Executive

Date

Councillor Roger Hollingworth
Leader of the Council

Date

EXPLANATORY FOREWORD

Introduction

This Statement of Accounts presents the overall financial position of Bromsgrove District Council for the year ended March 2010. The format of the Accounts is stipulated by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) in accordance with best accounting practice (Statement of Recommended Practice - SORP). This foreword provides a brief explanation of the financial activities of the Council and a guide to the significant matters reported in the accounts.

Changes to this year's SORP affecting the Council include the accounting treatment of local taxes and National non-domestic rates. Comparative 2008/09 figures in the core financial statements and accompanying notes have been restated to reflect these changes.

Restatement of 2008/09 figures has also been made throughout the core statements and notes to the accounts in respect of amounts incorrectly treated as capital expenditure in the published 2008/09 Statement of Accounts. £2.265 million of expenditure previously treated as capital has now been reflected as revenue expenditure in 2008/09. This has been funded by the use of general fund balances and earmarked reserves, reducing the general fund balance to nil at 31 March 2009. Please refer to note 2 in the section Notes to Core Statements for further details.

The Council received a capitalisation direction during 2009/10 allowing an equivalent amount of revenue expenditure incurred in 2009/10 to be financed from capital resources. This has the effect of reinstating in 2009/10 the general fund balance and earmarked reserves used to fund the £2.265 million of additional revenue expenditure in the 2008/09 restated accounts.

The Core Financial Statements:

An explanation of the purpose of the Core Financial Statements is given below:-

The Income and Expenditure Account (I&E Account)

This statement is fundamental to the understanding of the Council's activities, in that it reports the net cost for the year of all the functions for which the Council is responsible. It also shows how much is received from council tax payers and from general government grants to help meet the cost of services.

Statement of the Movement on the General Fund Balance

This statement shows the change in the General Fund Balance after taking into account the Council's spending against the Council tax that it raised for the year, items required to be included or excluded by statute, the use of reserves built up in previous years and contributions to Earmarked Reserves for future expenditure.

Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses (STRGL)

The I&E Account brings together all of the functions of the Council and summarises all of the resources that the Council has generated, utilised or set aside in providing services during the year. However, the Council may recognise other gains and losses in its Balance Sheet that are not debited or credited to the Income and Expenditure Account. The Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses bring these other gains and losses together with the surplus or deficit on the I&E Account to show the total movement in the Council's net worth for the year.

The Balance Sheet

The Balance Sheet summarises the Council's financial position as at 31st March 2010. It includes the assets and liabilities of all activities of the Council.

The Cashflow Statement

This summarises the cash received and payments made by the Council for revenue and capital purposes in 2009/10. The SORP has clarified that two methods are acceptable for the production of cash flow statements. Cash flows can be presented using either the 'direct method', whereby major categories of gross cash receipts and gross cash payments are disclosed, or the 'indirect method', whereby the net cash flow from revenue activities is derived by means of a reconciliation from the surplus or deficit on the Income and Expenditure Account for the year. Bromsgrove District Council currently uses the indirect method.

The Supplementary Financial Statements:

The Collection Fund

The Collection Fund shows the transactions of the Council in relation to the collection of Council Tax, and National Non-Domestic Rates and the way in which these have been distributed to the preceptors (the police, fire authority, county council and parishes), the General Fund and the NNDR Pool. It is a statutory requirement for billing authorities to maintain this account.

Financial Summary

General Fund Revenue Account

At its meeting on 22 January 2009, Bromsgrove District Council set a budget of £12.006m (net of planned transfers from earmarked reserves) and a Band D equivalent Council Tax of £188.15 (£180.13 in 2008/09) which was an increase of 4.45% on the previous year. During the year further budget approvals were agreed of £0.559m to fund approved projects and costs associated with organisational restructure. This gave a revised budget of £12.565m.

During the year the Council was successful in a claim for a refund of VAT following a decision in the European Courts on what is known as the “Fleming Case”. The Council has received a refund and payment of interest of approximately £260k. This exceptional item of income has been credited to the Income and Expenditure Account in 2009/10 although the VAT claim goes back many years.

The General Fund Revenue Account produced a year end shortfall of £0.487m compared to a budgeted shortfall of £0.731m, a favourable variance of £0.244m. This has enabled the Council to limit the transfer from balances to £0.487m. Within these figures the Council has set aside resources to fund future expected payments in a number of areas including costs associated with the implementation of shared services. Details of individual earmarked reserves can be found in the notes to these financial statements.

The main reasons for the variances are:

- VAT refund – Following a successful claim on the basis of the “Fleming Case” the Council received approximately £260k of income offset by costs incurred of £53k. This produced a favourable variance overall in excess of £200k
- Income generated from investments was £77k less than budget. Market conditions combined with the strategy of maintaining investments in AA rated institutions only, to minimise risk, were contributory factors.
- Planning & Environment Services (£99k underspend) – savings arising due to a number of vacancies across the department and increased income from licensing offset by loss of income from land charges and Right-to-Buy sales.
- Legal and Democratic Services: A refund of national non-domestic rates was received in respect of the Council House and amounted to £85k. This reflects a revaluation of the property dating back to financial year 2005/06.

The Income and Expenditure Account details the gross costs of service provision amounting to **£40.963m**. This expenditure has been analysed as follows:

Expenditure Type	Restated*	
	2008/09	2009/10
	£000	£000
Employee expenses	11,401	11,700
Premises related expenses	1,225	1,299
Transport related expenses	1,049	1,059
Supplies and services	5,786	5,524
Third party payments	1,172	1,329
Transfer payments	14,064	16,741
Exceptional Items	2,265	53
Capital charges	1,606	3,258
Total	38,568	40,963

Employee expenses comprise payments to and on behalf of the Council’s employees and include salaries, employers’ National Insurance and Superannuation contributions, training, professional subscriptions and recruitment.

Transfer payments are payments made to others for which no goods or services are received and are principally in respect of housing and Council tax benefits.

Capital charges comprise depreciation and impairment charges, where applicable. These charges represent the cost of using assets in the provision of services. These costs do not get charged to the Council Tax payer as they are excluded by statute via the Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance.

The gross income of **£25.303m** shown in the Income and Expenditure Account has been analysed as follows:

Income Type	Restated*	
	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Government grants	15,710	18,188
Fees & charges	4,120	5,000
Exceptional Item	0	264
Other grants & contributions	1,208	1,409
Internal recharges	432	442
Total	21,470	25,303

The figure for government grants income includes £17.055m (£14.226m 2008/09) towards the cost of housing and Council Tax benefits and their administration.

Income from fees and charges include car parking fees, building control fees, planning fees, land charge fees, licensing fees and charges for the use of sports centres.

Internal recharges represent the credit to net cost of services for support service costs charged to capital and trading activities, combined with depot charges to other areas for additional services provided.

Please refer to note 2 Prior Period Adjustments for further details on restated amounts.

Due to restatement the General Fund Revenue Balance brought forward as at 31st March 2009 was reduced to £nil (original £1.753m). After implementing the capitalisation direction, appropriations and transferring the deficit in 2009/10, the General Fund Revenue Balance increased to £1.266m as at 31st March 2010.

General Fund Capital Expenditure and Receipts

Capital expenditure amounted to £5.632m. This includes the capitalisation direction of £2.265 (see note 6). In addition to this the main areas of expenditure were in Street Scene and Waste Management for the planned replacement vehicle programme and the introduction of the co-mingled service (£1.506m); Town centre development including toilets (320k); Grants to RSL's and Hostels (311k); and Disabled Facilities Grants (£554k).

Capital receipts for the year totalled £1.062m. This relates to sales of vehicles and industrial units, and sales of the Council's interest in Low cost Housing schemes.

Capital contributions of £40k were invoiced relating to Section 106 planning agreements whereby developers and other external sources provide sums to be used to fund capital expenditure. Schemes to be funded by such contributions are specific and may be time limited. Capital grants and contributions of £507k were also received from Government and other organisations to assist with the funding of expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants, Play Areas, Waste Recycling and Housing.

Housing Services

Although the Councils' housing stock was transferred to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) on 29th March 2004, the Council still retains statutory responsibilities in respect of Strategic Housing Services. The Council has an in-house Strategic Housing Team which has responsibility for assessing the housing needs of the District, the development of housing strategies to meet those needs, developing partnership working with other organisations to enable the provision of affordable housing and schemes that support the improvement and regulation of private sector housing. The Strategic Housing Team also monitors the performance and involvement of Registered Social Landlord's operating in the district, progress against the promises made to tenants in the transfer agreement, and the provision of support, advice and housing services to the homeless and vulnerable client groups.

Group Accounts

In accordance with the 2009 SORP the Council has considered its relationship with a number of bodies in order to determine whether or not group accounts are required. It has been concluded that no group relationships exist and therefore the Council is not required to prepare group accounts.

Welcome Break Group Limited

The Council opened a joint bank account with the Welcome Break Group Limited at HSBC Plc in June 1999. £150,000 was received from the developers of the Hopwood Service Station on the M42 motorway. The money funds a nature reserve at Hopwood Park. Owing to the nature of the relationship with Welcome Break Group Limited the money in this account is not owned solely by Bromsgrove District Council and as such does not form part of these accounts. The balance at 31 March 2010 was £113,113.

Pension Fund

The Council's share of the assets and liabilities of the Pension Fund is a net liability and has been calculated in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard 17 (FRS17). The net liability has increased by £4.542m to £23.845m. A further explanation can be found in note 38 to the Core Financial Statements.

The net pension liability is a position taken at just one point in time. Market prices can move up as well as down in the short term and it is therefore not possible to quantify what long term effect the movement in market process will have on the Pension Fund.

Further Information

Further information on the accounts is available from the Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B60 1AA. In addition, interested members of the public have a statutory right to inspect the accounts before the audit is complete. The availability of the accounts for inspection is advertised in the local press.

This document can also be made available in other languages and alternative formats on request from the Customer Service Centre on 01527 881288 or email worcestershirehub@bromsgrove.gov.uk.

For a large print version of this document telephone 01527 881288

Subject to Audit

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTING POLICIES

This section provides a summary of the significant accounting policies and estimation techniques used in the preparation of Bromsgrove District Council's accounts.

1. General Principles

The general policies adopted in compiling the financial statements are those recommended by the CIPFA/LASAAC Joint Committee in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2009 'A Statement of Recommended Practice' (the 2009 SORP). If exception occurs these are noted at the appropriate place in the statements.

2. Significant Changes in Accounting Policies

It is a requirement of the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting that the Council adopts the following changes of accounting policies within the Statement of Accounts for 2009/10:

- Accounting Policies (21 and 22) have been added in respect of Council Tax and NNDR Income to reflect changes to the accounting arrangements for these two income streams introduced in the SORP 2009. The introduction of agency accounting results in prior year adjustments to the 2008/09 comparative figures.
- Clarification of the treatment of impairment of Financial Instruments

3. Best Value Accounting Code of Practice

All councils have to comply with the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (BVACOP), the main items being the mandatory charging of depreciation (with some exceptions), identification of trading services, and a standard service expenditure analysis in the Income and Expenditure Account. The 2009/10 Income and Expenditure Account complies with these requirements.

4. Comparative Figures

In line with the 2009 SORP, comparative figures for the previous financial year are shown. Where there have been changes to the presentation or accounting treatment of items the previous year's figures have been restated to ensure that they are comparable.

5. Fixed Assets - Recognition and Valuation

The requirements of the 2009 SORP are that all appropriate assets should be carried at a valuation that would be the lower of the net current value or net realisable value for existing use. Also all those assets should be revalued at least once every five years.

The recorded fixed assets are subject to a review to ensure the completeness of the record and that the valuations are in accordance with the 2009 SORP. A programme of valuations, to be carried out by the County Council's Valuation Officer (under a SLA), is in place to ensure

all appropriate fixed assets are revalued every 5 years. There have been no revaluations carried out in this financial year. The County Council's Valuation Officer has been asked to review the impact of the current economic climate on the Council's fixed assets and has confirmed that there is no material impact on their value in the financial year.

The basis for valuation of each class of asset is as follows:

- Intangible assets such as software are recorded at cost in the balance sheet and are amortised to revenue over an appropriate period.
- Operational assets such as the Council Offices, and Car Parks have been included at existing use value.
- Infrastructure assets such as environmental improvements (eg footbridges, highways furniture and bus shelters) from 2003/04 onwards, are recorded at cost.
- Vehicle, Plant and Equipment are recorded at cost.
- Community assets, such as Parks and Recreation Grounds, are recorded at historic cost.
- Investment Properties, which are assets that are not directly used in the delivery of a service and are held for investment potential with any rental income being negotiated at arms length, such as Industrial Properties, are shown at market value.
- Assets under Construction are new capital works that will result in the creation of a new asset but will involve expenditure over several years are carried on the Balance Sheet at cost and classified as non-operational until they are finished and brought into operational use.
- Specialised operational assets such as the skateboard park, where there is no established market value, have been valued on a depreciated replacement cost.

6. Capital Expenditure

All expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of fixed assets is capitalised on an accruals basis. In this context enhancement means the carrying out of works on the fixed asset that are intended to increase substantially the life, value or use of the asset.

Expenditure that falls under this definition but that is considered to be immaterial by virtue of not adding value to the asset (generally less than £10,000) is written off to the Income and Expenditure Account during the year. All other expenditure is added to the fixed assets at cost. The expenditure will be carried at cost on the Balance Sheet until the asset is revalued.

7. Intangible Assets

Intangible Assets represent expenditure that has been properly capitalised but which does not create a tangible asset for the Council. Intangible assets include major software purchases. Expenditure on intangible assets is written off to the Income and Expenditure Account over the period of the benefit to be received from the asset. However there is a corresponding transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account to neutralise the effect of these charges on the General Fund Balance.

8. Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital Under Statute

Revenue Expenditure Funded from Capital under Statute represents properly capitalised expenditure, which does not create a tangible asset for the Council. Examples of this type of expenditure include work on property not owned by the Council such as disabled facilities grants, home repair and housing renewal grants, grants to other persons and bodies such as registered social landlords for capital expenditure purposes. All expenditure is charged to the Income and Expenditure Account in the year it is incurred. However, there is a corresponding transfer from the Capital Adjustment Account to neutralise the effect of these charges on the General Fund Balance.

9. Depreciation

Depreciation is charged on all assets used in the provision of services. It represents the use of capital assets by that service. It is calculated on a straight line basis by writing off the cost or revalued amount for assets, less the residual value for each asset, over the useful life of each asset.

Depreciation is charged on the asset values at the beginning of the financial year. All assets have now been revalued within the last four years. No depreciation is charged on assets in the year of acquisition or enhancement. No charge is made for non operational assets.

The useful life of assets is based on individual assets but generally is based on:

	Estimated useful life
Other Land and Buildings	5-50 years
Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	2-7 years
Infrastructure	5-20 years

10. Government Grants

Whatever their basis of payment, revenue grants are matched with the expenditure to which they relate. Grants received to finance general activities of the Council or to compensate for a loss of income are credited to the I&E Account in the year to which they relate. Government grants are accounted for on an accruals basis and are recognised in the accounting statements when the conditions for their receipt have been complied with and there is reasonable assurance that the grant will be received.

All capital grants and other contributions when received are credited to the government grants and contributions unapplied account. When applied to fund capital expenditure which creates a fixed asset they are transferred to the applied government grants and contributions account, statutorily known as the deferred government grants and contributions applied account. These deferred contributions are released to the Income and Expenditure Account in line with the depreciation of the asset they are funding.

11. Repayment of Debt

Regulation 27 of The Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 requires Councils to charge a minimum revenue provision (MRP) to its revenue accounts for the repayment of debt. This calculation is based on the Council's Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as derived from the Balance Sheet. As the Council's capital financing requirement is nil the amount of MRP required is therefore deemed to be nil.

12. Capital Receipts

All sums received which are considered to be capital receipts under the Capital Accounting regulations are credited to the Income and Expenditure Account in the first instance and transferred to Capital Receipts Unapplied on the Balance Sheet where they are only available to the Council to fund capital investment. However, receipts below £10,000 are treated as revenue income. Receipts from the sale of former Housing Revenue Account assets are subject to national pooling.

13. Basis on which Debtors and Creditors have been included in the accounts

The revenue and capital transactions of the Council are maintained on an accruals basis in accordance with the 2009 SORP and FRS 18 'Accounting Policies'. That means that sums due to or from the Council during the year are included irrespective of whether cash has actually been received or paid in the year. Where there was insufficient information available to provide actual figures, estimates have been included although this element is not significant.

14. Reserves and Provisions

Provisions represent sums set aside for liabilities or losses which are likely, or certain to be incurred, but it is uncertain as to the amounts or the dates on which they will arise. Provisions are charged direct to the appropriate revenue account, and when expenditure is incurred to which the provision relates, it is charged direct to the provision.

Amounts set aside for purposes falling outside the definition of provisions are considered as reserves, transfers to and from them are distinguished from service expenditure disclosed in the Statement of Accounts. Certain items - the Revaluation Reserve and the Capital Adjustment Account - can only be used for specific statutory purposes and thus are not available for discretionary purposes earmarked by the Council, further details of which appear in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses.

Reserves include earmarked reserves set aside for specific policy purposes and balances which represent resources set aside for purposes such as general contingencies and cash flow management. Statements concerning the purpose and usage of all provisions and specific reserves appear in the notes to the core financial statements.

15. Financial Instruments

The 2009 SORP requires the classification of financial instruments into separate categories for which the accounting requirement is different. The Council has classified its financial instruments as follows:

- Fixed deposits, principally comprising funds held with banks and other financial institutions and trade receivables, are classified as loans and receivables.
- Investments managed as a single portfolio by an appointed fund manager are classified as fair value through profit and loss.
- Borrowings and trade payables are classified as amortised cost.

Loans, receivables and borrowings/trade payables are carried at amortised cost. The I&E Account is charged with interest receivable/payable, impairment losses and any gain or loss on disposal/maturity.

Fair Value through profit and loss instruments are carried at fair value. Movements in fair value recorded in the Balance Sheet are balanced by posting gains and losses to the Income and Expenditure Account as they arise. Any residual gains and losses arising at the settlement date will be reflected through the I&E Account.

