



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY 6TH APRIL 2011 AT 6.00 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 meetings of the Cabinet held on 2nd February 2011 and 23rd February 2011 (Pages 1 - 10)
4. Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 1st February 2011 and 1st March 2011 (Pages 11 - 22)
  - (a) To receive and note the minutes
  - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
5. Minutes of the Meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee held on 28th February 2011 (Pages 23 - 28)
  - (a) To receive and note the minutes
  - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
6. Minutes (Non Confidential) of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 22nd March 2011 (supporting documents attached) (Pages 29 - 40)
  - (a) To receive and note the minutes
  - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

7. To receive verbal updates from the Leader and/or other Cabinet Members on any recent meetings attended in an ex-officio capacity (Pages 41 - 42)
8. Bromsgrove Museum (Pages 43 - 50)
9. Bromsgrove War Memorial - Change of Name Report (Pages 51 - 56)
10. Government Homelessness Grant and Support for Preventative Services (Pages 57 - 72)
11. Countywide Housing Strategy 2011 - 2014 (Pages 73 - 82)
12. Worcestershire Local Investment Plan and Affordable Homes Programme (Pages 83 - 94)
13. Bromsgrove Private Sector Housing Strategy and Assistance Policy (Pages 95 - 104)
14. Council Plan 2011 - 2014 (Pages 105 - 108)
15. Annual Review of Operational Policy under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) (Pages 109 - 116)
16. Adoption of Planning Enforcement Policy (copy of report to Planning Committee attached for information only) (Pages 117 - 122)

Appendices For Item 9 - Bromsgrove War Memorial Change of Name Report (Pages 123 - 128)

Appendices For Item 11 - Countywide Housing Strategy 2011-2014 (Pages 129 - 234)

Appendices For Item 12 - Worcestershire Local Investment Plan and Affordable Housing Programme (Pages 235 - 316)

Appendix For Item 13 - Bromsgrove Private Sector Housing Strategy and Assistance Policy (Pages 317 - 382)

Appendix For Item 14 - Council Plan 2011-2014 (Pages 383 - 416)

Appendix For Item 15 - Annual Review of Operational Policy under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (Pages 417 - 446)

Appendix For Item 16 - Adoption of Planning Enforcement Policy (Pages 447 - 456)

17. 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

18. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of items of business containing exempt information:-

**"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 items of business on the grounds that they involve 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, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>
19	3
20	1 and 4"

19. Proposal for Allocation of Additional CLG Homelessness Grant Funding for 201/2011 (Pages 457 - 464)
20. Minutes (Confidential) of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 22nd March 2011 (supporting documents attached) (Pages 465 - 540)

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

The Council House  
Burcot Lane  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B60 1AA

29th March 2011

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# Agenda Item 3

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 2ND FEBRUARY 2011 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. (during part of Minute No. 144/10), Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, R. D. Smith (during part of Minute No. 137/10 to Minute No. 144/10), M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. H. Bennett, Ms. J. Pickering, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. G. Revans and Ms. R. Cole.

#### 130/10 APOLOGIES

An apology for late arrival was received from Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E.

#### 131/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor M. J. A. Webb declared a personal interest during the discussion on Agenda Item 9 (Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/2012 – 2013/2014). This was in relation to the former Lickey End Parish Council.

#### 132/10 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 5th January 2011 and 19th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record in each case.

#### 133/10 OVERVIEW BOARD

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 4th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

#### 134/10 JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

The minutes of the meeting of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 4th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

135/10 **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 17th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

136/10 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD (PART)**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 27th January 2011 relating to non confidential and non exempt items were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

137/10 **VERBAL UPDATES FROM THE LEADER AND/OR OTHER CABINET MEMBERS ON ANY RECENT MEETINGS ATTENDED IN AN EX-OFFICIO CAPACITY**

The Leader reported that he had attended a number of meetings of the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) together with a meeting of the LEP Steering Board and the City Region Board.

Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP reported that she had attended a meeting of the Age Well Steering Group.

138/10 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011/2012 - 2013/2014**

The Executive Director Finance and Corporate Resources gave a short presentation on the latest position regarding the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2011/2012 - 2013/2014. It was noted that the detailed report on the MTFP together with any recommendations from the Budget Jury and the Overview and Scrutiny Board, would be considered by the Cabinet and the Council on 23rd February 2011.

During the discussion, it was reported that the sum of £5,545 which had been forwarded to the Council by Lickey End Parish Council prior to the dissolution of the Parish Council had been raised by a precept. Members therefore considered the possibility of ring fencing that sum on the basis it will be utilised for the benefit of Lickey End residents.

Members also requested officers to consider the possible need for additional expenditure of £30,000 in relation to Economic Development. The Chief Executive noted the request for officers to investigate this matter further and in this regard reminded Members of the recently approved Shared Services Business Case for this service.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that officers be requested to continue to work on the MTFP on the basis that the current projected shortfall of £292,000 for 2011/2012 will be met from balances;

- (b) that officers continue to consider alternative methods of service provision, including bringing forward the timetable for the Shared Service and Transformation Programme, with a view to maximising efficiencies in order to address the projected shortfall within the MTFP for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014;
- (c) that the sum of £5,545 be ring fenced for use for the benefit of the residents of Lickey End ;
- (d) that officers be requested to investigate the inclusion of an additional budget bid of £30,000 in respect of Economic Development.

139/10 **INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE AND FINANCE MONITORING REPORT - QUARTER 3 2010/2011**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Council's performance and financial position as at 31st December 2010.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that it be noted that 52% of Performance Indicators were stable or improving;
- (b) that it be noted that 57% of Performance Indicators which had a target were meeting their target as at the month end and 76% were projected to meet their target at the year end;
- (c) that the performance figures for December 2010 as set out in Appendix 2 to the report be noted;
- (d) that the successes and areas for potential concern as set out in section 4.1.1 to the report be noted;
- (e) that the current financial position on both revenue and capital budgets as detailed in the report be noted and that officers be requested to consider actions to enable the predicted overspend to be mitigated as far as possible;
- (f) that the budget virements as set out in Appendix 6 to the report be approved; and
- (g) that the detailed information on complaints and compliments as set out in Appendix 4 to the report be noted.

140/10 **ENFORCEMENT AND FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

The Cabinet considered a report on the possible introduction of Enforcement and Fixed Penalty notices for Environmental Services.

Members noted that it was felt there was an opportunity to improve Environmental Enforcement within the District and therefore to improve further the Council's performance on street cleansing.

It was reported that the development and introduction of an Environmental Enforcement Strategy, in conjunction with the employment of an Environmental Enforcement Officer, would assist the Council to pursue action relating to environmental issues such as fly tipping, general littering, dog fouling and graffiti. It was anticipated that funding for the post could be met

from savings proposed to be achieved through the deletion of an existing post within the Environmental Services Department.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the option to utilise potential savings within the Environmental Services Department to fund the post of Environmental Enforcement Officer be approved in principle;
- (b) that the benefits of introducing a fully integrated Enforcement Strategy be noted and that officers be requested to submit such a Strategy to a future meeting of the Cabinet ;
- (c) that the need to adopt powers within the Clean Neighbourhood and Environment Act 2005 and the Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 and for these to be included in the Strategy be noted; and
- (d) that the need to adopt a scheme of delegation to enable the issue and enforcement of fixed penalty notices be noted and that officers be requested to submit such a scheme to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

141/10 **RECREATION ROAD MARKETING EXERCISE - INCLUSION OF A BROMSGROVE DC ASSET - RECREATION ROAD NORTH CAR PARK**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report on the possible inclusion of the Council owned Recreation Road North Car Park in an area of land to be included in a marketing exercise to ascertain interest from developers and care operators.

It was reported that Town Centre Area Action Plan had identified Recreation Road as a potential site for regeneration as an Extra Care Village.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the incorporation of the Recreation Road North Car Park within the Recreation Road Consortium's proposed marketing exercise for development of the site be approved in principle;
- (b) that it be noted that the marketing is to be undertaken by a commercial property consultant engaged by the consortium, John Dillon; and
- (c) that authority to finalise and sign the agreement for the marketing exercise be delegated to the Regeneration Programme Manager.

142/10 **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 items of business the subject of the following minutes on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of "Exempt Information" as defined in part 1 of schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

<u>Minute No.</u>	<u>Paragraphs</u>
143/10	1 and 4
144/10	3



143/10 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD (PART)**

The confidential minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 27th January 2011 were submitted.

Following consideration of the minutes and of the details of the options available to the Authority in relation to Asset and Facility Management, it was

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be noted.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that following the full consideration undertaken at the Shared Services Board, this Council withdraw from the current arrangements whereby its Asset and Facility management is delivered by Worcestershire County Council;
- (b) that officers be requested to put in place the necessary arrangements to transfer the affected staff back to this Council in accordance with TUPE regulations;
- (c) that the cost of the transfer of £11,000 be paid to the County Council and that this be met from revenue balances for 2010/2011; and
- (d) that officers be requested to consider alternative management and staffing arrangements in order to deliver savings within the service in the future.

144/10 **BROMSGROVE MUSEUM**

(The Leader agreed to the consideration of this item as a matter of urgency as a decision was required prior to the next meeting of the Cabinet).

The Leader referred to previous decisions on this matter and reported on discussions which had taken place with The Friends of the Museum (The Friends) regarding work it was necessary to undertake as part of the transfer of the Collection to The Friends. There had been a request for the Council to contribute towards the cost of this process in view of the terms of the original acquisition of the Collection by the Council.

It was reported that there was a current budget in respect of the Museum which could encompass a contribution to the work required. Following discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that officers be requested to use their best endeavours to negotiate suitable terms with The Friends to conclude this matter, subject to the final arrangements being agreed in conjunction with the Leader of the Council.

The meeting closed at 7.55 p.m.

Chairman

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**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY, 23RD FEBRUARY 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Chairman), G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., R. D. Smith, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms. S. Hanley, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. R. Cole.

145/10 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP and Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP.

146/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

147/10 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011/2012 - 2013/2014**

The Cabinet considered a report on the Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/2012 to 2013/2014 relating to revenue and capital expenditure. The Portfolio Holder for Resources referred to the background to the Medium Term Financial Plan and drew attention to measures to maximise savings whilst maintaining services.

The Cabinet took account of the work undertaken by the Budget Jury and the issues raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the budget pressures identified as high in Appendix A of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2011/2012	£304,000
2012/2013	£239,000
2013/2014	£239,000

- (b) that the savings identified in Appendix B of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2011/2012	£873,000
2012/2013	£1,458,000
2013/2014	£1,794,000

- (c) that income shortfalls identified in Appendix C of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2011/2012	£622,000
2012/2013	£625,000
2013/2014	£625,000

- (d) that the budget pressures identified as unavoidable in Appendix D of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2011/2012	£261,000
2012/2013	£217,000
2013/2014	£217,000

- (e) that the capital bids identified as high in Appendix E(i) of the report be included within the Medium Term Financial Plan as follows:

2011/2012	£737,000
2012/2013	£873,000
2013/2014	£1,467,000

- (f) that the use of balances totalling £323,000 be approved.
- (g) that the recommendations from the Overview and Scrutiny Board as set out in Appendix G to the report be noted, that no action be taken with regard to the recommendations on revenue bids (a) (i) to (iv) or on capital bids b (i) to (iii) but the (b) (iv) be approved.
- (h) that the Prudential Indicators as set out in Appendix H be approved.

148/10 **FEES AND CHARGES 2011/2012**

The Cabinet considered a report on the fees and charges to be levied on services provided by the Council which had been used as the basis for income targets in the Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/2012 – 2013/2014.

It was reported that Heads of Service had suggested the level of fees and charges based on a guideline 3% - 5% increase.

It was noted that the following additional charges in relation to Car Parks had been omitted from the schedule of fees and charges at Appendix A and were proposed to be included:

Recreation Road South Car Park

Lost Ticket - £10  
In Excess of 5 hours – Charge of £35

Season Tickets

Churchfields Multi Storey - £215 per year (£53.75 per quarter)

Alvechurch Sports and Social Club - £250 per year (£80 per quarter)

**RESOLVED** that subject to the inclusion of the additional charges relating to car parking referred to above, the fees and charges as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved.

The meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.

Chairman

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# Agenda Item 4

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 1ST FEBRUARY 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman) (Present from Minute No. 1/10 to Minute No. 9/10), R. J. Deeming, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, C. R. Scurrall, Mrs. C. J. Spencer, C. J. Tidmarsh (Present from Minute No. 1/10 to Minute No. 9/10), C. B. Taylor and L. J. Turner

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering and Ms. A. Scarce

1/10 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

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

2/10 **ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN**

**RESOLVED** that Councillor D. A. Pardoe be elected as Vice Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

3/10 **APOLOGIES**

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

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

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

5/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2010**

The minutes of the Scrutiny Board meeting held on 26th October 2010 were submitted.

Members noted that the meeting of the Scrutiny Board scheduled for 25th January 2011 had been cancelled.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW BOARD HELD ON 4TH JANUARY 2011**

The minutes of the Overview Board meeting held on 4th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

7/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 4TH JANUARY 2011**

The minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 4th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

8/10 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2011**

The minutes of the Performance Management Board meeting held on 17th January 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

9/10 **THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2011/12 - 2013/14**

The Board received a presentation on the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2011/12-2013/14 from the Executive Director, Finance and Resources who explained that, due to the delay in receiving this year's grant settlement, she had not been able to provide the Board with as much detail as had been the case in previous years. The final Grant Settlement figure had been received on 31st January 2011 and was different again to that which she had been given in December 2010.

The Medium Term Financial Plan for 2011/12 – 2013/14 would be received by Cabinet and full Council on 23rd February 2011. The main purpose of the Board meeting was to give Members the opportunity to discuss the new Revenue and Capital bids and to consider any recommendations they wished to make before the final budget was approved. The Executive Director, Finance and Resources informed Members that only the bids classed as "high" priority on the list before them would be funded and this was the final list and no further bids would be put forward.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that the Grant Settlement for 2011/12 was £3.83m and for 2012/13 £3.27m. The cumulative overall shortfall was £260,000 for 2011/12, £641,000 for 2012/13 and £974,000 for 2013/14. It was also confirmed that the shortfall for 2011/12 would be met from balances.

The Board discussed the following in more detail:

- The level of Grant Settlements received throughout Worcestershire.
- Provisions made for further cuts.
- How the savings would be achieved.



- Investment Income.
- Income shortfalls for car parking and land charges.
- Consolidation of the Shared Services programme and the possible inclusion of other districts in particular areas of work.

The Executive Director, Finance and Resources informed Members that there would not be an increase in the Council's portion of the Council Tax (this would be off set by a 2.5% Government grant). However, that this was not the case for the emergency services and an increase was expected on this portion of the bill. Members asked for assurances that this would be made clear in the information that was sent out to residents with the Council Tax bills and asked if the Board could see the draft documentation prior to distribution.

Members noted that from June 2011 Portfolio Holders would consult with officers and discuss savings and efficiencies and any reduction in services that would need to be made in order to cover the shortfall in future years. It was confirmed that the Board would be given the opportunity of scrutinising the outcomes of these discussions.

During the discussions Members also referred to the following particular items:

- Members understood that the Council would make a contribution to the funding of the new railway station. If this is correct, would the monies be ring fenced?
- As the Capital bid from Community Services in respect of Bromsgrove Urban and Rural Transport (BURT) was a "medium" priority, would the service continue if the current bus needed further extensive repair work to be carried out?
- At a previous presentation a large proportion of the car parking overspend appeared to be related to staff overtime. What actions would be taken to reduce this?
- Also at that presentation Members had queried the charges for removal of abandoned vehicles and details of any income generated from this, together with details of charges and/or income received from recycling banks.

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that the following Revenue Bids for 2011/12 - 2013/14 be reprioritised to "medium" pending the receipt of further information:
- i) Transformation – Member ICT facilities
  - ii) Transformation – MC Office and PC suite
  - iii) Transformation – Voice over IP
  - iv) Leisure and Culture – Options appraisal for new leisure facility;  
and
- (b) that the following Capital Bids for 2011/12 - 2013/14 be reprioritised to "medium" pending the receipt of further information:
- i) Community Services – Local Authority Grant to Principal Preferred Partners
  - ii) Transformation – Member ICT facilities at RBC and BDC
  - iii) Transformation – Voice over IP for BDC and RBC
  - iv) Environmental Services – Depot Drive Replacement.

**RESOLVED** that the Draft Medium Term Financial Plan for 2011/12 - 2013/14 be noted and that relevant Heads of Service respond to the matters referred to in the preamble above.

10/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme and discussed the format for future investigations. Officers explained that the Task Group procedure notes had been taken out of the Constitution and would be replaced by a more informal and flexible protocol, which would be considered by the Board at a future meeting. Members felt that the format used for short sharp reviews, such as the Inquiry into the Multi-use Games Area (MUGA) at Alvechurch, had been a success and should be used for future investigations, where appropriate. The Board discussed the line of questioning used and felt that a more robust approach should also be taken. The Board discussed witnesses involved and asked Officers to invite the relevant Portfolio Holder to attend together with the lead Officer for each topic.

Members discussed the re-instatement of the Local Food Task Group and felt that, due to the limited time available, this should be re-scheduled and be included for consideration within the Board's Work Programme for 2011/12.

After discussion, the Board also felt that, in order for a more detailed investigation to be carried out, the following topics should be re-scheduled and included within the Work Programme for 2011/12:

- The Corporate Safeguarding Policy (Children and Vulnerable Adults)
- Alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour

Officers agreed to ask the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services for further information on the Play Strategy topic in order for the Board to consider whether it was necessary for an investigation to be carried out.

Officers explained that there were a number of reports which would, in future, be received by the Board as standing items, which had previously been included within the agenda for the Performance Management Board. After discussion, Members requested that initially the Shared Services Highlight Report should also be included within the standing items at quarterly intervals.

Members asked for an update on the responses received (from external partners) to the recommendations from the MUGA Inquiry and agreed that an additional meeting of the Board should be set up to discuss this. The meeting would also include an update on the Community Safety Partnership Plan and areas of possible scrutiny. An invitation should also be extended to the Crime and Disorder Advisor, Councillor Brandon Clayton, who was appointed at the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting, held on 5th October 2010, to attend.

After further discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that the Work Programme be noted subject to the above amendments.

11/10 **QUESTIONS TO WITNESSES 1ST MARCH 2011**

Members were informed that the following topics would be discussed at the meeting to be held on 1st March 2011:-

- The Annual Bonfire Event (this could also be carried over to the meeting of the Board on 5th April 2011 if a second meeting was necessary)
- Review of the Hot Food Takeaway Investigation

The Council Plan and Performance Management Strategy, which were items that would previously have been considered by the Performance Management Board, would also be considered at the meeting on 1st March 2011.

The Board asked that they be provided with a full financial breakdown of the Annual Bonfire Event for this and previous years and that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services be asked to provide information on any alternative formats for the event which might be considered in future.

Members were asked to provide Officers with any questions they would like to put to the relevant Portfolio Holders/Heads of Services, as soon as possible.

The meeting closed at 7.33 p.m.

Chairman

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**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**TUESDAY, 1ST MARCH 2011 AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors S. R. Colella (Chairman), D. L. Pardoe (Vice-Chairman), R. J. Deeming, J. A. Ruck, C. R. Scurrall, C. B. Taylor, C. J. Tidmarsh and L. J. Turner

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. J. Godwin and Ms. A. Scarce

13/10 **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. R. L. Dent and Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths.

14/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

15/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 1st February 2011 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

The Board was provided with updates on the matters arising from Minute No. 9/10 and Members asked to be provided with the following additional information.

- Car parking over spend relating to staff overtime - The Head of Environmental Services had advised officers that during 2011/12 a complete review of this service (including civil parking enforcement) would be carried out. Members would have an opportunity to be included within that review and Officers agreed to provide Members with details of the expected timetable for this. The Board continued to be concerned as to how the overspend had arisen and requested further clarity on this issue. Members also asked for further information on the value of penalty charges imposed after 6.00 p.m.
- The Board were advised that in respect of abandoned vehicles, the Council had a joint contract, which was subject to a full tender process, with Redditch Borough Council, Wyre Forest District Council and Worcester City Council. A £10 inspection charge per vehicle was made under the terms of the relevant

legislation and £30 for the removal of the vehicle, there was no storage charge. Members were advised that the Council had a duty to remove abandoned vehicles but were able to reclaim disposal costs from the County Council (the waste disposal authority) under an SLA. Members asked for the income and expenditure figures to be provided when available.

16/10 **REVIEW OF THE ANNUAL CIVIC BONFIRE EVENT**

The Chairman introduced this item and reminded Members that the topic had been re-visited on a number of previous occasions, and it was therefore important that some positive outcomes were put forward by Members.

Members received a presentation from the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services which provided a summary of the financial position relating to the Civic Bonfire Event. The Board discussed, with the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services, the following areas in more detail:

- Access points to the event being reduced.
- Weather conditions and the effect these had had on the event in the past.
- Lessons Learnt (including timing of the Bonfire and procurement)
- Car parking and the calculation of any increase in revenue
- Pre-sale of tickets and increased sponsorship from local dealerships/newspapers (for example banners attached to the stall for the weeks leading up to the event)
- Alternative arrangements (for example extending the Street Theatre programme as an alternative to holding the Bonfire.)

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resources informed the Board that the funding was in place for this year's event, however, Members would be given the opportunity in June 2011 to re-assess and prioritise services and options for future civic events, for consideration in the context of budget constraints.

Members asked if there was any mechanism in place which would determine which parts of the district attendees came from, as it was felt that not all of the district benefitted from the event. The Head of Leisure and Cultural Services confirmed that it would be possible, particularly with the pre-sale tickets to undertake a post code sampling survey. After further discussion it was

**RECOMMENDED:**

- (a) that sponsorship of the Civic Bonfire Event be further investigated with a target of 50%, through the avenues referred to in the above pre-amble;
- (b) that a postal code sampling survey be carried out at this year's event; and
- (c) that the holding of the Civic Bonfire Event in future years be reviewed in the context of budget constraints.

17/10 **COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION PROCEDURE**

The Board considered a report on the Councillor Call for Action Procedure. Members were informed that Councillor Call for Action was a legislative procedure which was introduced under Section 119 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and came into force on 1st April 2009.

Officers informed Members that the Community Involvement In Local Democracy Task Group had also recommended that a procedure for dealing with Councillor Call for Action be put in place. The procedure was discussed in detail and it was explained that a Councillor Call for Action was a place of last resort, after all other options to resolve an issue had been exhausted.

**RESOLVED:**

- a) that the requirements and role of Councillor Call for Action be noted; and
- b) that the Councillor Call for Action Guidelines attached at Appendix 1 of the report be agreed.

18/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY INQUIRY/TASK GROUP PROCEDURE**

The Board considered a report on Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry and Task Group procedure guidelines. Officers explained to Members that the Task Group Procedure Notes had been removed from the Council's Constitution following the review of the Committee Structure, as in practice these had been found to be too prescriptive and rigid, and adherence to the process had caused delays in establishing task groups. The new guidelines were more informal and flexible and also took into account the recent, successful use of short, sharp inquiries. After further discussion it was

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Inquiry and Task Group Guidelines be noted and endorsed.

19/10 **ALTERNATIVE ARRANGEMENTS TO THE PLACE SURVEY - VERBAL UPDATE**

Officers informed the Board that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships would attend the Board meeting to be held on 5th April 2011 and would provide an update in respect of this item at that meeting. After discussion, Members asked that the Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships provide answers to the following questions:

- What, if any, would be the alternatives to the Place Survey?
- Do we need to do a survey and if so what areas would it cover?
- How much would a survey cost?

20/10 **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS 1ST MARCH TO 30TH JUNE 2011**

The Board considered the Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Members requested sight of the report on Enforcement and Fixed Penalty Notices for Environmental Services for pre-scrutiny at the meeting to be held on 5th April 2011.

**RESOLVED** the Forward Plan of Key Decisions be noted, subject to the above request.

21/10 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered the Work Programme and discussed the Community Involvement in Local Democracy Task Group in detail. Officers explained that this was due for 12 month review by the Board in June 2011; however, as the Democracy Year campaign was coming to a close it was thought to be an appropriate point for Members to be made aware of the work that had been covered by the campaign. The Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services had therefore requested to attend the meeting on 5th April 2011 to up date Members on the work of the campaign and it was agreed that the 12 month review of the Task Group would also be included within that presentation.

After further discussion it was agreed that all Councillors should be invited to the presentation on Local Democracy and in view of the number of items on the agenda for the 5th April 2011 meeting, that the start time be brought forward to 5.30 p.m.

Members also discussed the following items on the Work Programme for the meeting to be held on 5th April 2011 in detail:

- The Council Plan
- Performance Management Strategy
- Older Peoples' Task Group 12 Month Review
- Hot Food Takeaways Investigation 12 Month Review

**RESOLVED** that the Work Programme be noted, subject to the above amendment.

22/10 **QUESTIONS TO WITNESSES**

The Chairman of the Board reminded Members that this was an example of questions that could be put to witnesses, this list was not exhaustive and if Members wished to ask further questions these should be provided to Officers as soon as possible.

23/10 **SILVERDALE PLAY AREA PETITION**

The Board considered a petition entitled "Potential Closure of Silverdale Play Area". After discussion Members asked that a report be prepared by the Head



of Leisure and Cultural Services for consideration at the meeting to be held on 13th June 2011. It was agreed that the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services together with the Portfolio Holder for Community Services be asked to attend that meeting to answer any questions from the Board.

**RESOLVED** that an in depth report be provided by the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services to the Board meeting to be held on 13th June 2011 for further consideration.

The meeting closed at 7.22 p.m.

Chairman

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY 2011 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker  
Bromsgrove District Council: Councillor Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP  
(substituting for Councillor P. Whittaker)  
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor Mrs. B. Behan  
Malvern Hills District Council: Councillor R. Madden  
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor M. Braley  
Redditch Borough Council: Councillor G. Vickery  
Worcester City Council: Councillor Mrs. L. Hodgson (Vice-Chairman, in  
the Chair)  
Worcester City Council: Councillor F. Lankester  
Worcestershire County Council: Councillor S. Clee  
Worcestershire County Council: Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths  
(substituting for Councillor D. Prodger, MBE)  
Wychavon District Council: Councillor Mrs. J. Pearce (substituting for  
Councillor Mrs. A. Mackison)  
Wychavon District Council: Councillor A. Dyke  
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor J. Baker  
Wyre Forest District Council: Councillor P. Harrison (substituting for  
Councillor M. Hart)

Observers: Mr. I. Pumfrey, Head of Customer and Environmental  
Services, Malvern Hills District Council

Invitees: Mr. I. Edwards, Regulatory Services Project Manager

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Mr. S. Jordan, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. S. Wilkes  
and Ms. P. Ross

The Vice-Chairman welcomed Members, substituting Members, officers  
and Mr. S. Wilkes, Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Business  
Manager to the meeting.

The Vice-Chairman requested that the Joint Committee's best wishes and  
thanks for her services as Chairman of the Worcestershire Shared  
Services Joint Committee be conveyed to Councillor Mrs. A. Mackison.

#### 35/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. A. Mackison, M.  
Hart, D. Prodger, MBE and P. Whittaker.

36/10 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

37/10 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Worcestershire Shared Service Joint Committee held on 25th November 2010 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

38/10 **PROJECT PLAN UPDATE**

Mr. I. Edwards, Regulatory Services Project Manager provided Members with a summary of progress against plans for the period 26th November 2010 to 28th February 2011. He informed Members of the Key achievements within each work stream as detailed in the report. Transformation would be a priority for the project as the service now had its structure in place and would begin to undergo the Systems Thinking approach in partnership with Vanguard.

Following further discussion on transformation and timescales, the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services informed the Committee that successful and sustainable service transformation demanded learning and understanding across all areas of the system and that an 'Introduction to Systems Thinking Workshops' would be provided for Members. Further discussion followed on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services High Level Implementation Plan and the need for more detailed information to be provided on the plan with regard to Information and Communications Technology and Transformation (ICT & T).

**RESOLVED** that the Regulatory Services Project Manager be tasked to provide more detailed information as requested by Members on the Worcestershire Regulatory Services High Level Implementation Plan for the meeting of the Committee to be held on 23rd June 2011.

39/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES SERVICE PLAN 2011-2012**

The Committee gave consideration to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Service Plan 2011/2012. The draft Service Plan had been considered by the Committee at its meeting on 25th November 2010. The Vice-Chairman informed the Committee that the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services had revised the recommendation. The Vice-Chairman informed Members of the revised recommendation to be considered.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services informed the Committee that this was the first Service Plan. The Service Plan outlined the way in which the service's activities would link into local priorities, particularly around local sustainable community strategies. The Service Plan had been designed to provide Members with a picture of the operating environment, within which the

service operated, the main factors that would impact on service delivery and the five key priorities.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services responded to Members' questions regarding the five key priorities. Following further discussion on the five key priorities and partnerships, the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services noted the revisions to the Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Service Plan 2012/2012 agreed by the Committee.

The Executive Director, Finance and Corporate Resource, Bromsgrove District Council informed Members that updated financial information would be included within the Service Plan once the revised budget had been approved by the Committee.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the revisions agreed and the updated financial information as referred to in the preamble above, the Worcestershire Regulatory Services, Service Plan 2011/2012 be approved.

40/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES PERFORMANCE SUMMARY**

The Committee considered a report on the current levels of performance in relation to work carried out by Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) on behalf of each Council.

The WRS Business Manager introduced the report and in doing so informed the Committee of the on-going performance of the service against plans agreed before the establishment of Regulatory Services on 1st June 2010. From April 2011, WRS would have a single Service Plan with agreed outcomes and performance measures.

The Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services responded to Members' questions regards outcomes and performance measures for each individual authority. He informed Members that the Management Board had been requested to identify any specific (local) information that would be required or reported against. Members could also identify particular elements or local issues to be drawn out and reported on for their individual authorities.

**RESOLVED** that the performance in relation to the work carried out by Worcestershire Regulatory Services on behalf of each Council be noted.

41/10 **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES - REVISION TO PARTNER % SHARE % 2011/2012 - 2013/2014**

The Committee considered a report which detailed the proposed revisions to the 3 year budget projections, 2011/2012 – 2013/2014 as a result of post transfer issues and the significantly reduced costs associated with accommodation as a result of the move to Wyatt House.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the revised budget to reflect changes in the base salary and the reduction in accommodation costs be approved as follows:
- 2011/2012           £ 6,026,725
  - 2012/2013           £ 5,670,980
  - 2013/2014           £ 5,670,980
- (b) that the revised percentage partner share for allocation of the budget to reflect the reduction in the base salary, as set out below, be approved.

	<b>REVISED % ALLOCATION 2011/12</b>
Bromsgrove	11.16%
Malvern Hills	9.67%
Redditch	10.65%
Worcester City	10.99%
Wychavon	16.72%
Wyre Forest	10.93%
Worcester County	29.88%

42/10    **WORCESTERSHIRE REGULATORY SERVICES FINANCIAL MONITORING  
JUNE - DECEMBER 2010 - 2011**

The Committee considered a report which provided details of the financial position for the period June 2010 to December 2010 for both revenue and capital expenditure.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) that the repayment of funds as a result of post transfer scope and staffing changes be approved as follows:
- Redditch Borough Council           £35,098
  - Worcester City Council               £12,906
- (b) that the financial position of the service for June 2010 to December 2010 be noted.

43/10    **WORCESTERSHIRE SHARED SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE - MEETING  
DATES FOR 2011 / 2012**

The Committee considered the proposed meeting dates scheduled for 2011/2012.

**RESOLVED** that the Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee meeting dates and time for 2011/2012 be approved as follows:

- Thursday 23rd June 2011, 4:00pm – Annual Meeting
- Thursday 29th September 2011, 4:00pm
- Thursday 24th November 2011, 4:00pm – Budget Meeting
- Thursday 23rd February 2012, 4:00pm

The meeting closed at 5.35 p.m.

Chairman

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**SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

**22nd MARCH 2011 at 5.30pm**

**THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BROMSGROVE**

**PRESENT:**

Councillors Geoff Denaro (Chairman), Steve Colella and Stephen Peters (Bromsgrove District Council)  
Councillors Carole Gandy, Bill Hartnett and Malcolm Hall (Redditch Borough Council)

Officers: Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley, John Godwin, Helen Mole, Deb Poole and Ivor Westmore.

1. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Mike Braley and Roger Hollingworth.

2. **MINUTES**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Board held on 27th January 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

3. **PROGRESS REPORT**

The Board considered a report in respect of all elements of the Shared Service work involving Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils undertaken to date.

Kevin Dicks updated the Board on the progress of two appointments. The post of Service Manager for the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit had been offered to a candidate from one of the participating authorities. The Post of Transformation Manager, overseeing the work on the Project Plan, had been filled by Helen Mole from Bromsgrove District Council.

The Board noted that the latest meetings of the Chief Executives' Panel had confirmed a lack of willingness on behalf of the partners to commit to a WETT Phase II Programme. The one area where consideration is being given is to wider shared partnership arrangements for Community Safety Partnerships and the possibility of establishing a model based on a north and south Worcestershire split. It was noted that both existing WETT services, Property Services and Regulatory Services were classified as amber in the status summary appended to the report (experiencing some issues which were expected to be eventually resolved).

**RESOLVED that**

**progress to date be noted**

4

**SHARED SERVICES / TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME -  
REVISED TIMELINE**

Deb Poole, Head of Transformation, introduced a report setting out a proposed new timeline for the sharing of services and the Transformation Programme. Senior management considered they had the capacity to adopt the proposal to shorten the overall programme from three years to eighteen months.

Members were primarily concerned that the process would be deliverable under the proposed timeline and that the necessary consultation with staff and additional statutory processes would be achievable. It was confirmed that management was using flow diagrams to ensure compliance with all necessary steps in the shared service and transformation process. Kevin Dicks stated the desire of the management to engage with staff from the outset in order to achieve the revised timescale. It was noted, as a consequence, that additional meetings of the Board would need to be convened through the early part of the summer.

Deb Poole informed Members that the revised timeline could be accomplished within existing budgets and with no additional requirement for funding for external support, although the support previously factored in would be reconfigured to meet the requirements of the new timetable. Presentations to Members on the Transformation Programme were to be held in the near future, commencing with sessions for Portfolio Holders and then encompassing all Members in due course.

It was noted that both Councils were nearing the date at which notice could be given by either party of their intention to conclude the Shared Service arrangement. Following a discussion around the timeliness of a performance review report it was generally concluded that, firstly the two Councils had proceeded too far down the path of shared services to withdraw and, second, that such a performance review would be better carried out in at least six month's time, once more significant services had been subject to the shared service regime.

Deb Poole concluded by confirming that the timeline would be flexible inasmuch as it needed to be changed to address significant developing issues and that it was still very much work in progress.

**RECOMMENDED that**

**the revised Programme timeline for the delivery of Shared Services and Transformation between the two Councils be approved.**

5. **DATE OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that the next scheduled meeting would be held on Thursday 19th May 2011 at 5.30 p.m. in Committee Room 3 at Redditch Town Hall.

The meeting closed at 6.52 p.m.

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**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL AND REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

**22<sup>nd</sup> March 2011**

**SHARED SERVICES / TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME TIMELINE**

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report presents for consideration by the Shared Services Board a revised Shared Services and Transformation Programme timeline. The timeline has been reworked to deliver the programme earlier than originally planned. The original programme was scheduled for delivery over a three year period. The revised timeline shortens this to eighteen months.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Shared Services Board:

Approve the revised Programme timeline for the delivery of Shared Services and Transformation between the two councils.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In light of the recent reduction in government grant funding the Transformation Programme Board have explored the possibility of reducing the time it takes to deliver the initial shared services and transformation programme. All Heads of Service have been involved in these discussions and have approved the attached timeline (Appendix 1)
- 3.2 The six key service areas that would benefit from transformational system thinking are unchanged from the original programme timeline. These areas are listed below:

**2011**

- Revenues and Benefits (although these will be undertaken jointly due to the cross over of the issues / working practices it is worth recognising that they are distinct areas)
- Environmental Services
- Housing
- Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT) Regulatory Services

**2012**

- Planning (including Development Control, Conservation & TPOs)
- Community Services/Community Cohesion

- 3.3 It is worth noting that the while the main services above are scheduled for transformation in the first eighteen months all services will eventually be transformed by the use of systems thinking. With regard to the service areas outlined above it is felt that these service areas should be “transformed” before a shared service is considered due to their direct impact on customers.
- 3.4 The shared service aspect of the programme (Appendix 1) is based on the same eighteen month timeline and would see a number of services being shared at the same time as the above transformational activities are carried out.
- 3.5 In considering the proposed shared services / transformation programme the Board are asked to note the following:
- As the timeline has been shortened there may be an increased impact on day to day performance in some service areas. This may increase the need for interim management structures to reduce the impact on day to day activities and to free capacity to carryout transformation work.
  - The proposed revised timeline will be released to staff once approval has been obtained from the board.

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

- 4.1 None arising directly from this report, although indirectly the intention of the programme plan is for each service area to deliver efficiencies/savings and improvements in service quality.

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

- 5.1 None

#### **6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None

#### **7. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 7.1 Each Council will need to ensure any proposals support its own Council Objectives.

#### **8. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 None arising directly from this report. However, it is envisaged that risks will be mitigated and controlled as part of the programme and project governance.

**9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 No direct impact on the Customer arising from this report, although indirectly the intention of each area is to deliver efficiencies/savings or improve service quality to the ultimate benefit of the customer.

**10. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 None arising directly from this report. These will be addressed as each proposed service area is considered for sharing or transformation.

**11. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

11.1 The delivery of efficiencies, in light of recent reductions in central government funding, is the main driving force behind the revision of the shared service/transformation programme.

**12. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

12.1 None

**13. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 None arising directly from this report. However, it is envisaged that any HR implications will be included as part of the programme and project governance.

**14. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 None arising directly from this report. However, it is envisaged that there may be short term performance implications in some service areas while the programme is being delivered.

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

15.1 None

**16. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

16.1 None

**17. LESSONS LEARNT**

17.1 None

**18. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

18.1 None

**19. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**20. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Shared Services / Transformation Timeline

**21. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**AUTHOR(s) OF REPORT**

Name: D. Poole – Head of Business Transformation  
E Mail: d.poole@bromsgrove.gov.uk  
Tel: (01527) 881256



**Proposed Shared Service / Transformation Programme**

		2010			2011			2012			2013											
		September	October	November	December	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December	January	February	March		
Head of Service Area	Services	Lead Officer	Status																			
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Policy incorporating: - LSP - Performance Management & Improvement - Policy (excluding specific strategy) - Consultation and Community Engagement - Communications, Marketing and Promotion (including oversight of web content) - Customer Insight - Special Projects - Inspections Equalities & Diversity Corporate Administration/ Central Post Opening Printing & Reographics	H.Bennett	Started																			
		H.Bennett	Started																			
		H.Bennett	Rescheduled SS																			
		H.Bennett	Rescheduled SS																			
		C.Felton	Rescheduled SS																			
		C.Felton	Rescheduled SS																			
		C.Felton	Rescheduled SS																			
		Kevin Dicks	Rescheduled SS																			
		C.Felton	Rescheduled SS																			
		H.Bennett	Rescheduled SS																			
		T.Kristunas	Rescheduled SS																			
		J.Pickering	Rescheduled SS																			
		Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Accounts & Financial Management & Advice Corporate Income & Debt Management Revenues Benefits Risk Management Human Resources & Welfare Training & Development (Day to day) Health & Safety Organisational Development (including Workforce Planning and Succession Planning) Payroll - Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre One Stop Shops	T.Kristunas	Started																	
T.Kristunas	Started																					
K.Dicks	Started																					
T.Kristunas	Started																					
K.Dicks	Started																					
K.Dicks	Started																					
T.Kristunas	Started																					
J.Pickering	Started																					
T.Kristunas	Started																					
J.Pickering	Started																					
J.Pickering	Started																					
J.Pickering	Started																					
Head of Customer Services	Customer Service Centre One Stop Shops			A.DeWarr	Rescheduled SS																	
		A.DeWarr	Rescheduled SS																			





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# Agenda Item 7

**THERE ARE NO ENCLOSURES FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **CABINET**

6th April 2011

#### **BROMSGROVE MUSEUM**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor M. J. A. Webb
Relevant Head of Service	J. Godwin - Leisure and Cultural Services
Non-Key Decision	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report follows on from a report submitted to Cabinet in December 2010 and updates members of the Cabinet in relation to the negotiations to dispose of the Bromsgrove Museum building.
- 1.2 Members are being asked to consider granting a 12 month option to purchase the Museum building in Birmingham Road to the Norton Collection Museum Trust on terms to be agreed.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **Cabinet is asked to note the recent negotiations with the Norton Collection Museum Trust (previously the Friends of the Norton Collection Charitable Trust) and to consider and determine whether to grant the Trust an option to purchase Birmingham Road for the sum of £285,000 on terms to be agreed.**
- 2.1 **Authority be delegated to the Head Of Legal Equalities and Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader to determine the terms of the Option to Purchase recognising that it would be for a definite period of 12 months from the date that the option is granted.**

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 In December 2010 the Cabinet approved the sale of the museum building at the market value of £285,000 to the Friends of the Norton Collection.
- 3.2 Members are advised that in February 2011 the Friends of the Norton Collection Charitable Trust changed its name through the Charity Commission to the Norton Collection Museum Trust. For members information one of the original trustees is no longer registered and the objects of the Trust remain as they were originally cited.
- 3.3 In recent discussions with the Trust it has become apparent that to enable third parties to properly commit funds to this project that a more secure option to purchase would be required by the Trust. Furthermore the Trust

- has indicated that they would need 12 months to achieve this and that they would wish this to commence from the date of the option.
- 3.4 In addition to this officers have been negotiating with the former donor of the Norton Collection to reach an agreed position with regards to the status of the artefacts and the historic terms of the trust deed.
- 3.5 Members will recall that as part of the original trust deed the Council undertook to catalogue the artefacts and that for numerous reasons this has not been possible.
- 3.6 Members will also recall that officers are working with the Trust to resolve the issues surrounding the cataloguing and that these matters will need to be resolved by the completion of the sale.
- 3.7 It is fair to say that the negotiations with the Trust and the original donor have been very positive and that were members minded to approve entering into a formal option to purchase that this could now become conditional upon the donor signing a waiver in respect of any claim that he may have on the Council in relation to any alleged breached of Trust Deed and that the Transfer of the Artefacts to the Trust would occur simultaneously with the transfer of the museum building.
- 3.8 At their meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and the 1<sup>st</sup> December 2010 Cabinet members acknowledged the value of the museum and their desire to maintain the provision thereof to the community of Bromsgrove.
- 3.9 Members are advised that there are still a number of smaller terms that would need to be agreed in relation to the storage of the artefacts and access to the museum building prior to the formal transfer for the purposes of undertaking the cataloguing.
- 3.10 If members are minded to approve granting a formal option to purchase then a delegation would be necessary to the Head of Legal Equalities and Democratic Services in consultation with the Leader to enable these terms to be agreed upon but that in any event the option would run for a period of 12 months from the date of its completion.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Cabinet has previously agreed to the sale of the building and the sale of the building is in line with the Council's priority to develop and regenerate the Town Centre.



- 4.2 The Cabinet has determined through the business plan provided by the Friends of the Norton Collection (now the Norton Collection Museum Trust) that the proposed project would benefit the Town Centre and enable the Council to further the objects of the Museum Trust.
- 4.3 It is essential that members consider the costs associated with continuing to store, maintain and catalogue these items and the risks, which have previously been reported to members of disposing of the collection in relation to cost, time and reputation.
- 4.4 Indeed in every respect the reputational issue maybe challenging as a considerable number of the items have been donated since the collection came into the control of the Council. It is understood that a number of which are of considerable value –financial and / or sentimental – and that they will have been donated with the intention of being for the benefit of the people of Bromsgrove. The donors or their relatives may see the disposal of their donations for money as unacceptable and disrespectful of their wishes. Returning items may be difficult because of the terms on which they were donated and time consuming in terms of investigating whether those making a claim for the item had a genuine entitlement; returning items will amount to disposal of charitable assets and must be undertaken in accordance with charity law.
- 4.5 The current market valuation of the building is £285,000. The ‘Trust’ is interested in purchasing the building for that sum.
- 4.6 Members must also consider that the building itself is not currently delivering any of the Council’s priorities or achieving its worth within the context of the assets management plan. In addition there are considerable running costs including business rates.
- 4.7 If the Collection is to be disposed of it is estimated that the work of listing, pricing and photographing would approach 140 days to complete the work based on 80 items a day. At £200 per day this would cost £28,000. This does not include the cost of materials and cameras. Furthermore after all this work there is not a guarantee that the items will sell. There are also costs associated with the continued housing of the dormant collection whilst the museum remains closed together with the officer time in ensuring that cataloging of artifacts it undertaken.
- 4.8 Taking these points into consideration together with the likely positive impact that a museum would have on the regeneration of the Town Centre, a matter which is at the fore of Council priority, members may wish

to consider that being released from the current burdens of general upkeep that a disposal at this time might be advantageous.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 As previously reported to members the cost of staff undertaking the itemising of the collection could be considerable as they will have to list, photograph and price between 15– 17,000 items. The time required to do this work will also be extensive. The Council would have to consider whether it had the capacity to do this work, if it did not agency staff would need to be engaged. The collection would have to be advertised in the trade press and if the Council did not receive offers for the collection it would have to enter into a contract with an auctioneer to dispose of the items. It has been agreed previously that the Council will make a contribution towards the cost of this work and that the contribution be limited to £10,000 and that the payment be conditional upon the Council securing an indemnity from Mr. Norton that he will not seek to make any claim against the Council at any time in relation to any alleged breaches of Trust obligations.
- 5.2 The current valuation of the building is £285,000. The Council has agreed previously to dispose of the same to the 'Trust' are interested for that sum this report seeks to enable that previous resolution to be varied to the extent that it would now become a formal Option to Purchase the building on the conditions outlined within the main body of the report.
- 5.3 If a transfer of the collection is not achieved as proposed to the Trust and the Council has to consider the disposal of the collection it is estimated that the work of listing, pricing and photographing would approach 140 days to complete the work based on 80 items a day. At £200 per day this would cost £28,000. This does not include the cost of materials and cameras. Furthermore after all this work there is not a guarantee that the items will sell. Members will be aware that the transfer of the collection is dependent on the Trust being able to purchase the museum building.
- 5.4 The combination of non-business rates (amounting to approximately £13,000 per annum), work on preparing the items for sale, the reputational damage and the other associated costs leads to the proposed Option to Purchase being a preferred way of achieving a simultaneous disposal of the property and the transfer of the Collection.
- 5.5 There is a risk that if negotiations are terminated with the 'Trust' the Council may face legal action which would involve the Council incurring legal costs to defend the Council's position.

- 5.6 If the sale is approved any budgets currently associated with the provision of the museum building will be included as savings within the medium term financial plan.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 It is a legal requirement that any transfer of the Collection is made to a charity or charitable trust with objects which are substantially similar to those of the Norton Collection.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council must ensure that all assets are managed in accordance with its priorities and the wider assets management plan. This report is proposing a sale at market value.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 The Council has identified the regeneration of the Town Centre as a priority and the museum falls within the Town Centre.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 Members are advised that although the restrictive covenant articulates the Council's intention that the building continue to be used as a museum that it may be challenged in a tribunal environment.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The museum is a facility that would become open to the public and would rely on customer support for its future.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The building is not currently accessible for persons with physical disabilities.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

- 12.1 By continuing to operate the museum as it was previously the Council would not be demonstrating value for money – visitor numbers were low

and as a result the cost per visitor were high. The Museum does not directly contribute towards the achievement of the Council's objectives and priorities and as such doesn't represent value for money.

12.2 The challenge in relation to value for money is the need to secure a best value return on the sale of the building while balancing this against the costs incurred from the maintenance of the building and the payment of nondomestic rates on an empty building.

12.3 A further value for money consideration is the costs incurred in disposing of the items compared with transfer of the items to a trust. It is suggested that if negotiation can be successfully concluded with the trust based on an agreed market value for the building and transfer of items then and if an agreed market value can be achieved and transfer secured to a trust this would release resources to the Council and remove any revenue implications.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

13.1 None associated directly with this report

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 None associated directly with this report

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 None associated directly with this report

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

16.1 None associated directly with this report

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 None associated directly with this report

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

18.1 None associated directly with this report

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

6th April 2011

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19.1 None associated directly with 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	Through CMT
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Through CMT
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Through CMT
Head of Service	Through CMT
Head of Resources	Through CMT
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Author
Corporate Procurement Team	Through CMT

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

**All Wards**

**22. APPENDICES**

None

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Cabinet report dated 7<sup>th</sup> October 2009

**24. AUTHOR OF REPORT**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**6th April 2011**

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Tel: 01527 881742

## Cabinet

6<sup>th</sup> April 2011

### **BROMSGROVE WAR MEMORIAL – CHANGE OF CHARITY NAME**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	<b>Cllr G Denaro</b>
Relevant Head of Service	<b>Teresa Kristunas - Finance &amp; Resources</b>
Non-Key Decision	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to agree to the transfer of the license on the Amphlett Hall site in Crown Close, to the Bromsgrove Armed Forces Memorial Fund from the original name of THANKSS Charity (To Honour and Acknowledge those Killed and Still Serving) as the members of the organisation have changed the name. As agreed by Cabinet in June 2010, this license is for the erection of a memorial/tribute and appropriate rights of way for services and remembrance. The licence would be subject to the usual probity and audit checks and conditions related to the charity.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:**

- 2.1.1 approve the grant of a licence to Bromsgrove War Memorial Fund (previously known as THANKSS) for land situate at Amphlett Hall in Bromsgrove for the purpose of erecting a war memorial and that this approval be subject to the Bromsgrove War Memorial Fund becoming a registered charity and producing a business case to demonstrate the viability of the project;**
- 2.1.2 agree that authority be delegated to the Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community to agree the detail of the business case and design of the memorial.**

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 As members will be aware a report was presented on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2010 to request approval to grant a license to the THANKSS organisation as they were hoping to register as a charity and raise sufficient funds to develop a memorial/tribute for the armed forces on a land near Amphlett Hall. This report is attached at Appendix A to update Members of the detailed background to the request.
- 3.2 Recently, officers of the Council have been contacted to be advised that the organisation have now changed their name to “Bromsgrove

War Memorial” as this name more clearly reflects the aim of the charity in the development of the memorial/tribute and will be easily identified by the community when funds are being raised.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The granting of the license will be formally agreed once the charity is registered and subject to the development of a business case to demonstrate the viability of the project.
- 4.2 As reported last year there are a number of checks that would need to be in place to safeguard the Council’s position, specifically
- Bromsgrove War Memorial Fund achieving its charity status
  - The production of a business plan to deliver the three stages of the project
  - The monitoring of the project by the Council’s Section 151 Officer to ensure probity
  - Consent of the Church Commissioners for the project to proceed
- 4.3 On planning considerations the proposed memorial/tribute will be sited on an area of Open Space within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Although planning permission will be required, the memorial/tribute will add an element of visual focus and would not appear out of character with the area given that the Burma Star Association war memorial already sits with the same area. However the design and specific siting will be the subject of negotiation with the Charity.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no direct financial costs associated with the project but it will need to have a detailed business case and progress will need to be measured to ensure it achieves the agreed outcomes.
- 5.2 It is proposed that future maintenance costs be funded from existing budgets relating to grass cutting and street cleansing. This will be assessed as part of the design review to ensure minimal ongoing maintenance costs are required. In addition insurance will be addressed as part of the liability insurance once the design has been agreed.
- 5.3 The intended site for the memorial/tribute is on Open Space Land and as such cannot be developed commercially.