16. Support Service Costs

The Best Value Accounting Code of Practice requires that all support service and service management costs are fully charged to services. The basis for the apportionment of support service costs is reviewed regularly. Some support services are charged out based on staff time whereas other areas use a basis more appropriate to the service provided e.g. Human Resources is recharged on number of employees and the Information and Communication Technology recharge based on the number of PC's each service area operates. The charge to the Capital Programme is based on staff time involved with the administration of various schemes within the programme.

17. Stocks and Stores

These are valued at cost. Stocks in hand are brought into the accounts for Central Depot Stores, Vending Machine Stock, Pest Control Stock and the Postal Franking Machine. The valuation of the stores is a departure from SSAP 9 however the effect is not material.

18. Leasing

Finance Leases

Statement of Standard Accounting Practice 21 (SSAP 21) defines a finance lease as a lease that transfers substantially all the risks and rewards of ownership of an asset to the lessee and the present value of the minimum lease payments is 90% or more of the fair value of the leased asset. If a lease qualifies as a finance lease under SSAP 21 then the value of the asset is treated as capital expenditure and recognised in the Council's balance sheet as a fixed asset matched by a liability. Rental payments under finance leases are apportioned

between the finance charge and the reduction of the liability, with the finance charge being charged to the I&E Account over the term of the lease. The Council does not hold any assets under finance leases.

Operating Leases

If a lease meets the SSAP 21 definition of an operating lease, then the payments under the lease are charged to the service revenue accounts. Details of the Council's operating leases are outlined in Note 18 to the core statements.

19. Interest

Provision has been made in the accounts for the accrual of loan interest due to/payable by the Council as at 31st March 2010. For 2009/10 investments and borrowings are carried at amortised cost (including accrued interest at 31 March 2010).

20. Pensions

This Statement of Accounts incorporates the full effects of FRS17 – Retirement Benefits, the purpose of which is to ensure that these financial statements reflect at fair value the assets and liabilities underlying the Council's obligations relating to retirement benefits and that the true cost of those obligations is recognised.

The Worcestershire County Council Pension Fund covers eligible members of the Local Government Pension Scheme in Bromsgrove and the Superannuation Fund Regulations require contributions to be sufficient to maintain fully the solvency of the fund. The fund is a defined benefits scheme based on final pensionable salary. Currently the Pension Fund is in a deficit position and the impact of FRS17 requirements has been to show a Pensions Liability in the Balance Sheet of £23.845 million, which is the Council's share of the overall deficit of the fund.

An independent actuary, based on triennial valuations, determines the employers' contributions. The review carried out as at 31 March 2010 will be implemented with effect from 1 April 2011 and may revise the contribution rates payable by the Council in future years.

There is no impact on the revenue account of the authority as a result of the application of FRS17 requirements as the effects are statutorily removed in the Statement of Movement in the General Fund Balance when calculating amounts chargeable to Council Tax payers. The resulting pension costs charged to the Council's accounts in respect of its employees are equal to the contributions paid to the funded pension scheme for these employees. Further costs arise in respect of certain pensions paid to retired employees on an unfunded basis.

Further information can be found in Worcestershire County Council's Superannuation Fund Annual Report, available on request from:

Mr M. Weaver CPFA
Director of Financial Services,
Worcestershire County Council

County Hall, Spetchley Road,
Worcester WR5 2NP

21. Accounting for Council Tax

As a billing authority, the Council acts as an agent, collecting and distributing Council Tax income on behalf of its major preceptors – Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority and itself.

Council Tax income for the year is the Council's accrued income for the year and not the amount required by legislation to be transferred from the Collection Fund. The difference between the amount included in the Income and Expenditure account and the amount required by regulation to be credited to the General Fund is taken to the Collection Fund Adjustment Account and included as a reconciling item in the Statement of Movement on the General Fund.

The cash collected by the Council from Council Tax debtors belongs proportionately to the billing authority and major preceptors. This results in a debtor/creditor position between the Council and major preceptors for the difference between the cash collected from Council Tax debtors and the precept paid over during the year. The Balance Sheet includes the Council's share of Council Tax arrears and associated impairment for bad debts, Council Tax overpayments and prepayments and the debtor/creditor position with the precepting bodies.

22. Accounting for National Non-Domestic Rates (NNDR)

The Council acts as an agent in the collection of National Non-Domestic Rates on behalf of Central Government. The cost of collection allowance is included as income within the Council's Income and Expenditure Account.

The Council does not include NNDR debtors in the Balance Sheet but instead shows a creditor or debtor for cash collected from NNDR debtors as agent of the Government but not paid to the Government or overpaid to the Government, at the Balance Sheet date.

23. Exceptional Items

Exceptional items are ones that are material in terms of the Authority's overall expenditure and are not expected to recur frequently or regularly. Exceptional items are included in the cost of the service to which they relate (or on the face of the Income and Expenditure Account if that degree of prominence is necessary in order to give a fair presentation of the accounts). A full explanation of each exceptional item is given in the Notes to the Core Financial Statements.

Acknowledgements

Finally, I wish to thank all Financial Services staff and their colleagues throughout the Council, who have worked on preparing these statements. I also wish to thank the Executive Directors and Heads of Service for their assistance and co-operation throughout this process.

Jayne Pickering
Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources

Date

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THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2010

This Account summarises the resources that have been generated and utilised in providing services and managing the council during the year. It includes all day to day expenses and related income on an accruals basis, as well as transactions measuring the value of fixed assets actually consumed and real projected value of retirement benefits earned by employees in the year.

Net Expenditure 2008/09 Restated* £000		Gross Expenditure 2009/10 £000	Gross Income 2009/10 £000	Net Expenditure 2009/10 £000	Note
1,164	Central Services to the Public	2,156	-923	1,233	
10,136	Cultural, Environmental and Planning	14,504	-3,730	10,774	
97	Highways and Transport	1,750	-1,801	-51	
2,138	Housing Services	19,728	-17,946	1,782	
1,051	Corporate and Democratic Core	2,276	-638	1,638	
2,265	Exceptional Item	53	-264	-211	
247	Non-distributed Costs	496	-1	495	4
17,098	Net Cost of Services	40,963	-25,303	15,660	
117	Gain or loss on disposal of fixed assets			16	28
	Other items treated as capital receipts				
625	Precepts of local precepting authorities (Parish Councils)			628	
-3	Surplus(-)/deficit of trading undertakings or other operations including dividends			818	7
3	Interest payable and similar charges			0	
3	Amounts payable into the Housing Capital Receipts Pool				
-1,434	Interest and investment income			-89	
945	Pensions interest cost and expected return on pensions assets			1,480	38
17,354	Net Operating Expenditure			18,513	
-7,180	Income from Council Tax (inc Parish Councils)			-7,485	
-616	Government grants (not attributable to specific services)			-950	21
-4,265	Contribution from National Non-Domestic Rates			-4,018	
5,293	Deficit for the year			6,060	

* Please refer to note 2 for further details on restated amounts

STATEMENT OF MOVEMENT ON THE GENERAL FUND BALANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

The Income and Expenditure account shows the Council's actual financial performance for the year, measured in terms of the resources consumed and generated over the last financial year. However, the Council is required to raise Council tax on a different basis and therefore is required to make adjustments for the effects of the following:

- Capital investment is accounted for as it is financed rather than when the fixed assets are consumed.
- Payment of a share of housing capital receipts to Government shows as a cost in the I&E Account, but is met from useable capital receipts rather than Council Tax.
- Retirement benefits are charged as amounts become payable rather than as future benefits are earned.

This statement shows the change in the General Fund Balance after taking into account the Council's spending against the Council tax that it raised for the year, items required to be included or excluded by statute, the use of reserves built up in previous years and contributions to Earmarked Reserves for future expenditure.

	Note	31 March 2009 Restated* £000	31 March 2010 £000
General Fund Balance as at 1st April		-2,023	0
Surplus or deficit for the year on the Income and Expenditure Account		5,293	6,060
Net additional amount required by statute and non statutory proper practices to be debited or credited to the General Fund Balance for the year	1	-3,270	-7,326
Increase (-)/Decrease in General Fund Balance for the year		2,023	-1,266
General Fund Balance as at 31st March		0	-1,266

* Please refer to note 2 for further details on restated amounts

**STATEMENT OF TOTAL RECOGNISED GAINS AND LOSSES FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31 MARCH 2010**

	31 March 2009 Restated* £000	31 March 2010 £000
Surplus/deficit(-) on the Income and Expenditure Account for the year	-5,293	-6,060
Surplus/deficit(-) arising on valuation of fixed assets	0	656
Amendment to revaluation figure pre 1 st April 2007	140	
Actuarial gains and losses(-) on pension fund assets and liabilities	725	-3,716
Capital Adjustment Account amendments to financing	0	0
Receipts on disposal of assets transferred to I+E	-4	0
Mortgage receipts transferred to I+E	-6	0
Total Recognised Gains and Losses for the year	-4,438	-9,120

* Please refer to note 2 for further details on restated amounts

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st MARCH 2010

2008/09 Restated*			2009/10	
£000	Note		£000	£000
2,796	25	<u>Intangible Assets</u>		2,359
		<u>Fixed Assets:</u>		
		Operational Assets -		
27,161		Other Land and Buildings	31,537	
4,270		Vehicles and Plant	5,938	
393		Infrastructure	383	
2,109		Community Assets	710	
		Non Operational Assets -		
7,620		Investment Properties	895	
291		Assets under Construction	143	
41,844	22	Total Fixed Assets		39,606
		<u>Other Long Term Assets:</u>		
0	37	Long Term Investments	0	
8	13	Long Term Debtors	4	
44,648		Total Long Term Assets		41,969
		<u>Current Assets:</u>		
125	14	Stocks	170	
2,454	15	Debtors	5,591	
169	16	Cash In Hand and Bank	2	
13,925	35	Short Term Investments	8,360	
		Less: Current Liabilities:		
-5,958	17	Creditors	-5,847	
0		Bank overdraft	-228	
-116	36	Short Term Borrowing	-115	
55,247		Total Assets less Current Liabilities		49,902
		Other Long Term Liabilities		
-2,138	32	Deferred Government Grant and Contributions	-1,779	
-478	19	Provisions	-70	
24,879	38	Asset Related to Defined Benefits Pension Scheme	36,662	
-44,182	38	Liability Related to Defined Benefits Pension Scheme	-60,507	
33,328		Total Assets less Liabilities		24,208
		<u>Financed by:</u>		
0	31	Fixed Assets Restatement Account		
0	31	Capital Financing Account		
0	29	Revaluation Reserve	430	
42,502	30	Capital Adjustment Account	39,756	
8,521	31	Capital Receipts Unapplied	5,133	
8		Deferred Capital Receipts	4	
136		Collection Fund Adjustment Account	126	
1,464	20	Earmarked Reserves	1,338	
-19,303	38	Pensions Reserve	-23,845	
0		General Fund Balance	1,266	
33,328		Total Equity		24,208

*Please refer to note 2 prior period adjustments and restatements

**CASH FLOW STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2010**

	Note	2008/09 £000 Restated*	2009/10 £000
Net cash inflow(-)/outflow from Revenue Activities	39	1,473	4,623
Returns On Investments And Servicing Of Finance			
Cash Outflows			
Interest paid (Net)		3	0
Cash Inflows:			
Interest received		-1,434	-79
Net cash inflow(-)/outflow from investments and servicing of finance		42	4,544
Capital Activities			
Cash Outflows:			
Purchase of Fixed Assets		7,203	2,664
Cash Inflows:			
Sale of Fixed Assets		-752	-1,062
Capital Grants		-813	-41
S106 Contributions		-45	-133
Net Cash Inflow(-)/Outflow on Capital Activities		5,593	1,428
NET CASH INFLOW(-)/OUTFLOW BEFORE FINANCING		5,635	5,972
Management Of Liquid Resources			
Repayments of amounts borrowed		8	-2
Net increase/decrease(-) in investments	39	-5,862	-5,575
Net Increase(-)/Decrease in Cash		-219	395

*Please refer to Note 2 Prior Period adjustments and restatements

NOTES TO THE CORE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. Note of reconciling items for the Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance

31 March 2009 Restated* £000		31 March 2010 £000	
	<i>Amounts included in the income and expenditure account but are required by statute to be excluded when determining the movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:</i>		
-1,681	Depreciation of fixed assets	-2,519	
0	Impairment of fixed assets	-1,535	
423	Government Grants Deferred amortization	493	
-1,203	REFCUS and associated grants	-2,772	
-197	Amortisation of intangible assets	-558	
-167	No added value assets	0	
-117	Net gain or loss on sale of fixed assets	-35	
-5	Collection Fund Adjustment	-10	
0	Other items treated as capital receipts		
-695	Amount by which pension costs calculated in accordance with the SORP (in accordance with FRS 17) are different from the contributions due under the pension scheme regulations	-826	
-3,642	<i>Amounts not included in the Income and Expenditure Account but required to be included by statute when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:</i>		-7,762
33	Capital expenditure charged to the General Fund Balance	562	
-3	Transfer from Usable Capital Receipts to meet payments to Housing Capital Receipts Pool.	0	
30	<i>Transfers to or from the General Fund Balance that are required to be taken into account when determining the Movement on the General Fund Balance for the year:</i>		
342	Net transfer to or from (-) earmarked reserves	-126	
342			
-3,270	Net additional amount required by statute and non statutory proper practices to be debited or credited to the General Fund Balance for the year		-7,326

2. Prior Year Adjustments and restated Statements

The following prior year adjustments have been included in the 2008/09 comparison figure due to changes in accounting policies and correction of the accounting treatment of £2.265m expenditure on the Spatial Project in the published 2008/09 accounts.

Balance Sheet Item	2008/09 Original £000	Adjustment £000	2008/09 Restated Amount £000	Key
Intangible assets	5,061	-2,265	2,796	A
Capital Adjustment Account	-44,767	2,265	-42,502	A
Capital Receipts Unapplied	-6,256	-2,265	-8,521	A
Earmarked Reserves	-1,976	512	-1,464	A
General Fund Balance	-1,753	1,753	0	A
Collection Fund Adjustment Account	0	-136	-136	B
Collection Fund Balance	-136	136	0	B
	-49,827	0	-49,827	
Debtors		-1,059		B
		-995		C
	4,508	-2,054	2,454	
Creditors		1,059		B
		995		C
	-8,011	2,054	-5,957	
Total Balance Sheet Changes		0		

Income and Expenditure Account	2008/09 Original £000	Adjustment £000	2008/09 Restated Amount £000	Key
Exceptional Item	0	2,265	2,265	A
Income from Council Tax	-7,185	5	-7,180	B
Total Changes		2,270		

I

I&E analysis in Explanatory Forward	2008/09 Original £000	Adjustment £000	2008/09 Restated Amount £000	Key
Supplies & Services	4,130	1,656	5,786	D
Capital Charges	2,809	-1656	1,606	D
		453		D
Exceptional Item		2,265	2,265	
Income from government grants	-15,257	-453	15,710	D
Total Changes		2,265		

Statement of Movement of General Fund Balance	2008/09 Original £000	Adjustment £000	2008/09 Restated Amount £000	Key
Transfers to/from earmarked reserves	854	-512	342	A
Income from Council Tax in accordance with regulation	0	-5	-5	B
Total Additional Items changes		-517		

Cashflow Statement	2008/09 Original £000	Adjustment £000	2008/09 Restated Amount £000	Key
Net cash outflow from Revenue Activities	-792	2,265	1,473	A
Capital Activities – Purchase of assets	9,468	-2,265	7,203	A
Total Additional Items changes		0		

- A – Correcting accounting treatment of Spatial Expenditure
- B – Collection Fund – council tax accounted for on an agency basis
- C – Collection Fund – National Non-Domestic Rates accounted for on an agency basis
- D – REFCUS – Expenditure incurred and grants thereon reflected within appropriate subjective headings in net cost of service.

3. Comparison with Revenue Budget

The income and expenditure account shows spending on net cost of services according to statutory definitions. The Council is managed on a departmental basis and throughout the year all budget managers receive regular budget monitoring statements for their department. The following table analyses final net revenue expenditure by department.

Department	Final Net Budget 2009/10 £000	Net Expenditure 2009/10 £000	Overspend / Underspend (-) 2009/10 £000
Corporate Services	962	948	-14
E-Government & Customer Services	107	52	-55
Financial Services	1,465	1,446	-19
Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	1,246	1,089	-157
Human Resources & Org. Development	44	-41	-85
Planning & Environment Services	5,196	5,097	-99
Street Scene & Community	8,840	8,810	-30
Service Revenue Budget	17,860	17,401	-459
Investment Income	-166	-89	77
Non service related income	0	-231	-231
Use of Replacement Reserve to Fund Capital Programme	536	536	0
Less: Capital Charges in Services above not charged to Council Tax Payers	-4,626	-4,626	0
Total Financing Requirement	13,604	12,991	-613
General Transfer from earmarked reserves	-1,038	-669	369
Net after general transfers from earmarked reserves	12,566	12,322	-244

Central Government Grants	-4,968	-4968	0
Council Tax (BDC only)	-6,867	-6,867	0
Transfer from general fund balance	-731	-487	244
Total Financing	-12,566	-12,322	244

4. Non Distributed Costs

In compliance with the Best Value Accounting Code of Practice specific pension related costs are not recharged to services:

	2008/09 Net Expenditure £000	2009/10 Net Expenditure £000
Pensions Past Service Costs	0	27
Pensions Curtailment Costs	254	463
Minor adjustments not charged to services	-7	5
Total Non Distributed Costs	247	495

The effect of the FRS17 pension costs included in non distributed costs is reversed by statute in the Statement of Movement on the General Fund Balance and replaced with actual contributions to the pension fund made by the employer. Further details on pension costs may be found in note 38.

5. Exceptional Items

2008/09 Figure - Within the 2008/09 published Statement of Accounts £2.265m of expenditure on the Spatial project was incorrectly treated as capital expenditure, funded from capital resources and reflected as part of the Balance Sheet figure for Intangible Assets. The expenditure has now been properly accounted for as revenue and in order to correct the accounting treatment the 2008/09 comparative figures have been restated.

The impact of the restatement removes £2.265m from intangible assets, treating the expenditure as revenue expenditure (an exceptional item) in the year 2008/09. £0.512m of this expenditure has been funded from earmarked reserves in 2008/09 with the balance drawn from general fund balances (please see note 2 prior period adjustments and restatements for further detail and note 6 in reference to successful receipt of a compensating capitalisation direction in 2009/10)

2009/10 Figure - As a result of a successful claim made on the basis of the Fleming case the council received a repayment of £260k in 2009/10 in overpaid Value Added Tax and simple interest thereon in relation to sporting charges and domestic bulky waste.

The Council has lodged further claims of this nature as well as a claim for compound interest, but has not accrued for these sums as there is no certainty that they will be paid.

6. Capitalisation Direction

A Capitalisation direction may be awarded by Central Government under specific criteria and/or exceptional circumstances, allowing specified revenue expenditure to be treated as capital expenditure and funded from capital resources. As a result of the correction of accounting treatment in relation to the Spatial Project (see note 5 exceptional items), the Council sought and received permission to capitalise an equivalent amount of revenue expenditure (£2.265m) in 2009/10 and to fund this expenditure from capital resources. As this is properly accounted for as REFCUS the net effect in 2009/10 has been to reinstate the earmarked reserves and general fund balance drawn upon in the 2008/09 restatement of accounts.

7. Trading Operations

These are activities of a commercial nature, which are financed substantially by charges made to the recipient of the services.

2008/09		External Trading Services	2009/10	
Turnover £000	Profit(-) /Loss £000		Turnover £000	Profit(-) /Loss £000
77	72	Market Services	-98	655
116	-75	Industrial Sites	-128	163
193	-3	Total External Trading Services	226	818

During 2009/10 asset impairment costs have been reflected in the costs of these services.

8. Publicity

Set out below, under the requirements of Section 5(1) of the Local Government Act 1986, is the Council's spending on publicity:

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
General Advertising	35	19
Recruitment Advertising	17	6
Marketing, Promotion and publicity	112	141
Total	164	166

9. Members Allowances

In accordance with Regulation the Council publishes each year details of the total amount of basic and special responsibility allowances paid to members of Bromsgrove District Council.

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Basic Allowance	138	145
Special Allowance	75	75
Total Allowances Paid	213	220

Members' Allowances are reviewed by an Independent Remuneration Panel. Allowances received for 2009/10 include the basic allowance at £3,640 pa, plus reimbursement for travel, subsistence and other expenses. Special responsibility allowances are paid to members undertaking specific duties and responsibilities for nominated roles of office (e.g. Council Leader, Deputy Leader, and Scrutiny Chairs).

10. Payments made to Employees 2009/10

Detailed below are the numbers of employees, in the accounting period to which the accounts relate, whose remuneration fell in each bracket of a scale in multiples of £5,000 starting with £50,000.

These figures also include compensation payments for loss of office and essential car user taxable allowances.

Numbers of Employees Remuneration Bands	2008/09	2009/10
Over £50,000 and up to £54,999	0	0
Over £55,000 and up to £59,999	3	3
Over £60,000 and up to £64,999	3	1
Over £65,000 and up to £69,999	2	3
Over £70,000 and up to £74,999	0	0
Over £75,000 and up to £79,999	0	0
Over £80,000 and up to £84,999	2	0
Over £85,000 and up to £89,999	0	1
Over £90,000 and up to £94,999	0	1
Over £95,000 and up to £99,999	0	1
Over £100,000 and up to £104,999	0	0
Over £105,000 and up to £109,999	0	0
Over £115,000 and up to £119,999	1	0
Over £120,000 and up to £124,999	0	1

Senior Officer Remuneration 2009/10

As detailed in LAAP Bulletin 85 the Council is required to report on the remuneration of senior officers in its Statement of Accounts. A senior employee is an employee whose salary is £150,000 or more per year, or an employee whose salary is £50,000 or more per year (to be calculated pro rata for an employee employed for fewer than the usual full time hours for the relevant body concerned) who is either:

1. The Council's designated Head of Paid Service
2. A statutory chief officer or a non-statutory chief officer, as defined by Section 2 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989
3. Any person having responsibility for the management of the relevant body to the extent that the person has power to direct or control the major activities of the body.

For Bromsgrove District Council this definition represents the senior management team and two statutory posts being the Head of Financial Services as Section 151 officer and the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services as the Council's statutory monitoring officer.

<i>Post Holder title</i>	<i>Salary</i>	<i>Allowances</i>	<i>Total Remuneration excl pension contributions</i>	<i>Pension Contributions</i>	<i>2009/10 Total Remuneration</i>
	£	£	£	£	£
Chief Executive	119,721	2,093	123,216	22,167	145,383
Executive Director - P/Ships & Projects – Leaving date 22 nd January 2010	83,365	462	84,127	11,885	96,012
Executive Director - Services – Leaving date 8 th March 2010	75,207	0	75,207	13,763	88,970
Assistant Chief Executive	65,929	0	65,929	12,065	77,994
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	65,929	0	65,929	12,065	77,994
Head of Financial Services	65,929	0	65,929	12,065	77,994
	476,080	2,555	480,337	84,010	564,347

For 2009/10 50% of the cost of the Chief Executive's post was recharged to Redditch Borough Council.

11. Related Parties

The 2009 SORP requires disclosure of transactions with related parties in line with FRS8 'Related Party Disclosures'. Parties are defined as related if one party can or has potential to exert control or influence over the other party or are subject to a common control from the same source. Central Government has effective control over the Council's general duties providing the legal framework within which we work, providing funding in the form of grants and sets the terms of many of the relationships that we have with other organisations. Grants are received from various Central Government departments including the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

The Council maintains a register of Councillors' interests that is regularly updated and available for public inspection.

During 2009/10, many Bromsgrove District Councillors were also County Councillors and also elected members of parish councils. The Council also has member representatives on various outside bodies, including Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust, Bromsgrove District Housing Initiatives, Amphlett Hall Management Committee, West Midlands LGA Council and West Midlands Regional Assembly.

During 2009/10 the Council had the following transactions with related parties. The selection criteria for reporting 2009/10 transactions was subject to a de minimis of £69k on the cumulative value of transactions.

2008/09			2009/10	
Payments £000	Receipts £000		Payments £000	Receipts £000
6,037	-6	West Mercia Police Authority – including precepts	6,334	-22
627	-4	Parish Councils – including precepts	640	-5
2,483	-1	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority – including precepts	2,611	0
36,248	-298	Worcestershire County Council including precepts	37,426	-413
959	-392	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust	455	-154
491	-1	Bromsgrove Housing Initiatives	220	0
84	-105	Redditch Borough Council	269	-313
120		Bromsgrove Arts Centre Trust T/A Artrix	121	0
	-616	Central Government Grants:		
		DCLG - Revenue Support Grant		-950
21,920	-4264	DCLG – Contribution/Redistribution to NNDR Pool	24,154	-4,018
	-14931	DWP - Housing Benefits		-14,741
	-211	DCLG - Other		31

The amounts due to or to be received from related parties are detailed in the following table:

2008/09			2009/10	
Debtor £'000	Creditor £'000	Related Party	Debtor £'000	Creditor £'000
11	17	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust	14	47
17	4	Redditch Borough Council	147	86
89	168	Worcester County Council	47	106
	891	DETR – Pool contribution		0
	559	DWP – Housing Benefit		1,252

12. External Auditors

The Audit Commission has been appointed to be Bromsgrove District Council's External Auditor for the conclusion of the 2009/10 accounts. For the financial year 2009/10 Bromsgrove District Council incurred the following fees in respect of external audit and statutory inspection.

Description	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Certification of grant claims and returns.	34	26
Audit and other services	121	127
Statutory inspection.	14	8
Total	169	161

13. Long Term Debtors

These represent the balance outstanding on mortgages granted for the purchase of Council Houses, under the right to buy scheme. The amount is off set by a deferred capital receipt

	31 March 2009 £000	31 March 2010 £000
Mortgagors re. Sale of Council Houses	8	4

14. Stocks

The stock at the year-end consisted of:

	31 March 2009 £000	31 March 2010 £000
Postal Franker	14	15
General Stock Items held at the Council's Depot	100	134
Lifeline Stock	9	18
Other minor stocks held	2	3
Total	125	170

15. Debtors

An analysis of debtors falling due within a period of one year is shown below. The appropriate level of bad debt provision is based upon an age analysis of the arrears.

	31 March 2009 Restated* £000	31 March 2010 £000
Amounts falling due within one year		
Council Tax arrears	277	282
Government Departments	741	3,485
Officers car loans	0	0
Payments in advance	625	876
Other debtors	1,392	1,667
Gross Debtors	3,035	6,310
Less Provision for Bad Debts:		
General Fund	-40	-100
Collection Fund	-124	-139
HB Overpayments	-417	-480
Net Debtors	2,454	5,591

- Please refer to note 2 prior period adjustments

16. Cash In Hand and Bank

Cash in hand consists of petty cash accounts held by various officers throughout the Council. Bank balances include cash in transit at the balance sheet date.

	31 March 2009 £000	31 March 2010 £000
Cash in hand (Petty cash)	2	2
Cash in bank	167	-228
Total	169	-226

17. Creditors

	31 March 2009 Restated* £000	31 March 2010 £000
Employee related	400	394
Sundry Creditors	366	129
Commuted Sums (Revenue Contributions from developers)	128	102

Government Departments	865	401
Council Tax preceptors	267	285
Council Tax prepayments	80	91
Capital Contributions received in advance	727	766
Other creditors	3,125	3,678
Total	5,958	5,847

18. Leases

The Council has acquired a variety of assets such as vehicles, office equipment and vending machines by the means of operating lease agreements. The rentals on these leases have been charged to the I&E Account when payable. The amount paid under the arrangements in 2009/10 was £21k. Future commitments under these existing leases are:

Financial Year	Future Commitment £000
2010/11	8
2011/12	5
2012/13	5

The reduced commitment in future years is due mainly to the cessation of a vehicle lease.

Council as a Lessor

The Council acts as a lessor by granting leases to third parties for the use of Council land or buildings. The leases are accounted for as operating leases, with the asset remaining under the ownership of the Council and appearing in the Council's Balance Sheet. Any income generated from the lease appears as income in the Council's Income and Expenditure Account. In some cases, where the lease is granted with another council or community organisation, the lease charged is only a peppercorn and is not the full market rental.

The Council owns the following assets that are leased to third parties:

Asset classification	Gross Value £000	Accumulated Depreciation £000	Net Value £000	Rental Income £000
Industrial Units, Sherwood Rd, Aston Fields	555	0	555	130
General properties and land	340	0	340	18
Total	895	0	895	148

19. Provisions

The Council maintains a number of provisions for bad and doubtful debts which reduce the value of the related debtor shown on the balance sheet (see note 15 - Debtors). Additionally the Council has established two further provisions. These relate to legal cases in progress at the balance sheet date and also costs associated with organisational restructure. The movement on these provisions is detailed below.

	Balance at 31 March 2009 £000	Used/released in year £000	Contribution to provision 2009/10 £000	Balance at 31 March 2010 £000
Provision for Legal Cases	-44	44	-10	-10
Provision for restructure	-434	396	-22	-60
Total Other Provisions	-478	440	-32	-70

20. Earmarked Reserves

The Council maintains a number of reserves which have been set up voluntarily to earmark resources for future spending plans. The balance on these reserves and their purpose are detailed below:

Earmarked Reserve	Balance 1 April 2009 Restated £000	Net Movement in Year £000	Balance 31 March 2010 £000	Purpose
Building Control Partnership	10	12	22	Funds associated with partnership arrangements on Building Control
Local Neighbourhood Partnerships	54	4	58	Remaining balance of original budgets ringfenced for future projects.
Litigation Reserve	50	0	50	Funds set aside based on potential litigation at 31 March 2010.
Economic regeneration	49	13	62	Includes Town Centre and regenerative small business grants.
Organisational Development	101	-101	0	Organisational training & development
Shared Services	262	182	444	To fund shared services opportunities

Single Status/Job Evaluation	309	-163	146	Implementation of Single Status – balance to be used in 2010/11
Local Development Framework	143	100	243	Development of Regional Core Strategy – potential costs of public examination
Housing Schemes	14	-3	11	To fund survey work and expected upturn in homelessness cases due to recession.
Planning Delivery Grant	340	-313	27	Accumulation of unused Planning Delivery Grant
Replacement Reserve	24	-24	0	Fully utilised in 2009/10
Other	28	-16	12	Planned expenditure on other equipment and maintenance
Local Strategic Partnership	0	25	25	LAA reward grant for LSP activities
Legal Monitoring Dept	0	24	24	Members complaints procedure
Recycling Extension	0	129	129	To extend the recycling into other areas of the District
Community Safety	0	25	25	Community Safety – Funding from LNP & WCC
Leisure/Community Safety Reserve	80	-20	60	Unspent funding to be used for ring fenced leisure/safety programmes
Total	1,464	-126	1,338	

21. General Government Grants

General grants are received from central government to support spending on local services. Revenue support grant is provided by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and is based on the Government's calculations of local spending needs via the Formula spending share. Area based grant is a non ringfenced general grant which has replaced certain grants formally treated as service specific.

	2008/09 £ 000	2009/10 £ 000
Revenue Support Grant	594	927
Area Based Grant	22	23
Total General Grants	616	950

Capital Notes

22. Analysis of movements in Fixed Assets

	Operational assets				Non Operational		Total
	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles Plant & Equipment	Infra-structure	Community Assets	Investment Properties	AUC (*)	
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	
Gross Book Value at 1st April 2009	28,399	7,506	532	2,109	7,620	291	46,457
Transfers	12	279				-291	0
Additions	73	1,950	17	68		143	2,251
Disposals	-85	-38			-974		-1,097
Reclassifications	5,701	1,468		-1,468	-5,701		0
Impairments	-890	-725			-246		-1,861
Revaluations	169	-139			196		226
Gross Book Value at 31st March 2010	33,379	10,301	549	709	895	143	45,976
Depreciation at 1st April 2009	1,238	3,237	139	0	0	0	4,614
Depreciation	657	1,340	27				2,024
Impairment	-125	-203					-328
Disposals	-4						-4
Reclassifications	340	154					494
Revaluations	-264	-166					-430
Depreciation at 31st March 2010	1,842	4,362	166	0	0	0	6,370
Net Value at 1st April 2009	27,161	4,270	393	2,109	7,620	291	41,844
Net Value at 31st March 2010	31,537	5,939	383	709	895	143	39,606

* Assets under Construction

23. Capital Expenditure and Financing

The following table shows the total expenditure incurred in the year and the funding of that expenditure. The Capital Financing Requirement is the underlying borrowing requirement for previous expenditure, calculated under the prudential controls.

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Opening Capital Financing Requirement	0	0
Capital Investment		
Operational Assets	2,570	2,108
Non Operational Assets	12	143
Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	1,656	3,258
Intangible Assets	*2,525	123
Total Expenditure	*6,763	5,632
Source of Finance		
Capital Receipts	*5,683	4,450
Government Grants and Other Contributions	594	134
Government Grants used to finance REFCUS	453	**486
Sums set aside from Revenue	33	562
Total Financing	*6,763	5,632
Closing Capital Financing Requirement	0	0

- *See note 2
- ** These items are included within capital expenditure for control purposes and for compliance with accounting guidance, however they form part of the surplus or deficit on the Income and Expenditure Account.

24. Valuation of Fixed Assets

The basis for valuation of the individual classes of the fixed assets owned by the Council is explained in the Statement of Accounting policies. The net book value as at 31 March represents the value of assets belonging to the General Fund.

The freehold and leasehold property owned by the Council has been valued in accordance with the Statement of Valuation Principles and guidance notes issued by The Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors as recommended by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The valuations were carried out by the Council's Valuation Provider, Worcestershire County Council Property Services.

The Council is in the process of reviewing all information on fixed assets held to ensure both completeness and compliance with the requirements of SORP. A programme of valuations, to be carried out by the Council's Valuation Officer, is in place to ensure all appropriate fixed assets are revalued every 5 years with the inclusion of residual land values.

	Other Land & Buildings	Vehicles, Plant and Equipment	Infra-structure	Community Assets	Investment Property	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Valued at historic cost	1,014	10,301	549	709	0	12,573
Valued at current value						
2005/06	9,645	0	0	0	0	9,645
2006/07	19,792	0	0	0	180	19,972
2007/08	0	0	0	0	125	125
2008/09	0	0	0	0	430	430
2009/10	2,928	0	0	0	160	3,088
Total Gross Book Value as at 31 March 2010	33,379	10,301	549	709	895	45,833

Some reclassifications of assets have been made during the year, see note 22.

25. Intangible assets

Intangible assets refer to capital expenditure that does not create a fixed asset for the Council but the benefit of which lasts for more than one year. All expenditure on intangible assets relates to purchased software and its relevant installation costs.

This expenditure is charged to the I&E Account over the period of estimated benefits. In the case of expenditure on computer software it is charged over 3 years. An additional review has been carried out on the expenditure incurred to develop the Spatial Project and the period over which benefits will be achieved. This has been assessed as 7 years therefore all related expenditure will be written off to the I & E Account over this period.

	Computer software £000
Cost At 1 April 2009	5,406
Restatement	-2,265
Restated cost at 1 April 2009	3,141
Expenditure in year	123
Amounts written off to Income and Expenditure account	-2
Cost at 31 March 2010	3,262

Amortisation At 1 April 2009	345
Amortisation in the year	558
Amortisation at 31 March 2010	903
Net book value at 31 March 2010	2,359
Net book value at 1 April 2009	5,061

26. Capital Commitments

Future capital expenditure committed as at 31 March 2010 amounted to £467k for the following schemes:

Scheme Name	Amount Committed £000
ICT Shared Service – Phase 1	11
Government Connect Scheme	18
Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site	280
Choiced Based Lettings	4
DFG- Owner Occupier	64
DFG- BDHT	28
Town Centre Development	10
Discretionary Home Repairs	19
Co Mingled Bins	12
Pay On Foot	21
Total	467

27. Fixed Assets (Land and Buildings) Held

The fixed assets (Land and Buildings) held by the Council include the following:

	31 March 2009 No's	31 March 2010 No's
Council Offices at Burcot Lane	1	1
Depot	1	1
Sport Centre	1	1
Customer Service Centre	1	1
Public Conveniences	3	3
Caravan Site	1	1
Car Parks	13	13
Cemeteries	2	2
Tourist Information Centre	1	1
Market Hall	1	1
Hostels	1	1

Other Properties	6	6
Allotments Sites	8	8
Parks/Recreation Grounds/Open Spaces and Play Areas	63	63

In addition the council holds 30% of 121 properties under the low cost scheme.