**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 This land was purchased in 1899 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England and the 1899 Conveyance imposed a covenant that the land would be used as “an open space and public recreation ground and for no other purpose whatever except with the previous consent in writing of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners”.
- 6.2 There is nothing to prevent the Council from disposing of part of the land but the restriction on use would continue to affect the land disposed of and any subsequent owner would need to satisfy themselves that their use of the land did not breach the use restrictions or alternatively obtain the consent of the Church Commissioners for that use.
- 6.3 As previously stated there is of course already a war memorial on the site. The Burma Star Memorial which was erected around 1982 authorising the Trustees of the Burma Star Association to erect the memorial on Council land. The Licence was for a period of 21 years to continue thereafter on a yearly basis until terminated but it was actually surrendered in 1987 when the Council agreed to maintain the memorial at its own expense.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no policy implications contained with in this report.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 The development of the site will support the community leadership objective for the Council.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report would result from the charity being unable to register or the lack of funding raised. These risks will be mitigated as the S151 officer and Monitoring officer will ensure that no formal license is granted by the Council until a robust business case is presented to demonstrate the viability of the project by the charity following its registration.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The erection of a dedicated memorial to the armed services will give a focus point for the community to acknowledge the dedication of the services and give a site to reflect and worship.

**Cabinet**

6<sup>th</sup> April 2011

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no equality and diversity implications with in this report.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

12.1 There are no direct VFM, procurement or asset management issues contained with in this report.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

13.1 There are no direct climate change, carbon or bio diversity implications with in this report.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 There are no HR implications with in this report.

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 There are no governance or performance implications with in this report.

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

16.1 There are no direct Community Safety or Section 17 implications with in this report.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 There are no direct health inequalities contained with in this report.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

18.1 N/A.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

19.1 N/A

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	YES
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**Cabinet**

6<sup>th</sup> April 2011

Chief Executive	YES
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	YES
Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director – Leisure, Environment and Community Services	YES
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	NO
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	NO
Head of Service	NO
Head of Resources	NO
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	YES
Corporate Procurement Team	NO

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**22. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Report to Cabinet 2nd June 2010

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

N/A

**24. KEY**

N/A

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **CABINET**

6TH APRIL 2011

#### **OUTURN EXPENDITURE OF CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING FOR 2010/11, UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE AND PROPOSED USE OF GRANT FOR HOMELESSNESS PREVENTATIVE SCHEMES FOR 2011/12.**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor P. Whittaker
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community Services
Key Decision	Yes

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 Since the Homelessness Act 2002, the Government has allocated grant funding to local authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness.
- 1.2 The annual grant to BDC, allocated through the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has been used each year since 2002 to fund a range of homelessness support services and schemes that focus upon the prevention of homelessness and repeat homelessness.
- 1.3 In dealing with the national deficit, the government is making significant changes to the way in which Welfare Benefits are awarded and in particular Housing Benefit. Because of these changes the Council is anticipating an increase in the number of households finding themselves at risk of homelessness or requiring alternative accommodation due to affordability issues. Therefore, at a time of significant government cuts, DCLG has chosen to increase the amount of homelessness grant to local authorities. For Bromsgrove, this has resulted in the Homelessness Grant allocation increasing by 40% to £113,470, paid as part of the Area Based Grant for 2011/12 and 2012/13.
- 1.4 This report therefore :
- i) provides Members with a progress report on schemes currently in place in this District funded by DCLG Grant during 2010/11;
  - ii) seeks Members approval for the award of grant to specific schemes in 2011/12 that have been recommended by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.
- 1.5 In addition to Homelessness Grant mentioned above, back in 2009 the Council received a non tenure specific 'Economic Recovery Fund' of £28,500. This fund was, and continues to be, intended to assist potentially homeless people who have suffered an income shock due to redundancy

or short time working, whether they are home owners or tenants, and to facilitate mortgage rescue. The fund, which is being held separately from Homelessness Grant, has so far prevented one family from becoming homeless during 2009/10 and it is anticipated that £11,000 will be used to facilitate three mortgage rescue cases in the pipeline by the end of March 2011. Accordingly approximately £13.500 will be carried forward for use during 2011/12.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the update on the homelessness prevention and support schemes funded through DCLG Homelessness Grant during 2010/11 be noted.
- 2.2 That the submissions for the funding of schemes during 2011/12 recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group be approved to receive funding from the Council's DCLG Homelessness Grant for 2011/12.
- 2.3 That the additional recommendation regarding use of DCLG Homelessness Grant to fund a new temporary Private Sector Housing Options part time post be approved for a two year period at £10,100 for 2011/12 and £11,017 for 2012/13 and in addition a fund of £5,000 to offer discretionary housing benefit payments to those who have accessed the Private Rented Sector through the Housing Options Service and others adversely affected by Housing Benefit changes.
- 2.4 That the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing be granted delegated authority to allocate any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2011/12 in support of existing or new schemes and approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Since the Homelessness Act 2002, the Government has allocated grant funding to local authorities to prevent and tackle homelessness and repeat homelessness. Since its inception, the annual grant to BDC, allocated through the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has been used to fund a range of homelessness support services provided in the District by a range of partner organisations.

The Government requires the following outcomes to be delivered by the grant:

- Reduced and sustained reduction in the level of rough sleeping by at least two thirds below the level in 1998.
  - Avoidance of long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with households with children or a pregnant woman.
  - End the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people between 16 and 17 years of age.
  - Reduction in the use of temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010 (already achieved and maintained to date).
- 3.3 As the Council experiences minimal or no rough sleeping, has very low usage of B&B (using hostel and self contained dispersed units to house homeless families) and has sound homelessness preventative services, all of the above requirements are currently being met.

**4. SCHEMES FUNDED BY DCLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT DURING 2010/11**

- 4.1 Members may recall that as the Strategic Housing Authority, BDC co-ordinates and leads the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. Through this group, which includes partners from a range of organisations, the Council's Housing Strategy Homelessness Action Plan has been developed to address the support needs of the homeless and provide schemes that are aimed at the prevention of homelessness.
- 4.2 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2010 the Executive Cabinet gave approval to the grant funding for 2010/11 being used in accordance with the recommendations made by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. The Executive Cabinet also gave delegated authority to the Portfolio Holder and the Head of Planning and Environment to re-allocate any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2010/11 in support of existing or new schemes.

## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### CABINET

6TH APRIL 2011

The table below sets out how the grant funding for 2010/11 has therefore been allocated and utilised:

Allocation of CLG Homeless Grant 2010/11			
	Budget	Bids	Actual
		£	£
Amount Carried Forward from 09/10	53,874		
Homelessness Grant for 10/11	81,050		
<b>Total</b>	<b>134,924</b>		
CAB Mortgage Rescue Adviser		12,000	12,000
Newstart Furniture Project		5,000	5,000
Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme		18,000	18,000
Floating Homelessness Prevention Officers		24,000	24,000
Housing Options Service		15,000	15,000
Consultation		400	0
Training flat		2,728	0
New Start Van Driver		3,500	3,500
PTS top up		3,500	3,500
Under occupation		21,000	13,975
Education Initiative		2,000	2,000
County Homelessness Strat (previously allocated to Centerpoint)		3,000	4,375
Children England		10,000	10,000
BYHF PTS from CLG		10,000	10,000
Mortgage Rescue		5,139.44	5,139.44
Fry Housing Trust- Move on packs		1,400	1,400
<b>Total</b>		<b>136,667.44</b>	<b>127,889.44</b>
<b>Under spend</b>		<b>-1,743.44</b>	<b>7,034.56</b>

4.3 The initiatives funded during **2010/11** are progressing as follows:

#### **Under occupation**

There is a growing need to make better use of existing social housing stock by encouraging those who are under occupying their homes to move to something more appropriate to their needs. The research carried out by consultant Richard Turkington identified significant numbers of people under occupying their homes in the social rented sector and what incentives might encourage them to move, for example support with arranging removals and redirection of post, the type of property, financial help towards the cost of moving. The Council is continuing to work with Housing Providers and the Home Improvement Agency to proactively discuss housing



options to those who are under occupying their homes and where possible and appropriate, encourage them to move.

**Owner Occupier Money Adviser**

The Owner Occupier specialist adviser at the CAB helped 96 households to avoid repossession in 2009/10 and is expecting the number to increase to 160 households by the end of 2010/11. The hours spent working with each client varies from 9 to 24 hours with an average of 10 hours per client. In total 5 cases have been referred to full mortgage rescue. The remainder have been resolved by accessing additional benefits such as support for mortgage interest, debt prioritisation and negotiation with mortgage lenders.

**BYHF Private Tenancy Scheme**

Following the successful Regional Centre of Excellence Youth Homelessness Event held at Avoncroft Museum in May 2009, CLG awarded an additional £10k to BYHF to promote the private tenancy scheme for under 25 year olds. Work is continuing to develop this resource pack and website.

**Housing Options**

In 2007 the Homelessness Service was re-structured to enable a more preventative approach to those who are homeless and those who are threatened with homelessness by creating a Housing Options Service. The service is offered to anyone seeking advice regarding housing and is supported by the Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme, the Basement's PTS scheme and Home Choice Plus. The number of clients accessing the service has steadily increased and continues to do so from 646 in 2007/8 to 766 in 2009/10 and an anticipated 760+ by the end of 2010/11.

**NewStarts Furniture Project**

NewStarts furniture project has grown rapidly into the largest furniture re-use scheme in Worcestershire. It assists those who are homeless and requiring furniture to access settled accommodation without delay and helps those who are on limited incomes to access affordable furniture and avoid falling into debt. The scheme helps approximately 200 households per annum.

**Education Initiative**

St Basils are developing a Homelessness Education Initiative pilot in the District to prompt young people to think about homelessness

and how it would affect them personally. It also trains and engages young people who have been homeless and gives them an opportunity to share their experiences and gain skills and qualifications in the classroom and one to one mentoring other young people. The initiative has been showcased and partner agencies have been asked to express an interest in delivering it to schools.

**Fry Housing Trust**

Fry Housing Trust secured £1,400 grant to help residents move on from their accommodation by providing a loan for white goods such as cookers and washing machines. These loans are repayable.

**5.0 THE IMPACT THAT PREVENTATIVE SERVICES HAVE HAD ON REDUCING HOMELESS PRESENTATIONS AND ACCEPTANCES AND BDC's PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT TARGET OF REDUCING THE USE OF TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION BY DEC 2010.**

5.1 The number of people presenting as homeless, those accepted as homeless and the outcome of homelessness prevention services are monitored by the Strategic Housing Team on a quarterly basis. The table below indicates that homelessness presentations are starting to increase and that whilst acceptances are still low the number of housing options interviews and homeless preventions have increased.

Performance info 2009/10	Total 2006-7	Total 2007/8	Total 2008/9	Total 2009/10	Total to 31 <sup>st</sup> Dec 2010	Projected 2010/11
Presentations	249	147	119	123	79	105
Acceptances	123	91	69	63	45	60
No of people in temp accommodation	63	16	13	14	19	
Preventions	76	157	172	155	119	159
New homes	72	46	145	88	55	55
Voids	291	314	343	350	256	341
Housing advice (BDHT)		646	695	766	540	720

5.2 In 2004, the Government set all housing authorities a target of reducing the number of homeless clients living in temporary accommodation by 2010. For Bromsgrove, this meant reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation from 68 to 34.

5.3.1 By the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007, the Council achieved the target figure of 34 when it recorded only 33 clients occupying temporary accommodation. Since that milestone the trend for reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation continued until recently. However, there were 19 households occupying temporary accommodation at the end of December 2010. In addition to this there has been a 40% increase in homelessness acceptances from April – Sept 2010 when compared with April – Sept 2009 and there have been year on year increases in households attending housing options interviews.

**6.0 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION SCHEMES RECOMMENDED FOR GRANT FUNDING FOR 2011/12.**

6.1 DCLG has allocated Homelessness Grant of £113,470 within the Council's ABG for each of the two financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13. The Medium Term Financial Plan Report considered by Cabinet on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February approved outline budget approval for £102,000 within which the following detailed schemes are recommended for approval.

6.2 The Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group met on the 7<sup>th</sup> December 2010 to consider bids for future funding and whether any of the existing initiatives should receive extra funding. The Group agreed that initiatives could be delivered using existing funding levels and therefore a recommendation was made that the following schemes continue to be funded at existing levels with any additional homelessness grant being directed towards the support of statutory services likely to be impacted by changes in Government policy regarding welfare benefits.

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

6TH APRIL 2011

**6.3 2011/12 Schemes Recommended for Homelessness Grant**

<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Grant recommended for Approval £</b>	<b>Outcomes  Other Considerations</b>
BYHF – Private Tenancy Scheme for under 25's	£21,500	Continuation of scheme offering rent deposit, rent in advance and support to assist under 25's to access private rented accommodation
BDHT – Floating Support Service	£24,000	Continuation of the floating support service for homeless or potentially homeless. This scheme is jointly funded by Supporting People and BDHT.
Owner Occupier Money Adviser with CAB	£17,600	To provide specialist advice regarding mortgage repayment issues including debt prioritisation, benefit advice and negotiation with lenders in order to prevent repossession.
Home Visiting Service BDHT	£15,000	For BDHT to continue to provide Home Visiting and prevention activities as per the recommendations of the CLG Homelessness Adviser in 2006
New Start Re-use and Resettlement Project	£8,500	To provide furniture and support to homeless people.
	<b>£86,600</b>	

**7.0 RECOMMENDATION OF ADDITIONAL SCHEMES TO RECEIVE REMAINING GRANT FUNDING FOR 2011/12 and 2012/13.**

7.1 The Strategic Housing Team have considered how the remaining unallocated approved grant could best provide an opportunity to minimise the impact of Housing Benefit changes and help households to access more affordable accommodation in the Private Rented sector and avoid homelessness.

- 7.2 In order to achieve this it is proposed that a temporary 'Private Sector Housing Options Post' is established on a part time basis. The expectation of the post holder would be to negotiate lower rents with landlords for those adversely affected by Housing Benefit changes, encourage more landlords to convert properties to HMO's to enable those who need to move into something more affordable, and work with CAB to decide whether Discretionary Housing Benefit could be applied.

<b>Name of Project</b>	<b>Grant Recommended for approval</b>	<b>Outcomes</b>
Private Sector Housing Options Post	£10,100 2011/12 £11,017 2012/13	Improved access to the private rented sector with a view to securing more affordable rents and encouraging more HMO's
Discretionary Housing Benefit Fund for those threatened with Homelessness	£5,000	To help those who have accessed the Private Rented Sector with Council support to manage any reduction in Housing Benefit that would otherwise put them at risk of homelessness.
<b>Total Additional Grant 2011/12</b>	<b>£15,100</b>	

- 7.3 As in previous years, it is proposed that any unspent funds or additional funding during the year being allocated under delegated authority if required.

**8.0 CONCLUDING COMMENTS**

- 8.1 Members are therefore asked to approve from 2011/12 CLG Homelessness Grant, the funding of schemes set out at 6.3 and 7.2 above.

- 8.2 Finally, as in previous years, Members are asked to grant the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder For Strategic Housing delegated authority to approve re-allocation of any under spend or make further adjustments necessary to ensure full utilisation of the grant allocation for 2011/12 in support of existing or new schemes and approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

**9.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 In summary the financial implications are as follows:

Carry forward from 10/11	£0.00
Grant 11/12	£113,470
Amount of grant approved for Preventative Schemes – Cabinet 23.02.2011.	<b>£102,000</b>
Recommended for Approval (per 6.3)	£86,600
New Initiatives (per 7.2)	£15,100
Total	£101,700
Balance remaining	£300

- 9.2 DCLG allocate funding under the Preventing Homelessness Grant to all local authorities to support their strategies to tackle and prevent homelessness effectively.

**10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

**11.0 COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 11.1 **Objective 1 – Regeneration (Town Centre and Housing)**

Improved standard of support and preventative service for homeless people.

**11.2 Objective 2 – Improvement**

Improved service to customers by the ability to provide a higher standard of prevention and support service together with more choice in solutions available.

**11.3 Objective 3 – Sense of Community and Wellbeing**

Homelessness prevention, reduction and support influences health and wellbeing.

**11.4 Priority 4 – Environment**

Reduction of homelessness helps a more planned allocation of housing thus supporting better neighbourhood integration and therefore reduces any negative impact upon the environment.

**12.0 RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

12.1 If the recommended schemes are not approved there is a risk that more households who are threatened with homelessness or who are in housing need will have limited alternative options. There is the risk that they may have to make a homeless approach and this could consequently lead to the following risks:

- Inability by the Council to meet the statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation in the District thus necessitating placement in B&B accommodation outside of the District.
- Increased B&B costs.
- Inability to maintain the reduction in the use of temporary accommodation to no more than 34 units.
- Increased Rough Sleeping in the District

**13. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 This scheme will benefit the Council's customer, by offering household's more options to prevent their homelessness. Where possible to enable them to remain in their own homes, the Council will be encouraging them to be more independent and take responsibility for their housing situation.

The scheme will also benefit the larger community as there will be fewer households making homeless approaches, and in turn less homeless households in the district.

**14. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 Whilst the Government has published an impact assessment regarding housing benefit changes it identifies that there is insufficient research to identify the adverse impact on some equalities groups. However, it does indicate that certain ethnic groups are likely to be more adversely affected than others by the changes to Housing Benefit entitlements. The above initiatives will help the Council to ensure that anyone disadvantaged by these changes is supported to sustain their accommodation in the short term so that they can seek more suitable accommodation in the future and avoid becoming homeless.

**15. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

- 15.1 Homelessness Grant is provided by CLG to facilitate the development of homelessness prevention activities. By working with partners we are able to deliver a wide range of services and initiatives cost effectively.

**16. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

- 16.1 None

**17. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 17.1 The appointment of a temporary Private Sector Housing Options post will require support from HR but funding for the post is identified through homelessness grant.

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

- 18.1 Minimising rough sleeping helps to create an atmosphere where the perception of crime is low and reduces possible anti social behaviour relating to rough sleeping.



**19. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 19.1 Homelessness and potential homelessness can have a serious effect on a households mental health and the ability of a family to thrive. Any measures to prevent homelessness will have positive effects on the households affected.

**20. LESSONS LEARNT**

- 20.1 By increasing the resources and restructuring services to concentrate on prevention of homelessness we have:

Reduced and sustained reduction in the level of rough sleeping by at least two thirds below the level in 1998.

Avoided long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for homeless families with households with children or a pregnant woman.

By 2010, ended the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for young people between 16 and 17 years of age.

Reduced the number of households in temporary accommodation by in excess of the required 50%.

At the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007, the Council achieved the target figure of 34 when it recorded only 33 clients occupying temporary accommodation. Since that milestone the trend for reducing the number of households in temporary accommodation continued until recently. However, there were 19 households occupying temporary accommodation at the end of December 2010. In addition to this there has been a 40% increase in homelessness acceptances from April – Sept 2010 when compared with April – Sept 2009 and there have been year on year increases in households attending housing options interviews.

We have found that in the past Homelessness Grant has allowed us the flexibility to respond to changes in the demand for homelessness and housing advice service, for example by providing a specialist adviser at CAB to help people to avoid mortgage repossession. Continued investment in prevention services will help the Council to continue to carry out its' homelessness and housing advice duties and avoid expensive bed and breakfast costs.

**21. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

21.1 The recommendations for support schemes to be funded included in this report come from the consideration given by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group membership of which is multi agency.

**22. 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
Head of Service - Community	Yes
Head of Resources	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**23. WARDS AFFECTED**

22.1 The homeless prevention services and issues covered in the report are District wide and are not specific to any particular ward.

**CABINET**

**6TH APRIL 2011**

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**24. APPENDICES**

24.1 None

**24.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

24.1 None

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **CABINET**

6th APRIL 2011

#### **COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community Services
Key Decision - Yes	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The report brings before Members a Draft Countywide Housing Strategy for approval (Appendix 1). The document is currently in the process of being circulated to partners and stakeholders for final consultation.
- 1.2 The report explains why a countywide housing strategy has been developed to replace the former district housing strategies, who it is aimed at and who and what helped shape the strategy.
- 1.3 The report also brings forward a local Housing Strategy Action Plan for the Bromsgrove District for approval.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That Members note the content of the report**
- 2.2 **That the Draft Countywide Housing Strategy and action plan attached at Appendix 1 be approved and delegated authority be given to the Head of Communities and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to agree any final minor changes that may be forthcoming from the consultation process.**
- 2.3 **That the local Housing Strategy action plan for the Bromsgrove District attached at Appendix 2 be approved.**

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Strategic housing functions, which include Enabling Affordable housing, homelessness prevention, affordable housing, supported housing services and private sector housing conditions and enforcement, are predominantly operated through District Councils with a very wide range of partnerships and statutory and voluntary sector agencies. Strategic arrangements and revenue funding for supported housing provision is administered through the Worcestershire Supporting People programme and has a major impact on strategic housing.

- 3.2 Increasingly there has been more co-operation and joint development between the six District Councils, Worcestershire County Council, its partners and other local Authorities outside Worcestershire. Significant examples include the South Housing Market Area Partnership, the development of a sub-regional choice based lettings scheme and the creation of a Countywide Home Improvement Agency.
- 3.3 District Councils are required to produce comprehensive, needs led, Housing Strategies and Homelessness Strategies which focus primarily on an area's needs. Increasingly these strategies are required to take a much wider geographical overview and respond to increasingly complex policy and strategic policy requirements of Government, key partners and stakeholders.
- 3.4 Each of the Worcestershire District Councils have had individual housing strategies. The Bromsgrove District Council Housing Strategy – *Unlocking the door to meeting Housing needs in the Bromsgrove District 2006 – 2011* expires this year.

**4.0 A COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE**

- 4.1 As stated above, up until now, the six strategic housing authorities have developed individual district housing strategies which have led to improved services for our local communities. These strategies have also improved our approach to working together and this has led to an increase in the number of countywide initiatives.
- 4.2 The new Worcestershire Housing Strategy (Attached at Appendix 1) which comes before Members for approval takes the next step; a concerted and more integrated countywide approach for the development and delivery of our housing services. We are corporately and jointly committed to this approach as the Chief Executives and Leaders for the district councils, gave approval for the development of a County Housing Strategy in 2009.
- 4.2 In practice, the Worcestershire Local Authorities have been working in close and effective partnership on housing matters for many years through the Worcestershire Chief Housing Officers Group (CHOG) and Worcestershire Supporting People Commissioning Body (SPCB). Government guidance issued by the CLG broadened the approach for the development of Housing Strategies, enabling these to be developed at Local strategic Partnership or sub regional level as well as locally.

- 4.3 It is intended that the new Countywide Housing Strategy will sit alongside the existing Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy and the Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy, which are closely aligned.
- 4.4 The partnership working between Local Authorities, Housing Associations, the Homes & Communities Agency (HCA) and the Government Office for the West Midlands will be the investment route and delivery vehicle for affordable housing, which is a top priority for the Worcestershire Partnership and is reflected in current LAA targets. The Countywide Housing Strategy also sits comfortably with the recent dialogue that has been developed by the district councils, County Councils, RSLs and PCT with the HCA on the approach to the “Single Conversation” and the development of the Local Investment Plan (LIP) to guide the Homes and Communities Agency’s investment in affordable housing across Worcestershire.

**5.0 WHO IS THE STRATEGY AIMED AT?**

- 5.1 The strategy is aimed at anyone with an interest in the commissioning and delivery of housing related services within the county. Its objective is to influence thinking, policy making and action at a county and local level to meet the housing aspirations of individuals and communities and to support Local Housing Authorities in attracting resources into Worcestershire.
- 5.2 Central to the strategy is the promotion of partnership working with customers, other agencies and across boundaries to create sustainable places to live. The strategy identifies the importance of working with all housing providers, including those in the private sector, to achieve a balanced housing market and we will promote the document and its priorities to developers and landlords.

**6.0 WHO AND WHAT HELPED TO SHAPE THE STRATEGY?**

- 6.1 The strategy responds to the national focus on the importance of the strategic housing role of local authorities, the implications of the Regional Housing Strategy and the outcome of the recent Comprehensive Area Assessment of the County. In addition, national and regional economic, housing and planning policy requirements are considered in the context of locally prioritised demographic and economic needs.

- 6.2 Within the county, two consultation events were held during autumn 2009 to consider housing from both a strategic and client based perspective. These events included partners from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations (see appendices for a list of those attending).
- 6.3 There was also consultation with service users, both through the consultation events and a series of focus groups with specific client groups. A questionnaire was also made available through the district council websites to maximise the number of people who could contribute their views.

**7. KEY ISSUES WITHIN THE NEW COUNTYWIDE HOUSING STRATEGY**

- 7.1 The **Vision** set out in the new strategy is ***“The right home, at the right time, in the right place”*** with a view to every household in Worcestershire being able to access housing that suits their needs and circumstances when they need it. In order to achieve the vision, the strategy identifies four **Primary Goals**:

- **To make better use of existing homes**
- **Deliver more new affordable homes**
- **Improve the condition of existing homes**
- **Provide housing related support**

- 7.2 To underpin these goals, the strategy aims:

- To ensure that our plans contribute to the development of sustainable communities and economic success for Worcestershire.
- To adopt a strategic commissioning approach, including identification of needs; gap analysis; prioritisation; outcome based commissioning; monitoring and review, to ensure the right solutions are provided.
- To embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.
- To ensure that services are delivered efficiently balancing performance, customer satisfaction and cost.

**8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**



- 8.1 There are no immediate financial implications to BDC associated with the approval of the Countywide Housing Strategy and Action Plan as the implementation of the actions will be carried out within existing Strategic Housing staff resources.
- 8.2 Where actions within the action plan are set to assess or investigate the potential implementation of certain new services and local funding would be required, a bid would have to be submitted for consideration under the Council's corporate annual budget process.

**9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Section 87(1) of the Local Government Act 2003 provides that the Secretary of State may require a local housing authority to have a strategy in respect of such matters relating to housing as he may specify. The Secretary of State may impose requirements as to ends the strategy is designed to achieve, the formulation of policy or review of the strategy.
- 9.2 Subsection 2 permits the Secretary of State to require an authority, at a specified time, to supply a statement of their housing strategy and any other housing material that may be specified. Further, requirements as to the form, content and supply of the statement may also be imposed.

**10. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 Policies relating to Homelessness, Choice Based Lettings and Private Sector Housing come before members as separate documents.

**11. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 11.1 The Housing priorities and actions within the document link with the following Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

Council Objective One - Regeneration – CO1 Priority Housing

Council Objective Three – Sense of Community and Wellbeing

Council Objective Four – Environment – CO4 Priority Climate Change

**12. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

The ability to retain suitably qualified and experienced staff to implement the strategy and action plan.

The ability to maintain continued commitment and support from partners in addressing the actions identified.

12.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Community Services

Key Objective Ref No: 4 - Effective, efficient and legally compliant Housing Service

**13. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The actions set out within the document are designed to enhance the Council's response to the identified housing needs of the community and to improve the quality, standard and accessibility of housing services provided.

**14. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 The strategy and consultation process has been carried out in accordance with corporate equality and diversity policy and where appropriate, housing services undergo impact assessment. An underpinning goal of the strategy is to embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.

**15. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

15.1 The Housing Strategy is based upon bringing together partners and resources to maximise the benefit to the community. The goals set within the new strategy include making best use of existing stock across all tenures dwellings by addressing under occupancy and empty homes and

adopt a strategic commissioning approach, including prioritisation and outcome based commissioning, to ensure the right solutions are provided.

**16. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

16.1 Addressed within Goal 3 – Improving the condition of existing homes.

**17. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 None.

**18. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

18.1 None identified.

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

19.1 None identified.

**20. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

20.1 None identified.

**21. LESSONS LEARNT**

21.1 Feedback from Audit Commission Inspection of Strategic Housing and consideration of the updated Key Lines of Enquiry have fed into the development of the strategy and action plans.

**22. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

22.1 Within the county, two consultation events were held during autumn 2009 to consider housing from both a strategic and client based perspective. These events included partners from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations (see appendices for a list of those attending).

22.2 There was also consultation with service users, both through the consultation events and a series of focus groups with specific client groups. A questionnaire was also made available through the district council websites to maximise the number of people who could contribute their views.

**23. 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
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	Yes

**24. WARDS AFFECTED**

All

**25. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Countywide Housing Strategy Document and Action Plan.

Appendix 2 - Local Housing Strategy Action Plan for the Bromsgrove District.

**CABINET**

**6th APRIL 2011**

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**26. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**27. KEY AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **CABINET**

6th APRIL 2011

#### **WORCESTERSHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN (LIP) AND AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK.**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community Services
Key Decision - YES	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The first part of this report brings forward for member approval a Local Investment Plan (LIP) for Worcestershire that has been developed between Worcestershire local authorities, Registered Providers of affordable housing (previously known as RSLs) and the Homes and Communities Agency setting out the shared priorities for housing, regeneration, economic development and supporting infrastructure.
- 1.2 The second part of the report summarises a range of proposed government reforms to the way that social housing is delivered and sets out the significant changes in the Homes and Communities Agency's expectation of what RPs are required to contribute when bidding for what is now to be much lower levels of HCA grant support for new affordable housing development. It sets out the importance of the Local Investment Plan in assisting Registered Providers of affordable housing to achieve a strategic fit when addressing the priorities for new supply identified by local authorities and when bidding for grant funding under the HCA's new 'Affordable Housing programme Framework'.
- 1.3 The third section of the report sets out how the Council's Principal Preferred Partners (BDHT and West Mercia Housing) are proposing to respond to Government's new framework for the delivery of affordable housing. This part of the report provides an overview of the bid that BDHT/West Mercia are currently formulating for submission to the HCA by the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 in order to seek grant subsidy to develop up to 250 affordable dwellings over the next 4 years. In response to the DCLG / HCA guidance the bid will seek lower levels of HCA grant (than has been previously available) necessitating the inclusion of financial contributions by the RSLs themselves, through the selected disposal of stock and a policy of increasing rents to a proportion of dwellings that are relet. The HCA, when assessing the bid will require confirmation that the necessary inputs to the funding of the proposed development is the result of agreement between the strategic housing authority and the Registered Providers.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That Members endorse the Worcestershire Local Investment Plan (LIP) set out at Appendix 1 of the report.**
- 2.2 That Members note the range of proposed reforms to the delivery of affordable housing and the summary of the key elements of the HCA's new Affordable Housing Delivery Framework set out at Section 5 of the report.**
- 2.3 Members are asked to consider the detail of BDHT/West Mercia Housing's proposed bid to the HCA Affordable Homes Programme (set out at Appendix II) and confirm the Council's commitment to the principles of the bid as detailed within Section 5 thereof with specific agreement to the bid elements detailed at 5.2 D and E as explained in sections 6.6 to 6.8 of this report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration delivery agency for England. The HCA has aimed to connect local ambition with national targets by engaging local authorities in a 'Single Conversation' on all aspects of housing and regeneration.**
- 3.2 The HCA's 'Single Conversation' process was launched in early 2010 to streamline their engagement and negotiation with local partners to generate investment plans and agreements to secure the delivery of affordable housing at local level in support of national objectives.**
- 3.3 The term 'Single' Conversation refers to its comprehensive coverage including the full range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities identifying the priorities set out in key local plans and is an ongoing, evolving and dynamic process.**
- 3.4 To deliver the agreed vision for the area, the process is supported by a Local Investment Plan (LIP) (Appendix 1) which identifies the needs to be addressed (based on evidence from local strategies, including the Sustainable Communities Strategy, Local Development Framework and the Local Economic Assessment ) and broad consultation that has helped to identify the objectives, outputs and outcomes that are expected from each partners' interventions and to assist the HCA, the LIP covers key areas for potential investment:**



- 3.5 With the change of Government during 2010, the concept of a Single Conversation was dropped and the requirement to develop a Local Investment Plan became voluntary although it is the document the HCA will use to determine housing investment within an area.
- 3.6 Dialogue with the Homes and Communities Agency indicated that it was desirable to continue to develop a Local Investment Plan that could be used to inform and support the forthcoming housing bidding round with the HCA (2011 – 15) under the new *Affordable Homes Programme Framework* which is described below, under Section 5 of this report.
- 3.7 The Worcestershire authorities jointly commissioned consultants, Regeneris Consulting and BBP Regeneration who had previous experience of developing LIPs to consult with key stakeholders and draw up the LIP. The development of the LIP was overseen by specific task and finish groups set up in the North and South, overseen by the Worcestershire Partnership Place Shaping Theme Group. Throughout the process Registered Providers (formally known as RSLs), with an interest in developing in the area, were consulted.

#### **4.0 KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 The Local Investment Plan has identified three key strategic priorities:
- Creating the conditions to sustain and generate employment,
  - Providing the right housing for all communities
  - Developing Worcestershire's infrastructure.
- Within these three strategic priorities there are a number of elements and these are listed below;
- Priority 1: Developing high growth employment sites
  - Priority 2: Creating and sustaining employment in Worcestershire's main centres
  - Priority 3: Supporting the economic sustainability of Worcestershire's towns
  - Priority 4: Developing housing to support high growth employment sites and main employment centres
  - Priority 5: Supporting housing markets in Worcestershire's towns
  - Priority 6: Delivering sustainable rural housing
  - Priority 7: Meeting special needs
  - Priority 8: Improving the existing housing stock
  - Priority 9: Strengthening the highways infrastructure
  - Priority 10: Improving public transport

- Priority 11: Developing social, community and green infrastructure
  - Priority 12: Managing Worcestershire's resources
- 4.2 For Bromsgrove, the proposals for housing and economic development and regeneration, identified through the draft Local Development Framework Core Strategy are picked up in priorities three, four and five. Delivery of affordable housing to meet rural housing needs is addressed by priority six and to meet special needs, including housing for older people is addressed by priority seven. Priority eight highlights the needs for ongoing improvements to the existing stock, especially around thermal comfort although recognition is given to the scale of disrepair in the private sector and the limited resources now available to support improvements. Priorities 9 – 12 cover various transport and infrastructure schemes under proposal throughout the county.
- 4.3 The LIP is an evolving document and it is recognised that in the short term it is a document that will inform the HCA bidding rounds. However, in the longer term it is the starting point for further prioritisation of Worcestershire's key employment and housing growth ambitions that require significant supporting infrastructure.
- 4.4 The development of a Worcestershire LIP has been supported by all of the Worcestershire Councils and other key delivery partners. Its implementation will continue to be overseen by the Worcestershire Partnership's Place Shaping Group as the next steps towards scheme prioritisation are addressed. However, in the meantime the LIP will serve as a document to support RP bids to the HCA. The Council is recommended to endorse the LIP.

**5. AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME - FRAMEWORK**

- 5.1 The Localism Bill and the Government's consultation paper 'Local Decisions: A Fairer Future for Social Housing' proposed far reaching changes to the nature and length of tenancies offered by social landlords and, in the case of Registered Providers (RPs), to the rents charged to a proportion of their new tenants when properties become available for reletting..
- 5.2 It is proposed that local housing authorities will be under a statutory duty to formulate and publish a 'Tenancy Strategy' as a framework for the application of the new flexibility to tenancy terms and the proposed introduction by RPs of new 'affordable rents'. Individual social landlords

- will also be expected to publish policies on their specific application of tenancy and rent reform.
- 5.3 In February 2011, the DCLG and Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) published an *Affordable Homes Programme Framework* setting out a new approach to the way that social housing is to be delivered from April 2011.
- 5.4 The Affordable Homes Programme Framework seeks offers from RP's (formerly known as RSLs, eg. BDHT, West Mercia Housing etc) to work with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver a new supply of affordable housing over the next four years - 2011 to 2015.
- 5.5 Whilst offering greater flexibility to RP's wishing to develop affordable housing, the basis of this new delivery model will be to encourage providers to use the potential to increase the rental stream from some of their existing stock (only when units become void for re letting) to help reduce the amount of public funding (HCA Grant) that will be needed to deliver the supply of affordable housing.
- 5.6 Key to this new structure is the introduction of a new '*Affordable Rent*' product which will form the principal element of the new supply offer. The new flexibilities will allow RP's to convert a proportion of their existing '*Social Rent*' dwellings (currently let at around 55% - 60% of open market rent) to the new '*Affordable Rent*' which can be let at up to 80% of open market rent. Existing tenants will not be affected as conversion to the new Affordable Rent product will only be an option available to a RP when stock becomes void and is relet to a new tenant.
- 5.7 Alongside this flexibility for RPs to capitalise upon an increased rental stream, the new delivery model will seek a competitive bid from RPs who use the new flexibilities on the use of existing assets to generate additional financial capacity to support new supply. There are therefore four broad funding streams:
- Additional borrowing capacity by conversion of Social Rent units to Affordable Rent.
  - Cross subsidy through surpluses, outright sale, shared ownership sales, recycled grant and stock disposals.
  - Free or discounted land.
  - HCA Grant funding (but only where required to make a development viable).

The assumption is that the most competitive bids made by RPs will effectively combine these funding streams.

- 5.8 The new delivery model will mean that the HCA's former 'scheme by scheme' appraisal process will end and providers will be expected to set out their proposals for a four year programme covering how they will manage their existing assets and capacity, and in particular how they will use the flexibility to convert some of their current stock to 'Affordable Rent', alongside HCA funding, to generate significant volumes of new supply.
- 5.9 When considering proposals, the HCA will consider the strategic fit and overall value for money. RPs will be encouraged to work closely with local authorities throughout the 2011 -15 development programme period to deliver against local needs and priorities. The HCA's local development teams will play a key role in brokering and enabling relationships between providers and local authorities to ensure that local priorities are delivered. Members will therefore recognise that the Local Investment Plan (LIP) as detailed in sections 3 and 4 of this report is a key tool in enabling this to happen.
6. **OVERVIEW OF THE PROPOSED BDHT / WEST MERCIA BID TO THE HOMES AND COMMUNITIES AGENCY (HCA) FOR DEVELOPMENT GRANT FUNDING FOR THE PROGRAMME PERIOD 2011 – 2015.**
- 6.1 This section of the report sets out how the Council's Principal Preferred Partners (BDHT and West Mercia Housing) are proposing to respond to Government's new framework for the delivery of affordable housing that is explained in section 5 above.
- 6.2 At the time of writing this report, BDHT / West Mercia have provided an update (Attached at Appendix II) for Members consideration, that provides an overview of the bid that BDHT/West Mercia are jointly formulating for submission to the HCA by the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 to seek grant subsidy to develop up to 250 affordable dwellings in the Bromsgrove District over the next 4 years.
- 6.3 In accordance with the DCLG / HCA guidance (Affordable Homes Delivery – Framework), the bid to develop up to 250 dwellings will seek the now required lower level of grant support from the HCA. However, to achieve this, it has been necessary for BDHT/WM to include within the bid, financial contributions from the sources recommended in the guidance that I made reference to in 5.7 above, i.e.:
- Additional borrowing capacity by conversion of a proportion of Social Rent units to the new Affordable Rent.

- Cross subsidy through surpluses, outright sale, shared ownership sales, recycled grant and stock disposals.
- Free or discounted land.
- The BDC approved capital grant budget of £200,000.

Members will note when reading the update provided by BDHT/WM set out at Appendix II, that in order for them to formulate a viable bid to the HCA, they are having to include a commitment to the disposal of some dwellings within the BDHT / WM housing stock and a policy of increasing rents on a proportion of dwellings when they become void for reletting to new tenants.

- 6.4 The Chief Housing Officers of the six Worcestershire Districts have been having meetings with all Registered Providers who operate across the County. Those that are proposing to formulate development bids are similarly having to give due consideration to the new guidance and the requirement to minimise the amount of grant requested from the HCA.
- 6.5 The HCA, when assessing the bids from BDHT/WM will require confirmation that the necessary inputs to the funding of the proposed development is the result of agreement between the strategic housing authority and the Registered Provider. Accordingly BDHT / WM seek the Council's commitment to the principles of their proposed bid to the HCA for the Affordable Homes Programme, as detailed within Section 5 of Appendix II.
- 6.6 In order for the Council to give its full commitment to the principles of the proposed bid, Members will be required to agree to two sensitive elements of the bid, as detailed at 5.2 D and 5.2 E of Appendix II.

Specifically:

**5.2 D** proposes that in order to raise sufficient funding to support the development bid, BDHT will need to convert approximately half of all new lettings of existing stock to new Affordable Rents that will be set at 80% of market rent.

**5.2 E** proposes that in order to raise sufficient funding to support the development bid, BDHT will have to dispose of between 15 – 20 dwellings over the period of the programme and also convert approximately 10 existing tenancies to shared ownership by offering existing tenants the opportunity to purchase a share of the property that they currently rent from BDHT.

- 6.7 In committing to the principles of the bid, Members will be agreeing to the full capital receipt from the proposed stock disposals being strategically invested in the development of new affordable housing provision on the basis of any proportion of the capital receipt that would be due to the Council would be waived as a Council contribution towards the development bid.
- 6.8 The Chief Executive Officer, Leader and Portfolio Holder have emphasised to BDHT our members' previous concerns over the loss of social housing in rural areas through stock disposals. In order to address these concerns, the Chairman of the BDHT Board has proposed that *'where BDHT disposes of a rural asset, being a property within a small settlement (as defined in Table 2 of the District's settlement hierarchy, BDC, Draft Core Strategy 2), fifty percent of the capital receipt after the deduction of reasonable and property incurred BDHT expenses, will be ring fenced by BDHT, for a period of 30 months, to be dedicated to a Rural Exception scheme, where there is a commitment by the District and Parish Councils and a strategic acknowledgement by the Planning Department of a need, as opposed to a demand, for the development.*

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Local Investment Plan is a mechanism for drawing in financial resources and focusing resources on schemes of strategic importance.
- 7.2 The Registered Provider bids to the HCA will be expected to include commitment of any resources the RP's and any other public or private bodies can make e.g. free or discounted land, local authority grant or the use of S106 contributions.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 The Housing elements of the LIP will form the basis of the packages that Registered Providers put together to the HCA to deliver housing over the next four years. These packages will be subject to legal agreement between the RP's and HCA but Local Authorities are expected to participate in consultation around these.

**9. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 9.1 The Housing priorities and actions within the document link with the following Corporate Objectives and Priorities:

Council Objective One - Regeneration – CO1 Priority Housing

Council Objective Three – Sense of Community and Wellbeing

Council Objective Four – Environment – CO4 Priority Climate Change

**10. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 10.1 The LIP is a Worcestershire wide document, there are no risks associated with endorsing it. However, failure to endorse it could place the Council at a disadvantage going forward in terms of securing internal investment opportunities.

**11. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 The actions set out within the document are designed to enhance the Council's response to the identified housing needs of the community and to assist Registered Providers and the HCA to invest in affordable housing that accords with the needs and priorities identified.
- 11.2 The incorporation of a policy of increasing rental income to support a new affordable housing development programme will impact upon a proportion of new BDHT tenants who do not qualify for Housing Benefit.

**12. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1 It has not been considered necessary to carry out an impact assessment on the LIP.

**13. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

- 13.1 The LIP will assist and encourage RP's to make best use of existing resources and guide their proposed investment and that of the HCA to most accurately reflect the needs and priorities of the County.

**14. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

- 14.1 Addressed within LIP Priorities 8 and 11.

**15. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 None identified.

**16. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 16.1 The LIP will assist in driving NI 155 Delivery of Affordable Housing.

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

- 17.1 None other than in assisting in creating sustainable communities and providing affordable homes that will help impact upon homelessness.

**18. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 18.1 Specifically addressed by LIP priorities 7, 8 and 11.

**19. LESSONS LEARNT**

- 19.1 Early engagement and agreement of priorities with RPs and with the HCA through the development of the LIP is clearly viewed as a positive support to the investment process.

**20. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 20.1 Registered providers, County Council and District Council officers from housing, regeneration, planning, economic development teams have been involved in the development of the Worcestershire LIP.



**21. 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
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

**22. WARDS AFFECTED**

All

**23. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Worcestershire Local Investment Plan (LIP).  
Appendix II – BDHT/West Mercia Housing Update on HCA Bid Proposals.

**24. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

DCLG / HCA - Affordable Homes Programme – Framework

Local Investment Plan Appendix 1

**25. KEY AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **CABINET**

6TH APRIL 2011

#### **UPDATE OF THE 2009 – 2014 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY AND CESSATION OF FUNDING TO THE KICK START EQUITY RELEASE SCHEME**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Whittaker
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community Services
Key Decision	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The report brings forward for Member approval an updated version of the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy (2009 – 2014) to reflect additional and improved housing data that has become available since it was approved in April 2009, the current level of funding available and a more up to date action plan.
- 1.2 The report also brings forward within the Strategy document for Member approval a revised version of the Council's Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy to reflect the minor changes necessary to achieve uniformity of policy for the processing of Disabled Facility Grants and Home Repair Assistance across the six Worcestershire districts whose customers are served by the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service (Home Improvement Agency).
- 1.3 The final element of this report relates to the West Midlands 'Kick Start' Equity Release Scheme to which the six Worcestershire districts became partners from April 2010. The scheme is now likely to close on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011 as a result of Regional top sliced funding to support the scheme being withdrawn.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 **That the updated version of the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy (Appendix 1 to this report) be approved including the revised Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (*appendix 1 of the Strategy*) and the action plan (*appendix 2 of the strategy*).**
- 2.2 **Members note the withdrawal of Regional top sliced funding to the Kick Start Scheme.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 When the Strategic Housing Service was re inspected by the Audit Commission in February 2008 they recommended that in addition to the Council's General Housing Strategy, a separate Private Sector Housing Strategy be developed by April 2009 to guide all activities in the private sector.
- 3.2 Accordingly, a separate Private Sector Housing Strategy covering the period 2009 – 2014 was developed and approved by the Executive Cabinet by the April 2009 deadline.
- 3.3 At the time of approval, it was recognised that an update of survey data relating to private sector housing conditions in Worcestershire was underway and that the strategy would need to be revised when the new survey data had been analysed.
- 3.4 An updated version of the Private Sector Housing Strategy 2009 – 2014 that incorporates the new data therefore comes forward for Member approval and is attached at Appendix 1 of this report.
- 3.5 Within the Private Sector Housing Strategy (2010 – 2015) there are two appendices:
- Appendix 1 – **The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy**, which sets out the detail and eligibility for Disabled Facilities Grants and private sector housing assistance schemes offered by the Council. This policy has been updated to achieve maximum uniformity with neighbouring authorities across Worcestershire following extensive officer working group consideration in partnership with the new Worcestershire Care and Repair service who project manage DFG , Home Repair assistance grant and equity release loan funded improvements for the customers of all six councils.
  - Appendix 2 – **Private Sector Housing Strategy Action Plan**, which now sets out an updated range of actions to address the aims and objectives over the remaining life of the strategy.
- 3.6 A summary of the key indicators relating to housing condition that informed the revised strategy are set out at Section 5 below.

**4.0 THE UPDATED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY 2010 - 2015**

4.1 The updated strategy document (Appendix 1) sets out the role, aspirations and priorities that the Council has for improving the quality, accessibility and availability of private sector housing in the Bromsgrove District over the period 2009 - 2014.

4.2 The document was developed in close relationship with partner agencies, and now takes into account the recent Building Research Establishment (BRE) Condition Survey, Thermal Imaging Survey and demographic data. Priorities and objectives were originally reviewed with stakeholders at two Strategic Housing Consultation Events and also based upon ongoing feedback from landlords and through the Landlords' Forum.

**5. THE PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY DOCUMENT (APPENDIX 1)**

5.1 Improving the standard of private sector housing and increasing the availability and accessibility of privately owned and rented housing, especially to the vulnerable and those on lower incomes, together with the important role of administering Disabled Facilities and Home Improvement grants is identified as the Council's second housing priority within its wider housing strategy.

5.2 **Section 1** of the document details the local context of the District with its' increasingly ageing population and identifies the needs of the District and the role of the local authority when dealing with private sector housing with particular regard to advice, assistance and enforcement.

**Section 2-** identifies how the Strategy takes into consideration the National, Regional and Local priorities, and how this has helped shape our vision for Housing in the District.

**Section 3-** identifies the housing profile of the Bromsgrove District by providing an overview of the last Stock Condition Survey and its key findings

**Section 4-** identifies current issues influencing Private Sector Housing in the District and explores the emerging and potential impact of the current economic downturn upon the local housing market.

**Section 5-** identifies the Council's priorities for private sector housing that were identified during the recent consultation event with partners and stakeholders.

**Section 6-** details how the Local Authority currently meets these priorities and sets out further future initiatives.

**Section 7-** provides information on resources and funding streams available in provide a range of grant assistance.

**Section 8** – sets out the Key Outcomes and key performance targets relating to:

- Sustained long term 'Decent' housing conditions, improved quality of privately rented accommodation (including HMOs), higher standards for healthier and safer homes.
- Improved energy efficiency of homes.
- Better support and assistance to older and vulnerable people in making home improvements and adaptations, healthier and safer homes.
- Increased access to private rented accommodation for the homeless, increased choice and increased support and assistance to landlords.

5.3 **The Private Sector Assistance Policy** is included within Appendix 1 of the Strategy document. Whilst the policy was reviewed in 2010 in readiness for the commencement of the Worcestershire Care and Repair service in June last year it has been further reviewed to gain maximum consistency with neighbouring authorities across the County in order to enhance the customer experience when accessing services through the Countywide Home Improvement Agency.

5.4 The policy remains unchanged from when it was approved by the Executive Cabinet on the 7<sup>th</sup> April 2010 with the exception of the following alterations:

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**6TH APRIL 2011**

<b>Overview</b>	<b>Previously</b>	<b>Now</b>
Reduction in the forms of discretionary Grant/ loan products available.	Home Repair Assistance Grant (up to £5,000 and Renovation Grants (up to £10,000) were available.	One Discretionary Grant known as the <b>Home Repair Assistance Loan</b> .
Deletion of Kick Start Equity Release Scheme from policy.	Previously included the availability of the Kick Start Scheme for equity holding home owners to access equity release loan for home improvement.	Now removed due to closure of the scheme from 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2011.
The repayment terms of the loans have been altered.	<b>Home Repair Assistance &amp; Renovation Grant</b> was only repayable if the property was sold within 10years. The repayment amount was based upon the percentage increase or decrease as determined by the land and property index	<b>Home Repair Assistance Loan</b> is repayable in full (no increase or decrease) when the property is sold or at change of ownership with no time limit.
Age restrictions and values of grants have been aligned	<b>Home Repairs Assistance Grant</b> was only made available to those over the age of 60 and up to a maximum of £5,000. The <b>Renovation Grant</b> was available for those under the age of 60 up to the value of £10,000	The <b>Home Repair Assistance Loan</b> is available irrespective of age provided that the works are deemed a Category 1 Hazard under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and the vulnerable person is resident in the property.
The length of time to which a qualifying applicant has to have owned the property has been reduced.	For both previous grants the applicants must have owned their property for 3years.	The applicants are required to have owned their property for a period of 12 months.
The eligibility criteria has been altered.	Previously there was no restriction on the applicant's level of savings unless in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (as it was not a means tested benefit).	All applicants must not have more than £16,000 savings available.
The previous inclusion of the Renewable Energy Grant has been withdrawn	Renewable Energy Grant to for the installation of Renewable Energy technology within a residential or non profitable organisation property was available.	Renewable Energy Grant withdrawn due to low take up and insufficient funding to continue.