28. Profit/ loss on sale of fixed assets

This note shows any profit or loss on the sale of fixed assets compared to the market value of those assets. The surplus is properly accounted for within the Income and Expenditure Account, but is reversed out in the Statement of Movement of General Fund Balance, with the proceeds being transferred to Capital Receipts Unapplied except where these receipts are de-minimis.

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Proceeds from sale of Fixed Assets	-539	-1,077
Other items treated as Capital Receipts	-200	0
Market Value of Fixed assets sold	869	1,093
Deferred capital grants relating to assets sold	-13	0
Profit/loss for the year	117	16

29. Movement in Revaluation Reserve

This account contains any gains from revaluations of Fixed Assets which have occurred since 1 April 2008. Gains prior to this date are consolidated into the Capital Adjustment Account.

There have been no asset revaluations undertaken during this financial year.

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Balance as at 1st April	55	0
Gains on revaluation in year	0	656
Written out on disposal	-55	-226
Balance as at 31st March	0	430

30. Movement in Capital Adjustment Account

The Capital Adjustment Account is credited with amounts set aside to finance capital expenditure and absorbs the timing differences that might arise as a result of the setting aside of resources being out of line with accounting charges for depreciation and impairment losses.

	Restated* 2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Balance at 1 April	40,391	42,502
Capital Adjustments		
Depreciation of Assets	-1,878	-3,076
Impairment of Assets	-167	-1,535
Disposal of Fixed Assets	-869	-1,093
Write Down of Revenue Expenditure funded from Capital under Statute	-1,203	-2,773
Deferred Government Grants and Contributions Amortised	423	493
Deferred Government Grant released on asset sale	13	0
Government Grant – Prior Year Adjustment	21	0
Revaluation written out	55	226
Prior Year Funding Adjustment	118	0
Capital Financing		
Usable Capital Receipts	5,565	4,986
Revenue Funding	33	26
Balance as at 31 March 2010	42,502	39,756

31. Movement in Capital Receipts Unapplied

Capital Receipts Unapplied represents the income from the sale of fixed assets that can be used to fund capital expenditure.

	Restated* 2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Balance as at 1st April	13,351	*8,521
Amounts Receivable	738	1062
Capital Receipts Pooled	-3	0
Applied to finance capital expenditure	*-5,565	-4,450
Increase in Realised Capital Resources	*-4,830	-3,388
Balance as at 31st March	*8,521	5,133

32. Deferred Government Grants and Contributions

The Deferred Government Grant and Contributions account represents amounts applied to fund capital expenditure, which will be released to the Income and Expenditure Account to offset depreciation in respect of the assets to which they relate.

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Balance as at 1st April	2,001	2138
Grants and Contributions applied	528	134
Amounts credited to the I&E Account	-391	-493
Amounts written out in year	0	0
Total movement in year	137	-359
Balance as at 31st March	2,138	1,779

Financial Instrument Notes

33. Financial Instruments Balances

The borrowings and investments disclosed in the balance sheet are made up of the following categories of financial instruments. The Council held no long-term borrowing or investments at the balance sheet date:

	Current	
	31 March 2009 £000	31 March 2010 £000
Financial Liabilities at amortised cost	117	115
Total Borrowings	117	115
Loans and receivables	13,925	8,360
Total investments	13,925	8,360

34. Interest and investment income

The total interest and investment income relates to the interest received from the temporary investment of surplus revenue and capital balances and the returns on investment crystallised on redemption of the externally managed portfolio.

Where interest is due at the year end it has been accrued against the value of the outstanding deposit.

35. Short Term Investments

These are surplus monies temporarily invested externally. Under the requirements of the 2009 SORP the Council has to classify its investments into separate categories with different accounting treatments for each category.

At 31 March 2010 short term investments comprise:

	31 st March 2009 £000	31 st March 2010 £000
Loans & Receivables - Deposits with Banks/Building Societies	13,925	8,360
Total	13,925	8,360

36. Short Term Borrowing

The Council remains free of long term debt and is not required to set aside a minimum revenue provision for the repayment of debt. The short term borrowing represents monies repayable on demand and consists of Parish Loans (where parishes have deposited cash balances with the Council and the Council pays them interest on the loans). The value outstanding as at 31 March 2010 was £115k.

37. Nature and extent of risks arising from Financial Instruments

The Council is exposed to the following risks in its dealings with financial instruments:

- Credit risk – the possibility that one party to a financial instrument will fail to meet their contractual obligations, causing a loss to the other party
- Liquidity risk – the possibility that a party will be unable to raise funds to meet its commitments associated with financial instruments
- Market risk – the possibility that the value of an instrument will fluctuate because of changes in interest rates, market process, etc.

The Council's Treasury Management Strategy has been developed in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance prudential indicators and is used to manage these risks. Additionally treasury management practices are followed on a day to day basis.

Credit Risk

Credit risk arises from deposits with banks and financial institutions, as well as credit exposures to the Council's customers. Credit risk is minimised by use of a specified list of investment counterparty criteria and by limiting the amount invested with each institution. The Council receives credit rating details from its Treasury Management advisers on a daily basis and any counterparty falling below the criteria is removed from the list.

The Council does not generally allow credit for its trade debtors.

The Council has not had and does not expect any default losses by any of its counterparties in relation to investments.

Due to market conditions the Council has reduced its credit risk for all new investments by only investing in the highest rated instruments and has shortened the allowable length of investments in order to reduce risk.

The credit criteria in respect of financial assets managed in-house by the Council were as detailed below for 2009/10:

Financial Asset Category	Criteria (Fitch ratings)	Maximum Investment
Deposits with banks	Short Term: F1+/F1 Support: 1,2,3 Long Term: minimum 'AA-/A	£3million/£2million
Deposits with building societies	Short Term: F1+/F1 Support: 1,2,3 Long Term: minimum 'AA-/A	£3million/£2million
Deposits with Debt Management Account – Deposit Facility (DMADF)		£no upper limit *

* Investments with the DMADF are guaranteed by HM Treasury. Following advice from the Council's treasury advisors, from a credit perspective no upper limit was imposed on investments with the DMADF.

Fitch Ratings is an international credit rating agency (one of three nationally recognised rating agencies alongside Moody's and Standard & Poor's). Fitch Rating's long-term credit ratings are set up along a scale from 'AAA' to 'D' where 'AAA' designates the best quality companies, reliable and stable through to 'D' where the company has defaulted on obligations and Fitch believes that it will generally default on all or most of its obligations. Fitch's short term ratings indicate the potential level of default within a 12 month period. F1+ is the best quality grade, indicating exceptionally strong capacity of obligor to meet its financial commitment

The following analysis summarises the Council's exposure at the balance sheet date based on Fitch ratings at point of deposit:

	Short Term Rating	Long Term Rating	Balance Invested 31 Mar 09 £ 000	Balance Invested 31 Mar 10 £ 000
UK Banks	F1+	AA+	2,000	0
	F1+	AA	2,025	0
	F1+	AA-	2,400	7,860
Total UK Banks			6,425	7,860
European Banks	F1	A+	0	0
	F1+	AA-	0	0
Total European Banks			0	0
UK Building Societies	F1+	AA-	2,000	0
DMADF	F1+	AAA	5,500	500
Other AAA rated investments *	F1+	AAA	0	0
Total Investments			13,925	8,360

* These investments relate mainly to UK Treasury Gilts and Bonds issued by multilateral development banks matching the Council's investment criteria.

Liquidity Risk

The Council's financial plans ensure sufficient monies are raised to cover annual expenditure and that cash is available as needed. In the event of an unexpected cash requirement the Council has ready access to borrowing to cover day to day cash flow needs. There is therefore no significant liquidity risk.

Market Risk

The Council is exposed to risk in terms of its exposure to interest rate movements on its investments and borrowings. It has a number of strategies for managing interest rate risk and these are addressed in the Treasury Management Strategy. In addition during periods of falling interest rates and where economic circumstances make it favourable the treasury management team may take fixed rate investments for longer periods to secure better long term returns.

Movements in interest rates have a complex impact on the authority. For instance, a rise in interest rates would have the following effects:

- Borrowings at variable rates – the interest expense charged to the Income and Expenditure Account will rise
- Investments at variable rates – the interest income credited to the Income and Expenditure Account will rise
- Investments at fixed rates – the fair value of the assets will fall

The impact of a 1% rise in interest rates in 2010/11 is estimated as being £76k for a full year.

38. Pensions Benefits (Financial Reporting Standard 17)

Participation in pension schemes

The Council participates in the Local Government Pension Scheme for Council employees, which is administered by Worcestershire County Council. This is a defined benefit scheme meaning the retirement benefits are determined independently of the investments of the fund and the Council has an obligation to make contributions where assets are insufficient to meet employee benefits. This is a funded scheme, meaning both the Council and employees pay contributions into the fund, calculated at a level intended to balance the pension's liabilities with investments.

Transactions relating to retirement benefits

The requirement of FRS 17 is for the cost of retirement benefits to be recognised in the net cost of services when the employees earn the benefits rather than when the benefits are eventually paid as pensions.

However, the charge the Council is required to make against Council tax is based on the cash payable in the year, so the real cost of benefits is reversed out in the Statement of Movement in the General Fund Balance.

The following transactions have been made in the Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Movement in General Fund Balance during the year.

Cost of retirement benefits in Income and Expenditure Account	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Net Cost of Services		
Current Service Costs	1,163	796
Past Service Costs	0	27
Curtailment costs	254	463
Net operating Expenditure		
Interest Costs	3,144	3,106
Expected Return on Assets *	-2,199	-1,626
Net Charge to Income & Expenditure Account	2,362	2,766
Statement of Movement on General Fund Balance		
Reversal of net charges made for retirement benefits in accordance with FRS17	-694	-826
Actual amount Charged against Council tax for Pensions in year - Employers Contributions Payable	1,668	1,940

In addition to the recognised gains and losses included in the Income and Expenditure Account, actuarial losses of £3.716m (£0.725 gain in 2008/09) were included in the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses.

Assets and liabilities in relation to retirement benefits

	2008/09	2009/10
	£000	£000
Reconciliation of present value of the scheme liabilities		
Scheme liabilities 1 April	-51,696	-44,182
Current service cost	-1,163	-796
Interest cost	-3,144	-3,106
Contributions by scheme participants	-449	-511
Actuarial gains / (losses)	10,612	-13,598
Benefits paid	1,912	2,176
Past service / curtailment costs	-254	-490
Scheme liabilities 31 March	-44,182	-60,507
Reconciliation of fair value of the scheme assets		
Scheme assets 1 April	32,362	24,879
Expected rate of return	2,199	1,626
Actuarial losses	-9,887	9,882
Employer contributions	1,668	1,940
Contributions by scheme participants	449	511
Benefits paid	-1,912	-2,176
Scheme assets 31 March	24,879	36,662
Net pensions liability 31 March	-19,303	-23,845

Please see below for an explanation of some of the terms used in the above table.

The expected return on scheme assets is determined by considering the expected returns available on the assets underlying the current investment policy. Expected yields on fixed interest investments are based on gross redemption yields as at the Balance Sheet date. Expected returns on equity investments reflect long-term real rates of return experienced in the respective markets. The actual return on scheme assets in the year was £11.508m (£7.688m loss 2008/09)

Scheme history

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	£000	Restated £000	Restated £000	£000	£000
Present value of liabilities	-45,847	-45,647	-51,696	-44,182	-60,507
Fair value of assets	32,543	34,317	32,362	24,879	36,662
Deficit	-13,304	-11,330	-19,334	-19,303	-23,845

The Council has elected not to restate fair value of scheme assets for 2005/06 as permitted by FRS17 (as revised).

The liabilities show the underlying commitments that the Council has in the long run to pay retirement benefits. The liability of £23.845 million has a substantial impact on the net worth of the Council as recorded in the Balance Sheet. However, the statutory arrangements for funding the deficit by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme actuary, means that the financial position of the Council remains healthy. The deficit on the local government scheme will be made good by increased contributions over the remaining working life of employees, as assessed by the scheme actuary, Mercer Human Resource Consulting Limited.

The total contribution expected to be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme by the Council in the year to March 2011 is £1.943 million.

Basis for estimating assets and liabilities

All costs, liabilities and other factors were determined using the projected unit actuarial cost method, in accordance with generally accepted actuarial principles and procedures by the County Council Fund's actuary, Mercer Limited. Key financial and demographic assumptions are detailed below.

	2008/09	2009/10
Long term expected rate of return on assets in the scheme		
Equity investments	7.5%	7.5%
Government bonds	4.0%	4.5%
Other bonds	6.0%	5.2%
Cash / liquidity	0.5%	0.5%
Mortality assumptions		
Longevity at 65 for current pensioners (years):		
Men	21.2	21.2
Women	24.0	24.1
Longevity at 65 for future pensioners (years):		
Men	22.2	22.2
Women	25.0	25.0
Financial assumptions		
Rate of inflation	3.3%	3.3%
Rate of increase in salaries	4.8%	4.8%
Rate of increase in pensions	3.3%	3.3%
Rate for discounting scheme liabilities	7.1%	5.6%
Take up of option to convert annual pension into retirement lump sum	50.0%	50.0%

The LGPS assets consist of the following categories, by proportion of total assets held:

	31 March 2009 %	31 March 2010
Equity investments	85.6	92.3%
Government bonds	8.4	2.8%
Other bonds	3.2	3.9%
Cash / liquidity	2.8	1.0%
	100.0	100.0

History of experience of gains and losses

The actuarial gains identified as movements on the Pensions Reserve in 2009/10 can be analysed into the following categories, measured as a percentage of assets or liabilities at 31 March:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
	%	Restated %	Restated %	%	%
Experience gains/(losses) on assets	14.9	0.2	(13.8)	(40.1)	26.9
Experience gains / (losses) on liabilities	(1.8)	0.0	(0.6)	0.0	0

Explanation of terms used in assets and liabilities table

The change in net pension's liability is analysed into various components:

Current Service Cost – the increase in liabilities as a result of years of service earned this year – allocated in the Income and Expenditure Account to the revenue accounts of services for which the employees worked.

Past Service Cost – the increase in liabilities arising from current year decisions whose effect relates to years of service earned in earlier years – charged to Net Cost of Services in the I&E Account as part of Non Distributed Costs

Interest Cost – the expected increase in the present value of liabilities during the year as they move one year closer to being paid – charged to Net Operating Expenditure in the I&E Account.

Expected return on assets – the annual investment return on the fund assets attributable to the Council, based on an average of the long-term return – credited to Net Operating Expenditure in the I&E Account.

Gains and losses on settlements and curtailments – the result of actions to relieve the Council of liabilities or events that reduce the expected future service or accrual of benefits of employees - charged to Net Cost of Services in the I&E Account as part of Non Distributed Costs.

Actuarial gains and losses – changes in net pension liability that arise because events have not coincided with assumptions made at the last actuarial valuation or because the actuaries have updated their assumptions – charged/credited as appropriate to the Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses

39. Notes to The Cash Flow Statement

Reconciliation of net deficit on the Income & Expenditure Account to revenue activities net cash flow.

	2008/09 £000 Restated	2009/10 £000
Surplus(-)/Deficit on General Fund	5,293	6,060
Surplus(-)/Deficit on Collection Fund	-5	-10
Non Cash Transactions		
Capital Charges	-2,825	-4,119
FRS17 Pension Costs	-695	-826
Contributions to(-)/from Other Provisions	154	408
Contribution to Capital Expenditure	33	562
Items on an Accruals Basis		
Increase(-)/decrease in Creditors	-2,370	-838
Increase/decrease(-) in Debtors	411	3,262
Increase/decrease(-) in Stock	46	45
Items included in other classifications		
Interest paid	-3	0
Interest received	1,434	79
Net cash flow from revenue activities	1,473	4,623

Liquid Resources

The principal liquid resources of the Council are short term investments with a small amount relating to Long term investments. The opening and closing balances for the financial year 2009/10 are given below:-

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Balance at 1 st April	19,738	13,925
Balance at 31 st March	13,925	8,360
Movement in Year	-5,813	-5,565

Accrued interest of £10k is reflected in the balance sheet figure for short term investments at 31 March 2010.

Net increase/Decrease in Cash

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Increase/Decrease(-) in Cash Overdrawn	-52	228
Increase(-)/Decrease in Petty Cash and Cash in Hand	-167	167
Net Increase(-)/Decrease in Cash	-219	395

Government Grants

Amounts received in respect of government grants (other than for housing and council tax benefits and capital grants) are listed below:

	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000
Admin Grant – Local Taxation	122	118
Other	698	430
Planning Delivery Grant	211	98
Benefit Administration Grants	453	495
Total Other Government Grants	1,484	1,141

40. Contingent Liabilities

On 30 September 1992 the Council's then insurer MMI announced that it had ceased taking new business and had placed a moratorium on claims payments. On 6 October 1992 MMI resumed the full payment of claims. Subsequently there has been further strengthening in the company's financial position and its directors remain of the view that a solvent run off can be anticipated. If a solvent run off is not achieved the Council currently has a potential contingent liability of up to £268,216. No provision has been made in the Balance Sheet for this amount.

41. Future Developments (Transition to accounting on an IFRS basis)

Local authorities will move to accounting on an IFRS basis by 2010/11, a year after central government and the NHS. International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) represents a significant change in financial reporting across government and the public sector and will be the way in which government reports its financial results.

The move to IFRS in government is part of a process of aligning public sector financial reporting with what is seen to be the highest standards of financial reporting. Local Authority accounts are currently prepared in compliance with both UK Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (UK GAAP) and the Statements of Recommended Practice (SoRP). The Accounting Standard Board (ASB) is committed to the convergence of UK GAAP with IFRS.

The accounting impact of implementing IFRS will be made less onerous than it would have been due to the SoRP having gradually moved towards IFRS compliance in recent years in order to harmonise with UK GAAP.

Bromsgrove District Council will move to accounting on an IFRS basis in 2010-11, with restated comparative figures for the previous year and a restated opening balance sheet. The move to IFRS is a challenge that will affect many areas of the organisation and will impact on budgeting, investment decisions, performance targets as well as financial reporting.

42. Statement of Accounts Authorised for Issue and Events after the Balance Sheet Date

The accounts were authorised for issue on 21 June 2010, when the Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources signed the Statement of Responsibilities. This is the date which has been used to assess any post balance sheet events.

During the last 12 months the Council has been actively reviewing and implementing Shared Services. This has included; the recruitment to a single management team across Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, the establishment of shared services for Elections, Community Safety, Lifeline and ICT across the 2 Councils and the transfer of the Dolphin Centre to Wychavon Leisure Trust in April 2010. In June 2010 a number of services were included with the wider Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier programme to include; property services, managed by Worcester County Council, Internal Audit by Worcester City Council and Regulatory Services being hosted by Bromsgrove District Council to all other Councils across the County. Employees were subject to TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Earnings) by the Council on 1 June 2010.

The Business case to share Economic Development across the North Worcestershire Districts was approved in May 2010 with Wyre Forest District Council being proposed as the host Authority.

As part of the regeneration of the town centre the market hall was demolished in April 2010. Resulting impairment losses as a result of the decision have been reflected in trading operations. Please refer to note 7.

A transformational plan is currently being developed by Corporate Management team with the aim for all services to be shared between the two Councils over the next 3 years to secure efficiencies and improvements in service delivery.

COLLECTION FUND INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2010

2008/09 £000		2009/10 £000
	<u>Income:</u>	
-47,588	Income from Council Tax (Net)	-49,050
-4,004	Council Tax Benefits	-4,527
	Reduction in Provision for Bad and Doubtful Debts:	
0	Council Tax	0
0	Business Rates	0
-23,586	Income from Business Ratepayers	-23,833
-75,178	Total Income	-77,410
	<u>Less Expenditure:</u>	
51,538	Precepts and Demands	53,423
	Business Rates:	
22,652	Contributions to NNDR Pool	23,124
118	Costs of Collection	122
	Increased Provision for Bad and Doubtful Debts:	
95	Council Tax	228
816	NNDR	587
75,219	Total Expenditure	77,484
41	Surplus(-)/Deficit for the year	74
-1,015	Collection Fund Surplus(-) brought forward	-974
-974	Collection Fund Surplus (-) carried forward	-900

Notes to the Collection Fund Account

1. General

The Collection Fund is managed and administered by Bromsgrove District Council as the Billing Authority on behalf of the council tax-payers and business rate-payers within its area. All sums raised from council tax and business rates are paid into the Fund. Payments out of the Fund include contributions to the National Non Domestic Rate Pool and precept payments to Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Police Authority, Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Authority, Bromsgrove District Council and Parish Councils to fund their net service requirements. The total amount of non domestic rates collected (less certain reliefs and other deductions) is paid to a central pool (the NNDR Pool) managed by the Government, which in turn pays back to authorities their share of the pool based on a standard amount per head of the local adult population as at a specified date.

These accounts represent the transactions of the Collection Fund, a statutory fund separate from the main accounts of the Council. Administration costs are borne by the General Fund. The transactions are however consolidated in the Council's Balance Sheet and Cashflow Statement.

2. Council Tax Base

The Council set a total Council Tax of £1,447.06 based on Band 'D' equivalent, with a tax base of 36,290.23.

The Council Tax Base is the number of chargeable dwellings in each valuation band adjusted for dwellings where discounts apply, and converted into an equivalent number of Band D properties. A collection rate of **99%** has been assumed in the calculation of the tax base.

Items for parish precepts are additional.

Band	Valuation	Numbers	Ratio	Band D
A	Up to £40,000	2,606.75	6/9	1,738.2
B	Over £40,000 and up to £52,000	6,176.50	7/9	4,803.9
C	Over £52,000 and up to £68,000	7,538.75	8/9	6,701.1
D	Over £68,000 and up to £88,000	6,878.75	9/9	6,878.8
E	Over £88,000 and up to £120,000	6,088.50	11/9	7,441.5
F	Over £120,000 and up to £160,000	3,099.50	13/9	4,477.1
G	Over £160,000 and up to £320,000	2,444.50	15/9	4,074.2
H	Over £320,000	271.00	18/9	542.0
Total Band D equivalent properties				36,656.8
Collection Rate				99.00%
Council tax base				36,290.23

The costs of individual Council tax benefits are met from the General Fund to which any Government grants are payable.

3. National Non-Domestic Rates

Non Domestic Rates are collected on behalf of the government and paid into a National Pool. The Collection Fund receives amounts paid by the local ratepayers in the area, and pays this amount over to the national pool net of allowable costs of collection. The National rate specified by government was an amount of 48.5p in the £ for 2009/10 (46.2p for 2008/09) and, subject to the effects of transitional arrangements, local businesses pay rates calculated by multiplying their rateable value by that amount. A revaluation of all non-domestic properties took effect from 1st April 2000; the rateable value as at 31st March 2010 was £57,286,700.

4. Precepts

The precepts were as follows:

2008/09 £000		2009/10 £000
35,663	Worcestershire County Council	36,788
7,148	Bromsgrove District Council (including Parish Councils)	7,456
5,992	West Mercia Police Authority	6,301
2,470	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	2,597
	Distribution of Collection Fund Surplus	
184	Worcestershire County Council	195
37	Bromsgrove District Council	39
31	West Mercia Police Authority	33
13	Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Authority	14
51,538	Total Precepts Collected	53,423

5. Bad Debt Provision

Bad and doubtful debt provisions comprised the following amounts:

2008/09 £000		2009/10 £000
1,557	Balance as at 31st March Council Tax	1,970
119	Written-off during the year	-115
95	Movement in Provision	228
	Non-Domestic Rates	
-617	Written-off(-)/on(+) during the year	-306
816	Movement in Provision	587
1,970	Balance as at 31st March	2,364
	Represented By:	
880	Council Tax Provision	994
1,090	Non-Domestic Rates Provision	1,370
1,970	Balance as at 31 March	2,364

6. Collection Fund Balance

The Collection Fund Balance is available for distribution to the authorities which precept on the Collection Fund. During 2009/10 a total of **£0.28m** was distributed to the precepting authorities as detailed in Note 4 above. The balance is set out below:

2008/09 £000		2009/10 £000
1,015	Balance brought forward 1st April	974
-41	Surplus/Deficit(-) in the Year	-74
974	Balance carried forward 31 March	900

This balance has accumulated due to both the collection rates and income received being higher than budgeted for at the beginning of the financial year. This surplus is available to be shared amongst the precepting authorities (prorate to the amount of the total precepts). The amount attributable to Bromsgrove District Council is £126k (14 %).

2008/09 £000		2009/10 £000
136	Bromsgrove District Council Collection Fund Balance	126
838	Other precepting bodies	774
974	Total Collection Fund balance at 31 March	900

Subject to Audit

STATEMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR THE STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS

The Council's Responsibilities

The Council is required to:

- Make arrangements for the proper administration of its financial affairs and to secure that one of its officers has the responsibility for the administration of those affairs. In this Council that officer is Jayne Pickering, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources..
- Manage its affairs to secure economic, efficient and effective use of its resources and safeguard its assets.
- Approve the Statement of Accounts.

Approval of the Accounts

I certify that the above Statement of Accounts were approved by Council at its meeting held on 30 June 2010.

Councillor Roger Hollingworth
Leader of the Council

Date

The Section 151 Officer's Responsibilities

The Section 151 Officer is responsible for the preparation of the Council's financial statements in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2009 (the 2009 SORP) and is required to present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council at the accounting date and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2010.

In preparing these financial statements the Section 151 Officer has:

- selected suitable accounting policies and applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that were reasonable and prudent;

- complied with the 2009 SORP.

The Section 151 Officer has also:

- kept proper accounting records, which were up to date;
- taken reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Issue Date

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources on 21 June 2010. All known material events that have occurred up to and including this date which relate to 2009/10 or before have been reflected in the accounts.

The Section 151 Officers Certificate

The Statement of Accounts for Bromsgrove District Council present a true and fair view of the financial position of the Council as at 31 March 2010 and its income and expenditure for the year ended 31 March 2010.

Jayne Pickering
Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources

Date

Auditors Report

The Council's Auditors are the Audit Commission.

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Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Benefit Take Up Strategy

Revenues and Benefits

Financial Services



February 2010

Benefit Take Up Strategy

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Bromsgrove District Council has a duty to promote Benefits Take up within the community. Section 123 of The Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992 states the following:

“(3) Every authority granting housing benefit—

(a) shall take such steps as appear to them appropriate for the purpose of securing that persons who may be entitled to housing benefit from the authority become aware that they may be entitled to it.

(4) Each billing or levying authority—

(a) shall take such steps as appears to it appropriate for the purpose of securing that any person who may be entitled to council tax benefit in respect of council tax payable to the authority becomes aware that he may be entitled to it”

Bromsgrove District Council's Benefit Take Up Strategy demonstrates the Council's commitment to improve customer service and reputation of the Council by ensuring;

- Income is maximised for all residents within the District which benefits the local economy
- Entitlement is correctly assessed based on information provided by the customer
- Working in partnership with other organisations enables customers to access all welfare benefits and to provide information for their claims in an efficient way
- The Council pays the right amount of benefit to the right people at the right time
- Residents entitled to benefit can look to improve their quality of life with access to the financial resources available to them
- Information to be available in formats that are accessible to all sections of the community
- Ensuring that it reacts to local circumstances quickly – for example – pinpointing particular affected groups of people in times of economic difficulty (high numbers of redundancies related to individual areas, trades or businesses)
- The service is accessible to all members of the community so not to disadvantage those who may not be able to contact the council during “normal” operating hours, i.e. the opening hours of the Customer Service Centre.
- That support is available to assist people with the claim process.
- That the claim process is as quick and simple as complex legislation allows so as not to discourage people from claiming.

1.2 In addition the strategy is key to delivery of a high performing benefits service and to improve customer satisfaction.

- 1.3 The policy also supports our commitment to working in partnership with other agencies, such as the Bromsgrove District Housing Trust, the Pensions Service, Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice and other voluntary groups and Registered Social Landlords.

2.0 Why is a Take up strategy important?

2.1 The reasons for adopting and developing this strategy are

- To secure effective delivery of Housing and Council Tax Benefit (HB/CTB) to help meet wider Government objectives
- To meet the requirements of the Department of Work and Pensions HB/CTB Performance Standards
- To meet the Councils priorities of customer satisfaction, performance improvement and a sense of well being.
- Encouraging take up, potentially improves the quality of life for those customers who are eligible and has a direct impact on poverty
- Increasing the income of customers has a direct impact on spending in the community
- Residents who are entitled have full access to all benefits available to them
- Improved welfare benefit take up provides extra assistance to some of the most vulnerable members of the community.
- It improves revenue collection for the authority, thus meeting another priority of maximising income to the Council.
- To introduce innovative ways of encouraging those eligible to apply for benefit

2.2 Take up of benefit is a key government objective for tackling poverty and the effects of poverty eg Health and Social Service issues

2.3 Maximising take up, improves the ability of:

- tenants to pay rent
- owner occupiers to meet housing costs
- tax payers to meet their liability
- all to reduce debt levels generally

3.0 What prevents people from claiming Benefits?

3.1 Customers are prevented from claiming Benefit due to some or all of the following reasons:

- The social perception of claiming Benefits and the people that claim them.
- Lack of awareness despite the information and encouragement to claim
- Poor perception of the gains in money terms that claiming can make.
- Difficulties or perceived difficulties in claiming benefits including:
 - Lack of support or personal contact throughout the claim process including language barriers, physical or mental inability to claim and learning difficulties.
 - Complex legislation.

- Delays in processing claims.
 - The provision of the same information to several other departments.
 - Complicated forms and unnecessary paperwork.
- Lack of information in formats accessible to all sections of the community.
 - The provision of private information.
 - Poor promotion of the services available.
- 3.2 A personal approach to claiming welfare benefit is the most satisfactory method, and where possible if claiming more than one benefit can be linked i.e. the different agencies can work on behalf of one another the more likely people are to claim all that they are entitled to.
- 3.3 Age Concern stress the need for assisting pensioners with claims, preferably with home visits as they are generally confused with the provision of welfare benefits.
- 3.4 In 2003 there were 11.2 million pensioners resident in the UK with 2 million living below the poverty line. One third of pensioners do not claim basic welfare benefits which includes Housing and Council Tax benefit.
- 3.5 Bromsgrove District Council has made a positive commitment to encouraging and helping people to claim benefit by:
- Appointing a welfare benefits officer who visits claimants to explain claims and collect information.
 - Partnering with other organisations such as Pensions Service and Social Services third age project
 - Ensuring that Council Tax payers are aware of Council Tax Benefit by including the relevant literature with the annual Council Tax bills
 - Arrangements with Housing Associations to collect benefit information
 - Home visits
 - Appointments to ensure that claimants can get advice at a time to suit them
 - Talks and presentations
 - Advertising
 - Questionnaires and consultation
 - Publicity material
 - Annual take up leaflets for Council Tax Benefit
 - Interpreting and translating information
- Taking part in a Government pilot allowing evidence and claim information to be gathered by phone rather than the customer having to provide large numbers of documents in support of their applications.

4.0 Targeting Take Up

4.1 In the Government's document 'Tackling Social Exclusion' target groups were defined as:

- Pensioners
- Minority ethnic Groups
- Disabled people and disabled people with high dependency needs
- Lone Parents
- In Work/Low Income Claimants
- Claimants in Hospitals

4.2 A range of approaches is needed to target these groups and we aim to provide general advice on the take up of the following benefits:

- Attendance Allowance
- Carers Allowance
- Child Tax Credits
- Council Tax Benefit
- Council Tax discounts/disregards
- Council Tax disability relief
- Disability Living Allowance (for both adults and children)
- Discretionary Housing Payments
- Extended Payments for Council Tax and Housing Benefit
- Guardians Allowance
- Housing and Council Tax Benefit
- Income Support
- Job Seekers Allowance
- Pension Credits
- Second Adult Rebates
- Working Tax Credits

- Council Grants

5.0 What we do now and proposals for future developments

5.1 We need to identify our target groups and area's by using mapping technology available. This will allow us to map our data along with other data including areas of poverty and deprivation to allow us to highlight area's where take up is poor but the need may be high.

5.2 The approach to take up depends on the target group. Some may be specific activities such as attending pensioner groups or clubs or events etc. We have identified a number of information sources that are to be used.

5.3 We ensure that we provide clear, accessible and up to date information in formats suited to our target groups. We seek to ensure that this information to be made available in formats that accessible to all sections of the community.

5.4 These information sources are:

Media and Advertising

- Leaflets
- Posters
- Newsletters

Website

- Benefit information available on the website which is updated and includes a benefit calculator and guidance on other benefits – to be further enhanced soon by the self serve functions to track claims and payments.

Claim Forms, Posters and Leaflets

- Targeted mail shots to specific groups
- Landlord Forums –ongoing and include regular information on new initiatives and legislation
- Council Magazine - regular features to encourage take up as this is delivered to every household in the district.

Training

- Ensuring that staff receive regular training and are fully aware of the need to maximise and encourage benefit take up
- Training Customer Service Centre staff on Welfare Benefits
- Giving overviews to external customers (registered social landlords, landlords etc) and training to include claim form filling, eligibility, overpayments, appeals, backdates, discretionary hardship payments and any new legislation or initiatives

Partnership Working

- Working closely with other agencies to raise awareness of Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit and associated benefits to vulnerable and hard to reach groups.
- Regular liaison with Citizens Advice Bureau and any other similar agencies to provide information and discuss any shared campaigns.
- Working groups to encourage feedback from various organisation's, partner's and stakeholders to assist in the ongoing improvement of the Benefits Service.

Advice Surgeries

- Trialing venues for Benefit Surgeries, with other agencies
- Offering a “specialist” presence in the Customer Service Centre on a regular basis for the more complex and contentious issues.

- Looking for suitable meeting places and groups to attend to encourage takeup

Welfare Visiting Officer

- Making home visits available to elderly or housebound claimants and anyone who is unable to visit the council offices.
- Visits co-coordinated with Social Services third age project
- Advising on other services available from the Council

6.0 Monitoring Effectiveness

- 6.1 The evaluation of the effectiveness of take up campaigns can be difficult. However, where possible we will monitor the results, and estimate the value of additional benefit claimed. This will usually be as a result of targeting a particular group of people or type of claim.

7.0 Conclusion

- 7.1 Bromsgrove District Council Benefits Service is committed to encouraging take up of benefit and understands that this is an ongoing process which should be regularly reviewed. The Service will work with other partners where possible and will examine any new and creative methods of reaching claimants.

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Improvement Plan Guidance

	<p>Grey = Programmed dates This is the planned timescale for the action- THESE ARE FIXED AND SHOULD NOT BE ALTERED / DELETED</p>
	<p>Green = On target The action is on target.</p>
	<p>Amber = One month behind The action is one month behind schedule.</p>
	<p>Red = Over one month behind The action is over one month behind schedule.</p>
	<p>Hashing = Reprogrammed / extended / revised This is to be used to show any new dates for an action, whether that is because it has been reprogrammed to a later date in the year or extended by a set period. <i>This requires approval.</i></p>
	<p>Blue = Suspended This is where an action has been suspended completely for the period covered by the Improvement Plan. <i>This requires approval.</i></p>

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- In the 'Status / Corrective Action' column, you should include any relevant information that will aid the reader.
- However, for all actions that are either amber or red, you should include a comment as to why the action has fallen behind timescale **and** a brief plan of what you intend to do to address the situation.
- Also in the 'Status / Corrective Action' column, please clearly state (in capital letters) at the start of any comment if the action has been SUSPENDED, REPROGRAMMED, EXTENDED or is COMPLETE.
- Please ensure that if an action is dependent on a previous action that has been delayed, that this is reflected in the status update.