- 5.5 **An Updated Action Plan** setting out actions that are proposed relating to each of the Key Outcomes is set out in Appendix 2 of the Strategy document.

**6. KICK START EQUITY RELEASE SCHEME**

- 6.1 The West Midlands Kickstart Scheme is a regionally (top sliced) funded scheme that provides an additional form of assistance to help home owners improve and renovate their dwellings through subsidised equity release loan facilities.
- 6.2 Following a successful bid last year, the six Worcestershire authorities joined the Kickstart Partnership to enable Worcestershire customers to access up to £360,000 capital grant to fund subsidised loans for home improvement.
- 6.3 During the past nine months, Festival Housing, who manage the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service have processed applications by customers in need of home repair assistance through to the Kick Start Service with a value of works that fully reflects the programme approved for Worcestershire.
- 6.4 Unfortunately both Regional funding that was top sliced to the Kick Start Scheme and government funding to local authorities to support private sector housing renewal have both been withdrawn from April 2011. Accordingly the Kick Start Scheme in its current form will cease to operate from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.
- 6.5 Whilst we are maintaining a dialogue with the Kick Start Partnership managers and Board, in the light of the funding streams being withdrawn, there is currently no viable proposal for a replacement service.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There are no immediate financial implications associated with the approval of the Private Sector Housing Strategy as the implementation of the actions will be carried out within existing Strategic Housing staff resources.
- 7.2 In the event of any action indicating or recommending the implementation of a new service, then a bid would have to be submitted for consideration under the Council's corporate annual budget process.



- 7.3 The withdrawal of top sliced Regional Funding to the Kick Start Partnership for Equity Release Loans means that continuation of the service in its present form is no longer viable and will cease from the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

**8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no legal implications associated with the introduction of the revised strategy and assistance policy.

**9. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 Alterations to the Home Repair Assistance Policy have been introduced to gain uniformity across the six Worcestershire district authorities who refer DFG and Home Repair Assistance customers to the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service.

**10. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 10.1 The Housing priorities and actions within the document link with all four Corporate Objectives:

Council Objective One - Regeneration – CO1 Priority Housing and Town Centre.

Council Objective Two – Improvement.

Council Objective Three – Sense of Community and Wellbeing.

Council Objective Four – Environment – CO4 Priority Climate Change.

**11. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

The ability to retain suitably qualified and experienced staff to implement the strategy and action plan.

The ability to maintain continued commitment and support from partners in addressing the actions identified.

11.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Environment and Planning  
Key Objective Ref No: 4 - Effective, efficient and legally compliant Housing Service  
Key Objective: 4.1 - Monitor, manage and implement the recommendations from the Audit Commission Housing Inspection Report and Housing Strategy Action Plan.

**12. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

12.1 The actions set out within the document are designed to enhance the Council's response to the identified housing needs of the community and to improve the quality, standard and accessibility of housing services provided.

**13. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

13.1 The review and consultation process has been carried out in accordance with corporate equality and diversity policy and where appropriate, housing services undergo impact assessment.

13.2 The strategy has been developed following the consultation events carried out with partners and stakeholders.

**14. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

14.1 The Housing Strategy is based upon bringing together partners and resources to maximise the benefit to the community. The vision that we have since developed; ***"Making best use of existing accommodation by improving the quality and accessibility and addressing the imbalance in the housing market through the provision of more affordable housing"***, has helped us to focus our efforts to achieve the greatest impact by making better use of existing stock across all tenures.

**CABINET**

**6TH APRIL 2011**

**15. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

- 15.1 The strategy is a key player in addressing energy efficiency which is a major cause for homes failing the Decency Standard.
- 15.2 Whilst limited by budget available, the Home Repair Assistance policy helps address home energy efficiency.

**16. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 16.1 None.

**17. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 17.1 None identified.

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

- 18.1 None identified.

**19. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 19.1 The Decent Homes Standard and the Housing Health and Safety Rating System feature in the strategy as a measure of condition within the private sector housing stock and has a direct relationship to health.

**20. LESSONS LEARNT**

- 20.1 The strategy is updated in response to improved data now available relating to the condition of privately owned homes across the District.

**21. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

- 22.1 The strategy was originally developed following a range of stakeholder events.

**23. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	YES
Chief Executive	YES

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**6TH APRIL 2011**

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

**24. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**25. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Revised Private Sector Housing Strategy 2010 – 2015  
(including Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Action Plan)

**26. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Housing Strategy Document 2006 – 2011  
Bromsgrove Housing Market Assessment 2008  
BRE Condition Survey

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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### COUNCIL PLAN 2011-14

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Relevant Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships
Key Decision	

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To agree the Council Plan for 2011-2014 including the action plan which sets out how the Council's priorities will be delivered.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **Cabinet are asked to RECOMMEND to the Council that the Council Plan 2011-2014 attached at Appendix 1 be approved.**

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Last year Members considered the Council Plan Part 1 report which set out the Council's vision and priorities. The vision and priorities were recommended to be reconfirmed and this was subsequently approved by Full Council.
- 3.2 The Council's vision is "Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services".

#### 4. KEY ISSUES

- 4.1 The Council Plan has been developed to reflect the strategic focus presented in the Council Plan Part 1 report and considers the national, regional and local context in which the Council operates.
- 4.2 The Council Plan sets out what each priority aims to achieve through a number of key deliverable, and the actions that will take place to support each of the key deliverables.
- 4.3 A range of performance indicators have been developed which will assist in monitoring progress within each priority area and these will form the basis for quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet during 2011/2012.

#### 5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan approved at Full Council has clear links with the delivery of the Council Plan. Agreed budget bids for specific key deliverables are detailed throughout the action plan.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no legal implications arising directly from this report.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The Council Plan 2011-14 will replace the current Plan and will require full Council approval.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 The Council's priorities are supported by a range of Council wide and service specific key deliverables and associated actions which are detailed in the Council Plan.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The Council Plan is supported by the corporate risk register. Proactive risk management features as an action within the Governance key deliverable.
- 9.2 This report does not identify any Health and Safety Considerations.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The actions and key deliverables are set out in the Council Plan to enhance the quality of services provided to customers.
- 10.2 Improved customer experience is proposed as a specific key deliverable, incorporating actions from the Customer Experience Strategy which Full Council has approved.
- 10.3 The Council Plan, when approved, will be published on the Council's website and staff intranet.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 None arising directly from this report; however the Council Plan contains actions and performance indicators in relation to equalities and diversity.

**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

12.1 No direct implications although the Council Plan contains actions relating to shared services, service transformation and efficiencies.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

13.1 The Council's priority 'Climate Change' aims to support measures to tackle climate change.

13.2 There is a specific key deliverable proposed to reduce the Council's carbon emissions.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14.1 Actions to reduce staff sickness and improve the employee climate and organisational culture are detailed within the Council Plan.

**15. GOVERNANCE/PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

15.1 The Council plan is a key component of the Council's governance and performance management arrangements. Associated actions are set out under the priority 'Value for Money.'

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

16.1 The Council's priority 'One Community' covers community safety and community cohesion.

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 The Council's priority 'One Community' covers health.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

18.1 The Council Plans for both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils are now aligned in terms of format and production which has streamlined the strategic planning process.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

19.1 None directly in relation to this report, but the Budget Jury were engaged in discussions around the Council's priorities and proposed key deliverables.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	At Portfolio Holder's Briefing
Chief Executive	At CMT
Executive Director (S151 Officer)	At CMT
Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director – Leisure, Environment and Community Services	At CMT
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	At CMT
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes
Head of Service	At CMT
Head of Resources	At CMT
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	At CMT
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All Wards

**22. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Council Plan 2011-2014

**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Council Plan 2010-2013  
Council Plan Part 1  
Service Business Plans 2011

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **CABINET**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

#### **REVIEW OF COVERT SURVEILLANCE UNDER RIPA**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Geoff Denaro
Relevant Head of Service	Claire Felton
Key Decision	

#### **1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Cabinet on the Council's use of covert surveillance as permitted by under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA). A copy of the most recent version RIPA policy ( March 2011) is included in the report. Members are asked to note the updated policy and the information contained in the report relating to the administration of the Council's RIPA scheme since April 2010 and the type of activities where covert surveillance is being carried.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is recommended that:**

- 2.1 Cabinet considers and notes the contents of the report.**

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 is the legislation which allows local authorities to undertake covert surveillance. For District Councils the need to rely on RIPA powers will arise in very infrequently, and the use of those powers is limited to circumstances where the Council in carrying out a regulatory role is investigating whether a criminal offence may have been committed. For example, in cases where the Council is investigating suspected benefit fraud.
- 3.2 The RIPA legislation covers covert surveillance activities. In other words situations where observations and evidence are being gathered of which the subject of the investigation is unaware. As by implication this type of activity could be intrusive and involve interference with individual's private and family lives, the RIPA legislation imposes a system of checks and balances which local authorities must comply with. The purpose of this is to ensure that any interference is necessary and proportionate. Members will be aware that a small number of local authorities have been criticised in the last 12 months for using RIPA powers in a disproportionate way. For

example, to assist in investigating the validity of school entry applications and to prosecute for dog fouling. Members should also note that a considerable amount of observations carried out by Council employees are performed as “overt surveillance”, such as car parking enforcement or planning enforcement. These activities fall outside of RIPA and do not need to be authorised.

- 3.3 The Council’s RIPA policy was extensively revised and updated in November 2007 to bring it into line with the relevant legislation. At that time Council granted a delegation to the Head of Legal Services to allow the policy to be updated and this has been carried out from time to time as required.

**4. KEY ISSUES**

**Changes to policy in last 12 months**

- 4.1 In June 2010 the policy was updated to take into account new Codes of Conduct that had been issued by the Home Office and together with other changes to the legislation. A significant change is that the government has tried to ensure that only senior officers can act as authorising officers for RIPA applications. The BDC policy was amended to reflect this. The changes also required a Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) to be appointed to have overall oversight of RIPA activity. This was required to be at senior management level and accordingly the Executive Director ( Finance and Corporate Resources) has been designated as the SRO. Member oversight has also been built into the policy by way of an annual report to Cabinet (of which this is the first) and regular updates from the Executive Director ( Finance and Corporate Resources) to the Portfolio Holder for Resources. Officers are meeting on a quarterly basis with the SRO to review a sample of RIPA applications made in the previous quarter, to ensure all processes under the policy are operating properly and to co-ordinate staff training.
- 4.2 In June 2010 the policy was also amended to reflect the transfer of staff to Bromsgrove District Council in it’s role as host authority to Worcestershire Regulatory Services. In particular, the incorporation into the new regulatory service of the Trading Standards team from the County Council. This was significant as due to the nature of their work and the fact that in investigating offences such as under age sales and sale of counterfeit goods the team regularly makes RIPA applications for covert surveillance activities. The Council’s legal team sought specialist advice on how to approach the new

arrangements for hosting the regulatory service in terms of the RIPA policy. However, it was difficult to establish an authoritative view as these types of collaborative arrangements between local authorities are still relatively new models in terms of governance.

- 4.3 As all staff now operating within the Worcestershire Regulatory Service are employed by BDC the RIPA policy was amended to reflect this. In other words under the system now in place any WRS staff wishing to carry out covert surveillance must comply with the BDC RIPA policy and processes. It was thought that this was the safest option available in that all staff will be working to a common policy which can be regularly updated with training being provided on an annual basis. Accordingly arrangements were put into place to incorporate the Trading Standards RIPA applications into the BDC process and on a practical level this is working very well ( although some issues have subsequently been raised by the Chief Surveillance Commissioner as set out in para 4.6)
- 4.4 Finally the policy has most recently been updated in March 2011 to implement some minor changes with staffing arrangements and the recommendation arising out of the recent inspection that there should be a formally designated RIPA co-ordinating officer.

#### **Inspection October 2010**

- 4.5 To ensure compliance with the RIPA legislation, an inspection regime is imposed on Councils by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners. Prior to 2010, the Council's last inspection had taken place in 2007. The Council was inspected again on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010. The inspection involved an examination of the Council's policy and procedures and interviews with the key staff involved. The outcome of the inspection was extremely positive with only two recommendations for follow up actions. These related to appointing a formally designated RIPA co-ordinator and ensuring that on Trading Standards applications for surveillance of multiple sites that each site to be targeted in an operation is considered individually when the RIPA authorisation is granted. The Inspector commented that " BDC has an first-class policy document and the officers whom I saw displayed an excellent knowledge of RIPA and the latest Codes of Conduct and OSC Guidance".
- 4.6 Since the inspection a further issue has been raised by the Chief Surveillance Commissioner. This relates to the governance arrangements for Worcestershire Regulatory Services and whether as a body governed by a joint committee it falls within the traditional definition of "local

authorities” that can carry out surveillance as set out in the 2000 Act. We are continuing to correspond with the Commissioner on this point and are consulting with other joint regulatory services to compare how they deal with implementing the RIPA legislation. Once officers have completed their enquiries and formed a clearer view of the issues involved it is intended that a full report will be brought before the Joint Committee to enable members to review the position.

**Applications made in year ending 2010**

4.7 The records for 2010 show that a total of 13 applications for RIPA authorisations were made. The applicant on each matter was the Trading Standards Team from Worcestershire Regulatory Services. No applications were made by BDC departments in 2010. The typical activities being authorised were operations to target sales of alcohol to under age purchasers and investigations into sale of counterfeit goods.

**Training**

4.8 In accordance with best practice the Council organises training on RIPA for staff on an annual basis. This enables officers to keep up to date with current practice and any changes in legislation. In 2010 two training sessions were held in December and a further half day session to complete that round of training is scheduled for March 2011.

**Future changes**

4.8 The government is currently in the process of making further changes to the RIPA regime for local authorities. The details have yet to be announced but the government has said that it will be introducing an additional requirement whereby Councils will have to get a Magistrate’s approval for use of covert directed surveillance, covert human intelligence sources (informants) and access to communications data. The primary legislation introducing these changes will be the Freedom Bill which is due to be published shortly.

**5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. The work involved in supporting the RIPA policy forms part of the main duties of the officers involved. There is a monetary cost attached to providing annual

training for staff but this is a necessary requirement in order for the Council to continue to rely on the RIPA legislation.

**6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The primary legislation under which covert surveillance is regulated is the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000. This legislation enables local authorities to undertake covert surveillance and imposes a requirement for any surveillance to be authorised in accordance with that Council's RIPA policy.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 A copy of the current version of the policy is attached at Appendix 1. The policy is regularly updated and this is carried out by the Head of Legal Services in line with the relevant delegation.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 8.1 Improvement/ One Community.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

- 9.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:
- Failure to operate in accordance with the RIPA legislation resulting in the inadmissibility of evidence submitted to the court in support of Council prosecutions.
  - Misuse of RIPA powers resulting in negative publicity/ complaints from residents
- 9.2 These risks are being managed through the operation of the Council's RIPA policy and maintaining high standards of compliance to the terms of the policy. As can be seen from this report the policy is updated regularly in addition to which officers receive annual training to ensure that all RIPA activity is appropriate and properly authorised.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The Council's use of covert surveillance will impact on those customers who are subject to investigation. However, all activity is properly managed under the policy which has built in safeguards to ensure minimal interference with private lives. This has to be balanced against the benefit to the community derived from the Council carrying out its regulatory role and bringing prosecutions where it is believed that criminal offences have been committed.

**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 The only issue to note is set out in para 4.6 of the report, namely the on-going dialogue between the Council and the OSC as to the governance arrangements for Worcestershire Regulatory Service. As referred to at para 4.6 officers are working to resolve this issue.

**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**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

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18.1 N/a

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

19.1 N/a

**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	No
Executive Director – Planning & Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	No
Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Resources	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

**21. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards

**22. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Bromsgrove District Council – Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 : Policy – updated March 2010

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**

**6<sup>th</sup> April 2011**

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**23. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

OSC Inspection Report dated 25<sup>th</sup> October 2010

**24. KEY**

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### **PLANNING COMMITTEE**

28TH MARCH 2011

#### **ADOPTION OF THE PLANNING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E.
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Planning and Regeneration Services
Non-Key Decision	

#### 1. **SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 In the move towards shared services with Redditch Borough Council, and in order to provide a consistent and uniformed approach between the two local authorities, and in the absence of an adopted customer charter for planning enforcement the Council seeks to adopt the Planning Enforcement Policy outlined in Appendix 1.

#### 2. **RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That Members of the Planning Committee RECOMMEND to the Council that the Planning Enforcement Policy is adopted.

#### 3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Unacceptable and unlawful forms of development threaten the quality of the natural and built environment and the integrity of the planning system. Planning enforcement is, therefore, a crucial tool in maintaining the standards and regulations of development.
- 3.2 The Planning Enforcement Policy is a statement that outlines the Council's approach to enforcement matters; this includes identifying, investigating and monitoring breaches of planning control and delivering action to regularise and remediate unacceptable and unlawful forms of development. It also outlines the situations in which injunction, prosecution or exceptionally, direct action may be pursued.
- 3.3 The document sets out the practices and actions to be taken by the Council when an alleged breach is identified as well as setting out an approach for internal cross team working. This makes the enforcement process transparent to all service users as well as providing improved levels of information for our customers.
- 3.4 The Planning Enforcement Policy covers the following matters:
- Breaches of planning control – what constitutes a breach and a criminal offence

- Aims of enforcement policy and purpose of planning enforcement
- Investigating alleged breaches of planning control
- Informal enforcement procedures, including negotiation, persuasion and retrospective planning applications
- Formal enforcement procedures
- Procedures following enforcement action
- The Council's commitment to complainants including expectations and service standards
- Contact details

3.5 Although Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council work towards the same principles and guidelines for planning enforcement and are governed by the same legislation, at present they do not possess a unified enforcement policy. As the two Councils continue to develop their working relationships there is a need to develop a consistency of process across the Councils to improve customer understanding and to create a coherent system.

4. **KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 To develop a consistent and uniformed system of planning enforcement across the service.
- 4.2 To make transparent and understandable to the general public the nature of planning breaches and the enforcement process.
- 4.3 To bring unauthorised activity under control to ensure the credibility of the planning system is not undermined.
- 4.4 To remedy and prevent unauthorised activity to protect the natural and built environment.
- 4.5 To promote lawful and acceptable forms of development and, where necessary, planning permission.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None identified.

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 The main powers available to the Council in relation to planning enforcement are set out in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as

amended) and the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. All action taken under the new Planning Enforcement Policy as a result of this procedure would be in compliance with the relevant legislation and associated good practice guidance.

**7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 The adoption of this policy would have no perceived negative impacts on the enforcement process itself, or the systems that are currently used.

7.2 Some minor changes to current working practices resulting in a more aligned and consistent approach both within and across the Councils would be required. The use of the policy will provide clarity to customers as to how the council will treat enforcement matters and so will improve customer service and quality. The Policy will be reviewed and monitored by Officers to ensure that it continues to provide a thorough, clear and coherent statement.

**8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

8.1 The adoption of a policy to set out the Council's approach to Enforcement matters will have an impact on many of the Council's objectives, most notably Environment, Regeneration and Improvement objectives.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH AND SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

9.1 None identified beyond current working practices.

**10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 It is intended that the adoption of a planning enforcement policy will improve consistency and uniformity across the Councils making development and enforcement process more transparent.

10.2 The Planning Enforcement Policy will improve customer understanding of the nature of planning breaches and the process of enforcement, as well as the process for reporting an alleged breach for complainants and the process for investigating an alleged breach for contraveners.

**11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 None identified.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**28TH MARCH 2011**

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**12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS, PROCUREMENT AND ASSET MANAGEMENT**

- 12.1 The adoption of the Policy by Bromsgrove District Council is unlikely to have any material effects on value for money, procurement or asset management. However, the principle of shared services between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council which supports the decision to deliver one Planning Enforcement Policy for both Councils is based, serves to develop value for money and best practices.

**13. CLIMATE CHANGE, CARBON IMPLICATIONS AND BIODIVERSITY**

- 13.1 It is intended that the adoption of a joint planning enforcement policy will have only positive effects on the environment through clarifying the nature of planning breaches, thereby reducing the number of unlawful or unacceptable developments that may negatively impact on the natural and built environment and increasing the speed and effectiveness of rectifying breaches.

**14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

- 14.1 None identified.

**15. GOVERNANCE / PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS**

- 15.1 The policy sets out a clear framework against which decisions relating to enforcement matters can be made and this will inform and support Members when carrying out that role.
- 15.2 Performance management of the enforcement team would be improved as a result of the adoption of the policy. It provides timescales for complainants as well as setting out the councils approach to enforcement with respect to informal and formal approaches. This will ensure proportionate action is taken in a timely manner.

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

- 16.1 The Planning Enforcement Policy will help to ensure that community safety is maximised by promoting lawful and acceptable developments and preventing, or remediating, unlawful and dangerous developments or uses which have a negative impact on the District.

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**28TH MARCH 2011**

**17. HEALTH INEQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

17.1 None identified.

**18. LESSONS LEARNT**

18.1 None identified as this would introduce a new framework, but this should be kept under regular review and amendment as appropriate.

**19. COMMUNITY AND STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT**

19.1 It is common place for Councils to have an enforcement policy or charter to set out to their customers their approach to planning enforcement. The Council has not carried out any specific consultation on this document; it does however reflect the policy in use at Redditch Borough Council and will therefore be familiar to some of our customers.

**20. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

20.1	Portfolio Holder	Yes
	Chief Executive	Yes at CMT
	Executive Director (S.151 Officer)	Yes at CMT
	Executive Director - Leisure, Cultural, Environmental and Community Services	Yes at CMT
	Executive Director - Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services	Yes at CMT
	Director of Policy, Performance and Partnerships	Yes at CMT
	Head of Planning and Regeneration Services	Yes
	Head of Resources	Yes at CMT
	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services	Yes at CMT

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**PLANNING COMMITTEE**

**28TH MARCH 2011**

	Corporate Procurement Team	Yes at CMT
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21. **WARDS AFFECTED**

21.1 All wards.

22. **APPENDICES**

22.1 Appendix 1 – Planning Enforcement Policy.

23. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

23.1 None.

**AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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# Appendix

## APPENDIX A

### BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

#### CABINET

2nd JUNE 2010

#### PROPOSED BROMSGROVE MEMORIAL/TRIBUTE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Geoff Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	Jayne Pickering
Non-Key Decision	

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks Cabinet approval to grant a license on the Amphlett Hall, site in Crown Close, to the THANKSS Charity (To Honour and Acknowledge those Killed and Still Serving). This license would be for the erection of a memorial/tribute and appropriate rights of way for services and remembrance. The licence would be subject to the usual probity and audit checks and conditions related to the charity.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 Cabinet is asked to -

- 2.1.1 agree in principle to developing a memorial/tribute in the Town Centre, on the Amphlett Hall site to honour all the armed services;
- 2.1.2 agree to the grant of a licence at land at Amphlett Hall, as detailed in appendix one of this report, to the THANKSS charity, subject to the charity being registered and producing a business case to demonstrate the viability of the project;
- 2.1.3 agree that the portfolio holder for community and the section 151 officer be delegated to approve the detailed business case and design, together with monitoring the delivery of the project.

#### 3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Currently, there is no dedicated memorial, in a public open space, to all the armed services. While there are 33 memorials around the town they are often on private sites or inside buildings. There is no acknowledged central memorial.
- 3.2 To address this position a working group has been set up by the Chairman of the Council to look at options to erect a central memorial/tribute. The

Council has now been approached by the fledgling charity THANKSS to help in the development of a memorial/tribute.

- 3.3 The development of a memorial/tribute will take two to three years but critical to success is a site. Specifically an agreed site will help raise funding for the project.
- 3.4 THANKSS has been set up as the charity to deliver the project. It will be registered as a charity in the spring of 2010. The mission of the charity is to set up a three phase project to raise funds for the memorial/tribute, build it, and then put in place arrangements for the ongoing maintenance of the memorial/tribute.
- 3.5 The Council's support for the project is critical to demonstrate to prospective funders the civic commitment to the project.
- 3.6 The prospective land that has been identified is in the town centre on the Amphlett Hall site beside the old council house building as shown on appendix one.
- 3.7 This project is still in its infancy and there are a number of checks that would need to be in place to safeguard the Council's position, specifically
  - THANKSS achieving its charity status
  - The production of a business plan to deliver the three stages of the project
  - The monitoring of the project by the Council's Section 151 Officer to ensure probity
  - Consent of the Church Commissioners for the project to proceed
- 3.8 On planning considerations the proposed memorial/tribute will be sited on an area of Open Space within the Town Centre Conservation Area. Although planning permission will be required, the memorial/tribute will add an element of visual focus and would not appear out of character with the area given that the Burma Star Association war memorial already sits with the same area. However the design and specific siting will be the subject of negotiation with the THANKSS Charity.

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

- 4.1 There are no direct financial costs associated with the project but it will need to have a detailed business case and progress will need to be measured to ensure it achieves the agreed outcomes.
- 4.2 It is proposed that future maintenance costs be funded from existing budgets relating to grass cutting and street cleansing. This will be assessed as part of the design review to ensure minimal ongoing maintenance costs



are required. In addition insurance will be addressed as part of the liability insurance once the design has been agreed.

- 4.3 The intended site for the memorial/tribute is on Open Space Land and as such cannot be developed commercially.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 This land was purchased in 1899 from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for England and the 1899 Conveyance imposed a covenant that the land would be used as “an open space and public recreation ground and for no other purpose whatever except with the previous consent in writing of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners”.
- 5.2 There is nothing to prevent the Council from disposing of part of the land but the restriction on use would continue to affect the land disposed of and any subsequent owner would need to satisfy themselves that their use of the land did not breach the use restrictions or alternatively obtain the consent of the Church Commissioners for that use.
- 5.3 As previously stated there is of course already a war memorial on the site. The Burma Star Memorial which was erected around 1982 authorising the Trustees of the Burma Star Association to erect the memorial on Council land. The Licence was for a period of 21 years to continue thereafter on a yearly basis until terminated but it was actually surrendered in 1987 when the Council agreed to maintain the memorial at its own expense.
- 5.4 To ensure full disclosure on the proposed project the Church Commissioners have been contacted to seek their views. We are still awaiting their response.

## **6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

- 6.1 This report links to the Council priority on community leadership

## **7. RISK MANAGEMENT INCLUDING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS**

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

- THANKSS fails to get registered as a charity
- THANKSS is unable to deliver a viable business case
- Consultation with the Church Commissioners for their support

- 7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Delegating the detailed management and monitoring of the project to the Section 151 Officer to confirm THANKSS charity registration and to validate and monitor the delivery of the business case

**8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The erection of a dedicated memorial to the armed services will give a focus point for the community to acknowledge the dedication of the services and give a site to reflect and worship.

**9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 There are no specific equalities issues arising from this report.

**10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 There are no specific value for money implications arising from this report.

**11. CLIMATE CHANGE AND CARBON IMPLICATIONS**

11.1 There are no climate change issues affecting this report

**12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

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

**13. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Joint Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes

Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Street Scene	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes

**14. WARDS AFFECTED**

All wards.  
Memorial/tribute will be sited in St Johns Ward

**15. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Plan of land to be gifted

**16. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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***The right home, at the right time,  
in the right place: A Housing  
Strategy for Worcestershire***

**Draft version 13**

**8th March 2011**

## 1. FOREWORD

(By Kevin Dicks, Housing Lead for the Worcestershire Chief Executive Panel)

We have a driving vision for the future and this strategy will deliver:

***"The right home, at the right time, in the right place"***

Housing is important to everybody and is essential to achieving a good quality of life. This may mean something different to each of us and may vary throughout our lives but generally involves a safe, secure and affordable home with the right support. It is true that many people are able to solve their own housing issues without help and support from the councils and other agencies but this strategy is about providing the right type of housing and support to those who need assistance.

The adoption of this new countywide housing strategy is well timed as it comes alongside the localism agenda being implemented by the new Coalition Government moving from the era of the 'Big Government' into the era of the 'Big Society'.

'Big Society' is to be locally defined but generally involves; removing unnecessary red tape and regulation, supporting people to get involved with development of their communities and how public money can be spent locally, giving people more choice and a better standard of service, making government information more available and strengthening accountability to local people. In response to this new and evolving agenda we will work together with our local communities to take forward common goals and priorities in ways that are more diverse, more personal and more local.

We will also be working with the Government to implement major changes to housing and welfare policy and develop plans to mitigate the potential risks of the changes to local people. Reductions in public expenditure through the Comprehensive Spending Review<sup>1</sup> will drive efficiencies in service delivery and the need for innovative solutions to help resolve new and existing needs. We will make sure that our communities are places where people want to live with a clear vision of what is required and ensuring that this can be sustained in the long term.

We have a track record of joint working and this strategy is about building on that. We will work together more closely to provide consistent, quality services that meet customers' needs irrespective of where they live within the county. By considering

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<sup>1</sup> More detail about the changes and implications of these is provided in a supporting document to this strategy. This can be found on our website or obtained by contacting us – see website link and contact details on the back page of this document.

the root causes of housing needs we will deliver services, which tackle issues at a much earlier stage.

Partnership though is much wider than just the councils. We recognise the crucial role that a wide range of agencies will have in delivering the strategy. They have been actively involved in developing this strategy and we welcome their commitment to partner us in its delivery.

We have worked hard to ensure that people in the County have had the chance to tell us what they think. We have listened carefully and we are confident that our priorities reflect what people have told us and that our objectives and plans are the right ones.

## 2. INTRODUCTION

### Context

A suitable, decent and affordable home is central to ensuring that residents enjoy a good quality of life and contributes to the sustainability of our local communities. Housing is an issue that affects everybody, including those in need of help and support and an inclusive, partnership approach is essential to achieve successful outcomes for Worcestershire residents

However this needs to be considered in light of the huge amount of change to social housing being introduced by the new Coalition Government. These changes include a move towards Localism with local communities having a bigger say about what is required, major funding cuts, the slimming down of regulation, significant reforms to the Benefit system, more emphasis on getting people back into employment, the need to address security of tenure and the role that private sector housing plays in meeting local needs.

The government's Health and Social Care Bill is also the biggest piece of health legislation since the creation of the NHS. This new landscape will have significant implications for local authorities who will have a big role both in overseeing health provision in their patch and in leading on public health. Good housing plays a crucial role in ensuring healthy communities. The changes to commissioning will affect organisations providing care and support but more widely, all housing providers may well be offered new opportunities to take a bigger role in promoting health and wellbeing in their communities. The challenges for housing organisations will be to ensure that their role is recognised and their voice is heard in the new NHS.

Increased delivery of affordable housing is a priority for Worcestershire residents. There continue to be a number of constraints that inhibit delivery such as the availability of suitable sites housing association partners can secure for new development continue to be a difficulty, both in terms of the number of sites generally available, and the financial rules that housing associations are bound by, in terms of competing with the private sector. However there are also new opportunities such as the proposed New Homes Bonus and the new 'affordable rent tenure' both of which will bring further investment to the development of affordable homes.

The existing housing and planning framework suggests that Worcestershire will need to accommodate 36,600 additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026 but the government will be revoking this and abolishing top down targets in favour of local decision making to reflect the local areas vision in the forthcoming Localism Bill.



The Worcestershire local authorities are working with a range of partner organisations to ensure that the full range of housing needs are addressed and a Local Investment Plan is being produced within the county to set out how partner resources can be invested into delivery and provision of necessary infra-structure. Worcestershire partners and local businesses have successfully negotiated a countywide Local Enterprise Partnership which will replace the role of Regional Development Agencies and be influential in the growth of the locality.

There are increased in-migration pressures from both the south as well as from the north, and the effect on house prices and longer distance commuting by higher paid employees is significant in South Worcestershire and Bromsgrove.

Despite the Regional Spatial and Housing Strategies being aimed at reversing this migration pressure from the conurbation, there seems little prospect of the overall migration pressures being relieved in the foreseeable future as a result of the combination of lifestyle choices and demographic growth which is particularly increasing the size of the older population.

The result is that the lower paid and locally employed are being increasingly excluded from the market, with increasing numbers of households on council housing registers and in inadequate accommodation (over 24,000 in 2010). The longest waiting times for social rented accommodation is for two bedroom houses for young families and four bedroom houses for established families that have outgrown their present accommodation. Changes by the Government will focus investment on the provision of shared ownership (new build home-buy) and the new affordable rent tenure rather than social rented homes.

Delivery of rural housing can be difficult to achieve and some rural housing needs are not being adequately met in Worcestershire. These areas require additional and appropriate affordable housing, as without it, the provision of an equitable supply of affordable homes in rural communities is unlikely to be realised. A recent study has been carried out to review the way rural enabling is provided across the county to improve the outcomes achieved for our rural communities and the key findings are reflected within this strategy.

There is some positive action being taken in the county through the planning process to secure allocations of affordable housing on new developments. In most cases, however, these are focussed on larger sites where planning thresholds can be applied, although planning policies are being reviewed to address this. The consequence is that despite affordable housing being a local priority, there are significant challenges in meeting both general housing needs and providing for people who need support.

In addition to the central issue of balancing supply and demand, particularly of affordable housing, there are other principal housing issues that we need to address.

We need to ensure that the use of the existing housing stock is maximised in line with the emerging Government policies. For example; that effective action is taken to bring empty homes back into use, that we respond both to overcrowding and under occupation, that we maximise the use of the private rented sector, that housing for older people is in scale with need and is of the right kind to meet changing needs and that the needs of people with disabilities are responded to effectively.

While the condition of homes in the social rented sector is good with most meeting the Decent Homes standard at the deadline of 2010, this is not the case with privately owned homes. Nearly 40 per cent of those, occupied by vulnerable households, fail to meet the standard and a substantial number are a risk to the health and safety of those who live there. Heating and insulation is a problem, with more than 20,000 households in fuel poverty.

There is a growing need for housing related support to a wide range of individuals. This needs to be approached in the context of both funding cuts to the Supporting People programme which commissions low level housing related support and the implementation of the 'Choice and Control' agenda which provides individuals the opportunity to directly purchase services they require to meet their needs.

Within the county, we already have a proportionally older population than England generally and older people are projected to increase substantially over the next 20 years. There is also a significant forecast growth in the number of people with dementia. This growth in the needs of older people is expected to increase the demand for; low level support, supported housing models including Extra Care, help in making housing choices, adapting homes to enable continued independence and responding to the impact of falls. It is essential that new innovative solutions to housing need, support and care are developed.

There are a range of other vulnerable customer groups who are identified requiring housing and related support including; people with learning and/or physical disability, sensory impairment, mental health issues, substance misuse and people with chaotic lifestyles.

Of particular concern is where people are faced with homelessness and the impact of this on their quality of life. The proposed benefit and housing reforms will need to be monitored to mitigate any risk of increased levels of homelessness within the county.

Housing also needs to play its part in creating and maintaining sustainable communities - a complicated and multi dimensional issue - and in driving through regeneration in areas of market failure to bring about housing growth and economic success.

### **Why a countywide strategy?**

A countywide strategy will be used to complement the new localism agenda, enabling a consistent and cost effective service offer to be provided whilst retaining the ability to be flexible in meeting needs at a local level.

In the past, the six strategic housing authorities have developed individual district strategies which have led to improved services for our local communities. These strategies have also improved our approach to working together and this has led to an increase in the number of countywide initiatives.

This new Worcestershire Strategy takes the next step; a concerted and more integrated countywide approach for the development and delivery of our housing services. We are corporately and jointly committed to this approach; the Chief Housing Officers Group, in conjunction with the Chief Executives and Leaders for the district councils, gave approval for the development of a County Housing Strategy in 2009.

There is a need for more focus around the outcomes achieved for our customers and the social benefits for our partners and the public purse. We aim to work together flexibly, using best practice from outside Worcestershire where this has a strategic fit with our local issues and in partnership with our local communities to find new and innovative solutions to our problems. We will be reviewing existing services and where possible aligning how we work in a more effective and efficient way.

### **Who is the strategy aimed at?**

This strategy is aimed at anyone with an interest in the commissioning and delivery of housing related services within the county. Its objective is to influence thinking, policy making and action at a county and local level to meet the housing aspirations of individuals and communities and to support Local Housing Authorities in attracting resources into Worcestershire.

Central to the strategy is the promotion of partnership working with customers, other agencies and across boundaries to create sustainable places to live.

We recognise the importance of working with all housing providers, including those in the private sector, to achieve a balanced housing market and we will promote the document and its priorities to developers and landlords.

## Who and what helped to shape the Strategy?

The strategy responds to the new Localism agenda and the views of local communities and partners to take forward common goals and priorities in ways that are more diverse, more personal and more local.

During the development of the countywide Housing Strategy the local authority partners have sought to engage a broad range of stakeholders, including service users and the wider community, in identifying the key challenges and potential solutions to these.

The consultation process commenced with an event for stakeholders in September 2009. The event sought to identify the key housing issues for different groups within the community and to draw out ideas for resolving these. The event was well attended with 46 different agencies represented representing a wide range of agencies concerned with housing, etc.

Although it was intended that service users attend the event, low attendance by this stakeholder group resulted in a commitment to engage them through existing fora and dedicated focus groups. A series of meetings and focus groups were held between January and July 2010 to engage with:

- People with learning difficulties and their carers
- People with mental health issues
- Young people
- Gypsies and Travellers
- People with visual impairment
- Rough sleepers

In addition, in order to secure the engagement of the wider community an on-line survey was conducted in January 2010 seeking peoples' views about housing priorities and the ways in which local authorities should intervene to help address these priorities. A report produced by the Research and Intelligence Unit for Worcestershire County Council provides an analysis of the results of this survey. This can be found at [web address to be inserted](#).

Our understanding of the views of local people about housing priorities has been further enhanced by the results of consultation during the development of other strategies. The report of the "Research into the Housing and Support Needs of Older People in Worcestershire" conducted by The Housing and Support Partnership in 2009 has provided useful information about the aspirations of older people as well

as their needs. The research involved a questionnaire survey resulting in nearly 1300 responses as well as holding 9 focus groups with 94 older people attending.

An early draft of the strategy was circulated to the West Midlands Leaders Board, the Local Enterprise Partnership and other consultees for comments and the officers responsible for writing the strategy utilised the Audit Commissions' Key Lines of Enquiry to ensure all aspects of strategic housing were covered.

A further event was also held with our partners to comprehensively consider the range of responses received via each of the different consultation mechanisms. This informed the strategic direction and priorities within the new strategy. The key messages from consultees can be found at appendix 3.

### **How will the Housing Strategy meet Local needs?**

The Worcestershire Housing Strategy reflects the multiple and varied housing markets that exist within Worcestershire. For decades, the supply of new homes has not kept up with the rising demand. This strategy will be used to set the high level themes within an action plan that will be co-ordinated to deliver county wide priorities. At a city and district level further action plan will be developed to address local housing needs.

### 3. SUMMARY OF THE NATIONAL AND COUNTYWIDE CONTEXT

#### A. NATIONAL CONTEXT

The new Coalition Government which took control in May 2010 has commenced the introduction of major change in regional and local government which will impact on this strategy.

The main focus of the new Government is the localism agenda which shifts power from the centralised state to local communities and introduces six actions to deliver de-centralisation down through every level of government to every citizen. The six actions are detailed below:

- Lift the burden of bureaucracy by removing the cost and control of unnecessary red tape and regulation whose effect is to restrict local action.
- Empower communities to do things their way by creating rights for people to get involved with and direct the development of their communities
- Increase local control of public finance so that more of the decisions over how public money is spent and raised can be taken within communities
- Diversify the supply of public services by ending public sector 'monopolies' ensuring a level playing field for all suppliers giving people more choice and a better standard of service
- Open up government to public scrutiny by relation government information into the public domain so that people can know how their money is spent, how it is used and to what effect
- Strengthen accountability to local people by giving every citizen the power to change the services provided to them through participation, choice or the ballot box.

The Comprehensive Spending Review 2010 announced substantial cuts in public expenditure and the Government has abolished many agencies, including the Regional Government Offices and the Audit Commission. Local authorities are expected to make cuts in addition to those already planned to balance their budgets and housing association budgets will be constrained by the impact of low inflation on rent levels and the impending welfare reform. The changes announced regarding the current welfare system, including caps on housing benefit will impact on people's ability to afford private rented housing, thus creating even greater pressure on subsidised housing, and reduce the security of tenure for social housing tenants.

Cuts have also been made in planned programmes, such as the funding for new affordable housing promised by the previous Government. Therefore the funding and staffing capacity available for delivery of the strategy is expected to reduce significantly.

The key policy and resource changes announced by the new Government that impact on this Housing Strategy and housing services more generally are set out below:

- Communities, citizens and volunteers will be supported to play a bigger role in shaping and providing services
- Government funding to local authorities will reduce by 28% over the next four years
- Ring fences will be removed from all funding for 2011-12, except for schools and a new public health grant
- Councils will be able to cease monitoring on Local Area Agreement targets, and those which are kept will not be monitored by government
- £6bn will be allocated to funding the Supporting People programme over four years
- Provision for Disabled Facilities Grants will rise with inflation, with local authorities given more discretion for their allocation
- The Regional Growth Fund will be extended to three years, and is increased to £1.4bn
- Government wants to ensure growth is driven by local business and communities
- Local Enterprise Partnerships will help develop the local economy
- The Homes and Communities Agency will be introducing new intermediate rental tenancy plus capital investment will support the building of up to 150,000 new affordable homes over the next 4 years
- Reform of the planning system will put local authorities and local people in charge of decisions on new house-building in their local areas, increasing housing supply
- Introduction of the New Homes Bonus scheme will mean communities benefit from new housing and economic development – matching the additional council tax from each new home for each of the following 6 years. Permission for homes granted now will count for the bonus and the Government are consulting on whether reuse of empty homes will also qualify
- There are no plans to change tenancy terms or rents for existing tenants
- Government wants to make social housing more responsive, flexible and fair so that a greater number of people are able to access social housing in a way that reflects their needs and changing circumstances
- Social housing will be reformed to provide a more tailored response to individual need at lower cost
- Housing associations will be introducing a new intermediate rent tenure called 'affordable rent' to social tenants for a new fixed period

- Investment via the Decent Homes programme will continue
- Government will reform the National Register of Social Housing which will reduce reporting requirements on social landlords
- £2 billion will be allocated over the next four years to fund the implementation of the Universal Credit.
- Household benefit payments for couples and lone parent households will be capped at around £500 per week from 2013
- The age threshold for the Shared Room Rate in Housing Benefit will be increased from 25 to 35
- A one-year time limit will be introduced for contributory Employment and Support Allowance for those in the Work Related Activity Group
- The Warm Front Programme will be scaled down over the next two years, with a budget of £110 million in 2011/-12 and £100 million in 2012-13
- From 2013, the Green Deal will replace Warm Front, and a new obligation will be imposed on energy providers – this will help households improve their energy efficiency with no up-front costs. Phasing out Warm Front is estimated to save £345 million by 2013-14.
- The Government has also announced an independent review of the fuel poverty target and definition before the end of the year

## **B. COUNTYWIDE CONTEXT**

The Housing Strategy is complementary to a web of policies and strategies that are in place across Worcestershire.

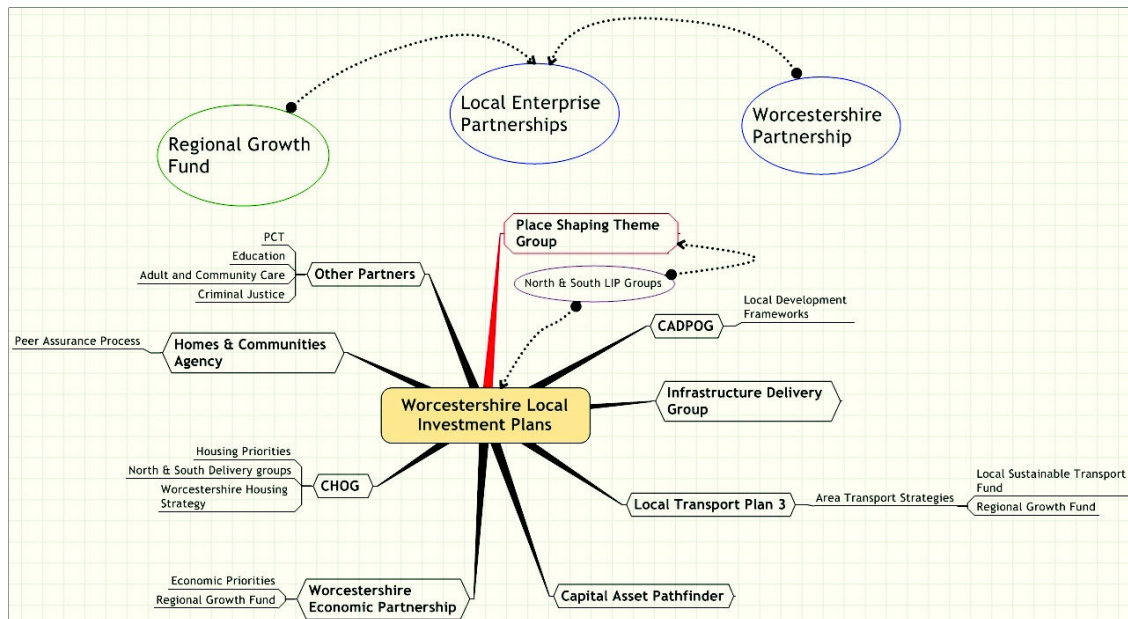
### **Local Enterprise Partnership**

A successful bid has been submitted for the first stage in creating a new LEP for the county. This is a developing agenda and both the Local Investment Plan and a robust strategic approach to housing will enable partners to create the conditions for the private sector to flourish in Worcestershire. The bid set out the following priorities for the partnership with commitments for housing and regeneration:



Priorities	Commitments for Housing & Regeneration
Deliver the strategic employment sites & related infrastructure, highways access, utilities etc needed to ensure sustainable economic growth & a low carbon economy.	Ensure an approach to strategic planning that is responsive to the aspirations of Worcestershire's communities and that helps to create a thriving environment for jobs and enterprise
Ensure there is the right support for business start up, business growth, business retention and inward investment	Continue a proactive joint approach to housing, particularly on innovative approaches to affordable housing with locally initiated schemes to meet local needs
Deliver the right infrastructure for businesses including broadband, improving access from the M5 to the Malvern Hills Science park and QinetiQ, improvements to the east west links and the A449	
Invest in skills, ensuring that provision is responsive to business needs, and relevant to future growth & business opportunity	

## Local Investment Plan



The development of a Local Investment Plan will set out the vision for Worcestershire in terms of housing, planning, transport, regeneration, social care, health, infrastructure and employment. There is real value in using this process to

help develop priorities for place shaping, investment and set out a co-ordinated and cohesive approach to utilising a wide range of partner resources including monies, land and expertise to achieve the vision. This plan is anticipated to be in place by March 2011 to meet the requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency and their allocation timetable however it is recognised that this is an evolving process.

Table 1: Worcestershire LIP: Summary of Strategic Priorities



As the LIP is updated over time, partners will clearly refine their lists of individual schemes to reflect the delivery of sites and schemes, new investment opportunities that emerge and the availability of public and private sector funding.

### **Sustainable Community Strategy**

The Worcestershire Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for the County and is responsible for the development and implementation of the Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS) *Partnership Towards Excellence* which sets out the overarching strategic vision for Worcestershire and identifies the activity that

partners will need to carry out to achieve outcomes within the following themes for action between 2008 and 2013:

Table 2: Worcestershire Community Strategy Themes & Priority Outcomes

Theme	Priority Outcomes (most relevant to LIP highlighted)
Communities that are safe and feel safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities</li> <li>To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol</li> </ul>
A better environment for today and tomorrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect and improve Worcestershire's natural and historic environment</li> <li>To promote the re-use, recycling and recovery of waste</li> <li>To address issues of water quality, supply, and consumption and land drainage in Worcestershire</li> <li>To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources</li> </ul>
Economic success that is shared by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the county</li> <li>To support the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development (in particular transport infrastructure) and establish Worcester as a growth point</li> <li>To remove barriers to employment and improve skills</li> <li>To ensure that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels</li> </ul>
Improve health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support adults to lead healthier lifestyles</li> <li>To reduce health inequalities</li> <li>To improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness</li> <li>To improve mental health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Meeting the needs of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles</li> <li>To identify and deal effectively with bullying and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it</li> <li>To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people</li> <li>To ensure children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities</li> </ul>
Stronger communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire</li> <li>To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all</li> <li>To support effective volunteering that is accessible to all</li> <li>To reduce income deprivation including child and pensioner poverty</li> <li>To deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network</li> </ul>

The themes are led by six groups and housing aspects fit primarily within stronger communities. The Housing Strategy has been developed with strong links to the

Sustainable Communities Strategy, associated theme groups and the Local Strategic Partnerships have been a key consultee.

The Worcestershire Partnership has recently agreed to move to a single Sustainable Community Strategy for the County that will run from 2011. Revision of the strategy is currently in place and future updates of strategically relevant documents including the Housing Strategy and Local investment Plan will need to reflect the themes and priorities agreed by the Partnership.

### **Worcestershire Community Safety Agreement 2010/11**

There are also links with the Safer Communities Board (SCB) which is one of the theme groups of the Worcestershire Partnership responsible for delivering the "Communities that are safe and feel safe" block of the Local Area Agreement. It was established to take responsibility for those areas of community safety that require a countywide perspective and to strengthen the strategic co-ordination of community safety activity in the county of Worcestershire, against the overarching priorities identified in the relevant section of table 2 above. The majority of funding is accessed from Central Government via the area based grant (ABG) or via the Local Area Agreements (LAA), both of which exist at county-wide level and is distributed by the SCB. The SCB has a joint commissioning role, which is increasingly becoming a key way of meeting joint or common strategic priorities. Community Safety initiatives in the County are delivered by four Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in Bromsgrove, Redditch, South Worcestershire and Wyre Forest.

The following countywide priorities have been identified for Worcestershire:

- **Anti-social behaviour – including agreed anti-social behaviour minimum standards and improving perceptions**
- **Offending / re-offending – including a strategy to deliver the new re-offending requirements placed on CSPs and responsible authorities**
- **Preventing violent extremism / building community cohesion**

The priorities have been informed by what the four local Community Safety Partnerships identified as the main issues for local people. The Housing Strategy will work to promote inclusion by delivering sustainable communities, improving people's life chances, raising capabilities, creating opportunities and developing stronger alignment to economic development through education and employment pathways to seeking and securing work. The impact of the recession in terms of deprivation and unemployment will increase the demand for local services at a time when public sector resources are being significantly reduced. This strategy will work to find bespoke ways to address these issues and focus on ways to achieve a home and a

job for vulnerable groups including offenders under probation supervision, adults in contact with secondary mental health services and adults with moderate to severe learning disabilities.

### **Core Strategies**

Core strategies set out the long term vision, objectives and key policies for development in Worcestershire. In the north, Wyre Forest district already has in place an adopted core strategy while Bromsgrove and Redditch will issue draft core strategies for consultation early in January 2011. The three south Worcestershire districts are in the process of completing a joint core strategy.

Of particular importance to the Housing Strategy and the LIP will be the policies set out by core strategies on housing provision, approaches to affordable housing, regeneration priorities and commercial development. Priorities identified in the Housing Strategy and the LIP will need to be consistent with policies set out in the core strategies, and the location, scale and characteristics of housing developments will be driven in part by local authority planning policies on developer contributions, the preferred composition of affordable housing schemes and the allocation of land for housing.

Local Area Action Plans (AAPs) and a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have also informed the preparation of the LIP. They are essential to understanding the mix of development that local authorities are seeking to deliver in specific localities. The development of Tenure Strategies and the introduction of the new Affordable Rent Model will be an important factor when updating planning policy and supplementary planning documents and is a key action within this Housing Strategy.

### **Capital & Asset Pathfinder**

Worcestershire is one of several pilot areas for the national Capital and Asset Pathfinder initiative. This initiative has been designed to enable partners to explore new ways of pooling budgets to secure efficiency savings, primarily through the better management of buildings and other assets. Partners have already undertaken a detailed asset mapping exercise, and the pathfinder may assist in identifying potential solutions to the use of publicly owned assets to support housing and regeneration schemes.

### **Homelessness Strategy**

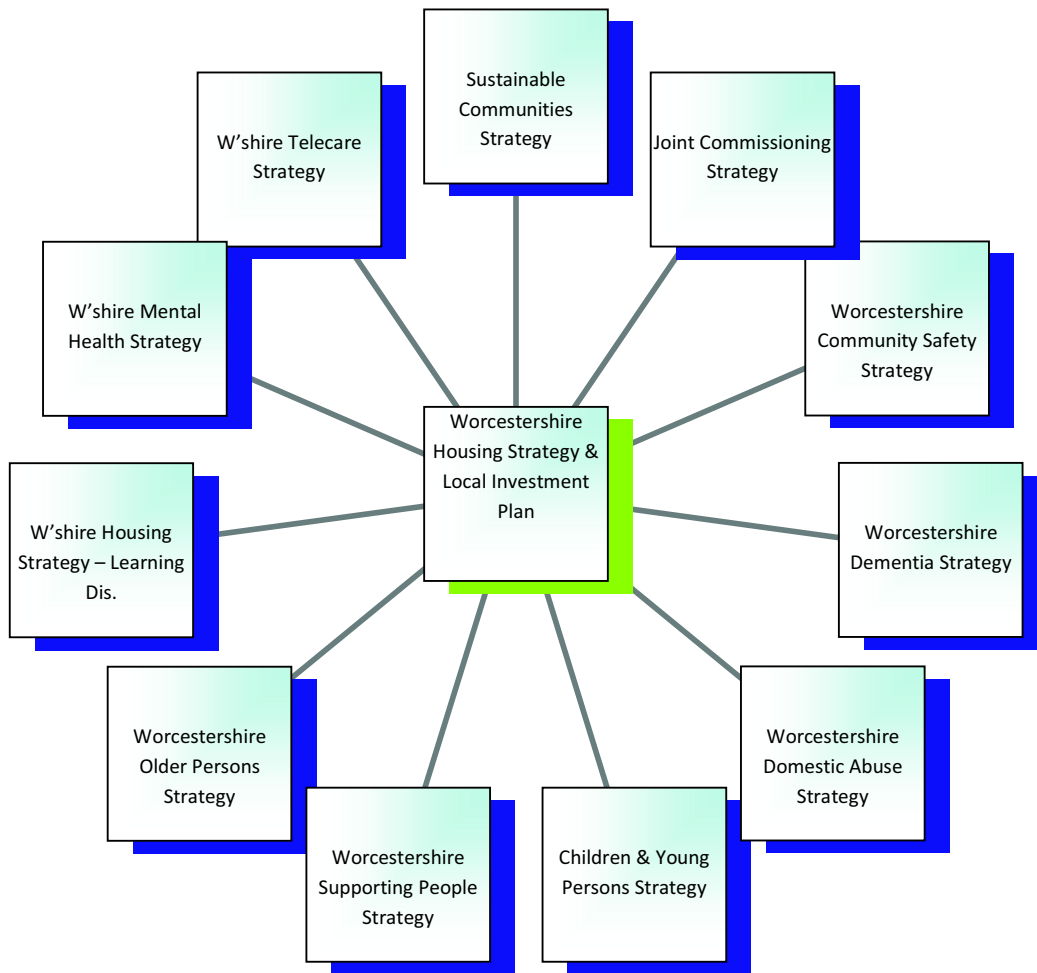
The Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy can be found on any of the district council websites and is due for renewal during 2011/12 and will have strong links to this Housing Strategy.

The vision for the current Homelessness Strategy is “to ensure that everyone has access to a place they can call home, where they can close their door and feel safe.”

The six key priorities are;

- To better understand the needs of key client groups for the delivery of appropriate housing services
- To develop a countywide methodology and system for data collection for homelessness information
- To share good practice and knowledge of the delivery of housing advice and homeless services
- To develop joint working processes and strategic partnerships across the County
- To empower customers to make a positive change to their lives
- Support the development of appropriate types of accommodation for key client groups.

### **Links with other Strategies**

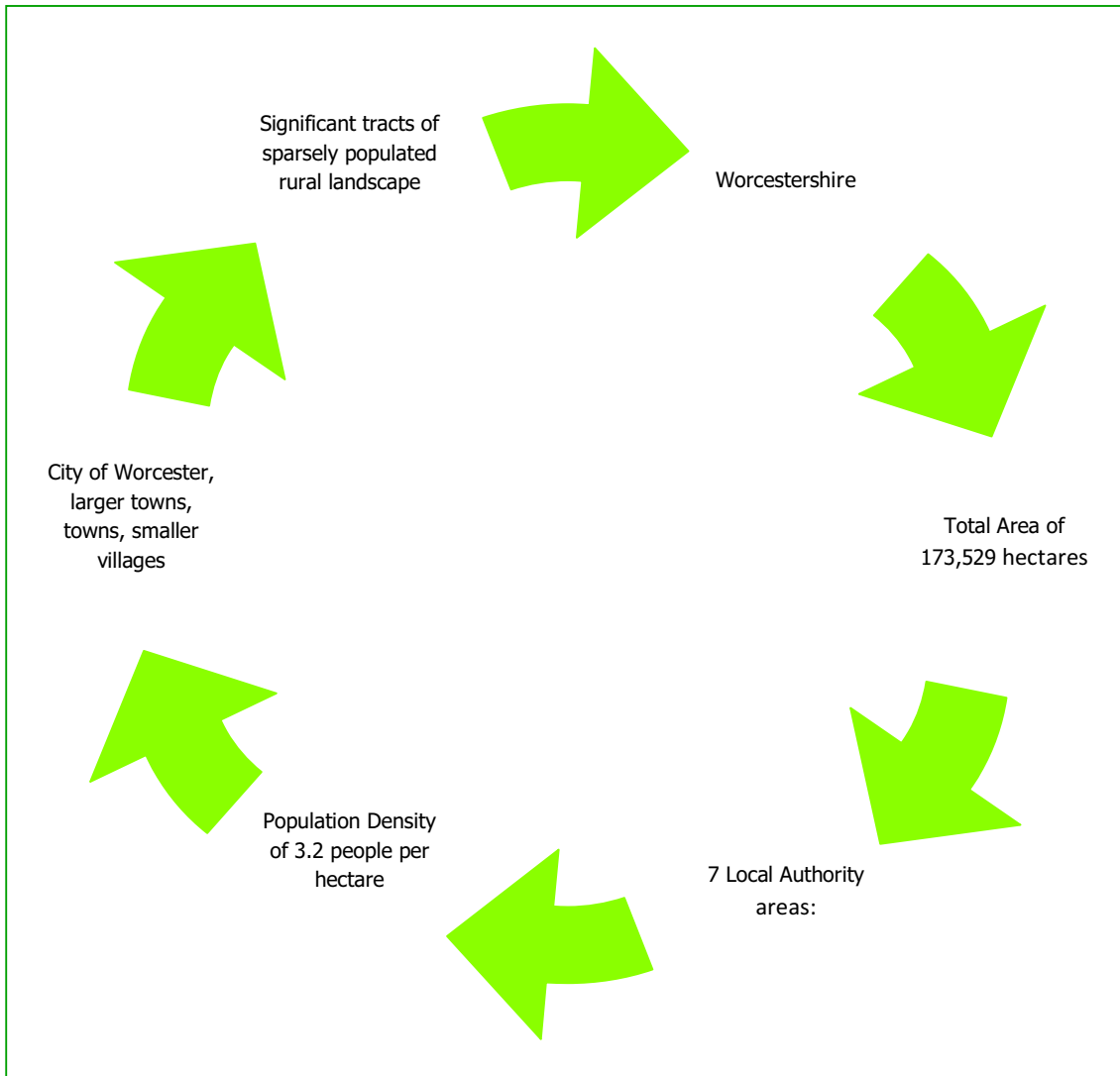


## 4. WHAT WE KNOW

### **Worcestershire’s Key Characteristics**

Worcestershire is a large and diverse county noted in the UK for its historic built environment and an outstanding natural environment. The key features of the county’s geography, economy and population have played a critical part in shaping its housing markets, and in turn they provide the context for the priorities partners have identified in both the Worcestershire Housing Strategy and LIP.

## Worcestershire Geography



(Insert map of W'shire inside the circle and behind arrows as a watermark)

The county provides a high quality environment to live in which has been an important factor in the trajectory of its housing markets during the past decade. The south is geographically self-contained and functions around the role of the city of Worcester. The demand for housing is strong and sustained, driven in part by urban and rural settings which have proved to be a strong draw for house buyers, particularly in older age groups. Many areas of the three northern districts have seen a strong demand for housing resulting from in-migration from the Birmingham conurbation.

All areas of the county continue to experience significant affordability issues and constrained development despite the recession and as a result of upward pressure on house prices and land values.



## **Population**

The population of Worcestershire was estimated to stand at 556,000 in 2009. The County has seen growth of just below 9 per cent in its population since 1991, above average for the West Midlands but on par with the national growth rate.

The age structure of the county's population and expectations about the way it might change are important drivers of the scale and nature of housing that the area will need to provide in the future. Population estimates for 2009 clearly shows that the county is over-represented in older age groups (particularly 50-70 year age group) but under-represented in younger age groups. This is a critical issue both for Worcestershire's future workforce and the pressure it places on services (increased demand for health care, smaller tax base), and it needs to be addressed in the approach to meeting housing need, the investment in housing and creating sustainable communities.

## **Worcestershire's Housing Market**

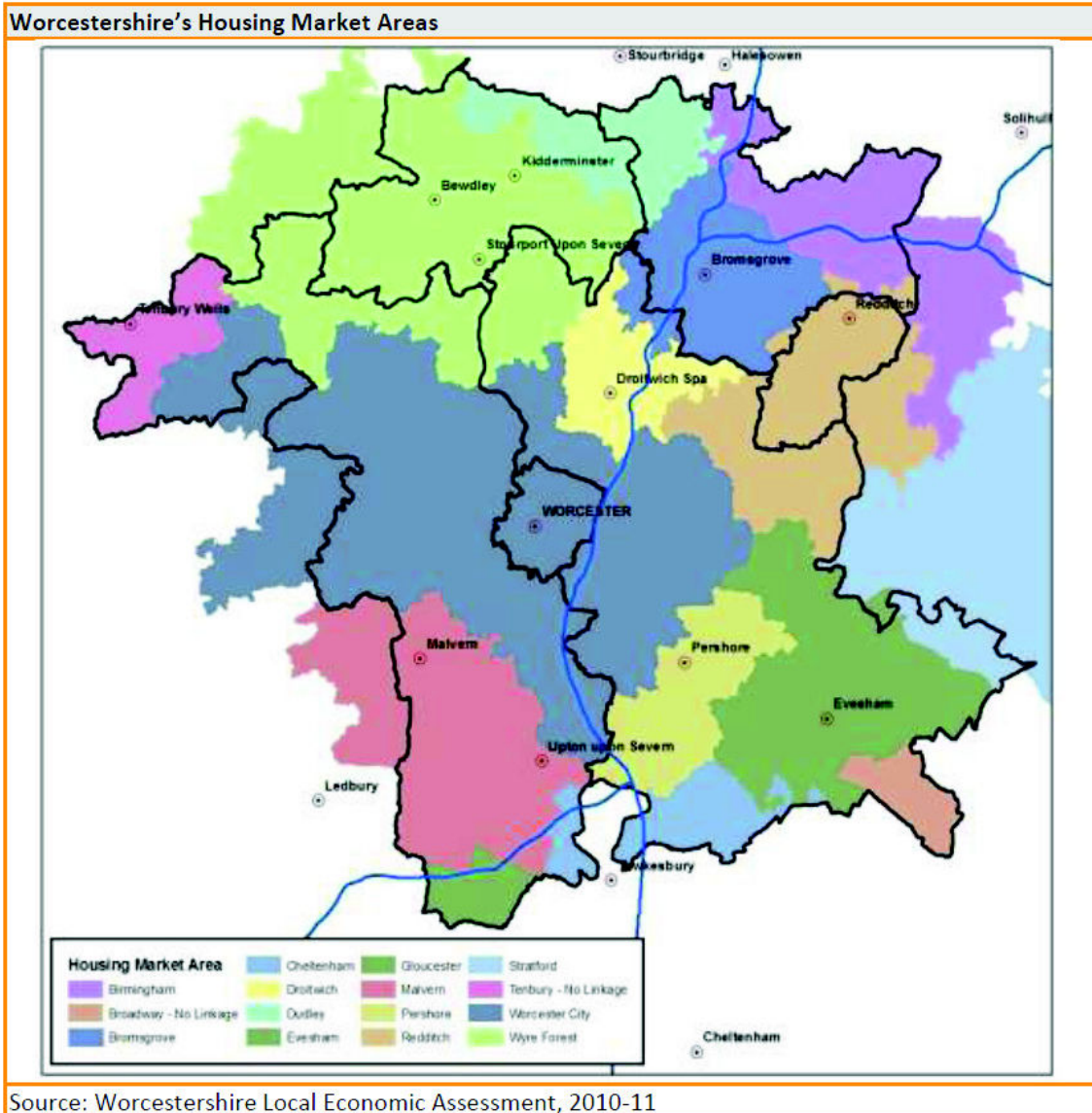
In order to improve understanding of the South Housing Market Area a full Strategic Housing Market Assessment was commissioned by the Partnership in 2006 and annual updates have been undertaken since this date. The most current update can be found at:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/housing-and-economy/housing/shma.aspx>

A further full Strategic Housing Market Assessment is being carried out currently for 2010/11. The methodology used will provide data to support our understanding of the new Affordable Rent Model and how this can be used effectively to meet housing need.

In a large county covering an area of 1,471 sq km, Worcestershire's housing markets are characterised by a northern area which has a strong relationship with Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country and by a more economically self-contained area in the south in which the growth and strong economic performance of Worcester City has been a key factor in determining the size and value of local housing markets.

The draft Local Economic Assessment for Worcestershire (2010-11) identifies eight housing markets in the county highlighted in the map below.



Source: Worcestershire Local Economic Assessment, 2010-11

Worcestershire's housing markets have been through a sustained period of buoyant demand during the 2000s. Between August 2001 and July 2010, average prices in the county rose from £100,000 to £167,000, peaking at £190,000 in December 2007. Detached house prices almost doubled between August 2001 and December 2007. Over a decade which saw unprecedented rates of growth in house prices, the six Worcestershire districts contributed to the southern housing market area (HMA) of the West Midlands experiencing the highest price inflation of any of the region's HMAs.

However, the housing sector in Worcestershire has been particularly hard hit by the recession. Sales have fallen dramatically from their peak in 2006, while the completion of new homes also fell sharply after 2007 as house builders bore the brunt of the credit crunch. In a county in which lower quartile affordability ratios are

significantly higher than both the national and West Midlands averages, the recession has further exacerbated the impact of affordability problems on Worcestershire's economy.

Despite the recession, one of the main effects of the recent period of strong demand is that Worcestershire now has some of the highest value housing markets in the West Midlands. Local housing markets within parts of south Worcestershire have some of the highest cost housing in the West Midlands, with prices having risen particularly sharply during the mid 2000s. For example, Malvern Hills has seen substantial price increases allied to higher than average increases in average household income in recent years. This reflects a combination of the area's AONB status, a reputation for its high quality of life and high levels of well paid knowledge workers with the location of QinetiQ in the district.

In common with much of the UK, price inflation has resulted in significant affordability problems in Worcestershire, and this has become an important issue for the county's economy. Data for 2009 shows a county wide lower quartile affordability ratio of 7.3, well above the regional (5.8) and England (6.3) averages. The affordability issue is most pronounced in those areas which have seen strong rates of in-migration in recent years (eg. Wychavon and Malvern Hills) in the south of the county, but even in lower cost local housing markets (eg. Redditch), the lower quartile income-price ratio still stands at 6.4, ie above average. This issue reflects the characteristics of local housing markets in an area which is seen as a desirable place to live with good standards of living, good quality services and easy access to large employment centres in both the Midlands (Birmingham) and, increasingly, the south east.

Affordability problems are especially acute in the starter homes market. For South Worcestershire, housing market data point to a mismatch between incomes and house prices which is especially acute in the family starter homes market (2 bedroom). At the same time, Worcester, Droitwich and Evesham have been identified as having the biggest current and projected shortages of affordable housing. Redditch and Wyre Forest have the biggest stock of more affordable property with 24.2% and 25.7% of properties sold in 2008/09 for under £120,000 compared to just 5% in Pershore.

A key outcome of high housing costs has been difficulties for particular population groups in securing a foothold on the housing ladder and their ability to climb the ladder. Evidence generated for the strategic housing needs assessment for South Worcestershire underlines particular problems faced by young families seeking to purchase a first house or rent a property, and those with expanding/growing families. For those who cannot afford to buy property, the challenge is exacerbated

by a supply shortage of property for rental in the £500-600 per month category. For Worcestershire's economic development, this is an issue both for the growth and prosperity of its town and for the sustainability of rural communities, where prospects of living and working in the same location are severely restricted by a lack of affordable property and limited employment opportunities.

High levels of demand for housing in some areas of Worcestershire have been fuelled by its position as an attractive location for commuters. Data for earnings in Bromsgrove show that resident average earnings are £8,000 higher than workplace earnings, underlining the extent to which the area has attracted well paid commuters who are working in Birmingham and the surrounding area. However, the pattern is not replicated across the County. While parts of Wyre Forest have seen increases in out-commuting, this has not been matched by strong demand for new homes in the district, and house builders have shown comparatively limited interest in the area.

The high level of in-migration to Worcestershire has presented a complex challenge for south Worcestershire's housing markets, where evidence suggests that in-migration by buyers with the financial means to purchase family homes is crowding out potential local buyers on lower incomes. Travel to work data produced by the West Midlands Regional Observatory (March 2010) show that in managerial and professional occupations, Worcestershire has a very strong relationship with Birmingham. Mobility within local housing markets is further restricted by a tendency (identified in the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment) for older people to retain family housing because of a shortage of stock and development aimed at ageing residents.

Local housing market areas faced with high demand have been constrained in their ability to develop new housing, although the pattern has not been a consistent one across the county. For example, Worcester's geographic expansion has been bounded by controls on new development on the edge of the town. Clearly, market forces have also played a critical role in supply side issues, with a preference for higher value developments and apartment schemes inevitably overriding pressure for more affordable supply in lower value locations.

Despite these constraints, the county has a good recent record of delivering new homes, reflecting the commercially attractive environment it continues to offer private sector developers and Registered Providers. During the 2000s, the county achieved a house building rate of 1,900 units a year on average. However, the recession has resulted in a marked fall in new completions, and the county fell well short of the Local Area Agreement target for completions in 2008-09. While there are some signs of recovery in the market, it has been slow to emerge and continued

economic uncertainty makes it a difficult climate in which to bring forward new housing schemes.

Following the decision to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands, housing targets will be set by the core strategies currently being produced by each of the county's district authorities. However, maintaining the level of new build required to meet demand is a key challenge for partners. The level of additional affordable homes required for Worcestershire is 2,277 needed each year to keep pace with demand. This strategy also points the need for sustained investment in new housing stock to meet demand from older people, including extra care and specialist care provision. Projected increases in the number of people over the age of 65 also require a remodelling of the existing stock to offer more aspirational homes for purchase and rent.

### **Stock Condition**

While the condition of homes in the social rented sector is good with most meeting the Decent Homes standard at the deadline of 2010, this is not the case with privately owned homes. Nearly 40 per cent of these fail to meet the standard and a substantial number are a risk to the health and safety of those who live there. Heating and insulation is a problem, with more than 20,000 households in fuel poverty.

In most of the districts there are few private landlords and a relatively low supply of privately let flats and smaller sized dwellings. Some increases in purchase by investors of properties to let are in evidence but the majority of these properties are offered at very high market rents that are not accessible by those in housing need. Houses in multiple occupation are disappearing in high cost areas as owners derive profit from conversion to apartments for sale.

The City of Worcester has a greater supply of houses in multiple occupation than other districts but the poor condition of some is not conducive to making them attractive lets. This lack of an active low cost private rented sector will be made worse with the expansion of University College Worcester from 7,000 to 13,000 students. This expected increase in demand could limit access to rented accommodation to meet general needs.

The level of empty homes in most districts is low and is projected to decrease offering limited opportunities for use as affordable housing. Reductions in Council Tax discounts have been made by some authorities to try and stimulate the return of second homes to full time occupation but the impact is limited

## **Decent Homes**

Approximately 39% of the homes within the County are deemed non-decent. The highest proportion of non decent homes are located in Malvern Hills, where 50% (13,453 properties) of the housing stock is deemed non-decent. The highest number of non decent homes in any one district are found within Wychavon (16,710 – 41%) where it has been assessed that in order to tackle non decency approximately £139,698,693 is required. The lowest levels of non decency found within the county can be found within Redditch, with 30% of the stock being deemed non decent. The average cost of bringing a non decent property back into decency across Worcestershire is £8,360 per dwelling. Therefore the total investment required across the whole county is £635,294,639

## **Housing Health & Safety Rating System**

Nationally the major cause of failure under Decent Homes has been as a result of inadequate thermal comfort, however there has been a significant shift to failures under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System increasing from 18% in 2001 to 24% in 2008. Within the Worcestershire County there are an above average number of properties failing HHSRS (28%) with Malvern Hills having the greatest proportion (38%) of the homes in the County failing under HHSRS and Redditch to the north of the County with the lowest proportion 19%.

The average cost of repairs for owner occupied properties with a category 1 hazard in Worcestershire is £8,811.

## **Thermal comfort**

The national Decent Homes rate of failure on thermal comfort is 17%. The Worcestershire average is 20% (38,571) of dwellings failing the Decent Homes Standard as a result of inadequate thermal comfort. The district with the highest failure rate is Wyre Forest with at 24% which results in approximately £59,314,230 of investment needing to be spent to remove this risk and Redditch having the lowest proportion of homes that fail under thermal comfort at 16%. The Worcestershire average cost of remedying an owner occupied property with an inadequate thermal envelope is approximately £7,017.

## **Modernisation**

The recent BRE (Building Research Establishment) report for Worcestershire identifies that the cost of works are considerable when modernising properties throughout the county. The Worcestershire average is 1.3% of dwellings failing Decent Homes Standard as a result of modernisation requirements. The north part of Worcestershire is more in line with the national average of 1% with Bromsgrove recording 1% and Redditch 1% of dwellings failing under modernisation. Worcester

City (2%) and Malvern Hills (2%) are further above national average of stock not meeting modernisation requirements of the Decent Homes Standard. The Worcestershire average cost of repairs necessary for owner occupiers to undertake in order to provide adequate modern facilities within a Worcestershire home is approximately £22,462 per property.

### **Disrepair**

The National average for properties failing Decent Homes Standard for reasons of Disrepair is 8%. The Worcestershire average is 10% with Wyre Forest having the greatest proportion of housing (13%) that fails under the disrepair aspect of the Decent Homes Standard, amounting to approximately £79,841,448 of required investment to address the issue. This is significantly above Redditch's level (7%) which is below the national average of 8%. In order to remove disrepair issues from properties within Worcestershire it has been deemed that it would cost approximately £17,762.28 per property.

### **Vulnerable Households**

Nationally the average proportion of all properties that are occupied by vulnerable people who live in non decent homes is 8%. Within Worcestershire this average proportion of all dwellings that are occupied by vulnerable people that live in non decent accommodation is 7% with Malvern Hills having the largest proportion of properties occupied by vulnerable people living in non decent homes being 9% and Bromsgrove being the lowest with 5 %.

There are 33,379 number of households that are classified as vulnerable or on a low income. Of these vulnerable households an estimated 13,768 are classified as living in non-decent homes which represents 41% of vulnerable household. Conversely this means that 59% of vulnerable households are living within decent accommodation.

### **Fuel Poverty**

Fuel poverty is defined as householders spending more than 10% of their income on heating and fuel provisions within their property. On average 14% of households in Worcestershire experience fuel poverty and the problem poses the greatest threat to households in Malvern with 17% of the population being in fuel poverty which is 5% higher than the national average (12%) and Wyre Forest at 8%.

Worcestershire districts have an above average population of residents over the age of 65 and above 75. There is an identified need to support older people to maintain and to assist them to remain in their homes through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant and other grants. Strong, and in many cases significantly increasing,

demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is evident. Given the ageing population within the area this demand will almost certainly continue.

### **Countywide HIA**

Worcestershire districts have an above average population of residents over the age of 65 and above 75. There is an identified need to support older people to maintain and to assist them to remain in their homes through the provision of Disabled Facilities Grant and other grants. Strong, and in many cases significantly increasing, demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) is evident. Given the ageing population within the area this demand will almost certainly continue.

Each of the Council's work on Disabled Facilities Grants across tenure and other housing assistance to the private sector is channelled through a Countywide Home Improvement Agency. The Worcestershire partner organisations identified significant benefits for local older and disabled residents from delivering services through a partnership arrangement that covers the county and works closely with social care and health professionals.

A Worcestershire wide Care & Repair Agency was established during 2010 with a vision to deliver a range of options, including helping people to repair, improve, maintain or adapt their home. The purpose of the service is to help people live independently, in the home of their choice, warm, safe and secure. The range of services on offer include:

- Information, advice and signposting
- Disabled Facility grant and other housing grant work
- Fitting aids and adaptations
- Minor works and handyperson services
- Falls and accident prevention
- Hospital discharge support
- Home energy, security and safety checks
- Advocacy and support on housing options
- Kickstart loans

### **Kickstart**

A number of additional funding streams were accessed during the set-up of the service including Kickstart funding. Unfortunately the government funding allocated to support the delivery of this service has been withdrawn. Kickstart was a regionally funded scheme that provides an additional or alternative form of assistance to help home owners improve and renovate their dwellings through subsidised equity release loan facilities. The funding for this scheme was held centrally by Birmingham



City Council and administered by them on behalf of the partnership. It was envisaged that based upon the projected available funding, the service would have been able to provide up to 30 Non Equity (such as unsecured loans) and 36 Equity Loans in Year 1 building up to 48 Equity Loans and 50 Non Equity loans by year over the three year programme. This will deliver approximately £380,000 of work up to the end of the financial year 2010/11. It will now be necessary to consider how private sector improvement can continue without the mix of equity and non-equity products for those people needing to undertake decent homes work to their property.

Due to constraints on capital budgets the local housing authorities are unable to satisfy demand for discretionary grants to improve private sector dwellings or even to meet requirements for mandatory DFG's. The role of Home Improvement Agencies & the Kickstart products were essential to reducing the impact of the withdrawal/reduction of discretionary assistance. An area of work to be investigated would be to identify sufficient core resources rather than relying on fee income and Supporting People funding. A possible avenue is to work with health authorities to contribute to HIA funding, as one of the key outcomes for HIAs is the reduction of hospital admissions and bed blocking.

The new health landscape will have significant impacts for social housing. The importance of decent, affordable housing in promoting better health outcomes is critical and housing providers, beyond their role as providers of directly commissioned services, should therefore be able to expect a place at the table under the new arrangements for promoting health and wellbeing. The housing sector has long argued that investment in housing and housing related support offers real benefits for health. The NHS reform should offer new opportunities for housing to become involved with other partners in local government and health in providing preventative and community health services as well as care and support services. Housing's expertise should not be forgotten and should be used more effectively or new relationships will need to be built to deliver across housing, health and social care.

### **Older Persons Accommodation and Support Needs**

The six strategic housing authorities working with the Worcestershire County Council and Supporting People commissioned research into the housing and related support needs and aspirations of older people living within Worcestershire over the next 20 years. The full report findings can be found at:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/health-and-social-care/supporting-people/strategic-reviews.aspx>.

Some of the key findings were;

Older people are the housing services largest and most rapidly growing client group.

In Worcestershire by 2031 there will be a 52% increase in those over 60 and a 155% increase in those over 85. Rates of growth vary between Districts with higher growth in Wychavon and Malvern Hills. In absolute terms, Wychavon and Wyre Forest have the biggest population of older people.

This research recognised that there was an above average provision of sheltered housing across the county but an under-provision of Extra Care units and that an additional 1938 units were required within the county, although needs and current supply within each district varied.

The research also recognised the current imbalance in supply between older people's accommodation to rent (through Registered Social Landlords) and properties for sale, particularly opportunities for low cost home ownership (the need for an additional 4636 units).

There were also issues raised around the quantity and quality of affordable sheltered housing and the need to reduce provision by 1171. However the supply of sheltered housing varied across the districts. There was also a requirement to provide more enhanced sheltered housing (1610 units).

There is an identified requirement for housing for people with dementia of 838 units and the growing need from elderly people with learning difficulties.

The research also identified a critical need for better signposting for older people to the range of housing options available from trusted sources and expanding the advice already available to include all services and funding opportunities available including equity release options.

Also the need for both Home Improvement Agencies and floating support services was identified to assist the growing numbers of elderly home owners remain in their homes. This will include the need for support to be available to those individuals pursuing the choice and control agenda and requiring support to identify and access care packages.

Levels of owner occupation amongst older people in Worcestershire are very high at over 80% in the 55-74 age range underlining the importance of planning for all tenures but also the possible role of equity schemes.

There are 745 households over 50 on housing waiting lists with an accepted housing need, there are also a small but growing number of older people with learning disabilities to cater for.

Nationally demand for specialist accommodation for people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) groups outstrips provision. With a predicted growth in the number of BME elders and changing cultural attitudes amongst younger BME family members, it is anticipated that demand will increase further over the next twenty years.

Within Worcestershire the number of BME elders is relatively low at just 1.3% of the older population. However, it is important to note the higher proportion amongst the 'rising elderly' group of people aged 55 to 64 is 1.5% compared with just 0.7% of those aged 85+.

These findings identify substantial demographic changes taking place within the county. The information will be used as a sound basis for forward planning and thinking through the way all housing authorities and their partner Registered Provider's should respond to the seismic, demographic shifts taking place. The Older People's Strategy and synergy with this strategy will be one of the mechanisms to address how we are going to reshape the specialist housing and related support services to meet these needs.

### **Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation & Support Needs**

The local authorities of the South Housing Market Area commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment which was published in January 2008. The assessment estimates unmet accommodation needs and identifies aspirations and perceptions in respect of alternative types of site. The study also considered the needs of Travelling Showpeople.

The Government's bi-annual caravan count in July 2007 shows that Worcestershire has a far higher number of Gypsies and Travellers than any other county within the region, with 445 caravans. Worcestershire's number has increased by 26% in the last 2 years, which is well above average. There has been substantial reduction in the proportion of Gypsy and Traveller population which is travelling in pursuit of employment resulting in a more settled population.

For Travelling Showpeople there has been less of a reduction in travelling for employment. Sites are pre-arranged when they are away from their base, so unauthorised encampments do not occur.

## Pitch Requirements

Table 3: Summary of Additional Site Requirement for 2008/13

District	Permanent Pitches	Permanent Showpeople 'Yards'	Temporary Stopping Places	Total
Bromsgrove	0	0	0	0
Malvern Hills	26	8	10	44
Redditch	0	14	18	32
Worcester	16	0	20	36
Wychavon	40	0	20	60
Wyre Forest	30	0	0	30
<b>Sub-Region</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>68</b>	<b>202</b>

includes 20 pitch private site for specific group

The greatest amount of provision required is related to:

- The present level of overcrowding on approved sites,
- The small number of permanent unauthorised encampments, and
- The growth requirement from a largely settled population.

Apart from Bromsgrove and Redditch, the largely settled population contains a high proportion of families from which household growth can be expected.

The study recommends that as almost one third of the provision required is related to the very transient groups of mainly Irish Travellers –it would be more appropriate to establish Temporary Stopping Places, with a minimum and unobtrusive level of facilities, that could be brought into use as and when required. Accommodation for Travelling Showpeople will normally be acquired and managed privately, so site identification in conjunction with the Showmen’s Guild will be a sufficient response. Sites for permanent pitches for Gypsy and Traveller families will need to be predominantly on sites that are acquired, managed and developed by local authorities or RSLs, and can receive 100% government funding.

This strategy draws down from a wide range of sources of information that have led us to establish our mission, vision and goals and ultimately our action plan. A

number of these have already been discussed in earlier sections of the document but sources also include:

1. A wide range of specific studies carried out by the individual local authorities that have informed their housing and planning strategies.
2. data from the partner agencies that help to inform the housing challenges e.g. National Health Service falls data and housing association stock condition information
3. Wide ranging consultation with residents, representative groups and partners.

Consultation during the development of this strategy was linked with that undertaken to develop the Supporting People Strategy, the Older Peoples Strategy, the Domestic Abuse Strategy and the Joint Commissioning Strategy where possible. This helped to reduce consultation fatigue, achieve better value for money and ensure that outcomes were effectively linked.

In addition to looking inwardly at the issues facing Worcestershire we have sought to identify and use good practice from elsewhere through beacon council and good practice visits.

### **Review of Rural Enabling Across Worcestershire**

A review of rural enabling activity was undertaken within Worcestershire during 2011 with support from consultants, Rural Housing Solutions. This review was to evaluate performance within the county, identify barriers to affordable housing delivery, look at best practice, review the governance, structure and funding arrangements with a view to improving joint working with partners and the speed of delivery.

Four main challenges were identified as follows;

#### **1. Gaining and maintaining political and executive leadership**

Includes developing a Communications Strategy, an ambassadorial role by a senior councillor for each Local Authority area and to ensure rural enabling is a golden thread running through corporate plans and strategies.

#### **2. Providing a supportive strategic policy framework**

Includes exploring the use of Home Choice Plus choice based lettings scheme and other techniques to inform local housing needs data, undertaking specific rural analysis as part of the SHMA, developing more proactive planning policies and a more responsive approach to rural affordable housing involving local communities

#### **3. Securing capital and revenue funding**

Includes ensuring local funding and targets for rural enabling within the Local Investment Plan, introduction of tariffs to support rural community

infrastructure, planning policies which respond to lack of funding by considering option of cross subsidy, longer term sustainable funding for the Rural Housing Enabler service which is value for money.

**4. Performance management and delivery of a rural programme**

Includes the establishment of robust governance arrangements for rural enabling across a range of partners/funders, clear Terms of Reference and decision making, common Performance Management Framework, audit of enabling resources and agreed work plan, implementation of a delivery team approach and increased speed of delivery

A sub-group of the Worcestershire Rural Housing Enabler Steering Group are using this work to develop a forward Action Plan for the county.

## 4. VISION, MISSION AND GOALS

Our **Vision** is:

***"The right home, at the right time, in the right place"***

This means that we want every household in Worcestershire to be able to access housing that suits their needs and circumstances when they need it. It is implicit in the vision that we want all housing to reach an appropriate standard, currently the Decent Homes Standard, and that the right home means one that is affordable to the households budget. However we do not mean that changing household circumstances should always result in the need to move home. Our vision embraces a much wider approach which always involves a housing options assessment to ensure household needs are met.

Our **Mission** is:

***"We will work with individuals, communities and partners to deliver housing opportunities so that people have the right homes, at the right time and in the right place"***

In order to achieve our vision and provide focus for our mission we have identified four primary goals. These are underpinned by four goals that will ensure that our work in delivering the primary goals creates sustainable communities, provides value for money, enables equality of access to all and helps to combat climate change.

Our **Primary Goals** are:

(all goals are to be achieved between 2011 – 2016 unless otherwise specified)

- **Better use of existing homes** - We will maximise the use of the existing housing stock by:
  - Bringing **700** empty properties back into use,
  - Adapting **2500** for disabled occupants through Disabled Facilities Grants & Registered Provider schemes,
  - Helping **400** households with a disable member to move to suitable alternative accommodation,
  - Helping **1200** households to move who have more than one bedroom surplus to their requirements,
  - Helping **3000** overcrowded households move to a more suitable home.

- **Delivering new homes** - We will enable **500** new affordable homes which meet local needs in terms of property type, size, tenure and affordability by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012.
- **Improving the condition of existing homes** -We will improve the condition of 2500 private sector homes using direct action of the local authority by 2016 to improve peoples' quality of life.
- **Providing housing related support** - We will seek to maintain 42,000 positive outcomes for vulnerable people

Our **Underpinning Goals** are:

- To ensure that our plans contribute to the development of sustainable communities and economic success for Worcestershire having regard to the themes and cross cutting themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, both within new housing developments and our regeneration activity.
- To adopt a strategic commissioning approach, including identification of needs; gap analysis; prioritisation; outcome based commissioning; monitoring and review, to ensure the right solutions are provided.
- To embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.
- To ensure that services are delivered efficiently balancing performance, customer satisfaction and cost

The way in which we will deliver our goals is outlined in the following sections together with a detailed action plan for each goal.



## 5. GOAL 1 MAKING THE BEST USE OF EXISTING HOMES

### What we know

#### Achievements to Date

- Empty Homes Strategies or policies are in place for each district.
- 138 empty homes brought back into use during 2009 - 2010.
- 2 authorities assisted 72 applicants to downsize through financial incentives during 2009 - 2010
- 5 authorities assisted 158 applicants to downsize through allocations during 2009/2010.
- Access and use of their existing home was enabled for 1373 disabled people through provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (financially completed cases) during 2007-2010.

#### Supporting Evidence of Future Challenges

- Reliance on the Private Rented Sector is growing because of limitations in social housing supply, and because first time buyers cannot afford owner occupation until much later now.
- The Private Rented Sector is increasingly important in preventing homelessness and widening choice through Choice Based Lettings. Demand for homelessness services is predicted to grow.
- Many private landlords are inexperienced – an estimated three quarters of landlords are individuals or couples, the majority of whom don't let properties as their main profession.
- Reuse of empty homes is seen as a priority by local people – 97.2% of respondents to the Housing Strategy survey.
- High levels of under-occupation in socially rented housing stock evidenced by surveys in Wychavon and Bromsgrove and this is likely to be replicated across the County.
- Empty homes are a problem – although only 2.1% of the total housing stock there were 5,248 empty homes at the end of March 2010, of which 2,543 were privately owned and vacant for more than 6 months.
- Number of homeless preventions through rent deposit schemes is 491 during 2007 - 2010.

- Over supply of affordable sheltered housing (1,171 units in excess of projected need).
- 1696 households on the Home Choice register are living in overcrowded conditions.
- Demand for adaptations for disabled people is high – 665 customers were waiting for Disabled Facilities Grant approval at the end of October 2010.

## Future actions to address the challenges

### Goal 1 – Better use of existing homes

**Links to other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Communities Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Empty Property Action Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Supporting People Strategy, Older People’s Strategy, Registered Providers Business Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Changes
1.	Increase the number of empty homes brought back into use – homes that stand empty are a wasted resource and have a detrimental effect on neighbour hoods	a. Develop a countywide toolkit for bringing empty homes back into use, including: improving informal advice and encouragement through practical measures such as flats above shops, working with RP’s to purchase or lease and to use enforcement powers but as a last resort	Existing staff resources	Worcester C C	April 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- HCA priority</li> <li>- New Homes Bonus</li> <li>- Community Safety</li> </ul>
		b. Attract available Government funding to maximise the number of empty properties brought back into use - The Government is exploring a range of measures to bring empty homes into use	National funding  Local Investment Plan  Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities / CHOG	2011 - 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- HCA priority</li> <li>- New Homes Bonus</li> </ul>

## Goal 1 – Better use of existing homes

**Links to other Strategies and Plans – W'shire Sustainable Communities Strategy, W'shire Local Investment Plan, W'shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Empty Property Action Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, W'shire Community Safety Action Plan, W'shire Supporting People Strategy, Older People's Strategy, Registered Providers Business Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Changes
2.	Reduce the level of under occupation in affordable housing	a. Develop a Countywide approach to identifying under-occupation –	Existing staff resources	CHOG	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced funding to deliver new affordable housing means there is a need to better utilise existing stock</li> <li>- Link to 2 year minimum tenancy proposal by coalition government</li> </ul>
		b. Use the Allocation policy to facilitate moves from under occupied affordable homes to more suitable accommodation	Existing staff resources	HC+ Steering Group & Redditch BC	2011 - 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced funding to deliver new affordable housing means there is a need to better utilise existing stock</li> </ul>
		c. Encourage under-occupiers to move to smaller accommodation through the development of a comprehensive package of incentives eg. Data research, financial incentives, advice, options interviews, support to	Existing staff resources	Wychavon D C	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced funding to deliver new affordable housing means there is a need to better utilise existing stock</li> </ul>

**Goal 1 – Better use of existing homes**

**Links to other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Communities Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Empty Property Action Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Supporting People Strategy, Older People’s Strategy, Registered Providers Business Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Changes
		move, creating a protocol with other partner agencies				
3.	Increase the use of the private rented sector	a. Use choice based lettings schemes to promote the choice of privately rented homes as an alternative housing option	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	2011- 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> <li>- Reduced funding to deliver new affordable housing means there is a need to better utilise existing stock</li> </ul>
		b. Actively work with private landlords to promote a good joint understanding, foster good working practices and overcome obstacles to providing homes to people in need eg local authorities with voluntary accreditation schemes can help landlords to self-regulate – an extremely cost	To be locally determined	All Local Authorities	March 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> <li>- Reduced funding to deliver new affordable housing means there is a need to better utilise</li> </ul>

## Goal 1 – Better use of existing homes

**Links to other Strategies and Plans – W'shire Sustainable Communities Strategy, W'shire Local Investment Plan, W'shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Empty Property Action Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, W'shire Community Safety Action Plan, W'shire Supporting People Strategy, Older People's Strategy, Registered Providers Business Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Changes
		effective way to improve standards in the sector in preference to more expensive enforcement action.				existing stock
4.	Reduce the number of people living in overcrowded conditions	a. Work with partners to develop a toolkit of measures for use across the county to tackle overcrowding e.g effective allocation policies, managing houses in multiple occupation (HMO's) through licensing and registers	Existing staff resources	CHOG	March 2013	- Further powers to be introduced by Government
5.	Enable people to make the right choice of home and where appropriate repair / adapt to meet the needs of the occupants	a. Further develop the housing options approach in ensuring the right housing solution is found which considers household needs and also achieves best value for money in service provision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- homeless prevention</li> <li>- adaptations</li> <li>- support to move to the a more suitable property</li> </ul>	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities – Worcestershire Care & Repair	2011-2016	- Best use of additional resources provided by Government towards provision of DFGs and homelessness.

**Goal 1 – Better use of existing homes**

**Links to other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Communities Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Empty Property Action Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Supporting People Strategy, Older People’s Strategy, Registered Providers Business Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Changes
		b. Research means of ensuring more effective use of the resources available to repair homes by offering financial assistance not grants	Availability of Kickstart funding and recyclable LA financial assistance	All Local Authorities	2011-2013	- Better use of existing resources
		c. Improve housing opportunities for single people by developing a shared housing living model across all tenures	Existing resources	Bromsgrove DC	March 2014	- Housing Benefit Reforms
6.	To create move on opportunities within supported housing and floating support services	a. Work with partners to provide support to enable people to move on to full independence from supported housing and floating support	Existing resources	All Local Authorities / Worcestershire County Council / Primary Care Trust / Probation	2011 – 2016	- Government Priority
		b. Free up supported accommodation by facilitating move on eg through choice based lettings schemes and implementation of the Move On Protocol Plan (MOPP)	Existing resources	HC+ Steering Group & Redditch BC	2011 - 2013	- Better use of existing resources

**Goal 1 – Better use of existing homes**

**Links to other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Communities Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Empty Property Action Plans, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Supporting People Strategy, Older People’s Strategy, Registered Providers Business Plan**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Link to Government Changes</b>
7.	To address the issue of over/under and inappropriate supply of sheltered and supported housing within the county	a. Undertake strategic service reviews of mental health, learning disability, physical disabilities, domestic abuse and chaotic lifestyles	Existing resources	Supporting People	2011 - 2016	- Government priority - Better use of existing resources
		b. Use existing research and evidence to determine whether the best use is being made of current supported / sheltered housing supply and where appropriate re-model to alternative uses	Existing resources	CHOG	2011 - 2016	- Government priority - Better use of existing resources



## 6. GOAL 2 DELIVERING NEW HOMES

### Achievements to date

- In spite of the impact of the decline in the economy, 1386 new homes were delivered in 2008/09 against the Local Area Agreement target of 1830 (NI 154). In the early years of the Local Area Agreement performance exceeded this target.
- 501 new affordable homes were delivered in 2009/10 exceeding the Local Area Agreement target of 380 (NI 155) by 121. In total since 2005 2,184 affordable homes have been developed.
- Standard heads of terms for section 106 agreements (planning gain) agreed for use across the County.
- As part of the Worcestershire Total Place project a review of property in the ownership of public bodies has been completed and a "property club" established to consider opportunities for better use of the estate, including potential for housing development.
- A Rural Housing Enabler has been employed with joint funding (local authority and housing association) and a review of activity across Worcestershire has recently been completed providing recommendations for future improvement.
- Social Housing Grant invested in Worcestershire has increased through lobbying during the 2008 – 11 period.
- Joint bids have been made for a rural housing delivery programme
- Joint work with Supporting People is ensuring co-ordinated development of supported housing schemes.
- Joint working across Worcestershire by housing and planning officers has enabled the Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.
- 194 units of extra care housing have been commissioned jointly.

## **Supporting Evidence of Future Challenges**

- 2,277 additional affordable homes are needed annually.
- 88.6% of residents surveyed during development of this strategy said affordable housing is a priority.
- As well as the need for additional homes there is a mismatch between supply and the aspirational needs of some households, e.g. demand for a mix of property types and sizes to enable older people to downsize.
- Property prices are high compared to national and regional averages, particularly in Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills and Wychavon.
- There is a significant affordability gap for those with average or below average incomes – the house price to earnings ratio<sup>2</sup> in 2009/10 was 7.27.
- Affordability is a particular problem in rural areas – the recent review of rural housing activity has provided some new challenges including the need for robust housing needs information and greater support at parish level to promote delivery of new homes.
- The affordability gap is leading to lower turnover in the social rented stock with consequent increases to waiting and transfer lists.
- Inward migration continues to have a significant impact driving up land and property prices – in 2008/09 Worcestershire experienced net inward migration of 1,500 households from the rest of the West Midlands and 500 from abroad.
- Most of the districts have a low supply of private rented accommodation.
- The level of empty homes in most districts is low and is projected to decrease offering limited opportunities for use as affordable housing.
- A significant loss of affordable housing through the Right to Buy has not been matched by new development.
- Local authority and housing association land banks have been exhausted.
- High flood risk affects potential development in some parts of the County.
- The current economic climate has affected developer's ability to deliver affordable housing, particularly on brownfield sites and in lower value areas like Kidderminster.
- NIMBYism in high value rural areas, particularly from people moving into the area, making delivery of affordable housing extremely difficult.
- Limited information exists about the need for housing by some groups, including key workers and migrant workers
- 1938 units of extra care housing are needed by 2031.
- 4636 units of sheltered housing for sale are needed.
- 53 pitches have been delivered and a further 149 additional pitches are needed for Gypsies and Travellers by 2012.

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<sup>2</sup> Lower quartile house prices from the Land Registry compared to the workplace based annual income of full time employees.

## Future actions to address the challenges

### Goal 2 – Delivering new homes

**Links to other Strategies and plans – W’shire Sustainable Communities Plan, Supporting People Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Plan, Older People’s Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W’shire Homelessness Strategy**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
1.	To implement the government directive to reduce tenancies for life	a. To develop and implement a Tenure Strategy which will effectively manage the supply of affordable housing to meet housing need	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities, RP’s, HCA	2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> <li>- Localism Bill</li> </ul>
2.	To attract external investment into the county to support maximum delivery to meet needs of the diverse communities	b. Implement and continually review the Local Investment Plan which sets out partner investment over the period 2011 -14	Skills, Land, Money as set out in the LIP	All Local Authorities, RP’s, HCA	2011 - 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reduced funding for new affordable housing</li> </ul>
		c. Develop a Supported Housing Commissioning Plan for the County which co-ordinates capital and revenue investment	Supporting People, HCA, RP’s, LA’s, Social Care, Health etc.	CHOG and Supporting People	2011 - 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government Priority</li> </ul>
3.	To embed ‘fit for purpose’ structural arrangements within the county to	a. Keep under review the governance structure & groups for place shaping	Existing staff resources	Place Shaping Theme Group	2011 - 12	

## Goal 2 – Delivering new homes

**Links to other Strategies and plans – W’shire Sustainable Communities Plan, Supporting People Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Plan, Older People’s Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W’shire Homelessness Strategy**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
	enable the delivery of affordable housing	across Worcestershire				
4.	To develop provision to meet the diverse needs of our communities	a. Fully utilise and review the housing needs evidence available to bring forward and identify the right numbers and mix of affordable housing (i.e. types, size and tenure)	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> </ul>
		b. Maximise the delivery of sustainable and affordable homes through ensuring clear planning policies are in place.	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> </ul>
		c. To deliver the supported housing needs identified within the Worcestershire Supported Housing Commissioning Plan	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> </ul>

## Goal 2 – Delivering new homes

**Links to other Strategies and plans – W'shire Sustainable Communities Plan, Supporting People Strategy, W'shire Local Investment Plan, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Plan, Older People's Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W'shire Homelessness Strategy**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
		d. Complete a new Gypsy & Traveller needs assessment	Existing staff resources	CHOG	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Local decisions – a fairer future for social housing</li> </ul>
4.	To ensure the right commissioning partners are engaged and encouraged to invest resources in Worcestershire	a. Review the existing RP commissioning partner arrangements to have regard to government changes and the views of the HCA and develop new partnership working	Existing staff resources	All Local Authorities	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> <li>- ARM</li> </ul>
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To undertake further research to bridge gaps in the strategic housing evidence base</li> </ul>	a. Ensure that the strategic housing evidence base is kept up to date and that further detailed work is undertaken as required subject to available resource eg SHMA and updates	LA funding – to be determined locally	All Local Authorities	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> </ul>

## 7 GOAL 3 IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF EXISTING HOMES

### Achievements to date

- Bid to the Kickstart programme to draw down funding earmarked for Worcestershire to begin to offer loans and equity release to households to improve the condition of their property.
- Success in tackling fuel poverty (NI 187) has been evidenced by a reduction in the proportion of homes with SAP ratings less than 35 to 8.82% (2009/10 target 9.18%) and an increase in the proportion of homes with SAP ratings above 65 to 43.34% (2009/10 target 38.23%).
- 1345 homes each year have been improved through use of Discretionary Housing Assistance during 2007/10
- 1417 private rented homes inspected following complaints in 2007/10 reflects performance in 5 authority areas
- 1443 homes improved through informal and enforcement action during 2007/10 reflects county wide performance

### Supporting Evidence of Future Challenges

- 88.7% of respondents to our Housing Strategy survey said improving housing conditions is a priority.
- 89.1% said improving energy efficiency is a priority.
- Most of the social rented stock in Worcestershire met the Decent Homes Standard at the end of March 2010.
- Around 39% of homes are "non-decent" (75,992), and in Malvern Hills this rises to 50%.
- The total investment required to address conditions is £635 million.
- 18.1% of non-decent homes are occupied by vulnerable people. A staggering 41% of all vulnerable households are classified as living in non decent homes.
- The proportion of homes failing the Housing Health and Safety Rating System standard is higher than average at 28%.
- 53,601 Category 1 hazards exist in homes across the county.
- 20% (38,571) of dwellings fail the Decent Homes Standard as a result of inadequate thermal comfort compared to 17% nationally. The average cost of remedying this is just over £7,000.
- There were 334 winter deaths during 2009/10 within Worcestershire.
- 14% of households in Worcestershire experience fuel poverty (22,816) compared to the national average (12%).
- The number of houses in multiple occupation is varied across the county, however evidence consistently shows these properties can exhibit some of the poorer standards.