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Priority CP1: Economic Development					
1	Expected Outcome	A thriving & more diverse economy			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
1.1	Economic Development Strategy	Implementation of the Bromsgrove Economic Development Plan Set up establishment structure for the North Worcestershire Economic Development Strategy	31 st March 2011 October 2010	JS	Economic Development & Town Centre Manager
1.2	Employment	Bromsgrove Business Start-up Programme Bromsgrove Business Booster Programme	March 2011 March 2011	JS	Economic Development & Town Centre Manager

Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
1.1.	Economic Development Strategy														
1.1.1	Implement actions in Bromsgrove Economic Development Plan	JS													
1.1.2	Creation of single North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit	JS													
1.2.	Employment														
1.2.1	Support 30 businesses through the Business Start-up Programme	JS													
1.2.2	Support 5 businesses	JS													

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
	through the Business Booster Programme														

Priority CP2: Town Centre					
2	Expected Outcome	A revitalised, vibrant and attractive town centre			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
2.1	Enhancement of the public realm	Improvements to the High Street & The Strand	April 2010 to April 2011	JS	Town Centre Team (subject to funding) SMT
	Enhancement of High Street buildings	Interest required from property owners for Shopfronts Grant	May 2010 to March 2011	RS	Town Centre Team Conservation officer Housing officer
2.2	Redevelopment of retail park, Birmingham Road	Secure planning permission for redevelopment of the site	June/July 2010	JS	Planning Team Town Centre Team
	Hanover Street car park extension	Secure change of use planning application Open extension (due to rise in visitors)	July 2010	MA	Town Centre Team
	Developing existing housing stock	Interest required from property owners re 'empty space' conversion	May 2010 to March 2011	RS	Town Centre Team Conservation officer Housing officer
2.3	Relocation of Police and Fire Services to free-up	Secure planning permission for new site	1 Dec 2011	RS	Town Centre Team Planning Team

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Priority CP2: Town Centre					
2	Expected Outcome	A revitalised, vibrant and attractive town centre			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
	town centre sites for development Completion of the Health Centre	Agree disposal of fire station on Windsor Street Opening of the new Health Centre (will service half of the town's residents)	March 2011	RS	Town Centre Team
2.4	New train station Improvements to bus station	Design and funding agreed for a new Bromsgrove train station Funding and installation of replacement shelter agreed Recommended option to expand the bus station	December 2011 September 2010 April-June 2011	JS RS RS	Network Rail & WCC (subject to necessary funding) Town Centre Team / WCC BDC and WCC
2.5	Production of Town Plan	Completion of Property Assets Review to show location of new Council House / Leisure Centre / development sites	October 2010	RS	Town Centre Team

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
2.1	Enhancement of public realm & High Street buildings														
2.1.1	Undertake performance clinic	JS													

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Status / Corrective Action
2.1.2	Complete Town Centre Marketing Strategy	JS													
2.1.3	Architect's brief	RS													Dependent on sale of Parkside car park; funding will dictate palette and timescales
2.1.4	Consultation	RS													As above
2.1.5	Confirm funding for pilot scheme	RS													On target
2.1.6	Gauge interest	RS													Extra funding may widen the scheme to include entire High Street
2.1.7	Undertake building enhancements	RS													
2.2	Redevelopment of retail park														
2.2.1	Planning application considered by Planning Committee	JS													
	Hanover Street car park extension														
2.2.2	Demolition of Market Hall	MA													Completed
2.2.3	'Change of use' Planning application considered by Planning Committee	MA													
2.2.4	Extension completed and opened	MA													Dependent on 'change of use' Planning Application approval
	Developing existing housing stock														
2.2.5	Conduct pilot scheme to gauge interest	RS													Completed
2.2.6	Survey entire High Street	RS													
2.2.7	Building conversions undertaken	RS													Dependent on interest and available funding

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Status / Corrective Action
2.3	Relocation of Police and Fire Services to free-up town centre sites for development														
2.3.1	Artrix approval gained	JS	■	■	■	■									
2.3.2	Disposal of Fire Station agreed	JS					■	■							
2.3.3	Planning Consent granted	JS							■	■	■	■	■		Dependent on Artrix approval
2.3.4	Construction commenced	JS												■	Dependent on Planning Consent
	Completion of the Health Centre														
2.3.5	Construction	RS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■		
2.3.6	Opening	RS												■	
2.4	New train station														
2.4.1	Funding secured	JS	■	■	■	■	■	■							Attend project board meetings (as called by Network Rail)
2.4.2	Design agreed	JS							■	■	■	■	■	■	Dependent on funding
	Improvements to bus station														
2.4.3	Funding for new shelter confirmed	RS	■	■	■										BDC and WCC funding
2.4.4	New shelter produced	RS				■	■	■							
2.4.5	Investigations to expand bus station	RS	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	Dependent on funding and transport surveys / reports
2.5	Production of Town Plan														
2.5.1	Leisure survey	RS		■	■	■	■	■							800 returns as of 11/06/10
2.5.2	Develop Town Plan options	RS	■	■	■	■	■	■							

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar		
2.5.3	Soft Market Testing	RS														
2.5.4	Property Assets Review recommendation	RS														Dependent on Town Centre Steering Group approval
2.5.5	Area Action Plan produced	RS														

Priority CP3: Value for Money					
3.	Expected Outcome	Realisation of cash savings with recognised improvements in Value for Money Assessment within Use of Resources			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
3.1	Shared Services	Transformation Programme Plan	May 2010	DP	Transformation Team
		Transformation Team in place	September 2010		
3.2	Efficiencies	Transformation Board	Ongoing	JP	Project Board Transformation Board Transformation Team
3.3	Marketing/ Income Generation	Marketing garden waste service	TBC	GR JG	Service Managers
		Annual review of Artrix SLA / marketing campaign	TBC		
			TBC		

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Priority CP3: Value for Money					
3.	Expected Outcome	Realisation of cash savings with recognised improvements in Value for Money Assessment within Use of Resources			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
		Annual review of Dolphin Centre SLA / marketing campaign	April 2010		
		Review Pay on foot scheme	TBC		

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
3.1.	Shared Services														
3.1.1	Develop programme	KD/DP													
3.1.2	Draft job descriptions for team	DP													
3.1.3	Recruit team	DP													
3.2.	Efficiencies														
3.2.1	Report progress of delivery of efficiencies to shared service Board	KD													
3.2.2	Develop system for identifying and monitoring of efficiencies	JP													
3.2.3	Develop Use Of Resources action plan for 2011/12	JP													
3.3.	Marketing/Income Generation														
3.3.1	Review the Place/Resident Satisfaction Survey and	HM													

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Status / Corrective Action
	User Survey results for the site and agree key service improvements required.														
3.3.2	Review KPI's with in the SLA and agree remedial actions as required.	HM													
3.3.3	Based on 3.1 & 3.2 agreed the revised KPI targets, key areas of service improvement and BDC support for 2011/12.	JG/HM													
3.1.4	Review the Place/Resident Satisfaction Survey and User Survey results for the site and agree key service improvements required.	JG													
3.1.5	Review KPI's with in the SLA and agree remedial actions as required.	JG													
3.1.6	Review the maintenance requirements for the site and agree areas of responsibility for 2011/12.	JG													
3.1.7	Based on 3.1 & 3.2 agreed the revised KPI targets, key areas of service improvement and BDC support for 2011/12.	JG													

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CP4: One Community					
4	Expected Outcome	A sense of community for all			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
4.1	Children & Young People	Review events package to increase engagement / involvement / participation of children & young people across the district 'U Decide' participatory budgeting event Children & Young People's Partnership (LSP)- shadow board	June 2010 March 2011 December 2011	JG HB	Arts Development Manager & Team Senior Corporate Policy & Performance Officers WCC Youth Support FLOSS funding LSP
4.2	Older People	Development physical activity programme Promote Ageing Well Scheme Roll out to outlying areas Create links with Health Improvement funding bid Older People's Directory	May 2010 August 2010 April 2011 December 2010 October 2010	JG HB	Sports Development Team Communications Team £13k (promote) £7k (roll out) New post? £8,000
4.3	Crime & the Fear of Crime	Develop West Mercia minimum standards Develop ASB Strategy for	March 2011 March 2011	AH	Safer Community Board Area based grant Community Safety Team

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CP4: One Community					
4	Expected Outcome	A sense of community for all			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
		Redditch & Bromsgrove Develop Communications Strategy & associated Action Plan	March 2011		CSP
4.4	The Trunk	Completion of the thematic high level action plans Finalise Section 10 Agreement Set up performance reporting system via the LSP	May 2010 August 2010 July 2010	SH	Section 10 agreement Senior Corporate Policy & Performance Officer

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
4.1	Children & Young People														
4.1.1	Agree suitable and sufficient consultation process to engage with all residents and target CYP to ascertain their views on future events.	JH/JG													
4.1.2	Undertake the consultation exercise and review results with key partners and officers.	JG/AH													
4.1.3	Develop the 20011/12 outline programme and	JG/AH													

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
	budget requirements in order to increase engagement opportunities. Including funding bids as required.															
4.1.4	Develop the full programme based on available budget and BDC priorities.	JG/AH														
4.1.5	Review 09/10 U Decide, build lessons learnt into 10/11 and hold third U Decide.	HB														
4.1.6	Continue to actively support the Children and Young People's Theme Group, including bi-monthly meetings.	JG														
4.2	Older People															
4.2.1	Through the H&WB Theme Group, agree the key principles, interventions and locations for the age well scheme physical activity programme.	JG/LK														
4.2.2	Develop the programme in partnership with NHS Worcestershire to complement existing provision and to provide suitable exit routes via sustainable community sessions. To include set	LK														

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
	of KPI's for this work to ensure objectives are achieved.														
4.2.3	Commence marketing campaign and roll out of activity sessions.	LK													
4.2.4	Build the partnership approach to this subject through the HIF work around Health Lifestyles and integrate the work streams.	JG/LK													
4.2.5	Develop the year 2 activity programme and commence roll out to outlying areas of the District.	LK													
4.2.6	Promote launch of Ageing Well Scheme	HB													
4.2.7	Older Person's Directory to be launched to coincide with Older Person's Day (01 October).	HB													
4.3	Crime & the Fear of Crime														
4.3.1	Develop West Mercia minimum standards- publish on website	AH													
4.3.2	Develop Customer Charter	AH													
4.3.3	West Mercia presentation and sign up	AH													
4.3.4	Develop ASB Strategy for Bromsgrove & Redditch	AH													
4.3.5	Develop Communications	BH													

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
	Strategy & associated action plan															
4.4	The Trunk															
4.4.1	Develop localised measures across the six SCS objectives for Charford and Sidemoor	AH/HB														
4.4.2	Finalise the Section 10 Agreement	SH														
4.4.3	Set up an LSP Stronger Communities Theme Group & new Successful Neighbourhoods Working Group with partners & report performance to Board.	AH/HB														

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CP5: Housing					
5	Expected Outcome	Delivery of Housing Strategy			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
5.1	Balanced Housing Mix and delivery of affordable housing.	Consult community and stakeholders upon revised Draft Core Strategy with Housing Allocations. Support and enable applications for affordable housing on approved site in accordance with Core Strategy and RSS allocation.	31 st December 2010 31 st March 2011	SH/JS/ AG/MD/ AC AC	Strategic Planning Team Strategic Housing Team Supporting people BDHT

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CP5: Housing					
5	Expected Outcome	Delivery of Housing Strategy			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
		Utilise results from Housing Market Assessment and Older Persons Housing and Support Needs Survey to identify housing needs and guide affordable housing development.	31 st March 2011	AC	RSL Partners CC R&I Team
5.2	Implemented Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency	Agreed SLA for Countywide HIA. Commencement of the availability of Kick Start Equity Release loans for home improvement.	1 June 2010 30 th September 2010	AC AC	Strategic Housing Team
5.3	Homelessness prevention & continued low level use of temporary accommodation	Continue to monitor & support the development of effective partnership homelessness prevention services. Continue to support the availability of mortgage rescue scheme as appropriate.	31 st March 2011 31 st March 2011	AC AC	Strategic Housing Team CAB BDHT Supporting People Homelessness Strategy Steering Group

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CP5: Housing					
5	Expected Outcome	Delivery of Housing Strategy			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
5.4	Effective Strategic Housing Service that works with its partners and other stakeholders to address the housing needs and challenges within its area.	Review of new Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for Strategic Housing.	1 st November 2010	AC	Strategic Housing Team BDHT

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
5.1	Balanced Housing Mix														
5.1.1	Prepare revised draft Core Strategy for community and stakeholder consultation	MD													
5.1.2	Identify public and privately owned sites suitable for affordable housing, liaise with preferred partner RSLs and support bids for funding to the Homes & Communities Agency.	AC													
5.1.3	Set up, attend and support quarterly meetings of new NW Delivery Group to monitor viability and projected delivery of pipeline schemes and update of progress against	AC													

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Status / Corrective Action
	the LAA target.														
5.1.4	Implementation of SP funded Support Worker for Private Sector Housing Step up Scheme tenants.	AC													
5.2	Home Improvement Agency														
5.2.1	Completion of agreed SLA and Transfer documents for Countywide HIA.	AC													
5.2.2	Completed transfer of North Worcestershire HIA into and commencement of Countywide Scheme.	AC													
5.2.3	Commencement of quarterly meetings of the Countywide HIA Performance Management Board.	AC													
5.2.4	Review and update Private Sector Housing Strategy to reflect updated condition data.	AC													
5.3	Homelessness prevention & reduction in the use of temporary accommodation														
5.3.1	Review outcomes of support and preventative schemes, consult with Homelessness Strategy Steering Group and formulate recommendations for use of CLG Grant if available in 2011/12.	AC													

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
5.3.2	Report to Executive Cabinet upon availability of CLG Homelessness Grant and seek approval of allocation to recommended schemes	AC														
5.4	Audit Commission Strategic Housing Key Lines of Enquiry															
5.4.1	Carry out a review of 2010 Audit Commission Key Lines of Enquiry for Strategic Housing.	AC														

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CP6: Climate Change					
6	Expected Outcome	Reduced Co2 Emissions			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
6.1	CO2 Emissions	Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan	November 2010	HB	Climate Change Manager
		Review Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan	March 2011		Future budget bids to MTFP
6.2	Adaption	Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan	November 2011	HB	Climate Change Manager
		Review Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan	March 2011		Future budget bids to MTFP

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
6.1	CO2 Emissions														
6.1.1	Complete first full draft of Climate Change Strategy	CJ													
6.1.2	Undertake consultation and seek approval from Cabinet.	CJ													
6.1.3	Review and update Better Environment Sustainable Community Strategy action plan.	CJ													
6.2	Adaption														
6.2.1	See 6.1	HB													

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FP1: Managing Finances (including Value for Money)					
7	Expected Outcomes	Improved Financial Management recognised within UoR Assessment Improved financial awareness & discussion by Members & public			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
7.1	Integrated financial and performance information	Integrated financial and performance management timetable Meetings with budget holders	Quarter 3 Ongoing	JLP	Service accountants and budget holders
7.2	Deliver Medium Term Financial Plan and statutory accounts	Financial Plan timetable Use of Resources Action Plan	September 2010 January 2010	JLP	Service accountants and budget holders

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FP1: Managing Finances (including Value for Money)					
7	Expected Outcomes	Improved Financial Management recognised within UoR Assessment Improved financial awareness & discussion by Members & public			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
7.3	Budget Consultation	Budget Jury	January 2011	JLP	Executive Director- Finance & Resources
		Online consultation	January 2011	HB	Director of Policy, Performance & Partnerships
		Schools project	January 2011		Senior Corporate Policy & Performance Officer

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
7.1	Integrated financial and performance information														
7.1.1	Develop monitoring timetable for financial and performance information	HB													
7.1.2	Report integrated information to Members	HB/JP													
7.2	Deliver Medium Term Financial Plan & statutory accounts														
7.2.1	Meet with Cabinet re development of priorities	JP													
7.2.2	Develop Council Plan budgets and discuss with CMT	JP													
7.2.3	Present options to all Members to include	JP													

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
	scrutiny															
7.3	Budget consultation															
7.3.1	Identify members	BD														
7.3.2	Carry out budget panel sessions to link with member considerations	HB/JP														
7.3.3	Carry out further community engagement to link with Member considerations	HB/JP														
7.3.4	Present budget jury and consultation data to members for consideration as part of budget setting	HB/JP														

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FP2: Governing the Business(including Value for Money)					
8	Expected Outcomes	Cash savings realised from improved procurement Improvements to UoR assessment relating to procurement			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
8.1	Procurement	Procurement Actions	August 2010	JP	Procurement Advisor
		Procurement Forward Plan	August 2010		CMT
8.2	Risk Management	Risk Strategy & reports	March 2011	JP	Internal Audit (WETT- Worcester City)

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
8.1	Procurement														
8.1.1	Identify areas of major spend	JP													
8.1.2	Develop action plan with procurement manager for savings to be realised	JP													
8.1.3	Undertake revised procurement to achieve savings identified	JP													
8.1.3	Monitor cash savings realised	JP													
8.2	Risk Management														
8.2.1	Develop corporate and departmental risk registers	TK													
8.2.2	Monitor registers via to members	TK													
8.2.3	Identify improvements to address UoR assessment	TK													

FP3: Managing Resources (including Value for Money)					
9	Expected Outcome	Recognised improvements in UoR judgement and improved asset, workforce and natural resource management			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
9.1	Manage assets effectively	Update Asset Management Plan Dispose of/ retain assets as per Council priorities	November 2010 Ongoing	JLP	Property Services (WETT- Worcestershire County Council)

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FP3: Managing Resources (including Value for Money)					
9	Expected Outcome	Recognised improvements in UoR judgement and improved asset, workforce and natural resource management			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
9.2	Workforce Planning	Service-level data, analysis & plans	December 2010	DP	Learning & Organisational Development Manager
9.3	Natural Resources	Green fleet review & action plan	31 st March 2011	GR	Waste minimisation
		Climate Change Strategy & Action Plan	November 2010	HB	Support from the Energy Savings Trust
		Sustainable Community Strategy Action Plan	March 2011	HB	

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
9.1	Manage assets effectively														
9.1.1	Agree SLA with Worcestershire County to include updates to asset management plan	TK													
9.1.2	Map the areas / assets owned by Council and review at asset management group	TK													
9.1.3	Identify assets for disposal and discuss plan wit WCC for action	TK													

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
9.2	Workforce Planning														
9.2.1	Produce shared workforce plan	HP													
9.2.2	Produce service-level data packs	HP/BB													
9.3	Natural Resources														
9.3.1	To work with other local authorities and the voluntary sector to increase re use from bulky household collections and explore future options for service delivery	Anna Wardell													
9.3.2	To work with the Energy Savings Trust to carry out a 'green fleet' review	Kevin Hirons													