- 3.4 billion is paid in housing benefit to neglectful landlords. Local Authorities can use their powers
- It is more difficult for local housing authorities to improve property standards and meet the demands of an increasing need for adaptations due to budgetary constraints.

## Future actions to address the challenges

### Goal 3 – Improving the Condition of Existing Homes

**Links with other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Plan, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
1.	Improve the property standards (including energy efficiency) across tenures using all of the tools at our disposal	a. Develop a consistent approach to working with private sector landlords, including a common accreditation scheme, through establishing a working group comprising the local authorities and landlord representatives	Existing staff and partner resources	Redditch B C	March 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> </ul>
		b. Use enforcement powers appropriately to enforce property standards across all tenures	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> </ul>
		c. Move away from awarding capital grants to recycling housing assistance and equity release products	Existing staff and Worcestershire Care & Repair	All Local authorities	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> </ul>



### Goal 3 – Improving the Condition of Existing Homes

**Links with other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Plan, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
			resources			
		d. Ensure that in developing a consistent approach through Worcestershire Care & Repair that there is efficient use of allocated financial resources e.g. improved procurement practices	Existing staff and Worcestershire Care & Repair resources	Worcestershire Care & Repair	March 2012 And then annual review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> </ul>
		e. Review and re-tender the Home Improvement Agency services	Existing staff & resources	CHOG Supporting People	2012/13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Government priority</li> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> </ul>
2.	To attract investment to help improve property standards including energy efficiency	a. Explore opportunities with private industry to provide greater levels of funding and ways to improve property standards	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities WCC	2011-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Making best use of existing and new resources</li> <li>- Service improvement</li> <li>- Green Deal</li> </ul>

### Goal 3 – Improving the Condition of Existing Homes

**Links with other Strategies and Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Community Safety Action Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Local Private Sector Renewal Strategies, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Plan, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Plan**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
		b. Prepare for and maximise take up within the county of nationally funded schemes	Existing staff and Worcestershire Care & Repair resources	All Local authorities SLA with procured Agent	2011-2016	- Making best use of existing and new resources - Green Deal
3.	Support households to take responsibility for improving their homes and reducing fuel poverty	a. Apply a consistent countywide approach to empowering people to improve their quality of life through developing a toolkit of information, skills and training, discounts, funding and loan products.	Existing staff and partner resources	CHOG	2011-2016	- Empowering local people - Making best use of existing resources

## 8 GOAL 4 PROVIDING HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT

### Achievements to Date

- The proportion of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living (NI 142) is on track to reach the 2010/11 target of 98.02% (out-turn for 2009/10 was 98.01%).
- Over 20,000 vulnerable people were being supported in 2009/2010 realising 42,000 positive outcomes for those people.
- An assessment of the value of Supporting People provision has shown a saving of £50m each year in other budgets (e.g. health and social care)
- The Comprehensive Area Assessment found that more older people are being helped to live at home, adults with learning disabilities are being given more choice about how to live independently and more people with physical and mental disabilities are living at home with care and support.
- A countywide Choice Based Lettings scheme was introduced in September 2008 with common allocation and banding arrangements (in all districts except Redditch BC which may join the scheme in 2011). This has contributed to a reduction in the time taken to re-let vacant housing association properties and greater transparency about the process and satisfaction for customers.
- Levels of statutory homelessness and numbers of people in temporary accommodation have declined due to homelessness prevention activity which helped 3058 households during 2007/10.
- New housing support and other services have been commissioned following research for the Countywide Homeless Strategy and Supporting People strategic reviews. These include the development of a joint 16/17 yr old young persons protocol across the county, a young peoples support service provided by St Basils in the north of the county, the opening of a Foyer in Bromsgrove and the development of The Bubble a new gateway service to help young people access accommodation and support in the south.
- Research commissioned into the housing and related support needs and aspirations of older people living within Worcestershire over the next 20 years.
- Development of a new Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy and progress towards a new Worcestershire Older People's Strategy.
- A countywide Home Improvement Agency service was jointly commissioned in 2010 and the new service is being provided by Festival Housing Group.

- The implementation of a Countywide Gateway software system from November 2010 for identification of available support and bed spaces for people with chaotic lifestyles
- Successful application to Department of Health of pump prime funding to help develop a core and cluster scheme to provide supported accommodation for people with substance misuse/alcohol issues and creation of seven accommodation units specifically for substance misuse/alcohol customers in the County by Stonham Home Group.
- Work with partners to help offenders back into community including following the Regional Offender Protocol, utilising the new Countywide Integrated Offender Management Scheme.

### **Supporting Evidence of Future Challenges**

- The ageing population is generating a need for advice about housing options; support and adaptations help older people maintain independence.
- Projected increase in population of older people by 2031 – 52% over 60; 155% over 85.
- 87.8% of people surveyed said support for older people to make housing choices is important.
- 7,000 people have dementia and this is expected to increase to 21,000 in next 20 years. There is an identified requirement for housing for people with dementia of 838.
- Growing number of older people with learning disabilities rising to 6,000 over next 20 years.
- High levels of falls by older people.
- 35% of older people responding to a survey said they needed practical support– gardening, shopping, cooking etc.
- Life expectancy in deprived areas is low.
- Slow 'move-on' from supported housing schemes for clients experiencing domestic violence or suffering with mental health difficulties is reducing their effectiveness.
- Schemes to provide new supported housing are hampered by lack of certainty about future revenue funding.
- A survey of clients of the Drug, Alcohol Action Teams in 2006 showed that 23% had a clear housing need.
- A review of single homeless people receiving support demonstrated a need for finance related support and support in accessing healthcare, training and education.
- Better understanding required about the support needs of Gypsies and Travellers through a planned strategic review within Supporting People.

## Future actions to address the challenges

### Goal 4 – Providing housing related support

**Links with other Strategies & Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Older Person’s Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W’shire Domestic Abuse Strategy, W’shire Telecare Strategy, Supporting People Strategy, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Investment Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Strategy**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
1.	Manage financial reductions to the Supporting People programme whilst continuing to meet housing related support needs in a more targeted way	a. Manage the budget reductions by prioritising service provision, benchmarking value for money. undertaking targeted strategic reviews, measuring social outcomes being achieved.	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities / Worcestershire County Council / Primary Care Trust / Probation	2011-2016	- Making best use of existing and new resources
		b. Support and implement the Supporting People Strategy. This will include; needs research, strategic reviews, re-commissioning of services, addressing identified problems and the commissioning of new services	Existing staff resources	SPCB	2011-2016	- Making best use of existing and new resources
		c. To work with the Joint Commissioning Unit to develop financially sustainable models for Extra Care provision and implementation.	Existing staff resources	CHOG	March 2012	- Making best use of existing and new resources

### Goal 4 – Providing housing related support

**Links with other Strategies & Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Older Person’s Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W’shire Domestic Abuse Strategy, W’shire Telecare Strategy, Supporting People Strategy, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Investment Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Strategy**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
2.	To mitigate risks of increasing levels of homelessness and to address the needs of those who become homeless	a. Review and renew the Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy and action plan.	Existing staff resources	County Homeless Implementation Group (CHIG)	March 2012	- Making best use of existing and new resources
		b. Focus on increasing homeless preventions through a toolkit of measures available across the county	Existing staff resources	County Homeless Implementation Group (CHIG)	March 2013	- Making best use of existing and new resources
		c. Monitor the impact of benefit reforms on the levels of homelessness and worklessness, responding to any areas of concern	Existing staff resources	County Homelessness Implementation Group	2011 - ongoing	- Making best use of existing and new resources
		d. To review the joint working arrangements & funding for Countywide Posts	Existing staff resources	CHOG	2011	- Making best use of existing and new resources
3.	To provide equal access of opportunity to affordable housing and other housing options	a. Use the information we know about need for supported housing and floating support to ensure that new provision is appropriate.	Existing staff resource	All Local authorities	2011-2016	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources

### Goal 4 – Providing housing related support

**Links with other Strategies & Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Older Person’s Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W’shire Domestic Abuse Strategy, W’shire Telecare Strategy, Supporting People Strategy, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Investment Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Strategy**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
		b. Consider the needs of BME households, Gypsies & travellers and migrant workers to ensure an inclusive approach to accommodation and support provision	Existing staff resource	All Local authorities	2011-2016	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources
		c. Keep the allocation policy in use within the county under review to ensure appropriate accessibility and consistency / fairness to all residents and to respond to proposed Government changes.	Existing staff resource	Home Choice Plus Steering Group	2011-2016	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources
		d. To enhance the range and consistency of advice and information with various media outlets in a leaner way.	Existing staff resource	All Local authorities	2011-2016	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources
		a. Consider impact of the	Existing staff	All Local	2011-2016	- Government priority - Making best use of

**Goal 4 – Providing housing related support**

**Links with other Strategies & Plans – W’shire Sustainable Community Strategy, W’shire Local Investment Plan, W’shire Homelessness Strategy, Older Person’s Strategy, Dementia Strategy, W’shire Domestic Abuse Strategy, W’shire Telecare Strategy, Supporting People Strategy, Mental Health Joint Commissioning Investment Plan, Learning Disability Joint Commissioning Strategy**

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Challenge</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Resources</b>	<b>Lead Partner</b>	<b>By When</b>	<b>Link to Government Proposals</b>
		personalisation agenda when developing or reviewing strategic housing procedures, policies, service improvement plans and strategies.	resource	authorities		existing and new resources



## 9. UNDERPINNING GOALS

- i. To ensure that our plans contribute to the development of sustainable communities and economic success for Worcestershire including future proofing for climate change and having regard to the themes and cross cutting themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, both within new housing developments and our regeneration activity.
- ii. To adopt a strategic commissioning approach, including identification of needs; gap analysis; prioritisation; outcome based commissioning; monitoring and review, to ensure the right solutions are provided.
- iii. To embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.
- iv. To ensure that services are delivered efficiently balancing performance, customer satisfaction and cost

### **Achievements to date**

- Development of the Social Outcome Framework for Supporting People services
- Joint partner commissioning of the new Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency
- Implementation of sub-regional choice based lettings scheme called 'Home Choice Plus' across five Worcestershire Local Authorities and Stratford on Avon D C
- The joint funding of a Worcestershire Rural Housing Enabler, County Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator and Housing Substance Misuse Development Officer posts.
- The development of the "Areas of Highest Need" projects within the six Local authorities to tackle deprived communities with LAA funding and further work being undertaken through Total Place pilot.
- Development of the Re-Wyre regeneration initiative in Wyre Forest to tackle areas of market failure.
- Redditch B C successful gained government funding under the Enhanced Housing Options programme
- Development of a Climate Change Adaptation Plan with input from across the County

- Undertaken customer satisfaction surveys relating to homelessness and choice based lettings
- Joint procurement of various research / projects to meet countywide strategic housing objectives,

### **Supporting Evidence of Future Challenges**

- Worcester City, Wyre Forest and Redditch have been identified as a significant area of deprivation within the top 10% nationally. The type of deprivation is within housing, access to services especially within rural areas and education. It should be noted that the general affluence of the area hides some big differences in some areas.
- Health and economic inequalities identified in Redditch e.g. people die earlier, more babies have a poor start in life and grow up in families on low incomes, young people attain lower educational results and go on to have fewer job opportunities when they leave school.
- Economic decline – increased benefit claims and worklessness.
- Infrastructure is required to deliver sustainable growth particularly within Worcester City as the designated area of significant growth.
- 93.6% of respondents to survey said local services to sustain rural villages is important.
- Planning and delivering services equitably.
- Ensuring effective and structured links between housing and wider objectives e.g. education and health.

## Future actions to address the challenges

### Underpinning Goals – Providing housing related support

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
1.	To ensure that our plans contribute to the development of sustainable communities and economic success for Worcestershire having regard to the themes and cross cutting themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, both within new housing developments and our regeneration activity & NHS reforms.	a. To imbed new structural arrangements within the county to bring together housing, planning, regeneration, economic development, health and social care partners with the objective of adding community benefit through the place shaping role	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities	2011-2014	- Making best use of existing and new resources
		b. To establish strong links with the new Local Enterprise Partnership once established	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities	2011-2014	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources
2.	To adopt a strategic commissioning approach, including identification of needs; gap analysis; prioritisation; outcome based commissioning; monitoring and review, to ensure the right solutions are	a. To formally imbed this strategic commissioning approach within key strategic housing partnerships to ensure effective and efficient work processes particularly around procurement.	Existing staff resources	CHOG	2011-2016	- Making best use of existing and new resources

Underpinning Goals – Providing housing related support						
Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
	provided.					
		b. To develop an outcomes framework to evidence the value of housing activity both for the local authorities and other key statutory partners	Existing staff resources	Worcester City	March 2013	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources
3.	To embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.	a. To ensure equalities standards are met within all housing procedures, policies, plans and strategies.	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities	2011-2016	- Government priority
		b. Where appropriate to undertake Equalities Impact Assessments and produce plans for improvement where necessary	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities	2011-2016	- Government priority
4.	To ensure that services are delivered efficiently balancing performance, customer satisfaction and cost	a. To work together across the six strategic housing authorities to identify areas for improved joint working and potential efficiencies	Existing staff resources	All Local authorities	2011 - 2016	- Government priority - Making best use of existing and new resources
		b. To work together across the six strategic housing authorities to test customer satisfaction in areas of work such as Housing advice,	Local Authority funding – to be determined	All Local authorities	2011-2016	

**Underpinning Goals – Providing housing related support**

Ref	Challenge	Action	Resources	Lead Partner	By When	Link to Government Proposals
		homelessness, housing development and delivery of private sector grants	locally			

## 10. RESOURCING OUR STRATEGY

We have started to assess the resources we expect to be available to all partners in order to deliver our strategy over the next 5 years. These include:

- Capital expenditure by the local authorities for improving housing standards and subsidising the delivery of new affordable homes.
- Funding available to enable people to move to more appropriate accommodation making best use of existing homes.
- Homes and Communities Agency and housing association subsidy for delivery of new affordable homes.
- Revenue funding from local authority and key partner agency budgets, Government grants and incentives and Supporting People funding.
- Staffing capacity dedicated to strategic housing employed within local authorities, contracted agencies e.g. home improvement and housing advice agencies and partners e.g. housing associations.

Most of the resources described above are shown in appendix 2 to this strategy and details of the resources available within each local authority area are available on request. We will continue to develop the resource information base across the county during the life of this Strategy.

## 11. MONITORING AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

We need to monitor progress against our goals to ensure that our action plan continues to be relevant. We have therefore established clear definitions for the goals that will enable us to measure progress in a consistent way

We are mindful of the need to ensure that our information is kept up to date and we will do this through a mixture of annual updates and full newly commissioned research as outlined below:

- Housing market assessment annual update (2010/11)
- New Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2011/12)
- New Gypsy & Traveller Needs Assessment (2011/12)

In order to ensure that we are clear about the progress we are making and any remedial actions required we have adopted the following monitoring arrangements:

- Progress monitored by the Local Authority Chief Housing Officers Group on a quarterly basis and then regularly reported to the Strategic Place Shaping Theme Group. Annual review of action plan and midterm review of full Housing Strategy in consultation with partners and customers to include new actions where required.
- Annual updates to County action plan and annual review of overall achievement to include local action plans.
- Key statistics to be monitored and updated annually.
- Mid-term review event with stakeholders and customers.
- District Action Plans to be updated quarterly and reported back through appropriate local monitoring mechanisms.

In drawing up the strategy at this time we are aware that the new coalition government has announced a range of potential changes that will affect this strategy. In particular there are proposals to radically revise the planning/housing framework. In addition the forthcoming comprehensive spending review may impose constraints on the resources available to us. The strategy will be updated in the light of these changes and the responses of the councils to those changes.

## 12. KEY CONTACTS IN EACH OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES

If you would like any further advice on any of the information contained in this document then please contact either of the following officers:

<p>Andy Coel Strategic Housing Manager Planning &amp; Environment Services Bromsgrove District Council The Council House Burcot Lane Bromsgrove Worcestershire B60 1AA Tel: (01527) 881270 Email: <a href="mailto:a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk">a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Nina Warrington Strategic Housing Services Manager Worcester City Council Orchard House Complex, Farrier St, Worcester, WR1 3BB Tel: (01905) 722 494 Email: <a href="mailto:nina.warrington@worcester.gov.uk">nina.warrington@worcester.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Peter Newman Housing Outcomes Manager Malvern Hills District Council Tel: (01684) 862187  Email: <a href="mailto:Peter.Newman@malvern hills.gov.uk">Peter.Newman@malvern hills.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Elaine Salter Strategic Housing Services Manager Wychavon District Council Civic Centre, Queen Elizabeth Drive, Pershore, Worcs. WR10 1PT Tel: (01386) 565241 E-mail: <a href="mailto:elaine.salter@wychavon.gov.uk">elaine.salter@wychavon.gov.uk</a></p>
<p>Matthew Bough Housing Policy Manager. Leisure, Environment &amp; Community Services Directorate Redditch Borough Council Town Hall Walter Stranz Square Redditch B98 8AH Tel: (01527) 64252 ext 3120 Email: <a href="mailto:matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk">matthew.bough@redditchbc.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Kate Bailey Strategic Housing Services Manager Wyre Forest District Council Duke House Kidderminster Tel: (01562) 732560 Email: <a href="mailto:Kate.Bailey@WyreForestdc.gov.uk">Kate.Bailey@WyreForestdc.gov.uk</a></p>



## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1 SUMMARY OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

Worcestershire - Information & Policy Base		
Strategic Documents:		
South Housing Market Assessment	South Housing Market Area	SHMA April 2007 and updates for 07/08, 08/09 and shortly for 09/10 <a href="http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/housing-and-economy/housing/shma.aspx">http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/housing-and-economy/housing/shma.aspx</a>
Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment	South Worcestershire Wyre Forest DC	<a href="http://www.swjcs.org/html/shlaa_2edition.html">http://www.swjcs.org/html/shlaa_2edition.html</a> <a href="#">Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Report - December 2009</a>
LDF - Core Strategy	South Worcestershire Wyre Forest DC	<a href="http://www.swjcs.org/">http://www.swjcs.org/</a> <a href="#">Local Development Framework - Core Strategy - Preferred options paper - January 2009</a>
Affordable Housing SPD	Malvern Hills DC  Worcester CC  Wychavon DC	<a href="http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/cms/planning/supplementary-guidance/affordable-housing.aspx">http://www.malvern hills.gov.uk/cms/planning/supplementary-guidance/affordable-housing.aspx</a>  <a href="http://www.worcester.gov.uk/index.php?id=1127">http://www.worcester.gov.uk/index.php?id=1127</a>  <a href="http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/pdf/wdc-planning-spg-affordable-housing.pdf">http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/pdf/wdc-planning-spg-affordable-housing.pdf</a>

	Wyre Forest DC	<a href="#">Wyre Forest District Local Framework - Supplementary planning document planning obligations - February 2007</a>
Design SPD	South Worcestershire	<a href="http://www.worcester.gov.uk/index.php?id=1748">http://www.worcester.gov.uk/index.php?id=1748</a>
Housing Needs Survey	South Worcestershire	<a href="http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/housing-and-economy/housing/south-worcs-housing-needs.aspx">http://worcestershire.whub.org.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/housing-and-economy/housing/south-worcs-housing-needs.aspx</a>
Homelessness research	Worcestershire	<a href="http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/County%20Homelessness%20Strategy.pdf">http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/County%20Homelessness%20Strategy.pdf</a>
Older peoples needs assessment	Worcestershire	Research into the Housing and Support Needs of Older People within Worcestershire. <a href="http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/health-and-social-care/supporting-people/strategic-reviews.aspx">http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/health-and-social-care/supporting-people/strategic-reviews.aspx</a>
Disabled peoples needs assessment	Worcestershire	Countywide Disabled Peoples Needs Assessment being progressed (Supporting People/Physical Disability Team)
Young peoples needs assessment	Worcestershire	<a href="http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/health-and-social-care/supporting-people/strategic-reviews.aspx">http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/health-and-social-care/supporting-people/strategic-reviews.aspx</a>
BME needs assessment	Worcestershire	<a href="http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/population/ethnicity-projections.aspx">http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/research-and-intelligence/population/ethnicity-projections.aspx</a>
Gypsy and Traveller needs	Worcestershire	<a href="http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/GTAA_FinalReport.pdf">http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/GTAA_FinalReport.pdf</a>

assessment		
Migrant workers needs assessment	Wychavon DC	<a href="http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/business/market-towns/rural-economy.aspx">http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/business/market-towns/rural-economy.aspx</a> <a href="http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/migrant-workers.aspx">http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/community-and-living/equality-and-diversity/migrant-workers.aspx</a>
Existing housing condition/suitability:		
Private sector housing condition survey	Malvern Hills DC Worcester CC Wychavon DC Wyre Forest D C	BRE survey - <a href="#">details to follow</a> <a href="http://www.worcester.gov.uk/fileadmin/assets/pdf/Housing/private_sector/FINAL_STOCK_CONDITION_SURVEY_AUGUST_2004.pdf">http://www.worcester.gov.uk/fileadmin/assets/pdf/Housing/private_sector/FINAL_STOCK_CONDITION_SURVEY_AUGUST_2004.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/pdf/wdc-housing-ps-stock-condition-survey.pdf">http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/pdf/wdc-housing-ps-stock-condition-survey.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/pdf/wdc-housing-ps-hmo-report-2005.pdf">http://www.wychavon.gov.uk/cms/pdf/wdc-housing-ps-hmo-report-2005.pdf</a> Private Sector House Condition Survey 2007 - Final Report - November 2007 <b>Need</b> <a href="#">Link</a>

## APPENDIX 2 RESOURCES AVAILABLE

	2009/10 out-turn	2010/11 planned	2011/12 proposed	2012/13 proposed
<b>Capital Expenditure</b>				
Capital expenditure on housing within the HRA (H1a)	9596000	7773000	6500000	6020000
Capital support for RPs (H2)	360000	1092000	126000	100000
Capital expenditure on other housing (H3)	4017000	4369000	3671000	3345000
<b>Above funded from:</b>				
Borrowing (H4a1)	0	0	0	0
Capital grants (H4a2)	2573000	2438000	2242000	1895000
Useable capital receipts (H4a3)	1515000	2474000	1105000	1085000
Contributions from revenue (H4a4)	3892000	3800000	3800000	3800000
Other (H4a5)	0	170000	55000	40000
<b>PSR assistance:</b>				
Expenditure on grants (K2)	893000	1080000	887000	0
Expenditure on loans (K4)	276000	388000	435000	0
Mandatory DFG allocations			185500	
<b>Provision of affordable housing:</b>				
Total LA expenditure (N11)	875000			
Estimated value of developer contribution through AH units	2493618			
Estimated value of developer contribution through commuted sums	731222			
HCA subsidy	12726581	9515645	2853408	4651137
<b>Revenue Funding</b>				
Homelessness Grant	377100	377100	674530	674530
Housing planning and delivery grant	804612			
Regional Housing Body funding	1042000			

SP funding

14,653,000

## APPENDIX 3 – KEY MESSAGES FROM CONSULTEES

There is a reassuring level of consensus about the key issues from respondents to the on-line survey and agencies and individuals engaged through the initial stakeholder event and focus groups. The main divergence exists around the need for housing in rural areas against protection of green space although, to a lesser extent, support for housing for vulnerable people is offset by a view that people should be more self-sufficient in meeting and managing their housing needs.

### **Housing Strategy Survey**

The on-line survey demonstrated significant support for additional affordable housing being a priority for the new strategy (69.6% said this was very important and a further 19% said it was fairly important). Other issues rated as very/fairly important were energy efficiency (89.1%), improvement in housing conditions (88.7%) and supporting older people to make housing choices (87.8%). Regeneration of town centres was seen as least important although still quite a high proportion said it was very or fairly important (79.7%).

Respondents identified a need for all types of housing. The most popular was family housing across all tenures but support was also evident for rented accommodation for vulnerable people, older people and young people.

Asked about priorities for urban regeneration respondents saw reuse of empty homes as the main priority (97.2% thinking this was very or fairly important). The most important factor in regenerating rural villages was seen as work with partners to provide local services to help people remain in rural communities (93.6%).

Respondents thought that raising awareness about grants and loans was the most important factor in improving affordable warmth with 88.2% selecting this option. Bringing empty homes back into use was also seen as important in improving housing conditions generally with 92.3% of respondents selecting this.

The survey asked people what help they would require if threatened with homelessness and 80.8% felt that advice to remain in their own home was important. Respondents were generally supportive of a range of options for helping older people plan for their future housing needs and young people and vulnerable people meet their housing needs.

### **Research into the Needs of Older People**

The results of the survey of older people carried out as part of the research project can be summarised as follows:

- Nearly 1 in 5 already lived in a property that had been adapted
- 15% said that home was unsuitable; the main reasons were because of poor health, it was too large or because they had problems with mobility
- The vast majority (81%) wish to stay in their present homes in later years; two thirds expect to receive some support to enable them to stay put; 40% would like some adaptations
- About a third of owners expressed a positive interest in retirement housing for sale or extra care; slightly more tenants are interested in sheltered housing to rent
- People predominantly want help with things like the garden, shopping and cooking
- There is a strong allegiance to the locality with two thirds hoping to stay in Worcestershire as they grow older; there is a significant gap in peoples knowledge of both housing and care options available
- Expectations are rising about space with more people looking for a minimum of two bedrooms. There is a significant demand for showers and managing stairs is a common barrier to continuing to live at home, as is inadequate heating
- There is a definite interest in extra care housing

The key themes emerging from the focus groups with older people were:

- People want to have better information from a trusted source about the full range of housing options and considerations for them; this includes advice on support possibilities, money and grants for adaptations
- Resistance to equity release schemes as currently available
- Extra care models of housing are viewed positively for rent and to buy
- Some reluctance to plan for the future in terms of the types of housing and carer support that people may need
- Difficulty for many owner occupiers in getting practical jobs done and knowing where to get help from
- Strong sense of local identity, even within districts – most people want to stay living near to their existing social and community networks

- Telecare, aids, adaptations – seen as potentially helpful; a frequent message was that telecare should not be at “expense” of personal support from people/paid carers
- Residential care is not popular but most people are not really aware of the full implications for them personally and their finances

The comments included in responses to these surveys are logged in the “You Said, We Did” document supporting this strategy along with the issues raised through stakeholder events and focus groups. The main issues raised are summarised below:

### **New homes**

- General support for more housing for all groups
- Other options needed for older people wishing to move eg shared ownership and extra care
- Older people aspiring to larger homes (2-bed plus)
- More supported housing needed for young people and people with mental health issues
- Flexible tenancy arrangements needed for people with learning difficulties to enable sharing
- Lifetime homes should be provided as standard
- More plots needed for Gypsies and Travellers, preferably close to family
- Research on Gypsy and Traveller site design to ensure plots are big enough for privacy and deter overcrowding

### **Better use of existing homes**

- Under-occupation is an issue – incentives and support to move are seen as solutions
- Many older people feel their current accommodation is unsuitable
- Hard to let sheltered accommodation is a waste
- Better use could be made of adapted homes, perhaps by holding a database
- Better use could be made of the private rented sector



- Reuse of empty homes is a priority
- Lodging schemes could be introduced

### **Existing housing standards**

- Better links with landlords are needed
- Incentives could be used to improve private rented housing
- Targeted enforcement could work
- Space and noise insulation should be addressed as well as minimum standards
- Existing schemes for young people are poor standard

### **Affordable warmth**

- Better standards should be aimed for – SAP 65 by 2020 and CSH level 4.
- Better information should be available – up to date and more accessible
- Fuel choice in rural areas should be assisted
- Advice should be available through GP surgeries
- Discounts from local companies should be arranged for energy conservation materials
- Grants should be available for external insulation
- Difficulty in keeping caravans warm in winter – need for affordable solutions

### **Urban renaissance**

- Funding is of key importance
- Infrastructure needs to be available before or alongside housing
- Community ownership/buy-in is important – need to engage at early stage
- Sustainability needs to be embedded – supply of materials, minimised car use etc
- Need to ensure people maintain gardens

- Adapt vacant business space for housing

### **Rural renaissance**

- A positive policy stance (rather than exceptions) should be adopted
- Parish plans should be established
- An infrastructure levy should be introduced
- Work to overcome obstacles to development should be resourced
- Action to retain focal points eg schools, post offices
- Work with Parish Councils to reduce nimbyism
- Links with infrastructure are important – employment etc
- Brownfield development should take priority over greenbelt

### **Housing options**

- Better information about housing and related services to enable choice
- Ensure everyone can access information eg rough sleepers
- Low level support for older people who wish to stay put
- Support to move on for older people
- Help to access private rented accommodation
- Single access point with a joined up approach for young people and older people
- Early intervention eg through schools
- Flexible support services for people with chaotic lifestyles
- Support to introduce to new home for people with learning difficulties
- Temporary accommodation to be suitable and affordable
- Customer care improvement needed

- Deposit guarantee scheme needed for couples and families

### **Housing support and adaptations**

- More flexible support
- Investment in support and adaptations to save on hospital admissions etc
- Use of assistive technology is helpful but not at expense of personal care/support
- Early intervention at transition stage
- Pre-tenancy and life-skills training
- Better joined up working across agencies
- Support in using CBL service
- Information and support for carers
- Adaptations are important for people with sensory impairments to remain in their own homes
- Help needed to enable older Gypsies and Travellers to remain in own homes, perhaps by providing living rooms in utility blocks
- Support to enable ex-rough sleepers to develop social networks

### **Other**

- CBL service issues
- Community facilities – better access and more for young people
- Employment and benefit issues

## APPENDIX 4: LIST OF CONSULTEES



Organisation
Worcester City Council
Wyre Forest District Council
Wychavon District Council
Redditch Borough Council
Sanctuary Housing
West Mercia Housing
Batchley Support Group
YMCA Worcester
YMCA Redditch
Worcestershire County Council
CAB Redditch
St Paul's Hostel
Fosseway Housing Association
Bromford Housing
Rooftop Housing Association
Help The Aged
Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Deaf Direct
Festival Housing Group
Home and Community Agency
Herefordshire County Council
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Fire
Riverside Housing Association
Worcester Relate
Worcester Community Housing
John Martins Charity
English Church Housing Group
St Basils
Nightstop
Acton Energy



Bubble
Redcross
Redditch Friends
Servite Houses
Malvern Hills District Council
Worcestershire SAAFA
Age Concern Redditch
WHBAC
Herefordshire & Worcestershire Connexions
Wychavon CAB
Wyre Forest CAB
Waterloo Housing
Community Housing Group
West Mercia Police
Jephson Housing

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## APPENDIX 2





### BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL STRATEGIC HOUSING DISTRICT ACTION PLAN – April 2011 - 2016

<b>GOAL 1 – BETTER USE OF EXISTING HOMES</b>				
<u>KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS</u>				
Number of empty private sector dwellings brought back into use. (10/11 Target = 25 pa )				
Action and Priority (H,M,L)	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<b>CHALLENGE - Increase the number of empty homes brought back into use</b>				
1.1 Support the development a countywide toolkit for bringing empty homes, including flats above shops, back into use. M	April 2012 JD	Worcester City Council setting up a working group.		
1.2 Appoint a temporary part time Private Sector Housing Options Officer (funded by Homelessness Grant) to liaise and assist landlords	June 2012	Approval having been given to		





<p><b>to provide housing in multiple occupation to homeless clients restricted by new Housing Benefit regulations.</b></p> <p>H</p>	<p>AC / AG</p>	<p>proposals for use of Government Homeless Grant to BDC.</p>		
<p><b>1.3 Work with HCA Investment Manager to access HCA funding for RSLs to convert empty accommodation over shops in Town Centre for affordable housing.</b></p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2013</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Identification of empty accommodation where landlords are willing to provide long enough lease to RSL to make scheme viable.</p>		
<p><b>1.4 Pro actively seek out empty homes that could be converted to HMO's.</b></p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>KSF</p>	<p>Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using Homeless Grant</p>		






<p>1.5 Look to support and encourage the owners of empty space within Bromsgrove town centre to convert to residential and bring back into use.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>JD/KSF</p>	<p>Achieving HCA /other funding to encourage landlords to convert their properties.</p>	
<p><b>CHALLENGE - Reduce the level of under occupation in affordable housing</b></p>			
<p>1.6 Work with RSL and Care &amp; Repair Agency partners to support the development of a Countywide scheme to support and encourage households who are under-occupying to downsize and access alternative accommodation through Choice Based Lettings.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2014</p> <p>AG/JD</p>	<p>Inclusion of a support service within the HIA specification when the contract is renewed in June 2013</p>	
<p>1.7 Identify / bid for funding to provide incentives to support countywide under occupancy support scheme when established.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>March 2014</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Establishment of Countywide support service within HIA.</p>	
<p><b>CHALLENGE - Increase the use of the private rented sector</b></p>			

<p><b>1.8 Work with colleagues in North Worcestershire to consider benefits of developing a joined up approach for liaising with landlords, including newsletters and landlord's forums.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>April 2012</p> <p>JD/KSF</p>	<p>Housing Initiatives Officer to set up a working group</p>	
<p><b>1.9 Continue to hold annual Landlords Forums to promote good practice, LL training opportunities and use of CBL to maximise knowledge of private letting opportunities to clients on the Housing Register.</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>JD</p>		
<p><b>1.10 Develop a handbook for Houses in Multiple Occupation to include all information needed for a landlord when looking to set up this type of let.</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p>Oct 2011</p> <p>KSF</p>	<p>Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using Homelessness Grant</p>	
<p><b>1.11 Look to actively encourage the conversion of properties into Houses in Multiple Occupation to meet the predicted increased need</b></p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p>	<p>Appointment of temporary Private</p>	

due to changes in Housing Benefit.  H	JD / KSF	Sector Housing Options Officer using Homelessness Grant			
1.12 Survey tenants of Step Up scheme to gauge level of satisfaction and any concerns that may exist around this tenure.  L	April 2012  JD				
<b>CHALLENGE - Reduce the number of people living in overcrowded conditions</b>					
1.13 Improve our knowledge of levels of overcrowding in the District and work with countywide colleagues to develop a toolkit to address overcrowding and make best use of Choice Based Lettings to enable applicants to move on to more suitable accommodation.  H	March 2013  AG	Improve our knowledge of levels of overcrowding in the District			
<b>CHALLENGE - Enable people to make the right choice of home and where appropriate repair / adapt to meet the needs of the occupants.</b>					

<p><b>1.14 Encourage landlords with adapted properties to approach the local authority for assistance in finding suitable tenants.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>KSF</p>	<p>Promotion at landlords forum and in landlords newsletter</p>	
<p><b>1.15 Investigate how we might support improvements in the housing options service.</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p>April 2012</p> <p>AG / JB</p>	<p>Review Enhanced Housing Options package with Abritas Sept 2011</p>	
<p><b>1.16 Seek authority to allocate a proportion of private sector renewal funding to the West Midlands Kick Start Scheme to enable continuation of a Worcestershire Kick Start Equity Release Scheme service.</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Approval of a Private Sector Renewal Capital Budget continuing to be made available.</p>	
<p><b>1.17 Improve housing opportunities for single people by developing a shared housing living model across all tenures – see 1. 2 above.</b></p>	<p>June 2012</p> <p>AC/AG/JD/JB</p>	<p>Approval having been given to proposals for use of Government Homelessness Grant</p>	

H	/KSF	to BDC.		
<b>CHALLENGE - To create move on opportunities within supported housing and floating support services</b>				
<p>1.18 Continue to lobby the HCA to grant fund one bedroom units to assist in providing 'move on' for single applicants currently residing in supported accommodation.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>AC</p>			
<p>1.19 Ensure that clients in supported accommodation are assisted and correctly banded through Choice Based Lettings to maximise their opportunities for accessing 'move on' accommodation.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2011 - March 2016</p> <p>JD /AG/JB</p>			
<p>1.20 Work with RSL's to assist and encourage them to review and re-designate low demand sheltered accommodation.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>April 2011 - March 2016</p> <p>AC / JB</p>			

<b>CHALLENGE - To address the issue of over/under and inappropriate supply of sheltered and supported housing within the county</b>			
1.21 Work with RSL's to assist and encourage innovation when reviewing low demand sheltered accommodation with a view to creating more appropriate accommodation for older people and other client groups.  <b>M</b>	April 2011 - March 2016  AC / JB		




**GOAL 2 – DELIVERING NEW HOMES**





KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Number of additional affordable housing units delivered. (Target =80 pa)

Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
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**CHALLENGE - Attract external investment to support maximum delivery to meet the needs of the diverse community.**



<p>2.1 Continue to update the local Investment Plan (LIP) with the HCA to ensure that opportunities for HCA funding compliment section 106 cross subsidy and support from other agencies as land is released through the Core Strategy.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2011 - March 2016</p> <p>AC</p>			
<p>2.2 Finalise and gain approval of policy for the provision of affordable housing within Core Strategy and a subsequent SPD to guide potential developers upon the Council's requirements for the provision of affordable housing within growth areas.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>MD</p>			
<p>2.3 Work with RSLs to develop a New Affordable Rent Strategy to maximise their ability to apply rent levels that increase their borrowing power to enable them to deliver more affordable housing.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>December 2011</p> <p>AC</p>			
<p><b>CHALLENGE – Embed 'fit for purpose' strategic arrangements to enable delivery of affordable housing.</b></p>				
<p>2.4 Monitor and review implementation of local investment</p>	<p>April 2011 -</p>	<p>12 monthly</p>		

<p>plan (LIP) with HCA and pursue opportunities for use of publicly owned land.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>March 2016</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>review</p>	
<p>2.5 Work with partner RSLs to develop agreed lettings procedures for both New Affordable Rents and Intermediate Rent products.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Sept 2011</p> <p>AC /AG</p>	<p>Develop a Tenancy Strategy with RP's relating to the policy for New Affordable Rents, and the term of these tenancies.</p>	
<p>2.6 Extend the review of the Home Choice Plus allocations policy to take into account changes in legislation.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>Sept 2011</p> <p>AG</p>	<p>Report to Cabinet by June 2011</p>	
<p>2.7 To carry out annual satisfaction surveys of Home Choice Plus.</p> <p>L</p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>AG</p>	<p>Send results to PMB by May 2011</p>	
<p>2.8 Work with developing RSLs to formulate local lettings plans to ensure sustainability of new developments in compliance with equalities legislation.</p>	<p>Sept 2011</p>	<p>Develop a local lettings plan for Perry Fields as a format for applications for future</p>	



H		AC / AG	developments.		
H	2.9 In response to proposed legislation that is likely to give increased flexibility upon who qualifies for inclusion upon housing waiting lists, work with partners to formulate a policy for Cabinet approval.	March 2013.  AC			
<b>CHALLENGE – Develop provision to meet the diverse needs of the community.</b>					
H	2.10 Work with Planners, RSLs and developers to deliver a multi tenure Extra Care Housing scheme within town centre or other central location.	Sept 2012  AC	Achieving a viable scheme with developer/land owners.		
M	2.11 Analyse the outcomes of the Supporting People Strategic Review of key client groups.	March 2013  AG			
	2.12 Analyse results of updated Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment to guide provision of size, type and tenure of general needs housing requirements and maximise delivery opportunities through application of planning	March 2013			

policy. M	AC / AG		
<b>CHALLENGE – Ensure that the right commissioning partners are engaged and encouraged to invest in the District.</b>			
2.13 Enhance knowledge and data in respect of publicly owned land in the District that may be available for the delivery for affordable housing. H	March 2012 JB	Analysis of data currently held by County Council and HCA	
2.14 Continue to work with RHE, RSLs and Parish Councillors in rural locations where housing need has been established to enable and encourage development of proposals to provide appropriate levels of affordable accommodation. M	April 2011 - March 2016 AC / JB		
2.15 To support the RHE in approaching Parish Councils and in carrying out local community consultation to identify affordable housing needs in rural areas not previously surveyed. M	April 2011 - March 2016 AC / JB		
<b>CHALLENGE – undertake further research to bridge gaps in the strategic housing evidence base.</b>			

	<p><b>2.16 Analyse the results of the updated Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment and use results to inform policy development and investment decisions.</b> M</p>	<p>March 2012</p>	<p>Strategic Housing Officer to attend Commissioning meetings.</p>	
	<p><b>2.17 Analyse the results of the Supporting People Strategic Reviews and use results to inform policy development and investment decisions.</b> M</p>	<p>March 2013 AG</p>		





**GOAL 3 – IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF EXISTING HOMES**





KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

NPI 187 - Tackling Fuel Poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with an energy efficiency rating of

a) Less than 35 (10/11 Target = 7.3)

b ) Greater than 65 (10/11 target 37.6%)				
Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<b>CHALLENGE - Improve the property standards (inc energy efficiency) across tenures using all of the tools at our disposal.</b>				
3.1 Develop the Uniform housing IT module to generate a routine inspection of previously inspected privately let properties. M	Sept 2011 KSF	Private Sector Team Leader to take forward		
3.2 Work with Worcestershire local authorities to develop a consistent approach to working with private sector landlords to improve the overall condition of accommodation. M	April 2011 - March 2016 KSF			
3.3 Re-inspect and review Fire Risk Assessment at Burcot Hostel. H	Sept 2011 KSF / JB	Private Sector Team Leader to complete assessment.		

<p><b>3.4 Seek authority to allocate a proportion of private sector renewal funding to the West Midlands Kick Start Scheme to enable continuation of a Worcestershire Kick Start Equity Release Scheme service.</b></p> <p><b>H</b></p>	<p>June 2011</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Approval of a Private Sector Renewal Capital Budget continuing to be made available.</p>	
<p><b>3.5 Review results of BRE private sector condition survey (if Kick Start funding bid is successful). Alternatively, review options/funding to update data.</b></p> <p><b>L</b></p>	<p>Sept 2011</p> <p>KSF</p>	<p>WM Kick Start being successful in bidding for funding for BRE Survey.</p>	
<p><b>3.6 BDC to lead on the development of countywide framework procurement of level access showers and stair lifts for inclusion in the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service SLA.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>KSF</p>		
<p><b>3.7 Finalise enforcement policy and develop report for Cabinet approval.</b></p> <p><b>L</b></p>	<p>Dec 2012</p> <p>KSF</p>		

<p>3.8 Investigate the resource implications of developing a Lettings Agents training programme.</p> <p>L</p>	<p>April 2012</p> <p>KSF / JD</p>			
<p>3.9 Undertake a procurement exercise with other Worcestershire local authorities to review the provision of energy efficiency advice service.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>March 2012</p> <p>KSF</p>			
<p><b>CHALLENGE – Attract investment to help improve property standards including energy efficiency.</b></p>				
<p>3.10 Work with Worcestershire local authorities to develop partnership arrangements with private industry to provide greater levels of funding and way to improve property standards.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>March 2013</p> <p>KSF</p>			
<p><b>CHALLENGE – Support households to take responsibility for improving their homes and reducing fuel poverty.</b></p>				
<p>3.11 Develop an online House Doctor Scheme whereby self help advice and assistance can be accessed by home-owners or tenants on the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Energy Efficiency</li> </ul>	<p>April 2012</p>	<p>Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using</p>		



<p>■ Home Maintenance</p> <p>M</p>	KSF	Homelessness Grant	
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**GOAL 4 – PROVIDING HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT**

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS





Number of households prevented from becoming homeless as a result of housing case work. (10/11 target = 125)





Number of homeless households to whom a duty to rehouse was accepted. (10/11 target == below 100)

Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<p><b>CHALLENGE – Manage financial reductions to the Supporting People programme whilst continuing to meet housing related support needs in amore targeted way.</b></p>				
<p>4.1 Pursue delivery of multi tenure Extra Care Housing scheme within town centre or other central location.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Sept 2012</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Achieving a viable scheme with developer/land owner</p>		
<p>4.2 Working with SP, St Basils and neighbouring north Worcestershire authorities to investigate options for providing appropriate housing for</p>	<p>Sept 2012</p> <p>AG / JB</p>			

clients with chaotic lifestyles. L						
<b>CHALLENGE – To mitigate risks of increasing levels of homelessness and to address the needs of those who become homeless.</b>						
4.3 Investigate how we might support improvements in the housing options service. H	April 2012 AG / JB	Review Enhanced Housing Options package with Abritas Sept 2011				
4.4 Work with bdht officers to review and if appropriate update written protocols and procedures relating to the homelessness service. M	April 2012 AG / JB					
4.5 Resolve procedures regarding private tenants suffering illegal eviction policy by making contact with Redditch to compare. H	Sept 2012 JB	Housing Enabling and Monitoring Officer and Private Sector Team Leader to take forward				
4.6 Continue to oversee and assess clients for eligibility for Mortgage Rescue service and monitor those who are threatened with re-	April 2012 AG / JD	Outcomes to be reported to Cabinet annually.				



<p>possession. H</p>				
<p>4.7 Review the outcomes of the Teenage Parent Family Support worker pilot scheme and make recommendations as appropriate. L</p>	<p>Oct 2011 AG</p>	<p>Strategic Housing Officer to attend meetings with Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Manager</p>		
<p>4.8 Re-assess the need to carry out a Rough Sleeper Count in co-ordination with neighbouring authorities . M</p>	<p>Sept 2011 JB / AG</p>			
<p>4.9 Look to actively encourage the conversion of properties into HMO's to meet the predicted increased need due to changes in housing benefit. H</p>	<p>March 2016 JD / KSF</p>			
<p>4.10 Support pilot STAMP scheme with St Basils and review continuation of service subject to funding. L</p>	<p>April 2012 AG / JD / JB</p>	<p>First sessions delivered by Oct 2011</p>		

<p>4.11 Review outcomes and performance of Homelessness Prevention Services funded from Homelessness Grant and develop annual report to Cabinet with recommendations for schemes prioritised for future funding.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>January 2012</p> <p>AC / AG</p>			
<p>4.12 Continue to support the Foyer Steering Group and provide input to the allocation and management of the scheme.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>April 2011 – March 2016</p> <p>JB</p>			
<p><b>CHALLENGE – To provide equal access of opportunity to affordable housing and other housing options.</b></p>				
<p>4.13 Pursue delivery of multi tenure Extra Care Housing scheme within town centre or other central location.</p> <p>H</p>	<p>Sept 2012</p> <p>AC</p>	<p>Achieving a viable scheme with developer/land owner</p>		
<p>4.14 Continue to support people to access choice based lettings, particularly older people and people with support needs.</p> <p>M</p>	<p>April 2011 - March 2016</p> <p>AG / JD</p>			

4.15 Review full range of housing service literature and website. M	March 2012 JD/JB			
4.16 Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on any service changes and as per equality impact assessment timetable. M	March 2016 AG / JB / KSF / JD			
<b>CHALLENGE – To embed personalisation and the choice and control agenda within housing service provision</b>				
4.17 Work with SP through the Commissioning Body to guide delivery of affordable housing in accordance with special needs identified. H	March 2016 AC			





## **UNDERPINNING GOALS**

### KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

Number of Rough Sleepers – (10/11 target Maintain rough sleeping in the zero – 10 category)

Use of temporary accommodation (Reduce use of temporary accommodation by 50% from 2004 – 2010 – 10/11 target = <20)					
DFG – Number of weeks - Referral to completion for BDHT and Private DFG's (referred after 1.04.07) broken down into 3 categories. (10/11 Targets – Cat 1 - 34 Wks, Cat 2 - 38Wks, Cat 3 – 38 Wks)					
Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status	
<b>CHALLENGE - To ensure that our plans contribute to the development of sustainable communities and economic success for Worcestershire having regard to the themes and cross cutting themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy, both within new housing developments and our regeneration activity</b>					
U.1 Continue to support regular meetings of North Worcestershire Delivery Group and provide representation at Place Shaping and Housing Theme Groups. H	April 2011 - March 2016  AC				
U.2 Update Portfolio Holder (as Homelessness Champion) on quarterly basis re: homelessness presentations and use of temp accom. H	April 2011 - March 2016  AC				
U.3 To continue to support the Positive Mental Health LSP project group to raise awareness of mental health issues and how these might	April 2011 - March 2016				

lead to homelessness. L	AG				
U.4 Annual Housing Bulletin update for Members. M	April 2011 - March 2016 AC				
<b>CHALLENGE – To adopt a strategic commissioning approach, including identification of needs; gap analysis; prioritisation; outcome based commissioning; monitoring and review, to ensure the right solutions are provided.</b>					
U.5 Through CHOG ensure opportunities are utilised to gain VFM solutions through consideration of joint commissioning where appropriate. H	April 2011 - March 2016 AC				
<b>CHALLENGE – To embrace the diversity that exists within Worcestershire and ensure that we plan to meet the diverse needs of our communities.</b>					
U.6 Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on any service changes and as per equality impact assessment timetable M	April 2011 - March 2016 AG				
<b>CHALLENGE – To ensure that services are delivered efficiently balancing performance, customer satisfaction and cost.</b>					

<p><b>U.7 Carry out customer satisfaction surveys on front line services.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>April 2011 - March 2016</p> <p>AG/JB/JD/KSF</p>			
<p><b>U.8 Finalise identification of customer service standards specific to housing services.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>September 2011</p> <p>JD</p>			
<p><b>U.9 Maintain set of key business plan performance indicators on a quarterly basis.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>April 2011 - March 2016</p> <p>JB</p>			
<p><b>U.10 Provide officer support and input to the development of a new specification in preparation for the re-letting of the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service from 2014.</b></p> <p><b>M</b></p>	<p>June 2014</p> <p>AC / KSF</p>			

The background of the cover is a collage of images featuring a large construction crane against a cloudy sky. The crane is the central focus, with its lattice structure and cables clearly visible. The sky is a mix of light and dark clouds, creating a dramatic atmosphere. The collage consists of several overlapping rectangular panels, some showing the crane and others showing the sky or parts of the crane's structure.

# Worcestershire Local Investment Plan

Prepared by Regeneris  
Consulting and BBP  
Regeneration

# Worcestershire Place Shaping Group

## Worcestershire Local Investment Plan



March 2011  
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# Contents

<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Purpose and Role of the Worcestershire LIP</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>3. Policy Context for the LIP</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>4. Worcestershire's Story</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>5. Strategic Priorities for Worcestershire</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>6. Funding Delivery</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>7. Working with the HCA</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>8. Consultation and Engagement</b>	<b>74</b>

# 1. Introduction

1.1 This is the first Local Investment Plan (LIP) for Worcestershire. It is a partnership document prepared through dialogue between Worcestershire's local authorities, Registered Providers (RPs) and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to identify shared priorities for housing, regeneration, economic development and supporting infrastructure.

1.2 The newly established Place Shaping group, a thematic sub-group of the Worcestershire Partnership, has taken responsibility for preparing the LIP and will guide subsequent iterations. The Place Shaping group brings together representatives of the six district local authorities, Worcestershire County Council, the HCA and Registered Providers.

1.3 The document is structured in the following way.

- Section 2 sets out the **purpose and role** of the LIP
- Section 3 describes the rapidly **changing policy context** for investment in housing and regeneration, which will influence what partners are able to achieve in the coming years
- Section 4 summarises **Worcestershire's story**, highlighting key characteristics of the county which have shaped the content of the LIP
- Section 5 outlines **key strategic priorities** for Worcestershire spanning economic development, regeneration, housing and infrastructure
- Section 6 sets out what we see as some of the principal **delivery challenges** and how we are proposing to respond to them
- Section 7 provides summary information about the **local priority schemes, including those identified for potential investment by the HCA** in the period 2011 to 2015. This is based on a separate and comprehensive list of schemes in each of the six constituent local authority districts in Worcestershire which partners will continue to refine over the coming weeks and months
- Section 8 summarises the **consultation and engagement** that has informed the development of the Plan.

The LIP is **by necessity a living document**. It has been developed during a period of considerable change in the housing, regeneration and economic development policy landscape both nationally and locally, the effects of which are still emerging. In a climate of uncertainty, partners wish to retain the flexibility to adapt priorities in line with further developments in policy. Critically, in a public sector funding environment in which it is becoming more challenging to secure the necessary investment, partners must also ensure that they allow themselves the maximum possible flexibility to develop and implement creative solutions in support of their objectives. This document has been produced with the support of Regeneris Consulting and BBP Regeneration.

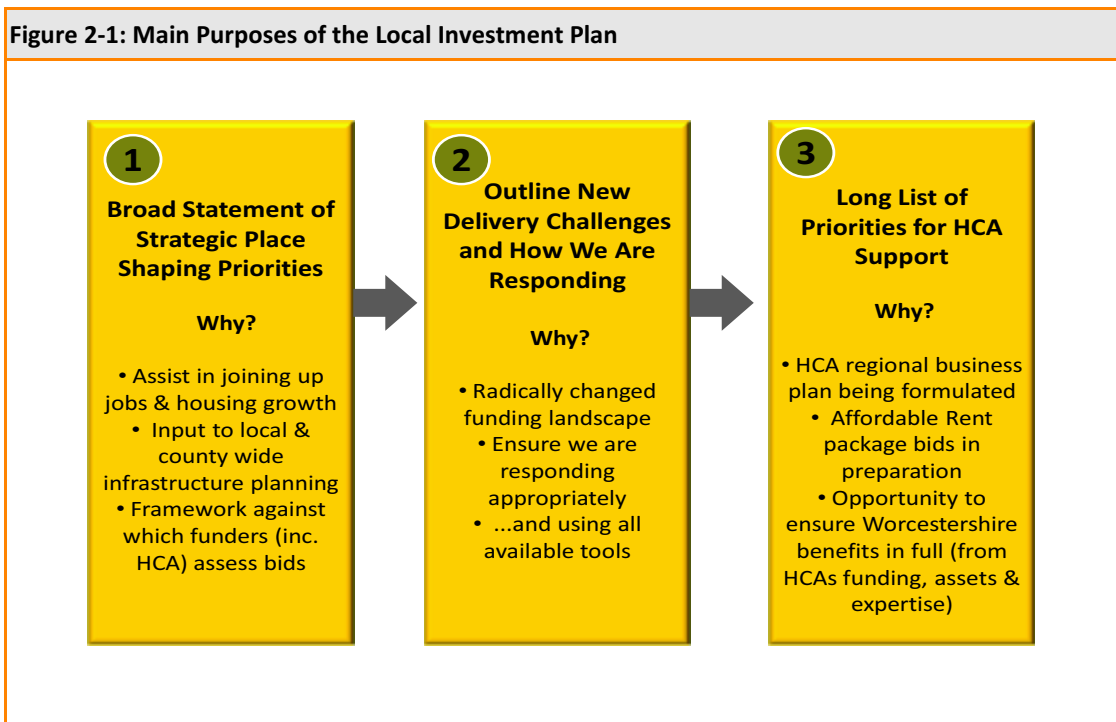
## 2. Purpose and Role of the Worcestershire LIP

### Background to Local Investment Plans

- 2.1 The HCA's *Single Conversation* process was launched in early 2010 to streamline engagement and negotiation about investment between the Agency and local partners. The Local Investment Plan (LIP) initiative was the most significant manifestation of the Single Conversation, devised to generate investment plans followed by Local Investment Agreements (LIAs) setting out how the HCA, local authorities and other partner organisations would contribute to the delivery of local, regional and national housing priorities.
- 2.2 A first wave of LIPs was produced during 2010. To different degrees, these documents provided statements of priorities to enable areas to do business with the HCA. But they are also usefully serving a wider range of purposes, including support for funding bids from a range of sources and a means of encouraging stronger joint working across local authority boundaries at a time when funding pressures are already steering local government in this direction.
- 2.3 Since the 2010 election there have been significant changes in the policy context for housing, economic development and regeneration in the UK. While the nature and extent of these changes is still becoming clear, the HCA has signalled a commitment to continue to work with LIPs in its business planning process. It is clear that the HCA will find it more difficult to invest in an area that does not have a LIP prepared.
- 2.4 The formal guidance on the production of LIPs has been pared back and they are not now expected to be followed by more detailed LIAs. In the future LIPs are now more of a voluntary tool for local authorities that find it a useful way to develop and deliver their local investment priorities. Their key function will be to align investment, land assets and other funding streams.
- 2.5 Along with changes in the policy landscape, the production of LIPs is also being heavily influenced by significant reductions to the HCA's budget and the refocusing of its investment priorities onto a narrower range of objectives. These narrower objectives focus around affordable housing with a clear focus on the HCA's new affordable rent product, the provision of decent homes and some continued work on wider place making activities. The LIPs will now be as much about how best to creatively engage with the broader resources offered by the HCA – its expertise, influence and land holdings – as it will be about the more limited pot of grant funding it will provide in future years.
- 2.6 The HCA is also going through a process of restructuring which has implications for the operational area in which Worcestershire is located. The county is included in the new, larger Midlands area. This means that priorities for Worcestershire will be considered amongst those of a broader range of areas than previously in the HCA's business planning process.

## The Role of the Worcestershire Local Investment Plan

2.7 Partners in Worcestershire have decided to push forward with a LIP. There is real value in using this process to help develop priorities for place shaping, feed into the planning of future infrastructure investment for the county and secure support from the HCA, and importantly other public sector bodies, to deliver these priorities.



2.8 As shown above, this initial LIP for Worcestershire is positioned as a document that will:

- First, provide a **broad statement of place shaping priorities** to inform the work of Worcestershire LSP's Place Shaping Group. It will serve to connect together established priorities for housing and employment growth in the county, and will be an important input into county wide infrastructure planning. The LIP will also serve as a framework against which external funders will assess the strategic fit of any funding bids which are submitted to them.
- Second, set out the **new delivery challenges** that are now emerging in a rapidly changing policy and funding landscape for housing, economic development and regeneration. The LIP will start to identify potential solutions and behaviours to ensure we respond to new funding mechanisms, secure the better use of publicly owned assets and explore new ways to leverage investment from the private sector.
- Third, provide those assembling bids for HCA's new affordable rent investment programme and related funding opportunities with a statement of **specific priorities to be considered for support**. This will enable the county to feature prominently in the regional business plan for the Midlands and access a fair share of resources.

2.9 On this final objective, a strong relationship between local authorities, Registered Providers and the HCA will be critical in making best use of new funding opportunities. The focus of the LIP in this respect is on what Worcestershire partners can seek to achieve over the next four years (2011-15), in line with the next cycle of HCA's expenditure planning.

## Constraints and Risks

- 2.10 In deciding to proceed with the LIP at this juncture, Worcestershire's local authorities have clearly recognised a number of constraining forces and risks in developing a document of this nature:
- National policy uncertainty – Key national policies on housing, regeneration, economic development and planning are still evolving. This means continued uncertainty about how priorities for Worcestershire will fit with national policy drivers, and how the government will target national funding resources in the future in the context of public sector austerity.
  - Differences in local planning cycles – Across Worcestershire, local authorities are at different stages in their progress towards core strategies and other local development framework documents. In most localities, core strategies and important development plan documents (around site allocations, Section 106 policies) are not yet in place. Only Wyre Forest's has so far been adopted. There are also critical elements of planning taking place at county level (Local Transport Plan 3, Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan) and which will have a key role to play in identifying investment priorities. The LTP 3 draft has now been published, while a first draft of the Infrastructure Delivery Plan is scheduled for Autumn 2011.
  - A fragile market – Despite signs of recovery in the housing and commercial property sectors, uncertainty about public policy and funding is likely to feed uncertainty in the market place. This will affect land values, the commercial viability of developments and the availability of Registered Provider and private sector investment. In turn, this will affect the deliverability of LIP priorities, and the document needs to be flexible enough to accommodate the need for change.
  - Information deficits – Many potential housing and regeneration schemes across Worcestershire are at an early stage of their development and lack viability statements, detailed masterplans and planning permissions. In addition, changes to the funding landscape mean that many projects previously deemed deliverable require further analysis, reconfiguration and new approaches. While this information deficit alone should not be grounds to decide not to pursue a priority, it further adds to the challenge of making a robust case for investment.
- 2.11 These challenges and risks for the LIP all underline the need for a document which is **continually evolving**. Priorities are not set in stone at this initial stage, and there must be scope both to add to the list and to modify or even set aside priorities over the next few years as partners further develop their investment plans and new opportunities and challenges emerge.

### 3. Policy Context for the LIP

#### Key Points

- New emphasis on neighbourhood and community involvement in planning set out in the 2010 Decentralisation and Localism Bill expected to influence the type, location and scale of housing, economic development and regeneration schemes in Worcestershire.
- Significant reforms to social housing policy including the abolition of lifetime tenancies and new powers for local authorities to determine who should qualify for social housing
- New affordable rent option to be introduced for Registered Providers. Set at a higher level than social rent, up to 80% of local market rent.
- Reorganisation of the HCA's operational areas, with a much larger Midlands region extending from north Lincolnshire to the borders of Buckinghamshire in the south.
- Majority of future HCA resources to be allocated to new affordable rent housing, with more limited funding to improve stock and invest in regeneration.
- Closure of RDAs represents a significant change in the way economic development and regeneration will be organised and funded. New local enterprise partnerships (LEPs) are expected to take on some of responsibilities of RDAs for economic growth and enterprise development.
- Proposals for new financial mechanisms (Tax Increment Finance, New Homes Bonus) for localities have potential to be source of funding to support capital investment in housing, economic development and regeneration.
- Regional Growth Fund of £1.4 billion (2011-14) available for investment to create private sector employment in areas most vulnerable to public sector funding cuts. Potential to provide sources of funding for investment in housing, economic development and regeneration schemes in Worcestershire.
- Strategic priorities identified in LIP are driven by Worcestershire Economic Strategy, LEP proposals, Worcestershire Housing Strategy and its Sustainable Community Strategy. District level economic development, regeneration, community and housing strategies are also important contributors to LIP priorities. The Housing Strategy will set a number of quantitative targets for housing development for the period through to 2016.
- Strategic Infrastructure Delivery Plan currently being developed in Worcestershire. This will play a critical part in enabling future housing development and wider regeneration to take place, and LIP priorities need to feed into this process.

- 3.1 The context for the LIP is set by a range of national and local policy drivers. This context is still taking shape during a period of significant change in housing, economic development, regeneration and planning policy, extending from the way that local planning decisions will be made to the type of housing that will in future be eligible for national funding.

#### National Policy

#### Localism and the Big Society

- 3.2 The development and implementation of Worcestershire's LIP is taking place in a rapidly changing policy and funding landscape for local government. Publication of the Decentralisation and Decentralisation and Localism Bill in December 2010 has signalled the Government's aspiration to shift more responsibility for decision making to localities and neighbourhoods, in the context of a particularly tough financial settlement for local authorities. Several aspects of the localism agenda have important implications for the Worcestershire Local Investment Plan including:

- Revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) – Until now, the RSS determined the level of new homes and the broad provision of employment sites needed in an area. The Government’s decision to revoke them puts new onus on Worcestershire’s local authorities and their partners to determine the quantity, type and location of houses and jobs required in their areas. This is particularly important in the context of the emerging core strategies for Worcestershire, since they will be expected to set new targets for housing, employment land and other key elements of spatial planning in a locality. Over time, these decisions will need to be reflected in the priorities set by the Worcestershire LIP.
- Neighbourhood planning powers – The Decentralisation and Localism Bill introduces new rights for neighbourhoods to determine future development (eg. the suggestion of a community right to build where a majority is in favour), as well as the potential for parish and neighbourhood councils to development and submit plans for their areas. As it evolves over time, this role for neighbourhoods and communities would be expected to have a bearing on the priorities set by the LIP. Housing schemes, major regeneration schemes and other developments are set to be more strongly influenced by these new planning powers, both in terms of the development sought by an area and the constraints and restrictions that neighbourhoods and communities may seek.

3.3 The Decentralisation and Localism Bill is a key pillar of the Government’s Big Society initiative, which comprises measures intended to give local communities a bigger role in the design, funding and delivery of local services. To this end, the bill will introduce new powers for communities to take ownership of local assets, changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy to enable a larger proportion of receipts to be directed to neighbourhoods and the right for a range of organisations to bid to take over the running of services. Although detail on the implementation of these changes is yet to emerge, they imply a more decisive input for neighbourhoods in planning and development decisions in their area. In turn, this would be expected to feed through into the LIP.

3.4 Worcestershire has a well established infrastructure of community and enterprise partnerships on which to build as the UK moves towards localism and big society principles. These extend from the district and county level local strategic partnerships through an extensive network of parish and town councils. They also include public-private collaborative bodies such as the ReWyre Regeneration initiative, a form of engagement which is expected to become an increasingly important part of local governance.

### **Role of the Homes and Communities Agency and Social Housing Reforms**

3.5 Following the Comprehensive Spending Review it has been confirmed that the HCA will be retained as a smaller ‘enabling and investment’ agency. HCA has outlined that investment will be focused in 3 broad areas:

- Affordable housing (£4.5 billion over the period between 2011 and 2015)
- Improving existing housing stock
- Land and regeneration – completing existing long term commitments, realising benefits from RDA land assets, working in partnership with other public agencies to

deliver.

- 3.6 The HCA will from now on work across five operating areas (excluding London). The new single Midlands region is a much larger entity than its predecessor West and East Midlands regions. The implication for Worcestershire is that funding for the Midlands region will be distributed amongst a much broader array of organisations than under the previous organisational structure.
- 3.7 The HCA has indicated that its future investment will primarily be focused on: affordable rent housing, mortgage rescue package, Gypsies and Travellers, the Places of Change programme and empty homes. A substantial majority of future funding is expected to be allocated to the new affordable rent programme.
- 3.8 Whilst details are still emerging on the enabling role the HCA may be able to play, this is likely to include some or all of the following:
- Support and technical advice
  - Project management of large scale planning applications
  - Economic appraisal tools and procurement panels
  - New models of public, private and third sector investment
  - Maximising the use of public land through the emerging Local Land Initiative (LLI).
- 3.9 As part of its broader package of housing policy changes, the government has embarked on a programme of social housing reforms. Its stated aims in reforming the social housing system are to:
- Make the system fairer, striking a balance between the needs of new and existing tenants
  - Ensure that social housing support is better focused on those who need it most
  - Give local authorities and Registered Providers new powers so that they can make the best use of their housing stock.
- 3.10 The reforms set out a new approach to affordable housing which aims to allow greater flexibility and make public investment go further. From 2011, Registered Providers will have an additional Affordable Rent option to offer households. Affordable Rent will be set at a higher level than social rent, up to a maximum of 80% of gross local market rents. It will give registered providers the flexibility to increase the revenue that is available to them through rents – which can then generate additional capacity and fund the delivery of new affordable homes. The government has stated that grant funding (including funding through the HCA) from now on will primarily target this new affordable rent product.
- 3.11 The HCA published its framework for the Affordable Homes Programme in February 2011. The framework sets out how new affordable housing development will be funded over the next 4 years and the delivery mechanisms for the new Affordable Rent product. At the centre of the framework is a requirement for Registered Providers to submit packages of



proposals for which grant funding to support development is needed. Proposals are expected to set out the volume, location and type of stock to be developed, how existing stock might be converted to Affordable Rent stock or other tenure types, and how developments will deliver local priorities including those identified by Local Investment Plans. There is also emphasis on the creative use of assets including public land holdings and funding mechanisms (eg. Registered Providers' borrowing, New Homes Bonus) to support development. The deadline for the submission of package proposals is 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011, and partners across Worcestershire are now working together to assemble bids.

- 3.12 Changes to social housing will also include measures to create a new local authority tenancy with a minimum fixed term of 2 years. This is expected to operate alongside secure and introductory tenancies. Both local authorities and Registered Providers will be able to let social housing on fixed term tenancies, rather than the current lifetime tenancy model. Local authorities will also be given new freedom to determine who should qualify for social housing waiting lists. Priorities for social housing in the LIP will need to reflect these changes.
- 3.13 A key element of the changes is the requirement for local authorities to develop tenancy strategies which set the objectives that Registered Providers will in turn be expected to reflect in their individual tenancy management policies. These strategies need to be completed 12 months after the relevant sections of the Localism Bill enter into force. However, partners in Worcestershire have recognised the need to give Registered Providers an early steer on local tenancy strategies in view of the May deadline for the submission of package proposals to the HCA.
- 3.14 Alongside funding for the Affordable Rent product, the HCA has made indicative allocations to four other elements of the programme: Mortgage Rescue Scheme, Homelessness Change Programme, Traveller Pitch Funding and Empty Homes. Registered Providers have the opportunity to demonstrate how they might provide this wider range of products as part of their package proposals.
- 3.15 Partners in Worcestershire are already compiling data on potential demand for mortgage rescue in the County which will inform how lead providers and local authorities manage allocations over the next 3 years. The level of funding available for Mortgage Rescue is likely to support fewer completions than has been the case in Worcestershire over the past 2-3 years. This puts greater onus on the development of a strategy to prioritise households, and work on this is now underway.
- 3.16 Partners are also considering their approach to the availability of Empty Homes funding, with the HCA having indicated that £100 million is earmarked to address this problem from April 2012. Further information on this scheme is expected shortly, but Registered Providers have already been asked to signal their interest in bringing empty homes back into use in preparing package proposals.

### **Economic Development and Regeneration Policies**

- 3.17 The second half of 2010 has been marked by a series of significant changes to the government's approach to economic development and regeneration. Responsibility for economic development and regeneration is now shifting from regional organisations to local

partnerships, with a bigger role sought for the private sector in new governance arrangements. This is changing the context for the delivery of the LIP, particularly the mechanisms through which partners will set objectives and secure funding to deliver them.

3.18 For the LIP, the key changes are:

- Local Growth White Paper. October 2010 saw the publication of *Local Growth: Realising Every Place's Potential* which provided further clarity about many of the government's proposals for economic development and regeneration. Along with detail on the LEPs and the closure of the RDAs, the White Paper set out how the government proposes to provide localities with new financial incentives to promote growth. These may have a significant part to play in the way that local authorities and their partners are able to fund housing and regeneration schemes in future. Of particular importance are:
  - Tax Increment Finance. The White Paper outlined new powers for local authorities to borrow against future additional income generated from local business rates. This funding could be used to support key infrastructure and other capital investments, and may prove in time to be a source of funding for LIP priorities.
  - New Homes Bonus. From April 2011, local planning authorities will receive payments based on the annual net increase in dwellings in the area, with the level of payments related to Council Tax bands. This has the potential to contribute to the pooling of resources across several local authority areas.
- Regional Growth Fund (RGF). The White Paper also set out proposals for the £1.4 billion Regional Growth Fund which will operate between 2011 and 2014. This fund has been designed to support the creation of private sector employment in those areas of the country likely to face the most substantial fall in public sector employment. The emphasis is on the direct involvement of the private sector in formulating bids to the RGF, and LEPs are expected to be among the organisations developing proposals. The RGF has the potential to support a wide range of priorities identified in the LIP.
- Abolition of Regional Development Agencies – The imminent closure of Advantage West Midlands and the other Regional Development Agencies is intended to further shift the focus of sub-national economic development and regeneration policy towards localities. Advantage West Midlands has been a key source of funding for economic development and regeneration in the county.
- New Local Enterprise Partnerships. In September 2010, local authorities and business leaders were asked to submit their proposals for new Local Enterprise Partnerships that better represent functional economic areas, and there are expectations that LEPs will take a policy lead on economic development and regeneration issues. The expectation is that LEPs will take on some of the responsibilities previously exercised by the Regional Development Agencies, although the position in relation to funding and assets is not yet clear.

## Worcestershire Policy and Strategy

- 3.19 This initial LIP is complementary to a web of policies and strategies that are in place across Worcestershire.

### County Housing Strategy

- 3.20 The LIP is identified as a supporting mechanism to enable delivery of the emerging Worcestershire Housing Strategy, which is expected to be completed in early 2011. The vision in the draft Housing Strategy is a simple and persuasive one: *The Right Home, At The Right Time, In The Right Place*. This is largely consistent with the key messages in the individual district housing strategies which have been developed over the past decade, but promotes a cross authority/joint approach to service delivery and highlights the importance of striking a balance between sub-regional needs and opportunities and those of local communities.
- 3.21 Partners have identified four primary goals in the draft strategy to which LIP priorities will be expected to make a key contribution:
- Better use of existing homes - To maximise the use of the existing housing stock by ensuring that a high percentage of homes are suitably occupied by 2016
  - Delivering new homes - Enable 1,830 new market and 450 affordable homes which meet local needs in terms of property type, size, tenure and affordability by 2011
  - Improving the condition of existing homes - Increase the number of existing homes across all tenures meeting the Decent Homes Standard by a target percentage by 2016 to improve peoples' quality of life
  - Providing housing related support -Increase the social benefit from housing related support by a target percentage by 2016 to meet the changing and growing needs of vulnerable people.

### Sustainable Community Strategy

- 3.22 Worcestershire's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) *Partnership Towards Excellence* sets the overarching strategic vision for Worcestershire and identifies the activity that partners will need to carry out to achieve it between 2008 and 2013. The SCS plays a key part in setting the framework for the LIP, since its key purpose is to improve the quality of life for all Worcestershire's communities and to make the county a great place to live, work and visit.
- 3.23 The SCS vision is of *a county with safe, cohesive, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a valued and cherished environment*.
- 3.24 The Local Strategic Partnership, which has overall responsibility for the strategy, has set out six themes which will guide the actions of partners and the outcomes they are seeking to achieve. While the LIP contributes to all 6 themes, it has particularly significant contributions to make to achieving outcomes for the health, economic success and strong communities themes.

Table 3-1: Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy Themes and Priority Outcomes	
Theme	Priority Outcomes (most relevant to LIP highlighted)
Communities that are safe and feel safe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities</li> <li>To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol</li> </ul>
A better environment for today and tomorrow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To protect and improve Worcestershire's natural and historic environment</li> <li>To promote the re-use, recycling and recovery of waste</li> <li>To address issues of water quality, supply, and consumption and land drainage in Worcestershire</li> <li>To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources</li> </ul>
Economic success that is shared by all	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To promote technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the county</li> <li>To support the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development (in particular transport infrastructure) and establish Worcester as a growth point</li> <li>To remove barriers to employment and improve skills</li> <li>To ensure that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels</li> </ul>
Improve health and well being	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support adults to lead healthier lifestyles</li> <li>To reduce health inequalities</li> <li>To improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness</li> <li>To improve mental health and wellbeing</li> </ul>
Meeting the needs of children and young people	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles</li> <li>To identify and deal effectively with bullying and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it</li> <li>To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people</li> <li>To ensure children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities</li> </ul>
Stronger communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire</li> <li>To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all</li> <li>To support effective volunteering that is accessible to all</li> <li>To reduce income deprivation including child and pensioner poverty</li> <li>To deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network</li> </ul>

3.25 The Worcestershire Partnership has agreed to move to a single Sustainable Community Strategy for the County that will run from 2011. Revision of the strategy is currently taking place and future updates of the LIP will need to reflect the themes and priorities agreed by the Partnership.

### Worcestershire Economic Strategy

3.26 The LIP has an important supporting contribution to make to the delivery of the refreshed Worcestershire Economic Strategy (2010-20). The strategy sets out a long term vision and

focus for economic development and regeneration within the county:

*In ten years time, technology-led growth will have contributed to the sustainable development of Worcestershire and strengthened its role as an economic driver for the region – acting as a catalyst for all sectors of the economy and areas of the County to benefit and providing well paid and highly skilled jobs and high quality of life for residents*

3.27 The strategy sets out three strategic objectives:

- Business: to support the development of a dynamic and diverse business base through engagement with existing businesses and encouraging growth of new businesses
- Place: Supporting the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development especially transport, and continue supporting Worcester as an accessible West Midlands Growth Point
- People: To enhance employability levels removing barriers to employment and improving skills.

3.28 There are a number of important spatial dimensions to the strategy, highlighting:

- Areas of market failure and disadvantage – Rural Regeneration Zone
- Concentrations of knowledge assets – Central Technology Belt
- Strategic Growth Point– Worcester City, which is identified as a key economic development priority
- Towns undergoing economic restructuring – Kidderminster, Redditch
- Larger towns providing a focus for economic activity – Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Malvern
- Market towns as a focus for rural regeneration – Pershore, Evesham, Bewdley, Stourport, Tenbury Wells, Upton-on-Severn.

3.29 While the strategy recognises that Worcestershire’s economic strength lies in its diversity, it recognises that the recession has had a deep impact on the county’s economy, and that recovery has been slow and modest. Cuts in public funding following CSR 2010 are expected to prolong the effects of recession, given the role of the public sector as a major employer and buyer of goods and services in Worcestershire.

3.30 The strategy recognises that the recession has an impact on housing and regeneration in Worcestershire. The number of new housing starts has fallen significantly and it is noted that a failure to meet future housing need/demand, including affordable housing will have an impact on the county’s economy.

3.31 Priorities identified in the LIP have a potentially important part to play in ensuring that the county attracts and retains the skilled workforce it needs to sustain its business base. In broader terms, the LIP directly responds to the opportunities and needs identified in the

spatial dimension of the economic strategy.

## Local Enterprise Partnership

3.32 Worcestershire partners have successfully navigated the first stage in creating a new LEP for the county, having had its *Worcestershire Works* bid approved in December 2010. The bid set out the following priorities for the partnership:

- Deliver the strategic employment sites and related infrastructure (services, highways access, utilities etc) needed to secure sustainable economic growth and a low carbon economy. It has a strong focus on high technology and knowledge based industries eg. the early delivery of the Worcester Technology Park, Worcester Bosch facility and building on existing companies such as QinetiQ in Malvern.
- Ensure there is the right support for business start up, business growth, business retention and inward investment.
- Deliver the right infrastructure for businesses including broadband, improving access from the M5 to the Malvern Hills Science Park and QinetiQ, improvements to east west links and the A449.
- Invest in skills, ensuring that provision is responsive to business needs, and relevant to future growth and business opportunities.

3.33 While the precise role and function of LEPs is still emerging, the *Worcestershire Works* bid document sets out a number of commitments on housing and regeneration reflected in the LIP:

- Ensure an approach to strategic planning that is responsive to the aspirations of Worcestershire's communities and that helps to create a thriving environment for jobs and enterprise.
- Continue a proactive joint approach to housing, particularly on innovative approaches to affordable housing, with locally initiated schemes to meet local needs.

3.34 As the LEP develops its agenda, the delivery of LIP priorities should in turn have a significant role in enabling partners to create the conditions for the private sector to flourish in Worcestershire. In addition to *Worcestershire Works*, North Worcestershire has also become part of the Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, reflecting the strong economic ties across the boundaries of the component local authority areas. With major sites including Longbridge straddling the border of the two LEP areas, developments in Worcestershire and on the Birmingham/Solihull side of the boundary are treated as common investment priorities.

## Local Transport Plan 3

3.35 The efficiency and effectiveness of Worcestershire's existing transport infrastructure and priorities for future investment in transport are critical to the county's aspirations for housing and regeneration. Following a period of consultation, Worcestershire's LTP3 was

published in February 2011. It sets policies that will have a key part to play in the location, scale and type of development that takes place over the period from 2011 to 2026.

3.36 The LTP3 will be followed by a sequence of 5 year delivery plans. The County Council and its partners are clear that constraints on public funding for transport means tough choices about future investments, and the LTP3 points to the maintaining of existing transport infrastructure and services being the immediate priority for Worcestershire. The plan identifies five major schemes and packages that are being considered for inclusion which would absorb the full allocation of LTP funding and require additional investment to be realised. These cover measures to tackle current problems on the infrastructure network as well as measures to support future growth. They include:

- Evesham Abbey Bridge & Viaduct Replacement
- Worcester Transport Strategy - Phase 1
- Worcester Parkway Interchange
- Kidderminster Town Package
- Redditch Town Centre Package.

3.37 LTP3 policies will influence the location, type and scale of future housing developments in Worcestershire, as well as wider economic development and regeneration schemes. At the same time, many potential LIP investments will help to support the delivery of LTP3 objectives, whether through contributions secured through developments (eg. Section 106 agreements) or simply by encouraging living/working patterns that meet one or more of LTP3's objectives. The creation of the £560 million Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which will operate over a 4 year period to 2015, also has the potential to be an important source of investment for this type of initiative in Worcestershire.

### **Worcestershire Infrastructure Delivery Plan**

3.38 Worcestershire County Council is currently leading the preparation of a County wide infrastructure delivery plan, scheduled for completion in spring 2011. The delivery plan builds on work to comprehensively identify the county's infrastructure requirements, and will provide the framework for the prioritising and then the delivery of the full spectrum of infrastructure investment (energy, water, telecoms, waste, access, transport, social and community).

3.39 The LIP will feed into the final stages of preparing the county infrastructure delivery plan. As far as possible, partners must seek to ensure that the infrastructure needs of key priorities for housing and regeneration are captured in the plan. At the same time, reduced funding for investment infrastructure will in turn affect the deliverability of housing and regeneration schemes, and this will need to be reflected in the way that LIP priorities are taken forward.

### **Capital and Asset Pathfinder**

3.40 Worcestershire is one of several pilot areas for the national Capital and Asset Pathfinder

initiative. This initiative has been designed to enable partners to explore new ways of pooling budgets to secure efficiency savings, primarily through the better management of buildings and other assets. Partners have already undertaken a detailed asset mapping exercise, and the pathfinder may assist in identifying potential solutions to the use of publicly owned assets to support housing and regeneration schemes.

- 3.41 The Pathfinder is required by the Department for Communities and Local Government to complete a long term strategy to establish a coordinated approach to service delivery and asset management by public sector partners on an area wide basis over a 10 year period. The strategy will identify reductions in the portfolio of estate properties, environmental sustainability objectives, reductions in revenue costs and the potential to draw on capital receipts.

### Key District Policies and Strategies

- 3.42 The preparation of the LIP has been informed by an extensive range of district level policies and strategies agreed by partners in Bromsgrove, Malvern, Redditch, Wyre Forest, Worcester, and Wychavon. These provide the detail about specific local priorities for housing, regeneration and economic development, but also local planning policies relating to the scale, type and location of affordable, social rented and special needs

### Core Strategies

- 3.43 Core strategies set out the long term vision, objectives and key policies for development in Worcestershire. In the north, Wyre Forest district already has in place an adopted core strategy while Bromsgrove and Redditch will issue draft core strategies for consultation early in January 2011. The three south Worcestershire districts are in the process of completing the South Worcestershire Development Plan with preferred options scheduled to be issued in September 2011.
- 3.44 Of particular importance to the LIP will be the policies set out by core strategies on housing provision, approaches to affordable housing, regeneration priorities and commercial development. Priorities identified in the LIP will need to be consistent with policies set out in the core strategies, and the location, scale and characteristics of housing developments will be driven in part by local authority planning policies on developer contributions, the preferred composition of affordable housing schemes and the allocation of land for housing.
- 3.45 Local Area Action Plans (AAPs) and a number of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) have also informed the preparation of the LIP. They are essential to understanding the mix of development that local authorities are seeking to deliver in specific localities.

### Local Housing Strategies

- 3.46 In addition to the draft Worcestershire Housing Strategy, some local authorities have had in place district housing strategies which have informed both potential priorities for the LIP and their broader objectives for housing provision in their localities.
- 3.47 Much of the work of planning authorities on housing is underpinned by a substantial evidence base on the dynamics of local housing markets, housing needs and the availability



of land for future housing development. This has informed the preparation of the LIP and includes the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAAs), Housing Market Assessments (HMAs) and accessibility studies, together with a wider range of studies on employment land, retail provision etc.

### **Economic Development and Regeneration Strategies**

- 3.48 A key criterion in identifying priorities in the LIP has been their connection to key local economic development and regeneration priorities in each of the 6 Worcestershire districts. In some cases (eg. Bromsgrove Economic Development Strategy, Redditch Economic Development Strategy) these set objectives covering the entire district. In many other cases (eg. Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus, Worcester Library and History Centre project), these take the form of plans for specific places or sites in which housing and/or employment have a central part to play. Alongside priorities for short term investment, the LIP also captures long term investment priorities that partners have identified for particular localities.
- 3.49 For some of these schemes, initial investments in housing, with or without funding from the HCA, will help to unlock future development or ensure that a component of affordable housing is provided. However, at this stage, several of the largest schemes are still at an early masterplanning stage and the role of the LIP is to help ensure that they are highlighted as priorities in advance of the submission of more detailed plans, the assembly of land and steps to secure funding packages.

## 4. Worcestershire's Story

### Key Points

- A large and diverse county with a complex urban and rural settlement pattern including Worcester city, larger strategic centres (Redditch, Kidderminster), towns, rural villages and hamlets.
- High quality living environments with historic built environment and an outstanding natural environment, including Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs).
- Population of 556,500 after growth of 9% between 1991 and 2009, with higher than average proportion of population in the 50-70 age group, and lower than average proportion of young people.
- Projected population growth of 12% to 2026, and a 50% increase in number of people over the age of 65 during the same period.
- Significantly self-contained, with 75% of population living and working in Worcestershire although some areas (eg. Bromsgrove, Wyre Forest, Redditch) have substantial numbers of people out-commuting to other parts of West Midlands.
- Worcestershire's housing markets saw sustained, strong demand during the 2000s leading to problems of affordability across the county.
- The recession had significant impact on housing markets, with falling sales and falling completion rates further exacerbating the shortage of affordable homes to buy and rent.
- The draft Worcestershire Housing Strategy points to a need for more than 2,200 new affordable housing units a year to meet demand.
- Population projections suggest a need for substantial new and remodelled provision for older people, including extra care and specialist care schemes.
- Strong economic performance during 2000s with higher than average rates of entrepreneurship and lower than average levels of unemployment.
- Higher than average proportion of resident population qualified to NVQ Levels 3 and 4.
- Mixed economy with manufacturing the largest sector (16% of employment) and health, retail, education and other public sector also significant employers.
- Strong innovation base including QinetiQ and Bosch, with strengths in defence, aerospace, security and related information technology.
- Potential to expand high tech manufacturing through further development of business parks and investment in environmental technologies sector.
- Recession has had adverse impact on business birth and survival rates, and seen increases in unemployment with more deprived areas of county most affected.
- Areas of Kidderminster, Redditch, Stourport, Great Malvern and Worcester rank amongst most deprived 20% in the country, with nine areas in the top 10% most income deprived in England.
- Good quality road infrastructure with motorway network providing efficient access to wider UK network but rail under used and requiring further investment in facilities and capacity. Some key pinch points on road infrastructure require substantial investment.
- Need for further investment to extend coverage of broadband to rural towns and other settlements, particularly as superfast broadband starts to be rolled out.

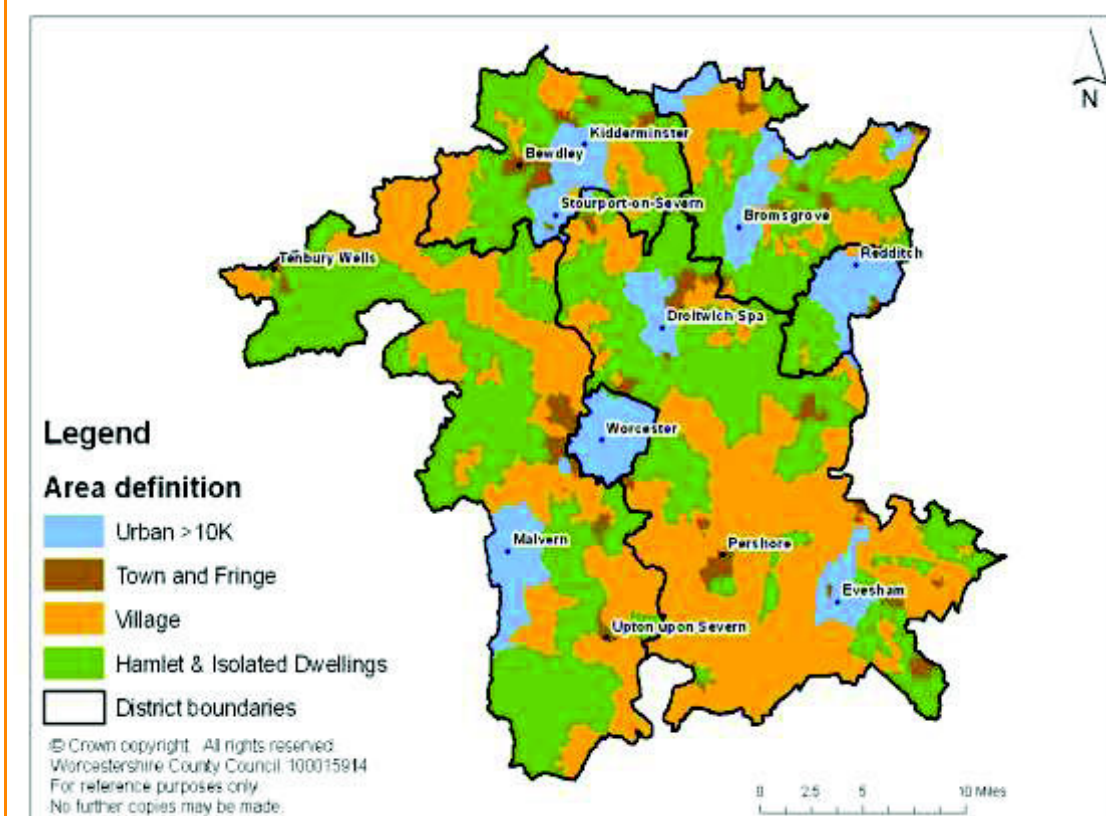
### Worcestershire's Key Characteristics

- 4.1 Worcestershire is a large and diverse county, noted in the UK for its historic built environment and an outstanding natural environment. The key features of the county's geography, economy and population have played a critical part in shaping its housing markets, and in turn they provide the context for the priorities partners have identified in the Local Investment Plan.

## Worcestershire's Geography

- 4.2 Worcestershire covers a total area of 173,529 hectares extending across seven local authority areas comprising Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills Redditch, Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest, together with the County Council area as a whole. A population density of 3.2 people per hectare reflects an area in which the city of Worcester, larger towns (Redditch and Kidderminster<sup>1</sup>), towns (Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Evesham and Malvern, Pershore, Stourport, Upton, Tenbury, Bewdley) and smaller village/hamlet settlements are interspersed with significant tracts of sparsely populated rural landscape.

**Figure 4-1: Worcestershire's Settlement Pattern**



Source: Worcestershire Local Economic Assessment 2010-11

- 4.3 The county's high quality living environments have been an important factor in the trajectory of its housing markets during the past decade. Many areas of the three northern districts have seen strong demand for housing resulting from in migration from the Birmingham conurbation. While the south is more geographically self-contained, centring on the role of the city of Worcester, southern districts have seen strong, sustained levels of demand for housing, driven in part by urban and rural settings which have proved to be a strong draw for house buyers, particularly in older age groups.
- 4.4 Worcestershire's geography is an important driver of both future opportunity and need in housing and the wider economic development and regeneration of the area. Despite the

<sup>1</sup> Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster were designated as Worcestershire's Strategic Centres in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

recession, upward pressure on house prices and land values has contributed to significant affordability problems and constrained development (housing and employment land). Substantial green belt allocations together with tight restraints on rural development have created challenging conditions for the growth of settlements and the construction of new housing stock. Ensuring access to housing in this complex environment of market and planning constraints will remain a long term priority for the county.

## Population

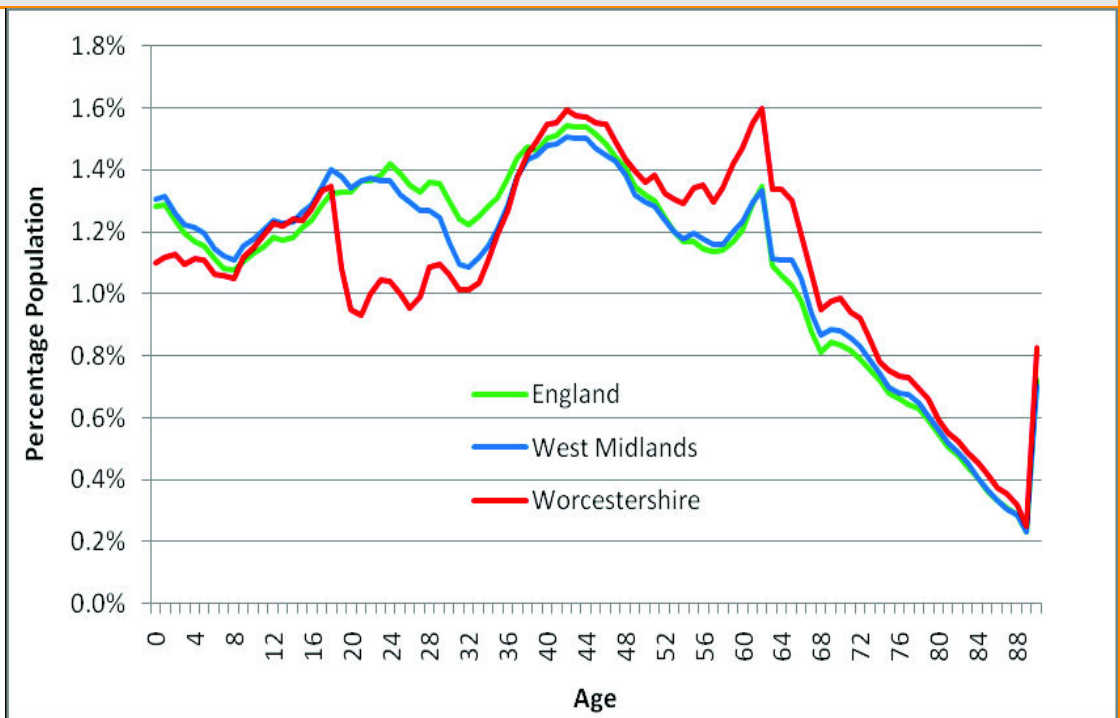
- 4.5 The population of Worcestershire was estimated to stand at 556,000 in 2009. The County has seen growth of just under 9 per cent in its population since 1991, above average for the West Midlands but on par with the national growth rate. Growth rates fell between 2001 and 2009, although there were significant differences amongst the districts over this period with Bromsgrove in particular having seen continued strong growth rates from in-migration. Rurality is especially pronounced in the south; more than 40% of residents of both Wychavon and Malvern Hills districts live in rural villages and hamlets.

	Population (2009 mid year estimate)	% of Worcestershire total	Change 2001-09	% out commuting (2001 census)	Projected Growth (2006-26)
Bromsgrove	93,400	17%	6.2%	58%	16.3%
Malvern Hills	75,000	13%	3.8%	42%	11.8%
Redditch	78,700	14%	-0.1%	39%	9.8%
Worcester City	94,700	17%	1.4%	32%	7.3%
Wychavon	116,700	21%	3.2%	43%	14.6%
Wyre Forest	98,100	18%	1.3%	36%	9.0%
Worcestershire	556,500	100%	2.6%	42%	11.8%

Source: Worcestershire Local Economic Assessment 2010-11  
Data sources include 2001 Census, ONS mid-year estimates

- 4.6 While 75 per cent of residents live and work in Worcestershire, commuting is a key feature for living-working patterns in many parts of the county and the economic connections it has with other areas. As an attractive location for commuters, the three northern districts in particular have seen significant increases in travel to work into the Birmingham conurbation over the past decade. Only 42 per cent of Bromsgrove's residents work in the district, whereas 68% of Worcester's population also work in and around the city. The city forms (with Malvern) one of two specific travel to work areas within the County, the other being Kidderminster.
- 4.7 The age structure of the county's population and expectations about the way it might change are important drivers of the scale and nature of housing that the area will need to provide in future. Population estimates for 2009 clearly show that the county is over-represented in older age groups (particularly 50-70 year age group) but underrepresented in younger age groups. This is a critical issue both for Worcestershire's future workforce and the pressure it places on services (increased demand for health care, smaller tax base), and it needs to be addressed in the approach to investment in housing.

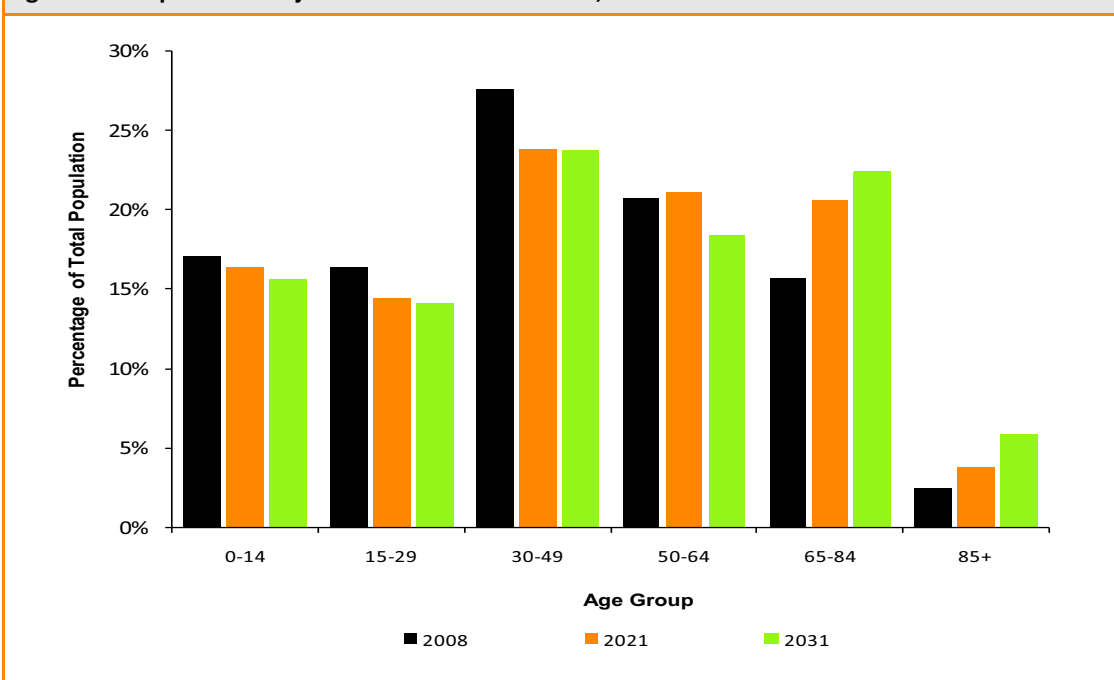
Figure 4-2: Worcestershire's Population Profile



Source: Draft Local Economic Assessment, 2010-11. ONS mid year population estimates, 2009

4.8 In common with many areas of the UK, Worcestershire can expect to see significant further growth in the number of older residents in the county over the next decade. Population projections data suggest overall population growth of 9 per cent to 2031, but an increase in the number of people over the age of 65 which exceeds 70%. Over the same period, the county's working age population is projected to fall slightly. These trends have significant implications for the size of the County's future workforce and for the provision of public services in the area.

**Figure 4-3: Population Projections for Worcestershire, 2008-31**



Source: Annual Population projections (2008 based). ONS Nomis ([www.nomisweb.co.uk](http://www.nomisweb.co.uk)) © Crown Copyright material is reproduced with the permission of the controller of HMSO

- 4.9 Offering the right housing in the right places will have an important part to play in attracting more working age people to live and work in the county in the long term.

### Worcestershire’s Economy

- 4.10 Worcestershire’s economy thrived throughout much of the 2000s. Many parts of the county have comparatively high rates of entrepreneurship and business formation, a healthy mix of service and manufacturing industries and lower than average unemployment and economic inactivity. The median gross annual earnings of residents in 2009 stood at £25,500, slightly below the England average but higher than that of the West Midlands.
- 4.11 Higher than average skill levels amongst its resident population are also a feature of many parts of the county, with significant proportions of young people entering further and higher education and a generally well qualified resident population. Ensuring that the county’s economy continues to shift from lower to higher value business activity remains a priority for partners.
- 4.12 Manufacturing remains the largest employer of people who work in Worcestershire. Around 16% of the workforce is employed in the sector, with health, retail, education and other public sector employment accounting for a significant majority of all employment. The county has a strong innovation base: QinetiQ at Malvern is a globally recognised player in the development of innovative technologies, while the Malvern Hills Science Park, and emerging developments at Bromsgrove Technology Park and Longbridge are expected to provide a substantial infrastructure for high tech business to grow along a corridor which broadly follows the A38. Emerging markets for environmental technologies are seen as a key area for development by partners, while defence, aerospace, security and related information technology are identified as key industries in the LEP proposal.

- 4.13 The rural economy remains an important part of the way that parts of Worcestershire earn their living. The agricultural sector, including food and drink production, is a significant source of employment for rural towns and villages, and the sector has been identified as a priority in the LEP proposal. In Malvern Hills and Wychavon districts, agricultural businesses comprise 14% and 10% of the business base respectively. Ensuring that affordable housing problems are addressed in rural areas, and addressing low rates of public transport use are identified as key challenges for rural Worcestershire.
- 4.14 The visitor economy is also an important contributor to Worcestershire's prosperity. Around 19,000 people are employed in the visitor economy across the County, representing 8% of the total workforce. Alongside well known destinations including the West Midlands Safari Park, Severn Valley Railway, the Malvern Hills (Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty) and the historic city of Worcester, much of the County offers a mix of attractions to visitors including its countryside, canal network, market towns and rural villages.
- 4.15 The county also has a broadly strong skills base, reflected in a resident population which has a higher than average proportion of residents with more advanced NVQ Level 3 and 4 qualifications. Ensuring that more of these people choose to remain and work in the county is a key issue for partners. However, there are areas of the County where skills attainment level and the take up of training are particularly low, and partners must continue to support a range of measures to secure improvement in these locations.
- 4.16 The recession has clearly bitten into Worcestershire's economy, although the county has generally fared better than other parts of the UK. Over the period since 2008, business birth rates have fallen and business failure rates have risen, with knock on effects in the form of rising unemployment. With around 26% of Worcestershire's workforce employed in the public sector, cuts in public spending are likely to trigger further and substantial redundancies over the next few years. The recession has led to an increase in the proportion of young people (18-24) who are unemployed, with Worcestershire now having a higher than average number of people in this category following the deep recession.
- 4.17 The recession's effects have been most pronounced in those areas of the county which already faced higher than average levels of deprivation, unemployment and disadvantage, and this pattern is set to continue as public sector unemployment rises. Areas of Redditch, Worcester and Wyre Forest rank amongst the most deprived 10% nationally in the 2007 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Although deprivation tends to be concentrated in urban areas, a small number of rural areas of Wyre Forest are also ranked amongst the most deprived 20% in the country. Around 6% (36,000 people) of Worcestershire's population live in households with a median income less than 60% of the England average, a key indicator of poverty.
- 4.18 The LIP has an important enabling role to play in securing sustainable economic growth in Worcestershire. The priorities partners have identified will help in the process of targeting resources towards economic opportunities for the county and in tackling key problems that will hinder economic progress, notably the need to provide the right mix of housing and employment to meet the needs of businesses and residents.