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FP4: Managing Performance (including Value for Money)					
10	Expected Outcome	Appropriate Performance Management Arrangements			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
10.1	Data Quality	Data Quality Strategy updates to PMB /CMT	August 2010 (and 6 monthly thereafter)	HB	CCPP
10.2	Performance & Project Management	Delivery of the Performance Management Strategy Action Plan	February 2011 (and annually thereafter)	HB	CCPP
10.3	VFM Measures	Vfm transactional measures spreadsheet	June 2010	JP	Finance Team Policy & Performance

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					HB	Team
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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
10.1	Data Quality														
10.1.1	Ensure closedown of National Indicators as per DCLG definitions.	HB													
10.1.2	Carry out review of lessons learnt	HB													
10.2	Performance & Project Management														
10.2.1	Report annual review of Performance Management Strategy to PMB.	HB													
10.2.2	Review corporate project management methodology	HB													
10.2.3	Monthly community programme board.	HB													
10.3	VFM measures														
10.3.1	Complete pilot and report results to CMT.	HB													
10.3.2	Agree roll out with CMT.	HB													
10.3.3	Roll out approach across all departments.	HB													
10.3.4	Develop VFM dashboard for focus on high spend / low satisfaction services	HB													
10.3.5	Update VFM Strategy for members consideration	HB													
10.3.6	Undertake VFM training for members and officers	HB													

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PR1: Customer Processes					
11	Expected Outcome	Improved Customer Processes			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
11.1	Customer Service Excellence Accreditation (Customer First Part 4)	New HOS to review CF Pt 3 action plans with teams Set up working group to undertake self assessment Customer First Pt 4 training	September 2010 TBC December 2010	New HOS	To be reviewed by HOS
11.2	Community Engagement	Community Engagement Strategy agreed at Cabinet Community Engagement toolkit produced	October 2010 October 2010	HB	Senior Corporate Policy & Performance Officer Equalities Officer
11.3	CSC/Website	'Have a Play' Promotion & marketing Agreement of programme	December 2010 TBC March 2011	DP New HOS	ICT Team Communications Team Customer Service Centre Manager

Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
11.1	Customer Service Excellence Accreditation (Customer First Part 4)															
11.1.1																Actions to be updated when new HOS takes post
11.1.2																
11.1.3																

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
11.2	Community Engagement														
11.2.1	Community Engagement Strategy agreed by Cabinet.	HB													
11.2.2	Toolkit developed.	HB													
11.2.3	Engagement results built into annual strategic review of Council Plan	HB													
11.3	CSC/Website														
11.3.1	Web developer to establish what CSC want on the website	NP													
11.3.2	Develop site	NP													

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PR2: Political Governance

12	Expected Outcome	Improved Governance			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
12.1	Overview & Scrutiny	Overview & Scrutiny Work Programme	March 2011	CF	Head of Legal, Democratic & Equalities
		Annual Overview & Scrutiny report	March 2011		
12.2	Elections	Democratic Task Group	May 2010	CF	Head of Legal, Democratic & Equalities
		Democracy Year	May 2011		
12.3	Modern Councillor	Member Development Action	September 2011	CF	Head of Legal,

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PR2: Political Governance					
12	Expected Outcome	Improved Governance			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
	Programme	Plan			Democratic & Equalities Learning & Organisational Development Manager
12.4	Member Standards	Governance with partnerships confidence protocol Officer/Member Code of Conduct with training	March 2011	CF	Head of Legal, Democratic & Equalities Senior Solicitors Standards Committee

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Status / Corrective Action											
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
12.1	Overview & Scrutiny													
12.1.1	Determine the 2010/11 work programme	CF												
12.1.2	Deliver specific Chairmanship training for Overview and Scrutiny Board Chairman	CF												
12.1.3	Agree and publish a policy for managing petitions, councillor calls for action, crime and disorder and public participation in overview and scrutiny topics	CF												

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
12.2	Elections														
12.2.1	Deliver the actions within the year three Electoral Services Improvement Plan (replaced Charter mark)	CF													
12.2.2	Deliver 'Would Be Councillor Days'	CF													
12.2.3	Deliver recommendations from the Democracy Task Group	CF													
12.3	Modern Councillor Programme														
12.3.1	Identify all compulsory training elements for Boards and Committees	CF													
12.3.2	Deliver the pilot exercise for PDPs and roll out programme to volunteer members in advance of the District Elections in May 2011 when the programme will be rolled out to all members	CF													
12.4	Member Standards														
12.4.1	Review the Member complaint process and the Standards Committee	CF													
12.4.2	Deliver Member training on outside bodies and specific external responsibilities	CF													
12.4.3	Deliver Ombudsman training	CF													

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PR3: Shared Services					
13.	Expected Outcome	Improved services to the public			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
13.1	Transformation Team	Recruitment of team <i>Input of RIEP</i>	September 2010	DP KD	Head of Transformation Chief Executive RIEP
13.2	Programme Plan	CMT/SMT & Stakeholders Working Group Programme of Work	September 2010	DP	Transformation Team CMT/SMT

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
13.1	Transformation Team														
13.1.1	Draft job descriptions	DP													
13.1.2	Recruit team	DP													
13.2	Programme Plan														
13.2.1	Hold CMT workshops on Transformational thinking	KD													
13.2.2	Meet with RIEP to determine external support available	KD													
13.2.3	Finalise programme	KD													
13.2.4	Implement programme	KD													

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PR4: WETT					
14	Expected Outcome	Successful provision of the Regulatory Service across the County. Improved property and Internal Audit service provision through management of service level agreements with provider Authorities			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
14.1	Property Services	Project Plan	June 2010	JP	Transformation Team
14.2	Regulatory Services	Project Plan	June 2010	JP	Transformation Team
14.3	Internal Audit	Project Plan	June 2010	JP	Transformation Team

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Status / Corrective Action
14.1	Regulatory Services														
14.1.1	Mapping of posts to structure	KD													
14.1.2	Deliver ICT improvements and access as detailed in project plan	KD													
14.1.3	Manage governance arrangements	KD													
14.1.4	Agree new structure with staff and implement	KD													
14.1.5	Monitor financial arrangements	KD													
14.1.6	Deliver actions as identified within project plan	KD													
14.2	Property Services														
14.2.1	Agree SLA with	TK													

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Status / Corrective Action
	Worcestershire CC														
14.2.2	Monitor SLA to ensure service provision met as agreed	TK													
14.2.3	Review other property service provision across the Council for potential transfer to County	TK													
14.3	Internal Audit														
14.3.1	Agree SLA with Worcester City Council	TK													
14.3.2	Monitor SLA to ensure service provision met as agreed	TK													
14.3.3	Review Use Of Resources judgement to ensure improvements delivered as agreed	TK													

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PR5: Strategic Planning					
15.	Expected Outcome	Improved Planning Service and Balanced Development of District			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
15.1	Core Strategy	Evidence collection and Strategy development	November 2010	JS	Strategic Planning Manager Strategic Planning Team

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PR5: Strategic Planning					
15.	Expected Outcome	Improved Planning Service and Balanced Development of District			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
15.2	AAP Town Centre	Town Centre Project Plan	31 st March 2011	JS	Senior Project Manager (Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration) Strategic Planning Team Additional resource
15.3	IDeA Peer Review	Peer review action plan	June 2010	JS	Strategic Planning Team Additional resource
15.4	Longbridge	Resolution of infrastructure tariff for East Works and determine planning application.	October 2010	JS	Strategic Planning Team External legal support Birmingham City Council

Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
15.1	Core Strategy														
15.1.1	Prepare Evidence Bases to support Core Strategy	MD													
15.1.2	Engage with ATLAS to support strategic allocations	MD													
15.1.3	Prepared revised draft Core Strategy	MD													
15.1.4	Consult on revised Draft	MD													

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Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Status / Corrective Action
	Core strategy														
15.1.5	Consider Consultation responses	MD													
15.2	AAP Town Centre														
15.2.1	Prepare evidence base to support the Town Centre AAP	MD													
15.2.2	Prepared Draft Town Centre AAP	MD													
15.2.3	Consult on Draft Town Centre AAP	MD													
15.2.4	Consider Consultation responses	MD													
15.3	IDeA Peer Review														
15.3.1	Receive final report	RB													
15.3.2	Final report presented to scrutiny	RB													
15.3.3	Produce & implement action plan	RB													
15.4	Longbridge														
15.4.1	Cabinet approval for Memorandum of understanding and project plan	MD													
15.4.2	Engagement with St Modwen over East works planning application	MD													
15.4.3	Determine planning application	MD													

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HR & OD1: Learning and Development

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16	Expected Outcome	Improved Employee Skills and Capacity			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
16.1	Improved Employee skills & capacity	Service-level data, analysis & plans	November 2010	DP	Learning & Organisational Development Manager
16.2	Effective & consistent people management & development processes	Review & deliver IIP action plan Create new joint appraisals scheme	April 2011 December 2010	DP	Learning & Organisational Development Manager

Ref	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action	
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
16.1	Investors in People															
16.1.1	Carryout BDC spot check	HP														
16.1.2	Implement recovery actions at BDC	HP														
16.1.3	Prepare for BDC accreditation inspection	HP														
16.1.4	Prepare for RBC spot check	HP														
16.2	Effective & consistent people management & development processes															
16.2.1	Prepare shared appraisal scheme	HP														
16.2.2	Draft to CMT	HP														
16.2.3	Consultation	HP														
16.2.4	Launch new scheme	HP														

HR&OD2: Modernisation

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17	Expected Outcome	RBC and BDC staff to be employed under harmonised terms and conditions where appropriate within an improved payroll service			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
17.1	Harmonisation Project (Policies / Terms & Conditions)	Production of policy proposal package for consultation Consultation exercise	September 2010 December 2010(<i>subject to Union agreement</i>)	TK	HR Teams (Bromsgrove & Redditch) Unions

Ref.	Action	Lead	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Status / Corrective Action
17.1	Harmonisation Project (Policies / Terms & Conditions)														
17.1.1	Identify terms and conditions to be reviewed														
17.1.2	Undertake mapping of T&C across the Councils														
17.1.3	Discuss proposals with unions for consideration and negotiation														
17.1.4	Implement changes in consultation with staff														

HR& OD 3: Positive Employee Climate

18	Expected Outcome	Positive employee climate			
Ref.	Measures of Success	Actions Required	Timescales	Lead	Resources
18.1	Improved Employee Engagement	Creation of employee engagement programme	March 2011	DP	Learning & Organisational Development Manager Communication & Customer First Manager

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Ref.	Action	Lead													Status / Corrective Action
			Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	
18.1	Improved Employee Engagement														
18.1.1	BDC employee survey	HP													
18.1.2	Submit quick wins proposals to CMT in response to the survey	HP													
18.1.3	Implement quick wins	HP													
18.1.4	Develop proposals for shared and separate engagement programme	HP/AMD													
18.1.5	Submit proposals for shared and separate engagement activities to CMT	HP/AMD													

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Performance Indicators Period 02 (May 2010)

Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum. or Snap?	2009/10 outturn	2009/10									
					April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend				
Environment Department														
NI 191	Residual Household waste per household (KG)	M	C	581.13	47.55	52.89	I	95.39	97.46	I	578.00	578.00	I	April and May Trade waste is still included in these totals as figures have not yet been provided by County. When these are provided and netted off it is estimated the May figure will be around 92kg, which would be within target.
NI 192	Percentage of household waste re-used, recycled and composted	M	C	37.4	42.80	38.61	I	44.86	40.08	I	40.00	40.00	I	Tonnages for comingled recycling are currently subject to a 20% reject rate due to issues with the EnviSort plant - this is due to be addressed with the aim of reducing it to a maximum 10% reject rate.
	Number of missed waste collections	M	C	1107	125	167	I	250	287	I	1,500	1,500	I	120 Missed collections of which 26 were garden waste, 41 were household waste and 53 were recycling collections.
	Town Centre Car Park Usage (av per month)	M	S	126,928 (ave)	126,875	125,929	I	n/a	n/a	I	>126,875	>126,875	I	Figures not available yet.

Community Services

							I			W			W	Total Crime performance indicator is currently 107 crime over target year to date. This is predominantly due to violent crime, vehicle crime and make off without payment at petrol stations in the Wythall area - also known as Bilking. The first two issues are CSP priorities and the CSP will be meeting to look at both issues to create an action plan to deliver over the remainder of the year to help out this performance back on track. Bilking offences requires a corporate approach by petrol stations to implement better control measures to prevent the offence occurring.
	Total Crime	M	C	5187	433	485	I	880	987	W	5,266	5,425	W	

Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn	2010/11						Comments				
					April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend		Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target & Trend		
	The number of domestic burglaries	M	C	321	30	25	I	61	42	I	346	I	370	346	Domestic Burglary continues to be on target, many of our prolific burglars are either in custody or not living within the Bromsgrove area. There are often cross-border offenders who offend in the affluent outskirts of the District - therefore efforts to combat domestic burglary will remain high.
	The number of violent crimes	M	C	1046	88	107	I	179	204	I	1,063	W	1,038	1,063	Violent Crime continues to be over target for the month and for year to date. Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership are currently delivering projects, campaigns and operations to combat violent crime during the World Cup celebrations. All police officer's rest days have been cancelled on days England are playing giving 50% officers on patrol. Home Visits will be conducted to households with known violent people throughout the World Cup and additional licensing checks are being carried out to all premises. There is also various campaigns being promoted. The CSP are meeting in August to develop a multi-agency action plan to tackle Violent Crime.
	The number of robberies	M	C	44	4	6	S	9	12	S	57	W	54	57	Robberies are slightly over target this month and year to date but continue to be of a low quantity. Those few offences are low level street robberies involving juveniles.

20010/11				Comments
Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target & Trend	Est. Outturn Target & Trend	Comments
664	662	W	W	Vehicle Crime is over target this month but still remains on target year to date. There has been a spout of vehicle thefts targeting Land Rover Defenders - this is currently being investigated and an operation will be put into place. There continues to be some thefts from motor vehicles of people who are leaving mobile phones and laptops on show in their vehicles. CSP are meeting in September to develop a multi-agency action plan to tackle vehicle crime although efforts will continue in the interim.
890	886	W	W	Criminal Damage is over target in May but remains on target year to date. May was mainly off target due to 11 reported offences of racist graffiti in the Stoke Heath area. Although these offences were committed by the same offenders on the same evening these offences were all recorded as individual crimes. These offenders have been arrested and are currently being investigated. Other offences of criminal damage are predominantly mindless vandalism with little offender patterns which it make it difficult to intervene.
160	160			Slightly down on previous month, possibly due to poor weather in May.
1,680	1,680			Performance is above target and service is valued by customers.
215	215			The target for new customers was missed by 2 installations in May. This was due to Bank Holidays and officer holidays.
137	137			3 Service Users passed away, 2 went into nursing homes and 3 have decided the service is no longer required.
78	78			A net gain of 8 is above target.

April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend
55	47	W	111	109	W
74	64	W	151	147	W
160	141	W	160	133	W
140	238	S	280	475	S
18	20	W	18	16	W
12	9	I	12	8	I
6	11	W	6	8	W

Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn
The number of vehicle crimes	M	C	672
The number of Criminal Damage Incidents	M	C	908
Monthly Shopmobility Centre Usage	M	S	144 (ave)
Community transport usages	M	C	n/a
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - new customers	M	S	
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - Leavers	M	S	
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - net gain	M	S	

Ref	Description	2009/10 outturn	Cum or Snap?	Freq. of reporting	2010/11						Comments		
					April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend		Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend
	Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - total private dispersals		S	M	607	612		613	620	I	679	679	This is based on the information above.
	Number of lifeline calls received (activity measure)		S	M	n/a	3,427	n/a	n/a	7,631		n/a	n/a	Activity Measure.
	% of lifeline calls answered within 1 minute		S	M	98.50%	99.94%		98.50%	99.98%	I	98.50	98.50	The target of 98.5% is a nationally recognised acceptable standard set by the Telecare Industry Authority.
	Number of CCTV incidents (activity measure)		C	M	n/a	33	n/a	n/a	24	n/a	(baseline in 10/11)		Baseline.
	% of CCTV incidents which are proactive monitoring		C	M	n/a	60	n/a	n/a	71	n/a	(baseline in 10/11)		Baseline.
	Number of CCTV evidential seizures		C	M	n/a	33	n/a	n/a	24	n/a	(baseline in 10/11)		Baseline.

Ref	Description	2009/10 outturn	Cum or Snap?	Freq. of reporting	2010/11						Comments		
					April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend		Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend
	Number of locally delivered diversionary sessions	163	C	M	16	30		35	33	W	185	185	Target missed due to poor coach capacity to increase delivery of diversionary sessions. Aiming to develop further diversionary activities in the coming months.
	Numbers of users attending diversionary activities.	617	C	M	56	64		125	72	W	720	720	Target missed due to poor coach capacity to increase delivery of diversionary sessions. Aiming to develop further diversionary activities in the coming months.
	Number of attendances at arts events	23,728	C	M	91	100		659	585	I	24,202	24,202	Although numbers increased over April the target for May was not met. There were 7 events in Sanders Park in May – 1 event cancelled and poor weather conditions for 2 others led to a down turn in numbers. Park events are always reliant on good weather conditions.
	Dolphin Centre Usage	415,407	C	M	34,056	34,301		71,765	67,317	W	413,000	413,000	Target not met due in large to bank holidays and Easter. Also due to less pool parties due to NPLQ course.
	Sports development usages	30,095	C	M	1,966	2,060		4,480	4,916	I	30,600	30,600	Target exceeded due to continued delivery of regular programmes including PSP, Mobility, Community Sessions etc.

Ref	Description	2009/10 outturn	Cum or Snap?	Freq. of reporting	2010/11						Comments		
					April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend		Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend
	Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - total private dispersals		S	M	607	612		613	620	I	679	679	This is based on the information above.
	Number of lifeline calls received (activity measure)		S	M	n/a	3,427	n/a	n/a	7,631		n/a	n/a	Activity Measure.
	% of lifeline calls answered within 1 minute		S	M	98.50%	99.94%		98.50%	99.98%	I	98.50	98.50	The target of 98.5% is a nationally recognised acceptable standard set by the Telecare Industry Authority.
	Number of CCTV incidents (activity measure)		C	M	n/a	33	n/a	n/a	24	n/a	(baseline in 10/11)		Baseline.
	% of CCTV incidents which are proactive monitoring		C	M	n/a	60	n/a	n/a	71	n/a	(baseline in 10/11)		Baseline.
	Number of CCTV evidential seizures		C	M	n/a	33	n/a	n/a	24	n/a	(baseline in 10/11)		Baseline.