	Largest employment sector (% of workforce, 2008)	Business births per 10,000 of population over 16 (2008)	Economic activity rate (April 2009-March 2010)	Claimant Count Unemployment Rate (September 2010)	% of population with NVQ Level 4 + (2009)
Bromsgrove	Education (13%)	63	86%	3%	30%
Malvern Hills	Manufacturing (15%)	61	82%	2.2%	33%
Redditch	Manufacturing (25%)	51	76%	4.2%	19%
Worcester City	Health (16%)	45	80%	3.6%	30%
Wychavon	Manufacturing (19%)	56	82%	2.4%	33%
Wyre Forest	Manufacturing (18%)	47	81%	3.6%	22%
Worcestershire	Manufacturing (16%)	54	81%	3.2%	28%

Source: Worcestershire Local Economic Assessment 2010-11  
 Data sources: Annual Business Inquiry 2008, Office for National Statistics  
 Claimant Count Rate, Office for National Statistics, 2010

## Worcestershire's Infrastructure

- 4.19 The performance of Worcestershire's economy and the quality of life of its residents is strongly influenced by its infrastructure. Transport provision, land and property, ICT infrastructure, social and community infrastructure and green space all contribute significantly to the way that Worcestershire functions. Future investment in housing, economic development and regeneration needs to be underpinned by the right level of investment to improve and maintain a strong infrastructure in the county
- 4.20 Generally, Worcestershire has an extensive and effective highways infrastructure. The three motorways that run through Worcestershire (M5, M42, M50) provide good north-south and east-west connections, while major urban areas tend to be well served by an effective principal road network. However, further investment to tackle pinch points on the road network (eg. Worcester southern link) and make critical improvements (eg. Abbey Bridge, Evesham) will be essential to maintaining the standard of the network and increasing its capacity where further growth occurs.
- 4.21 Use of the county's rail network has not reached the level sought by partners. This is partly attributed to the quality of services and facilities on the network, with links to Birmingham, Gloucester, Bristol and South Wales seen as requiring improvement, including the development of the Worcester Parkway. The capacity of the network around Birmingham to absorb increased rail traffic remains a key constraint on the growth in the number of services into other parts of the West Midlands.
- 4.22 North Worcestershire has a good supply of employment land to meet demand in the long term. Employment land reviews for Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest have indicated that each district has a range of allocated employment sites to accommodate growth in demand for office and warehousing uses, and a supply to meet replacement requirements for the manufacturing sector. There are a number of sites (eg. 24Ha former British Sugar site, Kidderminster) earmarked for regeneration.

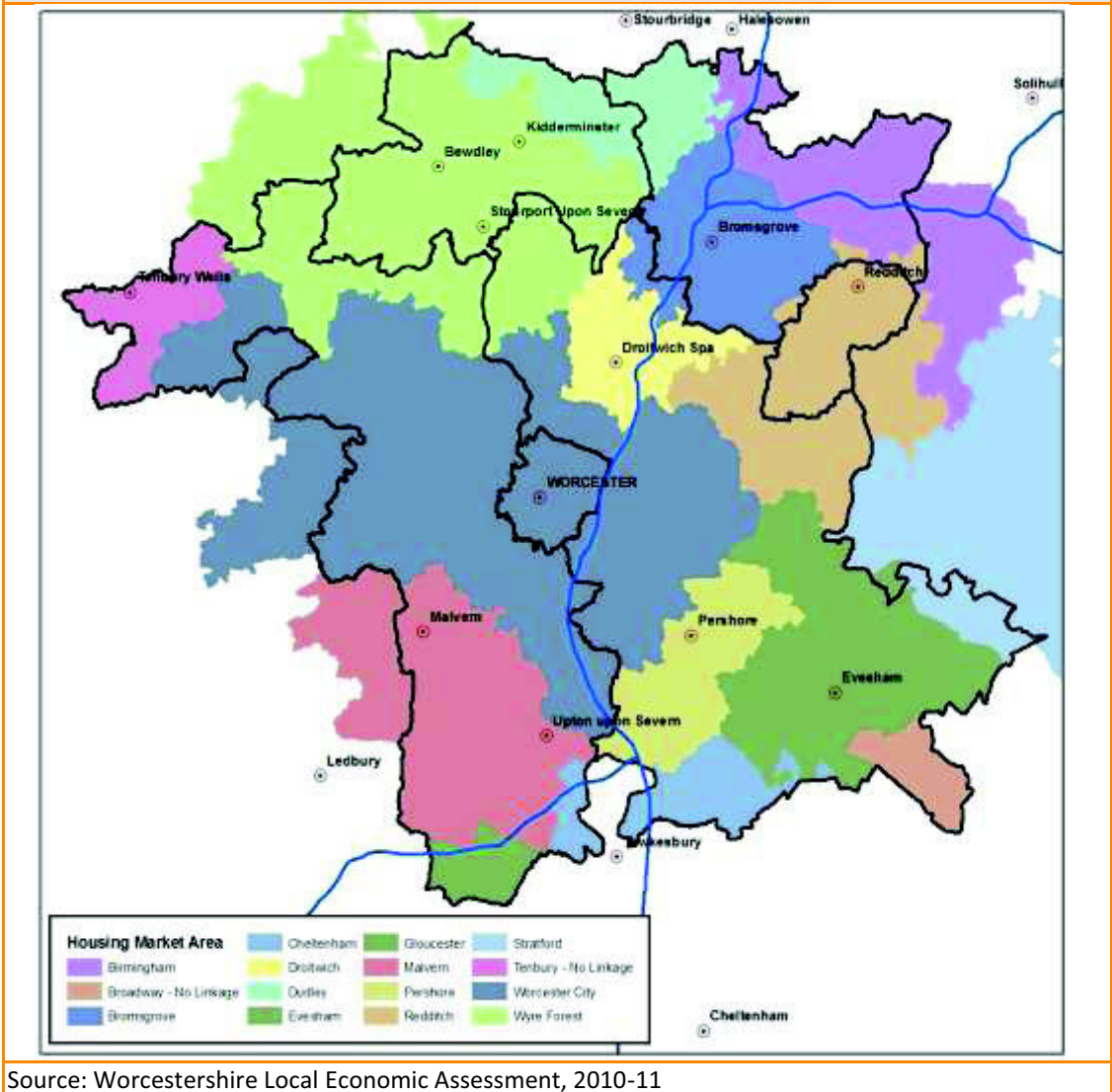


- 4.23 South Worcestershire's draft joint core strategy identifies a shortfall of around 61 Ha of employment land for the period between 2006 and 2026. The allocation of additional land is required in each of the 3 districts, with Worcester city requiring the most substantial increase in supply. Further development of the Bosch operation in Worcester and the future expansion of QinetiQ are among the factors expected to generate strong demand for employment land.
- 4.24 The quality and coverage of the county's broadband infrastructure will be an increasingly important issue in the growth of its economy. While provision in urban areas is generally good, partners have given priority to improving broadband infrastructure in rural towns and settlements. With the roll out of superfast broadband expected to commence in 2011, partners are gearing up to ensure that maximum access to the network is achieved in all parts of the county.
- 4.25 Worcestershire's green infrastructure is both an increasingly important source of employment (environmental economy) and a key factor in the characteristics that have given much of the county a good reputation for the quality of life it offers. An estimated 91,000 people work in the environmental economy in sectors ranging from environmental technologies to tourism. These industries are seen as a vital part of the future economy of Worcestershire, and partners are seeking to invest in ways which will support their growth. At the same time, striking a balance between pressure to develop in attractive edge of town/rural areas with the need to protect the natural environment and areas of outstanding natural beauty is a key challenge for planners in the county, and one which is reflected in the LIP.

## Worcestershire's Housing Markets

- 4.26 In a large county covering an area of 1,471 sq km, Worcestershire's housing markets are characterised by a northern area which has a strong relationship with Birmingham, Solihull and the Black Country and by a more economically self-contained area in the south in which the growth and strong economic performance of Worcester City has been a key factor in determining the size and value of local housing markets.
- 4.27 The draft Local Economic Assessment for Worcestershire (2010-11) identifies eight housing markets in the county highlighted in the map below.

Figure 4-4: Worcestershire’s Housing Market Areas



Source: Worcestershire Local Economic Assessment, 2010-11

- 4.28 Worcestershire’s housing markets have been through a sustained period of buoyant demand during the 2000s. Between August 2001 and July 2010, average prices in the county rose from £100,000 to £167,000, peaking at £190,000 in December 2007. Detached house prices almost doubled between August 2001 and December 2007. Over a decade which saw unprecedented rates of growth in house prices, the six Worcestershire districts contributed to the southern housing market area (HMA) of the West Midlands experiencing the highest price inflation of any of the region’s HMAs.
- 4.29 However, the housing sector in Worcestershire has been particularly hard hit by the recession. Sales have fallen dramatically from their peak in 2006, while the completion of new homes also fell sharply after 2007 as house builders bore the brunt of the credit crunch. In a county in which lower quartile affordability ratios are significantly higher than both the national and West Midlands averages, the recession has further exacerbated the impact of affordability problems on Worcestershire’s economy.

- 4.30 Despite the recession, one of the main effects of the recent period of strong demand is that Worcestershire now has some of the highest value housing markets in the West Midlands. Local housing markets within parts of south Worcestershire have some of the highest cost housing in the West Midlands, with prices having risen particularly sharply during the mid 2000s. For example, Malvern Hills has seen substantial price increases allied to higher than average increases in average household income in recent years. This reflects a combination of the area's AONB status, a reputation for its high quality of life and high levels of well paid knowledge workers with the location of QinetiQ in the district.
- 4.31 In common with much of the UK, price inflation has resulted in significant affordability problems in Worcestershire, and this has become an important issue for the county's economy. Data for 2009 shows a county wide lower quartile affordability ratio of 7.3, well above the regional (5.8) and England (6.3) averages. The affordability issue is most pronounced in those areas which have seen strong rates of in-migration in recent years (eg. Wychavon and Malvern Hills) in the south of the county, but even in lower cost local housing markets (eg. Redditch), the lower quartile income-price ratio still stands at 6.4, ie above average. This issue reflects the characteristics of local housing markets in an area which is seen as a desirable place to live with good standards of living, good quality services and easy access to large employment centres in both the Midlands (Birmingham) and, increasingly, the south east.
- 4.32 Affordability problems are especially acute in the starter homes market. For South Worcestershire, housing market data point to a mismatch between incomes and house prices which is especially acute in the family starter homes market (2 bedroom). At the same time, Worcester, Droitwich and Evesham have been identified as having the biggest current and projected shortages of affordable housing. Redditch and Wyre Forest have the biggest stock of more affordable property with 24.2% and 25.7% of properties sold in 2008/09 for under £120,000 compared to just 5% in Pershore.
- 4.33 A key outcome of high housing costs has been difficulties for particular population groups in securing a foothold on the housing ladder and their ability to climb the ladder. Evidence generated for the strategic housing needs assessment for South Worcestershire underlines particular problems faced by young families seeking to purchase a first house or rent a property, and those with expanding/growing families. For those who cannot afford to buy property, the challenge is exacerbated by a supply shortage of property for rental in the £500-600 per month category. For Worcestershire's economic development, this is an issue both for the growth and prosperity of its town and for the sustainability of rural communities, where prospects of living and working in the same location are severely restricted by a lack of affordable property and limited employment opportunities.
- 4.34 High levels of demand for housing in some areas of Worcestershire have been fuelled by its position as an attractive location for commuters. Data for earnings in Bromsgrove show that resident average earnings are £8,000 higher than workplace earnings, underlining the extent to which the area has attracted well paid commuters who are working in Birmingham and the surrounding area. However, the pattern is not replicated across the County. While parts of Wyre Forest have seen increases in out-commuting, this has not been matched by strong demand for new homes in the district, and house builders have shown comparatively limited interest in the area.

- 4.35 The high level of in-migration to Worcestershire has presented a complex challenge for south Worcestershire's housing markets, where evidence suggests that in-migration by buyers with the financial means to purchase family homes is crowding out potential local buyers on lower incomes. Travel to work data produced by the West Midlands Regional Observatory (March 2010) show that in managerial and professional occupations, Worcestershire has a very strong relationship with Birmingham. Mobility within local housing markets is further restricted by a tendency (identified in the Strategic Housing Needs Assessment) for older people to retain family housing because of a shortage of stock and development aimed at ageing residents.
- 4.36 Local housing market areas faced with high demand have been constrained in their ability to develop new housing, although the pattern has not been a consistent one across the county. For example, Worcester's geographic expansion has been bounded by controls on new development on the edge of the town. Clearly, market forces have also played a critical role in supply side issues, with a preference for higher value developments and apartment schemes inevitably overriding pressure for more affordable supply in lower value locations.
- 4.37 Despite these constraints, the county has a good recent record of delivering new homes, reflecting the commercially attractive environment it continues to offer private sector developers and Registered Providers. During the 2000s, the county achieved a house building rate of 1,900 units a year on average. However, the recession has resulted in a marked fall in new completions, and the county fell well short of the Local Area Agreement target for completions in 2008-09. While there are some signs of recovery in the market, it has been slow to emerge and continued economic uncertainty makes it a difficult climate in which to bring forward new housing schemes.
- 4.38 Following the decision to revoke the Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands, housing targets will be set by the core strategies currently being produced by each of the county's district authorities. However, maintaining the level of new build required to meet demand is a key challenge for partners. The draft housing strategy for Worcestershire indicates that 2,277 additional affordable homes are needed each year to keep pace with demand. The housing strategy also points to the need for sustained investment in new housing stock to meet demand from older people, including extra care and specialist care provision. Projected increases in the number of people over the age of 65 also require a remodelling of the existing stock to offer more aspirational homes for purchase and rent.

## 5. Strategic Priorities for Worcestershire

5.1 This section of the LIP sets out a series of **twelve strategic priorities** for Worcestershire. These priorities have been identified as critical to shaping the long-term future of the county, spanning economic development and regeneration, housing and the principal infrastructure requirements to underpin the place shaping process. They have been informed by the analysis in the preceding section and by the aspirations already identified across Worcestershire in strategies ranging from town centre regeneration plans to the newly formed Local Enterprise Partnership proposals.

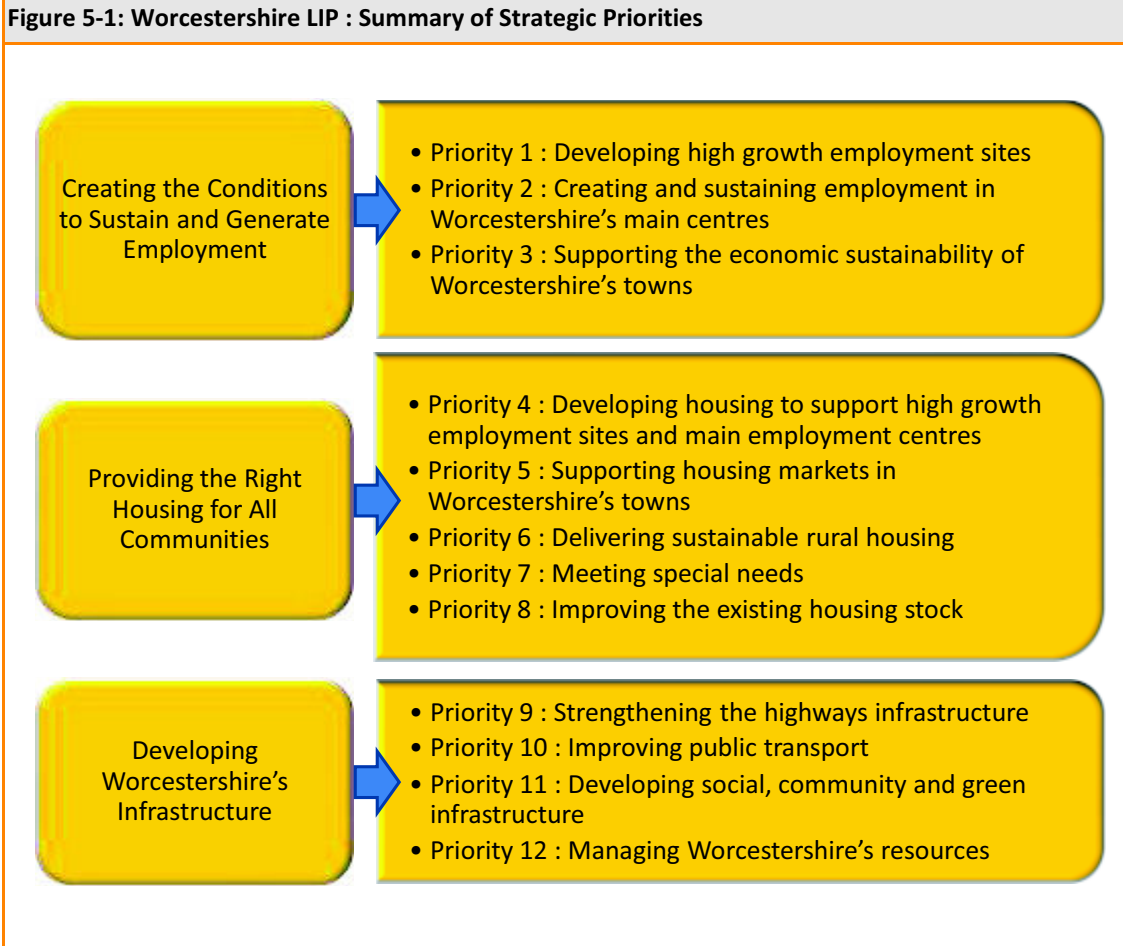
5.2 The priorities contribute to the delivery of **three overarching objectives**. These are:

- First, creating the environment for Worcestershire's businesses to sustain and generate new employment. During a period which has seen rising unemployment UK wide, there is a need for a period of sustained private sector job creation in Worcestershire to tackle the impact of recession and expected falls in public sector employment. There is a particular need to continue generating more knowledge-intensive, high value employment in the county, investing in the sites, premises and skills and supporting measures that enable partners to continue the transition from lower to higher value business activity. A supply of the right sites and premises and the broader attractiveness of the area to business investors are critical.
- Second, providing housing that meets the needs of all communities. Worcestershire needs to provide a choice of housing that meets the needs of all its resident communities and its employers, wherever they are located. The importance of developing more affordable housing options is widely recognised, with many areas facing particular shortages of 2-3 bedroom family homes. Partners have also signalled the priority they continue to attach to the provision of social rented housing, while the provision of new and improved special needs accommodation, including supported housing for vulnerable people, will continue to be a key issue for partners. To create employment and generate wealth, Worcestershire needs to ensure that it attracts and retains a workforce with the right skills in the right locations, and housing has an important part to play in achieving this objective.
- Third, developing Worcestershire's infrastructure. The drive to generate employment and secure the county's future workforce has to be underpinned and enabled by high quality infrastructure. There are already well established strategic infrastructure requirements across Worcestershire, while future development will require new investment to upgrade and add to infrastructure provision. These range from investment in maintaining and developing the highways infrastructure to Worcestershire's ability to provide the social and community infrastructure (eg. schools, community buildings) that is essential for well functioning communities. Partners are now in the process of determining their future requirements for infrastructure through the Worcestershire wide strategic infrastructure delivery planning process.

5.3 Each of the twelve priorities are described in more detail in the remainder of this section. Identified within each priority are some of the **individual schemes** that partners believe are required to deliver change. These schemes are presented on an area by area basis at the

conclusion of Section 5.

- 5.4 As the LIP is updated over time, partners will clearly refine their lists of individual schemes to reflect the delivery of sites and schemes, new investment opportunities that emerge and the availability of public and private sector funding.



**Creating the conditions to sustain and generate employment**

**Priority 1: Developing High Growth Employment Sites**

- 5.5 There are a number of key employment sites across the county which are critical to delivering a high volume of employment opportunities, particularly in higher skilled, knowledge intensive sectors of the economy. Partners will continue to invest in these sites to secure their long term future, as well as bringing forward other sites through LDF processes. Clearly, the release of some key sites may be determined by the availability of investment (including infrastructure investment), and partners will need to continue to be flexible in their approach to future supply.
- 5.6 Key high growth employment sites for Worcestershire, on which planning consents have already been granted, include:
- Enabling the development of Worcester Technology Park, including provision for the expansion of Worcester Bosch, is a key priority for the County. Proposals to develop

a 30 Ha site to the south east of J6 of the M5 in Wychavon district will provide a new headquarters and R&D location for Bosch Thermotechnology, and in turn anchor the business park as a nationally recognised hub for knowledge intensive business activity and low carbon technologies. This development is a key scheme for Worcestershire's Local Enterprise Partnership and is the subject of a bid to the Regional Growth Fund.

- Continued investment in Malvern Hills Science Park following the completion of phase 3 of the development in 2009. The site's proximity to QinetiQ and the growing number of technology driven businesses operating on the site make it a primary location for higher value business activity in Worcestershire. Supporting future business activity driven by QinetiQ is also central to partners' aspirations for the economy.
- Support for the future development of other locations on or around the A38 corridor for technology intensive business activity, including Bromsgrove Technology Park and potential development of the Longbridge Technology Park as part of the wider regeneration of the former Rover site at Longbridge. The Longbridge development is key priority for the Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership, and a £22 million bid for Regional Growth Fund support has been submitted by St. Modwen, the developer. The scheme has the potential to create up to 4,000 new jobs, many of which are likely to be taken up by residents of North Worcestershire.

5.7 Together, these sites broadly follow the A38 corridor extending from the southern Birmingham conurbation through to Worcester and Malvern. Over the past decade this has been identified as a key area for the growth of high technology industry in the West Midlands, and further investment in these sites is a priority for the County.

## **Priority 2: Creating and Sustaining Employment in Worcestershire's Main Centres**

5.8 The city of Worcester and the towns of Kidderminster and Redditch will continue to function as key centres for employment in the county.<sup>2</sup> Partners are seeking to invest in each of these locations to generate new employment (new and improved sites and premises, improved environment for existing businesses), sustain existing employment and ensure they are linked to supporting investment in housing and infrastructure:

- In Worcester, expansion of the University of Worcester and Worcester College of Technology have been earmarked as important catalysts for generating additional skilled employment in the city. Growth of the city's economy will be fuelled by both knowledge intensive industry and a service sector in which the visitor economy makes a particularly important contribution. The exciting £60 million development of the Worcester Library and History Centre will be a further stimulus for regeneration and employment in the city.
- For Kidderminster, there are opportunities for major new mixed use developments

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<sup>2</sup> Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster were defined as the County's three strategic centres in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

in the town identified in the ReWyre prospectus for regeneration. The town centre is the focus of a 30 year vision to restructure the economy and revitalise the area, with a strategy in place to significantly improve retail and leisure provision and develop new office space, allied to investment to improve the living environment. Bromsgrove Street and Worcester Street, together with the Weavers Wharf area, will be the focal point for redevelopment. There are also major opportunities for employment development on the former British Sugar site and the wider South Kidderminster Business and Nature Park initiative, connecting the Severn Valley Railway and the surrounding countryside to an employment location that could create up to 2,000 new jobs on the strategically important Kidderminster-Stourport corridor. Plans for the further development of two key tourism assets - West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park and the Severn Valley Railway – are also seen as opportunities to create new employment for the area.

- The challenge for Redditch is one of economic restructuring, with investment in housing and regeneration needed to sustain and further develop the town’s position as an economic centre. Large scale redevelopment of the town centre and its infrastructure is a key priority for the district and the subject of a number of Supplementary Planning Documents. The strategy for the town centre includes new mixed use residential, retail, cultural and leisure development and significantly improved transport provision and public realm. Proposals include major expansion of retail space to complement the Kingfisher Centre, the development of new office space and residential units in the Prospect Hill area and a remodelling of parts of the town centre (particularly Church Green) to improve the image of the area and encourage a more dynamic evening and night time economy. There are also proposals to regenerate Redditch’s district centres, with Church Hill having been identified by the Council as a pioneer scheme to secure long term improvements in retail provision, residential and leisure uses in these areas of the town.

### Priority 3: Supporting the Economic Sustainability of Worcestershire’s Towns

5.9 Ensuring the economic sustainability of each of the County’s towns has been identified as a key thematic priority by partners. While the towns are marked by their diverse characteristics and needs, they are united by the important functions they perform as local service centres, their contribution to sustaining vibrant local communities and their economic roles as places for employment and tourism.

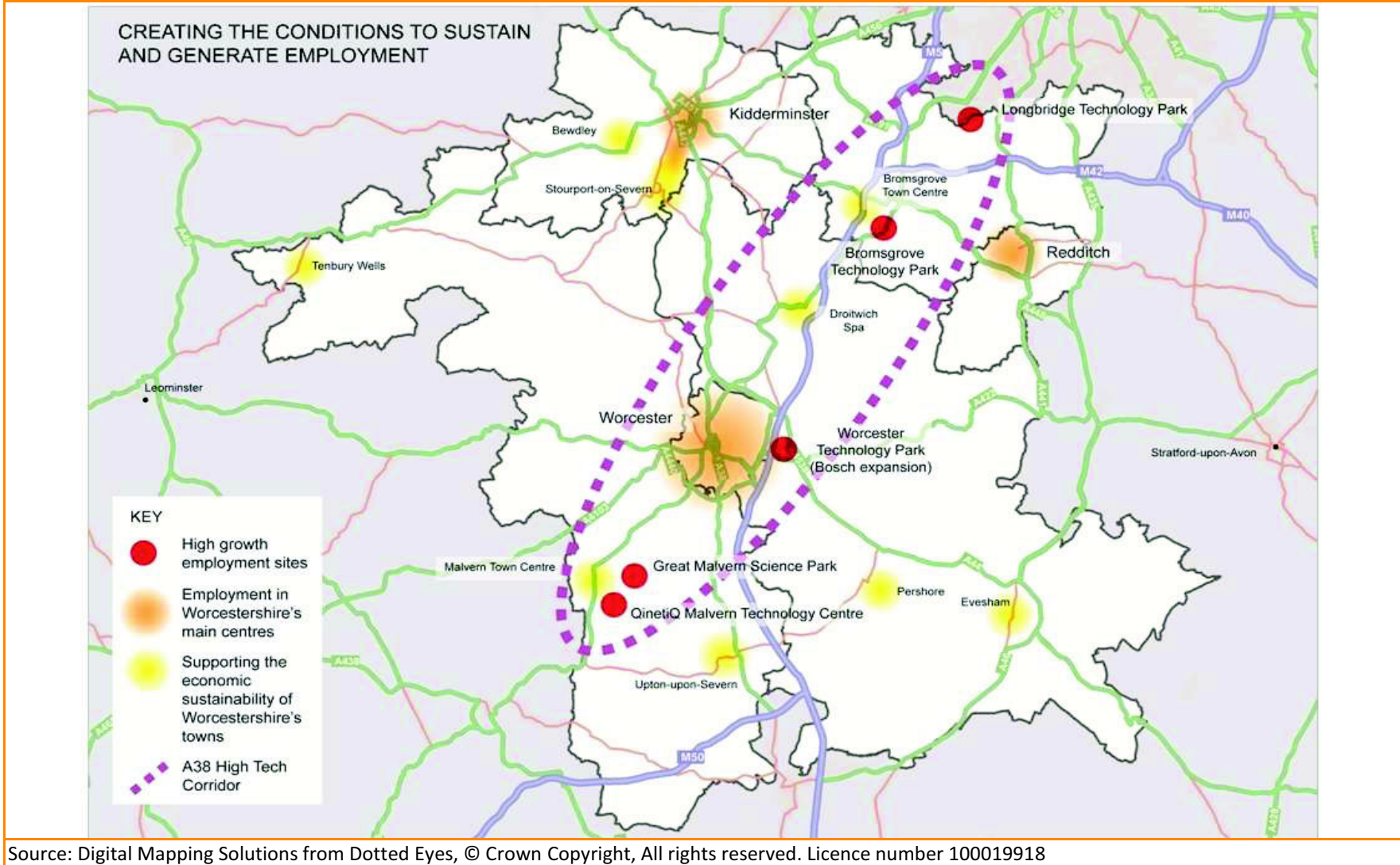
- Alongside the presence of Longbridge and Bromsgrove Technology Park, investment in Bromsgrove town centre is a priority for the district to reinforce the key economic role the town plays in the area. Further improvements to retail provision in what is already an attractive town centre and the development of new, small office space to meet demand from small businesses will generate new employment. Proposals for Bromsgrove town centre include a potentially innovative high density residential complex (Recreation Road site) of up to 100 units targeted at retired people with on site facilities such as shops, restaurants, services and communal facilities.
- Alongside major locations for high value employment around the town, further investment to maintain and improve Malvern town centre is seen as a priority by



partners. This includes the quality of its retail provision, the availability of office space to meet demand in what has proved to be a popular location for SMEs and continued investment to maintain a high quality public realm, in turn strengthening the town's role as a visitor destination.

- There is a dual need in Droitwich Spa to secure new employment to enhance its role as a local commercial centre and to enable it to fulfil its wider market town role in rural regeneration. Investment in new, small office accommodation will help to build on its platform of service sector employment. Restoration of the canal network is a key regeneration priority for the town, contributing to its continued ability to attract visitors to the area. This is expected to create new development opportunities for the town, and attract investment in local hotels and other visitor facilities.
- Following floods in 2007/8, a priority for Evesham has been clearing and dredging the flood plain in the town. Alongside this, regeneration of the riverside area includes developing the Evesham Water Sports Centre, and a range of path and walkway improvements. Support to local businesses during the construction phase of the Abbey Bridge replacement is seen as a key priority for the local economy. The Market Town Partnership prioritises the promotion of Evesham and the wider Vale area to retain and attract inward investment. This focuses on presenting Evesham as a business and tourism destination. New investment opportunities from the Vale business park, restoration of the Regal cinema and proposals for major new investment at Evesham Country Park have also been identified as local priorities.
- Stourport's close proximity to Kidderminster and the importance of the South Kidderminster Business and Nature Park initiative means that the northern side of the town will have a key role to play in providing employment. For Pershore, Upton and Tenbury, continuing to invest in attractive town centre environments and provide a good supply of small office space are common priorities. In Pershore, there are opportunities to expand the Keytec 7 business park.

Figure 5-2: Creating the Environment for Worcestershire's Businesses to Sustain and Generate New Employment



## Providing the Right Housing for All Communities

### Priority 4: Housing to Support High Growth Employment Sites and Main Employment Centres

- 5.10 An overwhelming majority of the sites and schemes identified for housing across Worcestershire have the potential to contribute to the provision of homes that will support aspirations for employment growth in Worcester and the county's major employment locations. This is about offering the right housing product in the right place, at the right time.
- 5.11 It is essential to provide a good, long term supply of housing located close to or within reasonable travelling distance of the main locations for employment growth, including Worcester city, Kidderminster, Redditch and the specific sites identified as the focal points for future employment generation in the county. It is particularly important that, where there is potential to significantly increase employment over the next few years, this is not constrained by a lack of housing to accommodate an expanding workforce. Wyre Forest's adopted core strategy, the draft core strategies for other districts and the draft LTP3 all underline the importance of new employment development taking place in sustainable locations, where public transport and short journeys are the available best option for travel.
- 5.12 Partners have identified a wide range of schemes which together would deliver significant and sustained increases in the supply of homes to underpin Worcestershire's economic growth aspirations. Among the key locations identified by the LIP are:
- Growth in Worcester city's housing stock, where there is strong demand for significant new development to take place over the next decade and beyond. This growth in housing supply, including a substantial component of affordable property, is vital to support employment growth in the city and in surrounding settlements, including Malvern. It will play an important role in underpinning future economic growth in Worcester, a key strategic priority for the County's economy. New housing development to accommodate growth in both Worcester and Greater Malvern is seen as particularly important to the planned expansion of Worcester Bosch, and both the local authorities and Registered Providers will have a key part to play in ensuring that the company has access to the workforce it needs.
  - Large scale proposed developments in Kidderminster, which are essential both in maintaining the town's status as an important employment centre and in the regeneration of the town centre and surrounding area. The adopted core strategy identifies a need for 4,000 net additional dwellings from 2006-2026, with 60% of this to be delivered in Kidderminster. There are plans for major housing developments in the Churchfields regeneration area, which will deliver around 350 units, including a key affordable housing development of 97 units on Hurcott Road which help to unlock the wider development of the area. There is potential to develop a further 300 houses on the former British Sugar site, which is currently the subject of a masterplanning exercise.
  - There are large scale development opportunities of several key sites in Redditch,

including the Brockhill East site (825 units), development at Brockhill West (167 units), land to rear of Alexandra Hospital (145 units) and the Woodrow strategic sites (Dingleside Middle School & Playing Fields, Auxerre Avenue, 220 units). These would deliver around 60% of the net additional dwellings requirement for the district identified in the draft core strategy.

- Both the Longbridge development and the Bromsgrove Technology Park reinforce the position of Bromsgrove as an important residential location for both Worcestershire's workforce and people commuting to other employment locations in the West Midlands. Priority housing locations include the Sustainable Urban Extension (Perryfields, Norton Farm, Whitford Road) which has the potential to deliver 1,850 housing units, the Longbridge East site (524 units) and major development sites at Alvechurch, Frankley, Hagley, Barnt Green, Catshill, Wythall and Wagon Works (936 units).
- With key employment sites located on the edge of the town, Malvern will continue to need new housing to meet the needs of the local economy, major employers and Worcester. There are opportunities for larger scale development (250-300 units) to be accommodated on part of the QinetiQ site.

### **Priority 5: Supporting the Vitality of Housing Markets in Worcestershire's Towns**

5.13 It is essential that there is continued investment in Worcestershire's towns because of the key role they play in sustaining communities, including the large rural areas which many serve. The vitality of these towns is integral to Worcestershire's Sustainable Communities Strategy, particularly to the priority of ensuring that economic success is shared by all. They are also highlighted as a key spatial focus in the county's economic strategy.

- There are opportunities for significant new housing development in Stourport. New housing provision in the town is important both to strengthen its role as a local employment centre and visitor destination, and to its strategic connection with Kidderminster (Kidderminster to Stourport employment corridor, South Kidderminster Business and Nature Park). Bewdley also has a smaller but still important contribution to make to housing provision in Wyre Forest, with potential for residential development in the Load Street regeneration area.
- There are significant housing development opportunities in Evesham, with a range of sites capable of delivering in excess of 1,500 homes and mixed uses. Large developments include those at Offenham Road and Pershore Road.
- There are opportunities for significant new housing development in Droitwich Spa to support the key role the town plays as Wychavon's largest settlement. New housing provision is key to meeting local housing needs, natural increases in the population and in supporting the economic development ambitions of the district and county.
- There is potential for Pershore to accommodate significant new housing demand, through a number of Registered Provider owned and privately owned sites in the town. The LIP has identified several small brownfield sites which have the potential

to provide a mix of market and affordable housing in a town that has faced strong demand pressures.

- 5.14 The needs of these towns are multi-faceted, but all are linked by a need to provide more affordable housing, to secure the regeneration of brownfield sites (housing, employment and other uses) and improve the quality of the environment they offer to residents and visitors. Deliverability in these areas is an issue, with greenfield sites and development boundaries (eg. Pershore) strongly influencing the scale and type of housing that could be delivered.

### **Priority 6: Delivering Sustainable Rural Housing**

- 5.15 With large rural areas, the provision of sustainable housing development in Worcestershire's many villages and hamlets represents a thematic priority for the county in its own right. There are established rural regeneration programmes across the County, together with significant pressures for Worcestershire to sustain a thriving rural business base, including a significant agricultural sector. In a period which has seen strong demand for rural housing from higher paid people commuting from villages and hamlets or setting up small businesses, affordability for lower paid residents has continued to be a problem. Together with higher transport costs and limited public transport provision, these are key factors in rural deprivation and exclusion.

- 5.16 While the required numbers of affordable homes to buy or rent are comparatively small and are dispersed over a wide area, their importance to the viability of communities in many of Worcestershire's villages and hamlets cannot be underestimated. This theme is common to all of Worcestershire's constituent districts, and partners are already seeking to address needs through a range of mechanisms including the Rural Housing Enabler and closer working with existing rural communities to look at how barriers to development in sensitive areas might be lifted. In compiling the LIP, partners have identified more than 60 individual sites which would contribute to sustainable rural housing. These fall under the following broad categories of priority:

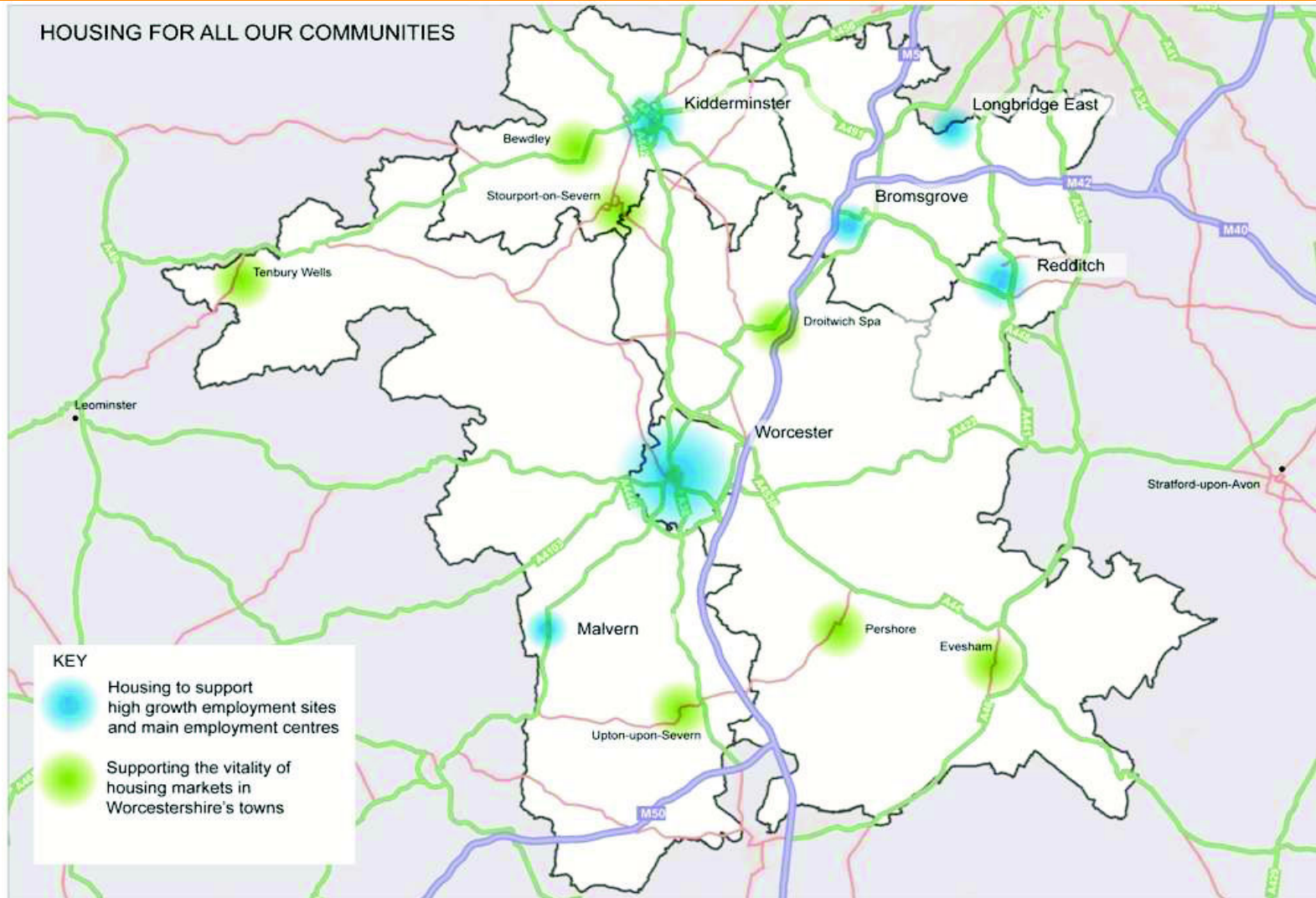
- Affordable homes for purchase or rent, including shared ownership properties. Partners have identified many sites owned by either Registered Providers or a local authority with potential for development to take place between 2011 and 2015. There are additionally privately owned sites with planning consents in place or in progress which will also contribute. With limited grant funding available to subsidise such development, the key here will be to assemble packages of sites with the potential to generate cross-subsidy.
- A continued need to provide socially rented properties for residents of rural communities on lower incomes or who are economically inactive.
- A limited volume of specialist housing, particularly for elderly residents of rural communities.

- 5.17 Relatively small investments can have a significant impact in meeting highly localised rural housing needs and tackling the broader issues faced in rural economies. However, partners recognise that in a changed funding environment, securing critical grant funding to enable the development of affordable rural housing will be particularly challenging given

● **Worcestershire Local Investment Plan** ●

requirements to maximise returns on investment in affordable housing schemes. They will seek to work with the HCA and other partners to explore how land assets, planning powers and funding resources can best be brought together to increase the supply of affordable rural housing. For example, a number of local authority districts are reviewing their commissioning arrangements to ensure greater efficiencies in the development of affordable homes in rural areas.

Figure 5-3: Providing the Right Housing for All Communities



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## Priority 7: Meeting Special Needs

5.18 Partners across Worcestershire are clear that they will continue to seek to provide housing which meets the needs of an extensive range of particular needs. This is about both upgrading existing stock and the supply of new stock in response to the changing needs of Worcestershire's communities. The key issues covered under this thematic priority include:

- Housing for older people. There is a need to improve and develop the range of housing products available for older residents in Worcestershire. Existing extra care and sheltered housing schemes require re-investment, while there is evidence of rising unmet demand for extra care provision from an expanding population of older people. There is also a growing need to ensure that older people are offered greater choice in the housing available to them, ranging from homes to buy to those which offer the most intensive forms of care. County wide research is currently being prepared to assess the areas of most acute need for this type of housing, and a number of districts are developing proposals for extra care housing schemes in partnership with Registered Providers.
- Supported housing for people with disabilities. There is a continued need to provide supported accommodation for people with physical and learning disabilities. Worcestershire's growing population of older people means that demand for this type of accommodation is likely to increase significantly in the long term, both to enable people to live independently and to meet rising demand from conditions that are most common in elderly residents (eg. people suffering from dementia).
- Supported housing for young people. There is an identified need for accommodation targeted at young people including support to tackle homelessness and to address the issues faced by the growing number of young people not in education, employment or training. Key examples include the requirement for a new Foyer development in Kidderminster, additional accommodation in Worcester City and provision across the County for young people with chaotic lifestyles.
- Supported housing for other vulnerable groups. Partners have clearly identified needs for supported housing for vulnerable residents including homeless people, women experiencing domestic abuse, people with mental health problems, people with substance abuse problems and ex-offenders. Partners have made good progress in reducing instances of homelessness amongst vulnerable groups, but want to build on successful schemes (eg. Stonham) and offer the mix of specialist accommodation that will continue to be required.
- The provision of sites for gypsies and travellers, with requirements for the allocation of additional pitches identified in planning policies in several of Worcestershire's local authority districts. A modest volume of new provision is needed over the period to 2017, although it is anticipated that a substantial proportion of this could be accommodated on existing sites owned by Registered Providers or the local authorities.

5.19 Achieving partners' wide ranging objectives under this thematic priority is a challenging task.



Nationally, the HCA is expected to have limited funding to invest in accommodation in this category, and there is also uncertainty about the future availability of the revenue funding which is essential to provision of this kind. The onus will be on partners to find creative ways to assemble the land and capital investment to bring forward new schemes or invest in existing schemes. It is also essential to ensure that there are strong links to the main County wide strategic plans. In this respect, the Worcestershire Supporting People programme is particularly significant, since it strategically commissions and then provides substantial revenue funding for new and existing housing schemes and initiatives.

## Priority 8: Improving the Existing Housing Stock

5.20 The overwhelming majority of social rented housing stock in Worcestershire is now classified as decent, the outcome of sustained investment over a long period. However, partners have a continued and pressing need for investment to raise the standard of private rented stock across the county. Homes in multiple occupancy represent a particular challenge for partners, with Worcester city and Redditch having a relatively high proportion of private rented accommodation in this category. In developing indicative priorities for the LIP, partners have identified a number of cross-cutting priorities under this theme.

- Improved thermal comfort standards, including grant schemes to enable home owners and tenants to fit insulation, and multi-agency work to tackle the risk of hypothermia in elderly people. In a number of cases (eg. thermal insulation grant schemes), local authority funding is available.
- Energy efficiency measures, including the retrofitting of cladding and condensers, or support for the installation of renewable energy technology in new build and existing homes.
- General grants and loans for home repairs and improvements to private sector stock. In some districts (eg. Redditch) there is a particular focus on improvements to homes in multiple occupancy.
- Continued investment to bring empty homes into active use.

5.21 This is a difficult issue for partners to tackle. The county's draft housing strategy estimates around £635 million of investment is required to achieve the Decent Homes standards to which partners are committed. Local authorities have limited scope to provide capital investment for this segment of the market, since it requires direct financial assistance to be provided to owners for improvement. Partners will need to look to the expertise and wider resources of the HCA in this area to assist in finding new and innovative mechanisms to deal with this issue.

## Developing Worcestershire's Infrastructure

5.22 Strong infrastructure is vital if Worcestershire is to achieve the aspirations it sets out in the LIP. This means both improving and upgrading the existing infrastructure and securing investment in the development of new infrastructure. Securing this investment is a particularly challenging task at a time when the supply of new public sector investment for infrastructure will be limited, and it underlines the importance of both prioritising and finding innovative ways to bring together public and private sector resources.

- 5.23 At this juncture, the LIP presents only an initial list of infrastructure investment priorities. Partners are currently engaged in assessing or reassessing their requirements, and there are a number of processes underway which are not yet complete. Worcestershire County Council is preparing a county wide delivery plan for infrastructure that will identify priorities for investment and provide a comprehensive picture of the range of infrastructure that is required over the next decade and a half. A first draft is expected in Spring 2011. Long term infrastructure requirements for Worcestershire to 2026 identified in the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy are now under review following the revocation of RSSs nationally. These requirements were based on housing growth targets for each district that may be reformulated or rejected through continuing work on Local Development Frameworks.
- 5.24 To reflect this continuing process of planning for infrastructure investment, the specific infrastructure requirements identified in this section are drawn from several sources:
- Studies carried out by Baker Associates during 2008 and 2009 which informed the infrastructure assessment for the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.
  - The revised draft LTP3, published by Worcestershire County Council in February 2011. This provides a comprehensive picture of infrastructure priorities.
  - District authority planning documents, including adopted core strategies, draft core strategies and associated infrastructure studies.
  - Initial assessments of infrastructure requirements associated with employment, housing and regeneration schemes identified by the LIP. Where schemes are at an advanced stage in the planning process, there is a reasonable degree of certainty involved. In other cases, infrastructure requirements are yet to be firmly established, and there will be additional uncertainty about funding mechanisms in some instances.

### **Priority 9: Strengthening the Highways Infrastructure**

- 5.25 Maintaining and improving the road network is critical to Worcestershire's capacity to accommodate further housing and employment growth. A substantial list of schemes are in need of investment ranging from improvements to the motorway and major road infrastructure. This is about replacing ageing infrastructure, dealing with significant congestion problems (eg. central Worcester, Kidderminster-Stourport corridor) and developing new infrastructure to facilitate growth. Where possible, the LIP has sought to identify schemes that are critical to sustaining and creating employment, to large scale housing schemes and to the broader functioning of Worcestershire's economy.
- 5.26 The key source for investment priorities in the highways infrastructure is Worcestershire's Local Transport Plan 3, which was published in February 2011. Partners across the County seek investment in an extensive range of highways schemes and individual employment and housing sites will require new or improved highways infrastructure. However, the LTP3 presents the results of a comprehensive process of prioritising highways schemes based on criteria including deliverability/costs, economic and environmental impacts, benefits to quality of life, equality, public health and safety. It identifies a number of major schemes which require investment over £5 million, essentially the strategic priorities for the County

for the next 15 years at a time of uncertainty about the scale and type of funding available to support such schemes. These are important to the delivery of LIP priorities and include:

- Evesham Abbey Bridge and Viaduct Major Scheme - Key project for the County which is expected to be delivered by 2014-15 and which is essential to maintaining road access to Evesham.
- Worcester Transport Strategy (Phase 1) Major Scheme – Includes highways improvements along with a package of measures to improve rail and other public transport infrastructure.
- Kidderminster Transport Strategy Major Scheme – A major package of investments including improvements to the town’s central road network.
- Redditch Transport Strategy Major Scheme – Investment package which includes improvements to the town’s ring road and other parts of the highways network.

5.27 The LTP3 also identifies a series of packages for a number of areas of the County which include highways improvement schemes and will be funded through major scheme investment plus a variety of sources of public and private sector funding. Where possible, the LIP has sought to highlight schemes which are particularly important in delivering housing growth and employment development priorities. Examples include:

- A range of improvements across Worcester and its surrounding area including M5 improvements at Junction 6, junction improvements on the southern link road, improvements to the city’s arterial network and city centre loop, junction enhancements on the A4440 and B4550, the North West and Southern Link Road schemes, Park and Ride Sites (Crown East and Ketch), improvements in the Shrub Hill area.
- Key schemes in Redditch including the Bordesley Bypass.
- Schemes in Kidderminster as part of the Wyre Forest Transport Strategy including the Hoo Brook link road and ring road improvements. Key schemes for Stourport include the A451/Minster Road junction improvement scheme and the Stourport relief road. A package of rural road improvements is also earmarked in the LTP3 for Wyre Forest covering the A456 (Kidderminster to M5 Junctions 3 and 4), the A448 and A449.
- The Bromsgrove Eastern Bypass scheme.
- A series of rural package schemes for the north of the County including improvements on the A38 (Wychbold-Bromsgrove-Crofton Hackett), A448 (Redditch to Bromsgrove), A441 (Redditch-Hopwood), A456 (Redditch-Maypole Roundabout).
- Rural package measures for the south of the County including improvements to the A422, A449, A38 linking Tenbury Wells, Droitwich Spa, Alcester and Malvern with Worcester and improvements to the B road network.
- Improvements to 2 link roads in Pershore (Racecourse Road to Station, Keytec).

## Priority 10: Improving public transport infrastructure and services

5.28 Continuing to invest in improving the County's public transport infrastructure and services is a priority for partners. The list of schemes is extensive, ranging from large scale investment in railway stations to minor schemes to improve access to information and the safety of public transport networks. Key investments identified by LTP3 which are particularly important in the context of the LIP include:

- Railway station redevelopment or enhancement schemes in Worcester (Shrub Hill and Foregate Street), Bromsgrove and Kidderminster. There are also enhancement schemes identified for Droitwich, Pershore and other smaller stations in the County.
- Rail line upgrades, including Barnt Green-Redditch, capacity improvements for Worcester, Worcester-Evesham dualling, Droitwich-Bromsgrove dualling, Stourbridge enhancement and Honeybourne-Stratford line reinstatement.
- The Worcestershire Parkway scheme.
- Consultations for the LIP have highlighted rail schemes including the improvement of services on the Cross City Rail Line (South), of particular significance to Redditch and Bromsgrove. Potential to better connect the Severn Valley railway to the national network has been highlighted by Wyre Forest.
- Both the LTP3 and submissions to the LIP have highlighted many requirements across Worcestershire for investment to improve bus stations and bus service provision. Most are integrated into package scheme for urban and rural areas in LTP3, although partners have identified a need for specific routes to be introduced or improved to connect housing and employment sites to town centres and transport interchanges. These are identified in the tables at the end of this section.
- A similarly wide ranging set of requirements to improve walkways, cycleways and public realm in Worcester and each town across the County.