Ref	Description	2009/10 outturn	Cum or Snap?	Freq. of reporting	2010/11						Comments		
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20010/11			
Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target & Trend	Comments

April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend
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Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn
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Finance & Resources Department

NI181	Time taken to process HB/CT benefit new claims or change events (days)	M	C	9.12						12.00	13.61	I	12.00	13.61		12.00		12.00	Following staff shortages in April, this has left us with an a small backlog. Staff are currently working overtime in order to catch up and as a result of this, some of the older items shall be picked up which will have a negative impact on performance.
	Percentage of invoices paid within 10 days of receipt	M	C	83.00						90.00	83.12	W	90.00	83.12		90.00		85.00	The percentage of invoices paid within 10 days was below target for May this was mainly due to staff not being in over the bank holiday period and elections duties. Also there have been problems with goods receipting of items not being done within the required timescales.
FP001	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	M	C	98.00						98.00	99.61	W	98.00	99.12		98.00		98.00	On target.
LPI (formerly BV12)	The average number of working days lost due to sickness.	M	C	9.12						0.71	1.55	S	1.42	1.55		8.75		9.31	A very slight reduction was seen in the number of days lost due to sickness absence in May.

Customer Services

	Monthly Call Volumes Customer Contact Centre (activity measure)	M	S							n/a	9,914	n/a	n/a	6,992		n/a	n/a	n/a	Calls to the Customer Contact Centre have fallen by 30% compared to last month. As expected overall call volume has reduced compared to last month this fall follows the spikes caused by Council Tax billing and Brown bin delivery problems.
	Monthly Call Volume Council Switchboard (activity measure)	M	S							n/a	4,799	n/a	n/a	4,127		n/a	n/a	n/a	Calls to the Council switchboard have fallen by 14% compared to last month The reduction in call volume is expected following April's peak and follows previous call profiles.
	Resolution at First Point of Contact all services (percentage)	M	S	95.00						85.00	97		85.00	98		95.00		95.00	Overall resolution performance remains above target and is consistent with previous monthly performance.

20010/11				Comments
Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target & Trend		
85.00	85.00			Performance above target this month and an improvement of 3% compared to last month supporting the positive trends demonstrated in previous telephone indicators.
20.00	20.00			An improvement of 5 Seconds over last month and demonstrates positive movement towards target performance The actual performance this month is 22 seconds but the cumulative answer time is reported to eliminate the variations experienced on a month by month basis. Positive trend expected matches previous years at this point in financial year, following the service delivery problems created by high demand driven by council tax main billing and brown bin delivery problems which have now passed.
decreasing	decreasing			A delay in the manufacturing of the brown bins has caused an increase in the number of complaints received as the knock on effect was customers did not receive them in time for the start of the green waste collections. Complaints received were - : 3 about parking machines not giving change, 1 about fly tipping not collected, 1 lack of info re changes to recycling service, 2 about bins not being placed back properly, 2 about missed collections, 19 about brown bins not being delivered in time for garden waste collection, 3 objections about planning applications, 1 about procedure at planning committee and 2 about Benefits claims.

April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend
85.00	86.00		85.00	89.00	
20.00	34.00		20.00	28.80	
	34		n/a	59	

Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn
	% of Calls Answered	M	S	85.00
	Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	M	C	20
	Number of complaints received (Council wide)	M	C	200

20010/11			
Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target & Trend	Comments
Increasing	Increasing		Compliments received were – 1 about the helpfulness of the Environmental Health Team, 1 about Recycling service and 3 about the excellent service provided by the Customer Service Centre Team.

April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend
	9		n/a	16	W

Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn
	Number of compliments received	M	C	60

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

There are no Corporately reported PI's for this department

Planning & Regeneration

85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00		April saw 6 decisions on Major applications which is significant. May saw 4 decisions. One application went out of time - the Stoke Prior affordable housing scheme, which went over due to the scale of the issues and the magnitude of public involvement.
85.00	66.60		85.00	70.00	I	In the last Quarter of 2009/10 minor applications returned to a more healthy number of 15 – 17 and April reflects this as did May. Of the two out of time proposals one related to a replacement dwelling where there was a need to consider the issue of outbuildings, the other was Primrose Hospice which was deferred from Committee.
90.00	88.30		90.00	88.20	W	May saw a further reduction in number of other applications (48) from April (52) and from the relatively high figure of March (62). Two applications went out of time due to the need to consult GOWM as they related to development at a Grade II*.

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85.00	66.60		85.00	70.00	I	In the last Quarter of 2009/10 minor applications returned to a more healthy number of 15 – 17 and April reflects this as did May. Of the two out of time proposals one related to a replacement dwelling where there was a need to consider the issue of outbuildings, the other was Primrose Hospice which was deferred from Committee.
90.00	88.30		90.00	88.20	W	May saw a further reduction in number of other applications (48) from April (52) and from the relatively high figure of March (62). Two applications went out of time due to the need to consult GOWM as they related to development at a Grade II*.

Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn
NI 157	The percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	M	C	83.00
NI 157	The percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	87.80
NI 157	The percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	91.00

Housing Department

Corporately reported PI's for this department are only reported quarterly

Regulatory Services

Ref	Description	Freq. of reporting	Cum or Snap?	2009/10 outturn	2010/11				Comments					
					April Target	April Actual	Target & Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target & Trend	Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target & Trend	

There are no Corporately reported PIs for this department

Policy, Performance and Partnerships

Corporately reported PIs for this department are only reported quarterly

Business Transformation

There are no Corporately reported PIs for this department

2010/11 Monthly Performance figures

Ref	Description	Freq	Cum or Snap	2010/11 Monthly Performance figures													
				Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.		
NI 191	Residual Household waste per household (kg)	M	C	47.55	47.84	47.60	48.38	47.12	47.68	47.09	48.57	53.04	46.98	44.23	48.21		
			Actual	52.89	44.57												
			numerator	2,058.94	1,735.24												
			denominator	38,929	38,929												
NI 192	Percentage of household waste re-used, recycled and composted	M	C	42.36	46.38	46.56	45.93	44.70	45.33	42.77	38.61	26.03	32.34	29.03	36.41		
			Actual	38.61	41.74												
			numerator	1,295,043	1,243,254												
			denominator	3,354,123	2,978,494												
	Number of missed waste collections	M	C	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125	125		
			Actual	167	120												
	Town Centre Car Park Usage	M	S	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875	126,875		
			Actual	125,929													

Environment Department

Community Services

	Total crimes	M	C	433	447	433	447	447	433	447	433	447	447	404	447
			Actual	485	505										
	The number of domestic burglaries	M	C	30	31	30	31	31	30	30	31	31	31	28	31
			Actual	25	17										
	The number of violent crimes	M	C	88	91	92	96	97	90	87	78	78	80	74	87
			Actual	107	97										
	The number of robberies	M	C	4	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	5	5	4	5
			Actual	6	6										
	The number of vehicle crimes	M	C	55	56	55	56	56	55	56	55	56	56	51	56
			Actual	47	62										
	The number of criminal damage incidents	M	C	74	77	59	93	74	81	74	76	59	63	70	90
			Actual	64	83										
	Shannonhilly Centre Ilseane	M	S	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160	160
			Actual												

Community Service Usage	M	C	Actual	141	133	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
Community transport usages	M	C	Target	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140	140
			Actual	238	237														
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - new customers	M	S	Target	18	18														
			Actual	20	16														
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - leavers	M	S	Target	12	12														
			Actual	9	8														
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - net gain	M	S	Target	6	6														
			Actual	11	8														
Private dispersed Lifeline customer numbers - total private dispersals	M	S	Target	607	613														
			Actual	612	620														
Number of Lifeline calls received	M	S	Target																
			Actual	315	4,204														
%age of Lifeline calls answered within 1 minute	M	S	Target	98.50%	98.50%														
			Actual	99.94%	99.98%														
Number of CCTV incidents	M	C	Target																
			Actual	315	336														
%age of CCTV incidents which are proactive monitoring	M	C	Target																
			Actual	60	71														
Number of CCTV evidential seizures	M	C	Target																
			Actual	33	24														

Leisure & Cultural Services

Number of locally delivered diversionary sessions	M	C	Target	16	19	18	21	25	16	18	14	5	5	5	12	16
			Actual	30	3											
Numbers of users attending diversionary activities.	M	C	Target	56	69	82	96	124	52	69	32	30	20	42	48	
			Actual	64	8											
Number of attendances at arts events	M	C	Target	91	568	3,660	1,222	15,080	847	859	3,025	129	63	111	95.00	
			Actual	100	485											
Enrichin Cantra I learn	M	C	Target	34,056	37,709	34,321	34,563	31,105	34,813	35,922	35,630	26,064	36,000	38,571	40,403	

Sports Development Usages		M	C	Actual	34,301	33,016	2,849	2,686	2,351	1,941	3,064	3,540	1,171	1,983	2754	3,781
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														

Finance & Resources Department

NI 181	Time taken to process HB/CT benefit new claims or change events	M	C	Target	12.00	12.00										
				Actual												
		numerator														
		denominator														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														

Customer Services

Monthly Call Volumes Customer Contact Centre (activity measure)	M	S	Target													
			Actual													
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														

Planning & Regeneration

NI157	The percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	M	C	Target	85.00	85.00										
				Actual												
		numerator														
		denominator														
		Target														
		Actual														
		Target														
		Actual														

N1157	The percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	Actual numerator	88.23	88.00																
				denominator	15	15																
N1157	The percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	Target	90.00	90.00																
				Actual numerator	94.30	95.80																
				denominator	49	46																
					52	48																

Housing Department

Corporately reported PI's for this department are only reported quarterly

Policy, Performance and Partnerships

Corporately reported PI's for this department are only reported quarterly

**Full list of the 2008-2011 District Level National Indicators:
2009/10 End of Year Performance Reporting Period**

NI No	Full Definition	Spatial Level	Good Perf. equals	Latest Data Available	Data Period	2009/10 Target	Traffic light	Comments
1	% of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	81.2%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Bromsgrove district reported the highest proportion of people who think their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. (2008/09 – 81.6%)
2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	61.2%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 61.4%
3	Civic participation in the local area	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	16.3%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 15.6%
4	% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	25.9%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Respondents in Bromsgrove district are least likely to feel they can influence decisions in their locality. (2008-09 – 24.1%)
Page 351	Overall/general satisfaction with local area	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	85.0%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 81.2%
	Participation in regular volunteering	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	26.0%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	The levels of participation in regular volunteering is noticeably lower in Bromsgrove district (26.0%) and Redditch district (26.3%) when compared to the other districts within Worcestershire. (2008/09 – 23.5%)
14	Reducing avoidable contact: Minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	14.5%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Outturn calculated using a different formula from last year, following comments by Auditors. The numerator & denominator figures represent the sum of the responses to the one week survey undertaken in areas covered by this indicator that are not currently supported by our Customer Service Centre plus an average one weeks figures from NI 14 data gathered at the CSC. As there is no target set for this indicator there is no traffic light assessment. Figure is higher ('worse') than last years result (8.92%), but that was considered to be unrealistically low. As a result of additional effort in training and guidance this year's figure is considered to be a more representative one. However as this NI is discontinued from April 2010 no further effort will be expended on this NI.

NI No	Full Definition	Spatial Level	Good Perf. equals	Latest Data Available	Data Period	2009/10 Target	Traffic light	Comments
15	Serious violent crime rate	Bromsgrove CSP	Lower rate	0.650 per 1000 population	2009/10	No Target	Green	Despite an increase in the total number of offences throughout 2009/10, the overall NI 15 rate per 1000 population has actually decreased in Bromsgrove this financial year due to a change in the size of the population. The decrease in the rate equates to 8.39% compared to 2008/09 - leading to an overall green assessment for this financial year.
16	Serious acquisitive crime rate	Bromsgrove CSP	Lower rate	11.237 per 1000 population	2009/10	No Target	Green	The NI 16 rate per 1000 population in Bromsgrove decreased by 17% during 2009/10 with 210 fewer offences recorded than in 2008/09, leading to a green performance assessment at the end of Q4.
17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	12.3%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 12.3
20	Assault with injury crime rate	Bromsgrove CSP	Lower rate	4.605 per 1000 population	2009/10	No Target	Green	Though the NI 20 rate in Bromsgrove has reduced by 2.3% during 2009/10 it is important to note that the number of offences recorded in the most recent quarter was slightly higher (10% or 9 offences) than the same period last year, therefore the CSP should still be closely monitoring this indicator.
Page 252	Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	29.6%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 27.7%
	Perceptions of parents taking responsibility for the behaviour of their children in the area	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	36.5%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 33.6%
	Perceptions that people in the area treat one another with respect and consideration	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	21.4%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 25.6%
	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	30.2%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 29.2%
	27	Understanding of local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and police	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	30.2%	2009/10	No Target	No Status
28	Serious knife crime rate	Bromsgrove CSP	Lower rate	0.260 per 1000 population	2009/10	No Target	Green	The 8.39% decrease in knife crime offences per 1000 population in Bromsgrove during 2009/10 is equivalent to just 1 less offence than during 2008/09. Therefore although a green performance assessment is given, it should be noted that an increase of just 2 offences would change performance to amber or red.

NI No	Full Definition	Spatial Level	Good Perf. equals	Latest Data Available	Data Period	2009/10 Target	Traffic light	Comments
29	Gun crime rate	Bromsgrove CSP	Lower rate	0.098 per 1000 population	2009/10	No Target	Green	The Gun Crime rate per 1000 population in Bromsgrove has decreased this financial year by 18.9% compared to 2008/09. The 9 offences recorded in total over the course of the year is 2 less than the 11 recorded in the previous 12 months, leading to a green assessment.
35	Building resilience to violent extremism	Bromsgrove District	Higher level	Level 2	2009/10	No Target	Green	County Council lead
37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	30.6%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Across the county, people in Bromsgrove district are the least aware of civil protection arrangements in the local area. (2008/09 – 10.4%)
39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates	Bromsgrove District	Lower rate	1340.1 per 100,000 population (Provisional)	Q2 2009/10	No Target	No Status	Provisional figures.
41	Perceptions of drunk or rowdy behaviour as a problem	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	20.0%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 23.5%
45	Perceptions of drug use or drug dealing as a problem	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	20.1%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 19.3%
45	People killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	11.1%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Figures collected at District Level but County Council lead
48	Children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	10.4%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Figures collected at District Level but County Council lead
117	16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEET)	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	3.7% (Provisional)	Q4 2009/10	No Target	No Status	Trunk priority
119	Self-reported measure of people's overall health and wellbeing	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	79.3%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 82.0% NHS lead
138	Satisfaction of people over 65 with both home and neighbourhood	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	82.6%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Bromsgrove District has the lowest percentage of people over 65 who are satisfied with both home and neighbourhood. The Bromsgrove figure is noticeably lower than the other districts within Worcestershire. The Older Persons directory is one initiative intended to improve this.
139	The extent to which older people receive the support they need to live independently at home	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	29.3%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 25.2%

NI No	Full Definition	Spatial Level	Good Perf. equals	Latest Data Available	Data Period	2009/10 Target	Traffic light	Comments
140	Fair treatment by local services	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	75.9%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	2008/09 – 70.9%
143	Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence	Redditch Probation Area (Redditch/ Bromsgrove)	Higher %	86%	2009/10	75%	No Status	Probation lead
144	Offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence	Redditch Probation Area (Redditch/ Bromsgrove)	Higher %	48%	2009/10	40%	No Status	Probation lead
151	Overall employment rate	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	82.4%	July 2008 - June 2009	No Target	No Status	Figure provided by ONS
152	Working age people on out of work benefits	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	7.8%	November 2008 – October 2009	No Target	No Status	Figure reported by Jobcentre Plus
154	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	Bromsgrove District	Higher number	88	2009/10	80	Green	Annual target exceeded.
156	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	Bromsgrove District	Lower number	14	Q4 2009/10	<34	Green	Annual target exceeded.
157	Processing of planning applications as measured against targets for 'major', 'minor' and 'other' application types	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	a) 83% b) 88.7% c) 91%	2009/10	a) 80% b) 85% c) 90%	a) Green b) Green c) Green	All annual targets exceeded.
181	Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	Bromsgrove District	Lower number of days	9.1 days	2009/10	15.0	Green	Annual target significantly exceeded. Improvement on this PI has been down to the hard work of staff at Bromsgrove District Council and new procedures / processes, most notably VRA. Further improvements can be made in 2010/11 with more concentration on changes in details.
182	Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	87.0%	2009/10	80.0%	Green	Annual target exceeded.
184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	92.6%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	Indicator deleted wef 1/4/10

NI No	Full Definition	Spatial Level	Good Perf. equals	Latest Data Available	Data Period	2009/10 Target	Traffic light	Comments
185	CO2 reduction from local authority operations	Bromsgrove District	Negative %age	+4%	2009/10	-2%		The cold winter will have had an adverse impact on this. A climate change strategy will be brought to Cabinet in September to tackle this issue.
187	Tackling fuel poverty – people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating	Bromsgrove District	<35) Lower % >65) Higher %	<35) 7.55% >65) 42.32%	2009/10	No Target	No Status	
189	Flood and coastal erosion risk management	Bromsgrove District	Higher %	No Data	-	No Target	No Status	
191	Residual household waste per household	Bromsgrove District	Lower number	581kg	2009/10	593kg	Green	Annual target exceeded.
192	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	Bromsgrove District	Lower number	37.40%	2009/10	30.00%	Green	Annual target significantly exceeded.
Page 355	Air quality – % reduction in NOx and primary PM10 emissions through local authority's estate and operations	Bromsgrove District	Negative %age	+8%	2009/10	-2%		The cold winter will have had an adverse impact on this. A climate change strategy will be brought to Cabinet in September to tackle this issue
	Improved street and environmental cleanliness a) levels litter b) levels of detritus c) levels of graffiti d) levels of fly posting	Bromsgrove District	Lower %	a) 8% b) 17% c) 2% d) 1%	2009/10	a) 13% b) 20% c) 5% d) 1%	Green	Annual target exceeded.
196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness - fly tipping	Bromsgrove District	Lower Grade	Grade 3	2009/10	Grade 2	Red	

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