5.29 The LIP reflects the key principles that underpin Worcestershire's approach to public transport investment. As far as possible, new housing and employment development in the County should take place on sites which are in or around urban centres, are served by the public transport network, cycling and walking routes and which contribute to more sustainable travel patterns.

## Priority 11: Developing Social, Community and Green Infrastructure

5.30 It is essential to continue investing in maintaining a good quality social and community infrastructure, a wide ranging category that covers schools, hospitals, emergency services, leisure, culture and recreational facilities and green space. New developments and a changing population will trigger a need for new social and community infrastructure, and this will be critical to securing the viability of developments.

5.31 Much of Worcestershire's future infrastructure requirement will be driven by the scale and location of employment and housing growth delivered in the County. It is therefore difficult at this stage to be precise about some types of infrastructure investment that will be

necessary in future, partly because full planning consents etc. are not yet in place, and partly because of uncertainty about future sources of investment. Where possible, the LIP has sought to identify significant infrastructure needs associated with specific sites and schemes. However, it is important to highlight the range of County wide infrastructure requirements that partners regard as critical to facilitating development and growth. They include:

- Schools and other education facilities – New housing developments and population increases trigger requirements for new schools and other educational facilities. A number of specific investment requirements responding to this need are identified in the tables below. As new and revised housing growth targets are established across Worcestershire, there will be greater clarity about the volume and location of this provision. However, there is a broader requirement for Worcestershire to ensure that educational facilities continue to be improved, whether through investment to maintain/upgrade existing facilities (eg. sites identified for Building Schools for the Future investment, Wyre Forest) or through the development of new facilities to accommodate growth.
- Health care provision – There are similar trigger points for the development of new health care facilities to respond to housing/population growth, and the tables below identify a number of schemes identified by partners. Beyond specific schemes and locations, the need to respond to an ageing population which is expected to place higher demand on health services, together with the need to invest in maintaining or improving Worcestershire’s existing stock of healthcare facilities are priorities for partners.
- Policing and fire service – Large scale housing developments put additional pressure on key emergency services and may trigger requirements for additional capital and revenue investment. For example, development of the Brockhill East site in Redditch is assessed as requiring an additional police post to serve the area.
- Development of parks and other types of green space. Green infrastructure is now firmly embedded in planning policy in Worcestershire, a commitment reflect in core strategies (adopted and draft). Clear standards are applied through local planning policy to the type and volume of parks, open spaces and other forms of green infrastructure secured through development, often through the use of obligations attached to planning consents. Outside of developer contributions, partners will continue to look to invest in improving and maintaining green infrastructure, although it is clear that fewer resources will be available exclusively for this type of scheme. Where possible, partners have identified in the LIP key green infrastructure requirements linked to major developments.

## **Priority 12: Managing Worcestershire’s Resources**

- 5.32 Maintaining a well functioning utilities infrastructure (water management, electricity, telecommunications) will also require additional investment, with new housing developments and employment sites placing further pressure on the network. The impact of climate change and extreme weather events is playing an increasingly important part in the type of investment Worcestershire needs, with flood management and drainage demanding a growing share of infrastructure investment.

- Utilities – Specific requirements for investment in the utilities infrastructure will be determined by the scale, location and type of development that takes place. A series of electricity, gas and water/sewage infrastructure requirements were identified in studies which supported the West Midlands RSS. These were based on the RSS preferred option for growth, and the assessments are being revised as growth targets for development are reviewed. However, partners have highlighted a number of requirements including:
  - Further development of the County’s broadband network, which will have a key part to play in the future of Worcestershire’s economy. BT has begun the process of rolling out superfast broadband in a number of locations across Worcestershire and additional investment in the network planned in the short term. For example, BT is scheduled to upgrade Worcester’s exchanges by 2011. While high speed broadband availability is an asset for Worcestershire’s economy as a whole, broadband coverage in general is a particular problem in some of the County’s rural areas. Improving coverage will have benefits both to rural communities and to businesses based in these areas. Although some funding has been available to improve coverage in rural Worcestershire (eg. Rural Regeneration Zone funds), securing further investment is important.
  - Studies carried out by south Worcestershire partners to inform the joint core strategy identify a need to reinforce the electricity network (132kV and 11kva) supply in a number of locations including Worcester, Malvern, Droitwich, Evesham and Pershore. While no equivalent source of data is available for north Worcestershire, partners will need to assess whether large developments put excessive pressure on a Central Network which is ageing.
  - Gas supply network reinforcement in Worcester (West and South), Redditch (North, North West and North) and North West Bromsgrove. This is based on the assessment of need carried out for the West Midlands RSS, so assumes the RSS housing growth trajectory.
  - Substantial investment in water treatment infrastructure, with Severn Trent water having identified a number of plants for improvement and investment in new plants where developments are of a scale that requires it.
- Measures to safeguard against flood risk and manage surface water. This has become an increasingly important infrastructure issue for the County. A number of areas are already at risk of flooding, with housing and other forms of development already present in those areas. Planning policy across the County does not favour further development on floodplain areas, although several districts have indicated that future development may take place in areas known to be at higher risk of flooding (Flood Zone 3a). A combination of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems, related forms of water management plans and other mitigation measures (barriers) are now integrated into local planning policy in Worcestershire. Future developments, including some of those identified by the LIP, will be expected to be accompanied by investment in measures of this type.

- 5.33 It is important that this initial LIP plays a part in informing the planning of future infrastructure provision that will in turn be vital to the success of employment, housing and regeneration schemes. Its contribution will be particularly crucial where schemes will deliver significant levels of growth in resident populations or employment. However, it is also important to recognise that new housing developments will continue to be a significant source of funding for infrastructure through developer contributions (eg. new Community Infrastructure Levy mechanism), sources including private owner/operator investments and public funding such as LTP3.

## Summary of Strategic Priorities, by Area

5.34 Each of the twelve priorities have been described above, together with **some of the key individual investment schemes** that partners believe are required to deliver change. These schemes are summarised below on an area by area basis. Clearly certain priority themes (rural housing for example) are more important for some districts than others.

MAIN INVESTMENT SCHEMES FOR BROMSGROVE	
<b>Creating the conditions to Sustain and Generate Employment</b>	
Developing High Growth Employment Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bromsgrove Technology Park</li> <li>• Longbridge Technology Park and mixed use regeneration scheme</li> </ul>
Supporting the Economic Sustainability of Worcestershire's Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bromsgrove Town Centre – Development of new office and mixed use schemes: improve retail provision: Recreation Road retirement living complex (Extra Care Scheme)</li> </ul>
<b>Housing for All Communities</b>	
Housing to Support High Growth Employment Sites and Main Employment Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainable Urban Extension (Perryfields, Norton Farm, Whitford Road - 1,850 units), including mixed tenure housing for older people (up to 150 units, including Extra Care provision)</li> <li>• Longbridge East (700 units)</li> <li>• Major development sites at Alvechurch, Frankley, Hagley, Barnt Green, Catshill, Wythall and Wagon Works (936 units)</li> </ul>
Supporting the Vitality of Worcestershire's Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New residential developments including Broad Street, Cobnal Road, former garage sites in Bromsgrove, former garage sites in Alvechurch (c. 70 units)</li> </ul>
Sustainable Rural Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Affordable housing schemes in rural villages including Clent and Beoley</li> </ul>
Special Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sheltered housing scheme at Windsor Gardens, Bromsgrove</li> <li>• Recreation Road retirement complex (Extra Care Housing Scheme)</li> <li>• Bungalow development for older people, Bromsgrove</li> <li>• Supported housing for disabled people aged 18-50</li> <li>• Supported housing for young people with chaotic lifestyles</li> </ul>
Improving the Existing Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retrofitting condensers and cladding in Sidemoor and Charford</li> <li>• Tackling hypothermia risks (with Primary Care Trust)</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Worcestershire's Infrastructure</b>	
Strengthening the Highways Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvements to M5 Junction 4</li> <li>• Improvements to M42, Junction 1</li> <li>• Eastern bypass enhancement scheme</li> <li>• Junction improvements for access to sustainable urban extension site including Birmingham Road, Perryfields Road/Stourbridge Road, Perryfields Road/Kidderminster Road and Whitford Road</li> </ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A448 Bromsgrove to Redditch improvements</li> </ul>
Improving Public Transport Infrastructure and Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New bus link from Perryfields to town centre and station</li> <li>• New station scheme for Bromsgrove</li> <li>• Extension of Cross City Line South</li> </ul>
Developing Social, Community and Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved walking and cycle links</li> <li>• Enhanced bus network for Bromsgrove town and district</li> <li>• Town centre public realm enhancement scheme</li> <li>• New local centre for sustainable urban extension, including retail facilities, community hall, play areas, sports pitches</li> </ul>
Managing Worcestershire's Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Potential reinforcing of gas supply network in North West Bromsgrove</li> <li>• SUDS measures for new developments</li> </ul>

**MAIN INVESTMENT SCHEMES FOR REDDITCH**

**Creating the Conditions to Sustain and Generate Employment**

Creating and Sustaining Employment in Worcestershire's Main Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Redditch Town Centre redevelopment (office and retail)</li> <li>• Brockhill East employment site (offices)</li> <li>• Brockhill West employment site (offices and retail)</li> <li>• Land to rear of Alexandra Hospital (offices)</li> </ul>
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**Housing for All Communities**

Housing to Support High Growth Employment Sites and Main Employment Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Church Hill centre regeneration (57 units)</li> <li>• Major housing development at Brockhill East (825 units)</li> <li>• Development at Brockhill West (167 units)</li> <li>• Land to rear of Alexandra Hospital (145 units)</li> <li>• Woodrow strategic sites (Dingleside Middle School &amp; Playing Fields, Auxerre Avenue, 220 units)</li> <li>• Range of small scale developments including purchase and development of Roxborough House, Clifton Close, Wirehill Drive, Loxley Close, Marfield School, Easemore Road, Castleditch, Widney Works, Millfields</li> </ul>
Meeting Special Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specialist care housing for elderly people with dementia, Redditch</li> <li>• Replacement refuge for victims of domestic violence, Redditch</li> <li>• Affordable housing for vulnerable young people, Redditch</li> <li>• St. Gregory's Church development for vulnerable young people</li> <li>• Conversion of ex –offender housing (Stonham)</li> </ul>
Improving the Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation and renewable energy grant scheme</li> <li>• Grant and loan scheme for improvements to HMOs and private housing</li> </ul>

**Developing Worcestershire's Infrastructure**

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Strengthening the Highways Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Weights Lane Link Road (Brockhill East)</li> <li>● Access from B4184 Brockhill Drive</li> <li>● Redditch Transport Strategy Major Scheme</li> <li>● Inner Ring Road scheme</li> <li>● Bordsley Bypass Scheme</li> <li>● Windsor Road/Middlehouse Lane Junction Improvement Scheme</li> <li>● Junction enhancements and access to Nine Days Lane for development of land to rear of Alexandra Hospital</li> <li>● New access road to Church Hill district centre (Tanhouse Lane to Rickyard Lane)</li> </ul>
Improving Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Increased rail services on Cross City Line South (Longbridge to Bromsgrove), providing additional services for Redditch</li> <li>● Rail infrastructure enhancements on Barnt Green-Redditch branch</li> <li>● Enhanced Redditch bus network</li> <li>● Sustainable transport provision for all strategic development sites</li> </ul>
Developing Social, Community and Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Shared school/community facility including school and playing field for Brockhill East</li> <li>● Improvements to cycling and walking network</li> <li>● Implementation of green infrastructure concepts for all strategic development sites identified in Core Strategy</li> </ul>
Managing Worcestershire's Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reinforcing the gas supply network in Redditch</li> <li>● SUDS measures for new developments</li> </ul>

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<b>MAIN INVESTMENT SCHEMES FOR WYRE FOREST</b>	
<b>Creating the Conditions to Sustain and Generate Employment</b>	
Developing High Growth Employment Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• South Kidderminster Business and Nature Park (Kidderminster-Stourport corridor)</li> </ul>
Creating and Sustaining Employment in Worcestershire's Main Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kidderminster Town Centre</li> <li>• West Midlands Safari and Leisure Park</li> </ul>
Supporting the Economic Sustainability of Worcestershire's Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Load St. regeneration area, Bewdley</li> </ul>
<b>Housing for All Communities</b>	
Housing to Support High Growth Employment Sites and Main Employment Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Churchfields regeneration area, Kidderminster (350 units)</li> <li>• Former British Sugar Site, Kidderminster (300 units)</li> <li>• Other sites in Kidderminster including Wolverley Park (72 open market and affordable units)</li> </ul>
Supporting the Vitality of Housing Markets in Worcestershire's Towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Steatite Way and Bewdley Road, Stourport (272 units)</li> <li>• Carpets of Worth, Stourport (159 units)</li> <li>• Parson's Chain, Stourport (3-400 units)</li> <li>• Other sites including Harriers Trading Estate, Wolverly Park, Clent Avenue (all Kidderminster)</li> <li>• STC.4 Bridge St. Basins Link, Stourport (housing as part of wider regeneration scheme)</li> </ul>
Delivering Sustainable Rural Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rural sites including Chaddersley Corbett, Sebright Road (Wolverly), Former Nursery Site, Blakedown (30+ units)</li> </ul>
Meeting Special Housing Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bromsgrove St. foyer scheme, Kidderminster</li> <li>• Supported affordable housing for young people with chaotic lifestyles</li> <li>• Remodelling of housing stock for elderly people</li> <li>• Gypsy and traveller pitches (30 additional pitches over 5 years)</li> </ul>
Improving the Housing Stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insulation grant scheme (up to 400 p.a.)</li> <li>• Bringing empty homes back into use</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Worcestershire's Infrastructure</b>	
Strengthening the Highways Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Kidderminster Transport Strategy Major Scheme. LTP3 package may include specific measures outlined below.</li> <li>• Hoo Brook Link Road (A451)</li> <li>• Kidderminster Town Centre Ring Road (including access to Churchfields)</li> <li>• Stourport Relief Road</li> <li>• Stourport and Bewdley package measures</li> </ul>

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Improving Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kidderminster station improvement package</li> <li>● Kidderminster Town Centre Pedestrianisation - including new bridges in Churchfields and Town Centre</li> <li>● Enhanced Kidderminster and Stourport Bus Networks</li> <li>● Severn Valley Railway to national rail network, including possible halts at British Sugar and West Midland Safari Park</li> <li>● Improved Kidderminster and Stourport cycling and walking links</li> </ul>
Developing Social, Community and Green Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Wyre Forest Schools Review - fit for purpose school buildings - review following closure of the BSF programme WF BSF programme was fairly advanced</li> <li>● Medical - Consolidation and fit for purpose modern GP Practices including proposed replacement/ consolidation of at least 4 practices in Kidderminster;</li> <li>● Stourport Community Facilities Project - on-going review of facilities</li> <li>● Bewdley Community Facility Project including new arts and medical (health centre) facilities</li> <li>● Civic administration - Wyre Forest District Council single site office accommodation</li> </ul>
Managing Worcestershire's Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SUDS measures for new developments</li> </ul>

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<b>MAIN INVESTMENT SCHEMES FOR WORCESTER</b>	
<b>Creating the conditions to sustain and generate employment</b>	
Developing High Growth Employment sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the expansion of Worcester Bosch</li> <li>• Expansion of University of Worcester and Worcester College of Technology</li> </ul>
Creating and sustaining employment in Worcestershire’s main centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing strategic leisure, retail and cultural services for wider catchment</li> </ul>
<b>Providing the right housing for all communities</b>	
Developing housing to support high growth employment sites and main employment centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic growth centred on the release of urban capacity within the City and consideration of possible urban extensions through the South Worcestershire Development Plan (SWDP) process (South Worcester and Worcester West)</li> <li>• Housing development in St John’s Area of the city (Bransford Road sites, 284 units)</li> <li>• Earls Court Farm housing development</li> <li>• Estate renewal and regeneration in Dines Green</li> </ul>
Meeting special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Detox Centre to support people with alcohol and substance issues</li> <li>• Extra care schemes to meet the needs of older people in the city and develop alternative housing options</li> <li>• Gypsy and Traveller pitches</li> <li>• YMCA Young Persons housing scheme to provide move on accommodation and supporting services (10 units)</li> <li>• Night shelter scheme for people with chaotic lifestyles and rough sleepers (15 units)</li> </ul>
Improving the existing housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovative working with Worcester Bosch</li> <li>• Reconfiguration of existing sheltered housing stock</li> <li>• Upper Floor Conversion grant scheme</li> <li>• Under occupation initiatives</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Worcestershire’s infrastructure</b>	
Strengthening the highways infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhancements to the Southern Link Road</li> <li>• Worcester Transport Strategy</li> <li>• M5 Junction 6 enhancements</li> <li>• Worcester Shrub Hill and Lowesmoor area improvements</li> </ul>
Improving public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worcester Transport Strategy</li> <li>• Worcester Foregate Street and Shrub Hill Enhancement Schemes</li> <li>• Central loop improvements</li> <li>• Park and ride sites</li> <li>• Worcestershire Parkway</li> </ul>

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Developing social, community and green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Open space enhancements</li><li>• Swimming pool/Sports Centre</li><li>• Pedestrian and cycle bridges</li><li>• Sustainable drainage schemes</li><li>• Green network</li></ul>
Managing Worcestershire's resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change (as set out in emerging Core Strategy)</li><li>• Managing flood risk</li></ul>

<b>MAIN INVESTMENT SCHEMES FOR MALVERN HILLS</b>	
<b>Creating the conditions to sustain and generate employment</b>	
Developing High Growth Employment sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued investment at Malvern Hills Science Park and links with QinetiQ</li> <li>Emerging SWDP proposals for additional employment land</li> <li>Foster the development of research and high technology businesses</li> </ul>
Supporting the economic sustainability of Worcestershire's towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the vitality of Malvern as a main centre with improvements to retail provision and high quality public realm</li> <li>Supporting the growth of SMEs and other businesses in and around Malvern</li> <li>Supporting the regeneration and enhancement of market towns (Tenbury and Upton)</li> </ul>
<b>Providing the right housing for all communities</b>	
Developing housing to support high growth employment sites and main employment centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Emerging SWDP considering a sustainable mixed use urban extension to the north and/or east of Malvern town</li> <li>Possible redevelopment of surplus land at QinetiQ for housing/mixed uses</li> </ul>
Supporting housing markets in Worcestershire's towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensuring that a range of housing types and tenures are provided in Malvern</li> <li>Housing development at Malvern Vale</li> </ul>
Delivering sustainable rural housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Providing a range of housing types in rural areas to aid affordability</li> <li>Supporting development that meets local needs and supports the prosperity of rural areas by maintaining the viability of services/amenities</li> </ul>
Meeting special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Urban extra care scheme in Malvern (Alexandra Gardens, 101 units)</li> <li>Supported housing in Malvern (Sherrards Green Road and Court Road, 14 units)</li> <li>Increasing the range of housing options to meet the needs of the ageing population in Malvern Hills district</li> <li>Meeting the needs of gypsies and travellers</li> </ul>
Improving the existing housing stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing empty homes back into use</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Worcestershire's Infrastructure</b>	
Strengthening the highways infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malvern, Tenbury and Upton urban packages (LTP3)</li> <li>Traffic and parking management strategy</li> <li>Link to the M5 / Worcester Transport Strategy / Worcester Southern Link Road enhancement</li> <li>A449 Malvern to Worcester inter urban corridor scheme</li> <li>A443 Tenbury Wells to Worcester inter urban corridor scheme</li> </ul>
Improving public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malvern Link station enhancement</li> <li>Malvern Link/Worcester Road maintenance and improvement scheme</li> </ul>
Developing social, community and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malvern Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Scheme</li> </ul>

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green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tenbury Wells Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Scheme</li> <li>● Upton upon Severn Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Scheme</li> <li>● Improvements to cycle and pedestrian network, including bridge over River Severn</li> <li>● Upton upon Severn to Malvern cycle route</li> <li>● Open space provision and maintenance</li> <li>● Community centres</li> </ul>
Managing Worcestershire's resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change (as set out in emerging SWDP)</li> <li>● Managing flood risk in Upton upon Severn and Tenbury Wells</li> </ul>



<b>MAIN INVESTMENT SCHEMES FOR WYCHAVON</b>	
<b>Creating the conditions to sustain and generate employment</b>	
Developing High Growth Employment sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting the expansion of Worcester Bosch and the proposed Worcester Technology Park</li> </ul>
Supporting the economic sustainability of Worcestershire's towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting new employment opportunities in Droitwich Spa to enhance its role as a local commercial and visitor centre, including opportunities for new investment linked to canal restoration project and its potential within the A38 High Technology Corridor</li> <li>Continued regeneration/development in Evesham including support to local businesses during construction phase of Abbey Bridge replacement, new opportunities from Vale Business Park, proposed investment in Evesham Country Park and the ongoing</li> <li>Maintaining the vitality and viability of Pershore, including opportunities for expanding Keytec 7 business park</li> </ul>
<b>Providing the right housing for all communities</b>	
Supporting housing markets in Worcestershire's towns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Housing development in Droitwich including a site capable of delivering 740 units (subject to Development Plan allocation) and Worcester Road Medals Site (c.100 units)</li> <li>Housing development to the South East of Worcester (300 units, subject to Development Plan allocation)</li> <li>Housing development in Evesham including Badsey Road (300 units), Offenham Road (508 units) and Cheltenham Road Phase 1 (158 units)</li> <li>Housing development in Pershore with 2-3 large sites capable of delivering up to 1,000 houses (subject to Development Plan allocation) and Three Springs Road (132 units)</li> </ul>
Delivering sustainable rural housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Affordable housing and supporting infrastructure in Wychavon's rural areas including schemes in Bevere, Broadway and Badsey</li> <li>Community Land Trust development in Evesham rural area</li> <li>Remodelling housing of non traditional build in rural areas</li> <li>Achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 in Evesham rural area</li> </ul>
Meeting special needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of housing for those with specialist needs on public sector land in Evesham</li> <li>Provision of specialist housing (extra care village)</li> <li>Extension of existing specialist/sheltered housing schemes in Pershore (Cherry Orchard House and Almonry Close)</li> <li>Supporting those with mental health problems and substance misuse</li> <li>Increasing the range of housing options to meet the needs of an ageing population</li> <li>Remodelling of EC/Ferry View in Evesham</li> </ul>
Improving the existing housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bringing empty homes back into use</li> </ul>

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stock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Investment in energy efficiency improvements and retrofitting</li> <li>• Tackling under occupation</li> <li>• Upper floor conversion grant scheme or conversion of garages to living space</li> </ul>
<b>Developing Worcestershire's Infrastructure</b>	
Strengthening the highways infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evesham Abbey Bridge and Viaduct Replacement</li> <li>• Traffic and parking management strategy – Droitwich Spa</li> <li>• A38 Worcester – Droitwich Spa – Wychbold inter urban corridor improvements</li> <li>• Pinvin A44 crossroad enhanced capacity scheme</li> <li>• Evesham B4035 junction enhancement / Bengeworth, Evesham infrastructure enhancements</li> <li>• Evesham A4184 Cheltenham Road Junction Enhancement Scheme</li> <li>• Improvements to Southern Link Road (A440)</li> </ul>
Improving public transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Droitwich Spa Town Centre Public Realm Enhancement Scheme</li> <li>• Droitwich Spa Railway Station Enhancement Scheme and Subway Enhancement scheme</li> <li>• Pershore Station Enhancement Scheme</li> <li>• Hartlebury Station Enhancement Scheme</li> <li>• Rail works – Worcester to Evesham line and a line dualling scheme between Droitwich Spa and Bromsgrove</li> <li>• Honeybourne Station Enhancement Scheme</li> </ul>
Developing social, community and green infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evesham walk/cycle bridge over A46 and under River Avon bridge</li> <li>• Community centres and improved utilisation of community facilities</li> <li>• Co location of public services</li> <li>• Open space provision and maintenance</li> <li>• Neighbourhood police station in Droitwich</li> <li>• Enhanced leisure and play provision</li> </ul>
Managing Worcestershire's resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Actions to mitigate and adapt to climate change (as set out in emerging Core Strategy)</li> <li>• Managing flood risk</li> </ul>

## 6. Funding Delivery

### Key Points

- Significant reductions in the availability of public sector funding, including HCA investment, expected to lead to far greater competition for resources.
- New emphasis on finding creative solutions to developing packages of finance to support housing, regeneration and economic development will be key.
- Strong emphasis on extracting more value from public sector assets, including to pool assets and cross subsidise. Measures such as HCA local land initiative, Worcestershire's Capital Asset Pathfinder and new risk and reward mechanisms will underpin future development.
- Importance of partnership activity is reinforced, with the need for local authorities and Registered Providers to work with the HCA, other public sector partners and the private sector to develop investment packages to secure investment in developing new affordable rented housing.
- Local authorities will need to lead development of new tenancy strategies in Worcestershire to reflect mechanisms and availability of funding for affordable housing.
- Local mechanisms including Community Infrastructure Levy, Tax Increment Financing/Accelerated Development Zones and New Homes Bonus will become key sources of funding to support investment in housing, regeneration and infrastructure.
- Partners gearing up to work with a new range of funding mechanisms (eg. Regional Growth Fund, Technology and Innovation Centres) to assist in delivering economic development and regeneration priorities. Regional Growth Fund bids already submitted.

### The Delivery Challenge

6.1 Implementation of the thematic priorities set out in the previous section will involve the delivery of a range of different schemes, including:

- Major residential schemes, some of which are targeted at specific groups of residents such as older or vulnerable people, or particular localities where opportunities for new housing developments have been identified.
- Major mixed use developments, some of which will take place in several phases over a number of years. Early investment in infrastructure or housing on a site will unlock future, larger scale development phases.
- Employment led schemes, ranging from major site developments and key town centre investments through to more modest workspace schemes.
- Crucially, the development of infrastructure to underpin housing and wider regeneration activities.

6.2 Partners in Worcestershire recognise that this will take place in an investment climate which has substantially changed. Over the past decade there has been public sector funding to support the delivery of new housing, regeneration schemes and infrastructure improvements. As the recession took hold of the housing industry, mechanisms including the National Affordable Housing Programme and Kickstart became increasingly critical to development activity, accounting for as much as 70% of recorded starts in the year to the second quarter of 2010.

- 6.3 These favourable funding conditions also extended to wider regeneration and economic development. Regional development agencies, including Advantage West Midlands, channelled substantial funding to local areas through investments in employment sites and premises, together with the extensive range of investments to support specific sectors of the economy, business support, skills development, public realm improvements and other key components of the economy.
- 6.4 In recent years, emphasis on the development of the knowledge economy has also played a key part in improving and generating new infrastructure including science and technology parks as well as directing investment towards research and development. There has been a strong flow of investment both directly into this infrastructure (eg. through the RDAs) but also through public investment into technology intensive industries such as defence.
- 6.5 A feature of the period leading up to the recession was the ready supply of credit and the generally relaxed conditions for borrowing. These features extended to local public sector authorities who, in certain parts of the country, secured increasing volumes of unsupported borrowing to help implement major pieces of physical renewal.
- 6.6 Many of these **funding sources have now radically reduced** and the LIP will be delivered in a substantially different context to that which prevailed through much of the 2000s.
- 6.7 The HCA has seen a significant reduction in its funding, with £4.5 billion available over the period from 2011-15 for investment in affordable housing, mortgage rescue, empty homes, provision for gypsies/travellers and places of change. It will now operate through a different geographical structure that will see increased competition for resources over much larger areas of the country. Partners can expect much greater emphasis on the alignment of public sector resources, package based approaches to development and the maximising of returns on investment.
- 6.8 These changes in the HCA's mechanisms for investing in housing present key challenges to which partners in Worcestershire are now responding:
- The need to continually refine and update lists of investment priorities to better reflect the volume and type of public funding available. This first LIP represents the start of this process.
  - The need for Registered Providers and local authorities to work together to develop packages of schemes to access HCA investment.
  - The need to accelerate activity to find new ways to pool public sector assets in Worcestershire and lever in investment for housing and regeneration through the creative use of these assets.
  - The importance of local authorities leading the development of new or updated tenancy strategies, working with Registered Providers and other partners.
- 6.9 The withdrawal of single programme funding and the closure of the RDAs will reduce the availability of funding to support employment development and regeneration activity in Worcestershire. Between 2008 and 2010, Advantage West Midlands operated with an annual budget of just under £300 million. While new funding will be available, it will be both more limited and more competitive.

## Worcestershire's Response

6.10 In this new policy and funding landscape, a number of generic principles are emerging that will determine how partners will approach the housing, wider regeneration and infrastructure investment it requires over the next few years. Strong public and private sector partnership, creative ways of subsidising development and the pooling of public sector assets will be central features of this new approach. Any public sector resource that is available will be fiercely competed for.

6.11 Specifically partners in Worcestershire will seek to:

### First, work constructively with the HCA's new affordable rent investment mechanism

6.12 The shift to the affordable rent model will fundamentally change the means by which significant volumes of affordable housing are provided, and will have particularly important consequences for social rented housing. Partners are now responding to the **need for a closer, three-way working arrangement** and dialogue between the HCA, Registered Providers and local authorities based on trust and a full, open book approach to determining what could and should be developed. Key elements of Worcestershire's response include:

- Registered Providers exploring how to work with new flexibilities (eg. potential to reassign stock to affordable rent, which in turn is expected to provide additional revenue which could be used to subsidise further development). The way in which Registered Providers are able to contribute significant equity and funding into project packages, in order to secure HCA funding, could entail various initiatives including:
  - loan finance (secured against other assets / income)
  - converting existing socially rented stock into affordable rented accommodation – using the uplift in rentals to fund additional new build, or
  - putting in land assets upfront at nil value, taking any value / uplifts at a later date.
- Collective dialogue amongst Registered Providers and local authorities about investment priorities, building on existing mechanisms in the County.
- Exploring how the mix of sites proposed by Registered Providers together with an approach which focuses development as much as possible, or feasible, on the HCA's preferred new affordable product (up to 80% of market rent) could help to strengthen the role of the private sector in funding deliverable private housing (for sale and / or to rent) and in contributing to the affordable housing needs of the area.
- Similarly, partners are continuing to create opportunities to cross-subsidise development through Section 106 arrangements or through the use of land and premises assets to generate receipts for reinvestment. This approach is particularly important for special needs special needs developments, since less public funding will be available to support priority schemes of this type across Worcestershire.

## ● Worcestershire Local Investment Plan ●

- Assessing the contributions that Registered Providers could make in delivering some other housing products (e.g. socially rented or special needs projects) and the scale of such provision.

6.13 Together, these activities will play a critical part in determining how much HCA funding will be available to support the new affordable housing product. At the same time, partners recognise the need to demonstrate the best possible value for money from any proposed investments. As well as simply representing a direct return (e.g. the number of housing units delivered), such considerations also need to take account of procurement and other efficiencies (e.g. through Registered Providers working in consortia, or ensuring their projects develop skills and employment within local communities).

### Second, use local assets creatively

6.14 There is now growing emphasis on the **creative use of local land assets** to secure housing, regeneration and economic development priorities. Partners in Worcestershire are now seeking to build on initiatives already underway in this area, and to explore new mechanisms for extracting additional value from shared assets. Their response includes:

- Early dialogue about the HCA's local land initiative (LLI). The HCA will have the leading role in a 10 year programme intended to create a long term pipeline of land for housing to support economic development and other key policy objectives. The initiative will involve the alignment of resources and investment plans including the use of HCA and Advantage West Midlands' assets, local assets and the development of opportunities to cross subsidise between sites in these portfolios. Support for the procurement of delivery partners will be central to the LLI, part of a drive to make the HCA's resources (expertise, influence) available to local partners which will also include work with financial institutions to secure new private sector investment in schemes.
- Starting to explore the potential to recycle receipts from land assets (including HCA land) and the more creative use of land to generate income. This is closely connected to the local land initiative, with the use of mechanisms such as overage aligned to HCA grant funding to fund several phases of development. New approaches to assets might extend to requests to ring-fence receipts from the sale of HCA land for the local area, with those funds then subsidising housing developments elsewhere in the community. It could also include local authorities leasing rather than selling land to generate longer term income streams.
- Further developing Worcestershire's Capital and Asset Pathfinder initiative, which is a good example of how partners are approaching the need to more creatively use either HCA or public sector land holdings, with greater emphasis on creating opportunities for land swaps. Through the Capital and Asset pathfinder, partners in Worcestershire have already made progress in building a comprehensive picture of the availability of public sector land and property assets across the county. Business plans have been developed to promote joint approaches to service delivery, including the sharing of buildings. Over time, this will provide a valuable resource to support further work on the creative use of local assets to secure future development.

- 6.15 Part of the process of identifying schemes for inclusion in the LIP has included establishing the ownership of sites and the potential for sites to be used as assets to lever other investment or cross-subsidise development elsewhere. Partners will seek to build on this work in future versions of the LIP.

### **Third, experiment with new risk and reward tools**

- 6.16 The UK government has signalled its intent to introduce a range of risk and incentive tools designed to encourage local housing and business development by expanding the options available to local authorities and their partners to borrow resources to facilitate physical renewal.
- 6.17 To incentivise areas to accept new house building and to help increase rates of development, the New Homes Bonus policy will take effect from April 2011. This will see local planning authorities receive payments based on the annual net increase in dwellings in its area, with higher payments per dwelling for properties in higher value council tax bands. Although there is no indication that this funding will be ring fenced solely for housing and related infrastructure, it is a further signal of intent on moves to a more localist position on tax and expenditure decisions. Partners in Worcestershire are now considering how best to use this to support priorities identified in the LIP, with the potential for some NHB funding to be pooled across several local authority areas.
- 6.18 The 2010 White Paper on Local Growth gave a clear commitment by the government to introduce a Tax Increment Finance (TIF) model. This would give Worcestershire's local authorities the potential to borrow additional funds to invest in capital and infrastructure projects leveraged against projected increases in local revenues from local business rates. As development takes place and new revenues are generated, these would be ring fenced to enable the local authority to meet its borrowing obligations (debt and interest). The expectation is that this would be based on an Accelerated Development Zone model, where an area is designated within which a local authority or groups of local authorities will invest in the expectation of securing growth in income from business rates.
- 6.19 Partners recognise that retaining a flexible approach to future housing and regeneration priorities in Worcestershire will be important, since detail about how these mechanisms will work and the opportunities they will create is still emerging.

### **Fourth, adopt new approaches to capturing developer value**

- 6.20 In November 2010, the government announced its intention to retain the Community Infrastructure Levy. The CIL mechanism is intended to simplify the process of capturing value from development for reinvestment in local communities, through the setting of local levy rates based on infrastructure plans. This ties the returns from development to their scale – essentially through the use of a charging schedule which will be clear to developers in advance of any development.
- 6.21 The expectation about the CIL mechanism is that it will provide local areas with a flexible mechanism to fund an extensive array of infrastructure to underpin development. In delivering the local investment plan for Worcestershire, the CIL is likely to be an important contribution to the wider package of funding required to make new developments work, and

to ensure that local infrastructure improvements keep pace with new housing schemes.

### **Fifth, gear up early for competitive funding regimes**

6.22 Partners in Worcestershire have moved quickly to respond to a number of new funding regimes introduced during the latter part of 2010. In the context of delivering the LIP, two funding sources in particular have an important part to play:

- Bids are currently being submitted for the first round of the new Regional Growth Fund (RGF). A total of £1.4 billion has been earmarked for the RGF over the next 3 years, with its primary purpose to encourage bids by private-public partnerships to support initiatives that will create new private sector jobs over a sustained period. While housing is not an explicit priority for RGF, successful first round bids and submissions to future rounds have the potential to be a significant source of funding to support the creation of new employment opportunities in Worcestershire, and to underpin priorities identified in the LEP and in Worcestershire's economic strategy. The government's intention is that RGF will be directed to those areas where there are both the biggest opportunities for new employment and which are most heavily dependent on public sector employment. Six first round bids have already been submitted including:
  - A major package of improvements to Kidderminster Station (East Midlands Trains)
  - The purchase of land for development in Evesham
  - Proposals for the development of the Bosch led technology centre.
- The government has allocated £200 million over a 4 year period to support the development of new Technology and Innovation Centres (TIC), with the Technology Strategy Board tasked with identifying 6-8 centres for investment in sectors including energy & resource efficiency, transport systems, healthcare, ICT and electronics, photonics and electrical systems. With a well established, internationally recognised base of high tech manufacturing businesses and its associated research and development base, Worcestershire partners will consider how the TIC initiative might support their aspirations to further develop the county's strengths in knowledge intensive industries.

### **Sixth, develop Worcestershire policies on a range of housing issues**

6.23 Production of this first LIP and the emergence of new policy and funding mechanisms for housing and wider regeneration reinforce the case for developing Worcestershire wide policies and programmes on housing issues. Partners are making good headway in this regard with the development of the LIP and with their continued work to complete the County Housing Strategy. The Local Enterprise Partnership, work on a new County Sustainable Community Strategy and the development of a County Infrastructure Delivery Plan are all helping to strengthen Worcestershire wide policies for priorities identified by the LIP. However, partners have signalled through the LIP process the need for further work on an extensive range of issues which are common to several areas or in some cases the County as a whole. These are summarised in below:



<b>Table 6-1: Key Housing Issues Identified By Partners</b>	
<b>Issue</b>	<b>Emerging Responses</b>
New approaches to tenancy	Highlighted through LIP process and dialogue has commenced, and partners will need to work towards tenancy strategies that reflect the new national tenancy policy framework
Domestic abuse refuges and support	Some potential schemes identified through LIP process. Needs assessment being undertaken across County.
Provision for Gypsies and Travellers	Some schemes identified in LIP, with adopted Core Strategy (Wyre Forest) and draft core strategies identifying need and locations
Connecting LIP to Infrastructure Delivery Planning process	Discussed through LIP process and recognised as issue to be addressed following completion of first LIP. Place Shaping Group to consider.
Older people and need for more extra care provision	Research undertaken and new work commissioned looking at Extra Care by the Joint Commissioning Unit. Potential for more research to target priority locations. Further research needed on demand for accommodation for people suffering from dementia.
Need for innovative approaches to funding and mix of housing for elderly	Partners have pointed to scope for more subsidising of low rent, extra care and other types of provision through the development of more aspirational market housing for the elderly.
Provision of accommodation for people with mental health needs.	Needs assessment being undertaken across County which may result in reconfiguration of services and development of new provision
Provision for people with physical disabilities and sensory impairment	Needs assessment being undertaken across County which may result in reconfiguration of services and development of new provision
Accommodation for single homeless and young people at risk	Needs assessment being undertaken across South Worcestershire which may result in reconfiguration of services and development of new provision
Need to develop Worcestershire wide approach to Mortgage Rescue	Work already underway to generate data on potential demand for mortgage rescue, which will inform how HCA funding and supporting activity is allocated across the County
Empty homes	Potential to look at new ways to bring empty homes back into use through a toolkit of measures and linking investment to nomination rights
Delivery of renewable technologies in homes and retrofitting of low carbon technologies	Process of developing LIP has highlighted wide range of schemes already being delivered in Worcestershire and need to secure funding to continue programmes. Linked to measures to tackle fuel poverty.
Implementation of code for sustainable homes and new design standards	These will be determined locally under the emerging policy framework, and partners could work with the HCA to respond to this change
Tackling underoccupation	Need to explore incentives for downsizing to promote better use of existing affordable housing provision by enabling downsizing within current social rented homes.
Overcrowding	Need to find innovative ways to increase space available (eg. loft conversion programmes) to enable households to remain living in local communities and to retain existing support networks particularly where larger accommodation is in poor supply - building on pilot project outcomes

6.24 This rapidly changing policy and funding climate presents both opportunities and challenges for partners in Worcestershire in taking forward the priorities they have identified in the LIP. Over the coming months, partners will need to undertake a more detailed assessment of the

## ● Worcestershire Local Investment Plan ●

range of funding and delivery issues they are faced with in delivering key priorities for the County. It will be important to ensure that County wide strategic priorities for accommodation for older and vulnerable people are connected to the Supporting People initiative and other commissioning arrangements. In essence, what is required is a business planning approach to identifying the most deliverable and the highest impact investments with an emphasis on finding creative and innovative ways to deliver them. The Worcestershire Place Shaping Group should be expected to play a key role in coordinating this activity.

## 7. Working with the HCA

- 7.1 Local Investment Plans were, and remain, a mechanism to help HCA decide how best it can assist in meeting affordable housing and regeneration needs in local areas. Whilst the scale and nature of the resource which HCA has at its disposal has changed fundamentally from when LIPs were first conceived, there remains a continuing need for the LIP to provide HCA with a framework against which it can assess the case for any investment in Worcestershire.
- 7.2 As set out in Section 6, HCA's principal investment mechanism for the period 2011-15 in Worcestershire will be its new £4.5 billion affordable rental model.<sup>3</sup>
- 7.3 Resources under the affordable rental model will be distributed via Registered Provider led investment packages. Each investment package will deliver affordable homes, with a primary focus on affordable rental properties, via a number of funding routes comprising:
- HCA grant funding, with the detail of the process set out in the prospectus on the affordable rent product
  - Registered Provider's own resources – which could come from borrowing capacity from new affordable rent homes, or resources generated from conversion (to affordable rent and in some cases, disposal or conversion to shared ownership)
  - Other sources, including private sector developer Section 106 contributions and the (anticipated) extensive use of public sector land assets.
- 7.4 Proposals under HCAs supported housing, empty homes and gypsy and traveller initiatives are also to be included within affordable rent package proposals.
- 7.5 The HCAs wider enabling role, in terms of the in-house expertise across its teams and access to delivery partner panels for example, will underpin the assembly of package proposals and their implementation. The process of securing grant from HCA has yet to be determined but is likely to be via a competitive bidding process, with the demands for HCA resources being greater than the level of available resources.
- 7.6 In recent months housing officers from the six local authorities, together with inputs from Worcestershire's Registered Providers, have been assembling a long list of possible investment priorities that could underpin package proposals. These lists have now been refined to comprise schemes that have:
- The potential to provide a significant new supply of affordable homes along with the provision of housing to meet special needs, including those of older and vulnerable people.
  - A genuine probability of delivery commencing within the next 4 years. In preparing the LIP, the deliverability of each scheme has been assessed with partners. Any for which barriers exist which make delivery a remote prospect have been excluded.
  - Scope to contribute to one or more of the five LIP housing themes set out in Section

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<sup>3</sup> Whilst HCA nationally also has £2 bn to deploy on the Decent Homes programme the vast majority of this will be focused on Council Landlords with a backlog of more than 10% non-decent stock, none of which are located in Worcestershire.

5 of this document. This is clearly indicated in the analysis of the list.

- 7.7 For some schemes there is an anticipated need for public subsidy to deliver affordable housing components - there may be a proven or likely viability gap, or HCA or other public sector land may be involved. This is clearly indicated in the table. For others affordable housing will be delivered through Section 106 contributions, or through resources generated from conversion of existing Registered Provider stock to affordable rental units.
- 7.8 In utilising these lists of candidate schemes for north and south Worcestershire, a number of caveats should be highlighted. There is a clear need for further financial modelling with Registered Providers to assess whether the affordable rent product will prove to be a viable on sites identified for HCA support.
- 7.9 Also, the lists have been compiled in dialogue with each of the local authorities and representatives of the Registered Providers using the best information currently available about the schemes. In some cases, there are not yet clear details about the nature of some individual schemes, the volume of housing they will accommodate, their potential start/completion dates and requirements for HCA and other public sector support. This reinforces the need for partners to retain a degree of flexibility in updating and supplementing the list as schemes come forward.

## Analysis of Worcestershire Schemes

- 7.10 Table 7-1 below provides a summary analysis of those schemes for which the LIP has identified a need for subsidy to secure the delivery of affordable housing. These schemes will be central to further discussions between the HCA, local authorities and Registered Providers about the development of package proposals.
- 7.11 Alongside summary data on the number of schemes under each of the LIP's key housing priorities, Table 7-1 shows the number of housing units and affordable housing units which those schemes have the potential to deliver. It also indicates how many of those schemes have Registered Providers already involved or earmarked for them, and how many would involve the use of public land. The key findings from this analysis are:
- The analysis identifies 103 schemes for which a need for subsidy has been identified.
  - Overall, the schemes would deliver just under 3,500 housing units, of which around 2,100 would be affordable.
  - A total of 19 schemes deliver just over 2,000 houses (930 affordable) in schemes to support high growth employment sites and the main employment centres in Worcestershire.
  - Under the supporting the vitality of housing markets in Worcestershire's towns, 19 schemes have been identified as requiring subsidy. They would deliver around 340 homes, close to 300 of which would be affordable.
  - A large number of schemes (42) would deliver sustainable rural housing. The majority (90%) of this housing would be affordable. This reflects the extensive rurality of parts of Worcestershire.
  - A total of 23 schemes under the meeting special needs priority, which together would deliver around 620 units ranging from extra care units for elderly people to supported flats for young people with chaotic lifestyles.
  - The overwhelming majority of schemes (more than 80%) already have Registered Providers involved in them through land/building ownership, roles as development partners or outline agreements to deliver affordable housing on the site.
  - Around 40% of the schemes involve the use of public sector land assets, an increasingly important factor in securing investment. Although 60% of schemes do not appear to involve public sector land assets, many of the sites identified are owned by Registered Providers and have therefore been earmarked for affordable housing, special needs housing etc.

● Worcestershire Local Investment Plan ●

Table 7-1: Count of Schemes with potential to start within 4 years, with requirement for public subsidy identified											
Priority	District						Total No. of Schemes	Total No. of Units	Sum of Affordable Units	RP identified Yes/No	Use of public land Yes/No
	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest					
Housing to support high growth employment sites and employment in main centres	1	1	9	4	0	4	19	2,045	930	Y = 14 N = 5	Y = 10 N = 9
Supporting the vitality of housing markets in Worcestershire's towns	4	1	0	0	12	2	19	345	301	Y = 15 N = 4	Y = 7 N = 12
Delivering sustainable rural housing	2	11	0	0	26	3	42	467	425	Y = 33 N = 9	Y = 14 N = 28
Meeting special needs	4	3	6	2	4	4	23	623	473	Y = 19 N = 4	Y = 7 N = 16
Total	11	16	15	6	42	13	103	3,480	2,129	Y=81 N=22	Y=38 N=65

7.12 Table 7-2 provides a summary analysis of the all schemes identified by partners for consideration in the LIP process. This list includes both those schemes for which a need for public subsidy has been identified and others for which no specific need for subsidy has yet been identified. Many of these non-subsidy schemes are expected to generate affordable housing through developer contributions. The analysis includes only the following types of scheme:

- The potential to commence delivery within 4 years.
- No potentially insurmountable barriers to the scheme being delivered. Partners have identified a number of sites where development is assessed as being unlikely to proceed.
- Schemes where there is a clear start date and data on the number of units that could be accommodated on the site. The analysis therefore excludes those schemes for which this information is not yet available.

7.13 Clearly, partners have an extensive range of specific sites, schemes and initiatives which are expected to contribute to achieving housing targets and policy objectives. A total of 131 specific schemes/sites have been included in this analysis. The list provides a comprehensive picture of the supply and pipeline of sites and schemes in Worcestershire. They range from large scale urban extensions which are expected to generate significant investment in affordable housing from Section 106 contributions through to small scale schemes on which housing provision is likely to be dependent on public subsidy. The key points of this summary analysis are:

- Schemes would deliver 10,400 housing units, 5,000 of which would be affordable.
- Around 65% of site specific schemes (95) already have a Registered Provider involved with them.
- Only around 20% of site specific schemes have involved identified public land. Many sites are owned of sites by Registered Providers, while there are also substantial private sector land holdings across the County.
- An overwhelming majority of the housing units that would be delivered by these schemes have been identified under priorities to support high growth employment sites and employment centres together with housing to support the vitality of housing markets in Worcestershire's towns.
- However, the highest number of schemes (47) falls under the Sustainable Rural Housing priority, reflecting the large number of rural housing sites identified by both Malvern Hills Council and Wychavon Council.

Table 7-2: Count of Schemes with potential to start within 4 years, with requirement for public subsidy identified											
Priority	District						Total No. of Schemes	Total No. of Units	Sum of Affordable Units	RP identified Yes/No*	Use of public land Yes/No*
	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Redditch	Worcester	Wychavon	Wyre Forest					
Housing to support high growth employment sites and employment in main centres	10	2	17	5	4	11	49	7,900	3,006	Y=17 N=29	Y=14 N=35
Supporting the vitality of housing markets in Worcestershire's towns	4	3	0	0	2	2	11	1,061	860	Y=18 N=9	Y=8 N=25
Delivering sustainable rural housing	2	11	0	0	31	3	47	792	646	Y=40 N=7	Y=10 N=37
Meeting special needs	4	3	6	2	5	4	24	662	491	Y=20 N=4	Y=6 N=18
<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>10,415</b>	<b>5,003</b>	<b>Y=95 N=49</b>	<b>Y=38 N=115</b>

\* Information on public land and Registered Provider involvement not known for small number of schemes.



- 7.14 This full list of schemes that partners have identified through the LIP process provides partners in Worcestershire with **a strong platform for dialogue about the development of packages** of proposed investments with housing. The potential for schemes to cross-subsidise other schemes (eg. through developer contributions, land swap mechanisms, reallocations) is already being explored by partners, and this process will be critical in achieving the objectives identified by the LIP.
- 7.15 It is important to note that partners identified a total of 243 schemes and sites through the LIP process. In summary, those which do not feature in the analysis above include:
- 40 schemes/sites for which no start date was available
  - 40 schemes/sites for which no housing unit data was available
  - 24 non-site specific initiatives (eg. energy efficiency schemes, retrofitting schemes)
  - A number of sites which partners specifically indicated should not be included in the analysis.
- 7.16 Registered Providers will continue to play a central role in delivering affordable housing across Worcestershire. Further analysis of those scheme for which a need for subsidy has been identified indicates that the County is well-served by a wide range of Registered Providers that are already involved with many of the schemes listed in the LIP. An indicative summary of the specific Registered Providers identified with the schemes summarised in Tables 7.1 and 7.2 is provided in Table 7-3 below.

Table 7-3: Indicative Summary of Registered Providers Identified for Local Investment Plan Schemes									
	BDHT	Stonham Home Group	Accord	Accord/RCH	Festival	WFCH	West Mercia	West Mercia/BDHT	Various
No. of Schemes with Need for Subsidy Indicated	8	5	1	2	2	7	2	1	1
Overall No. of Schemes	11	5	1	2	2	8	2	1	1
	Festival Housing Group	West Mercia	Worcester Community Housing	Marches-Jephson Group	Rooftop Housing Group	Stonham Home Group	Various		
No. of Schemes with Need for Subsidy Indicated	12	4	3	3	32	1	1*		
Overall No. of Schemes	13	4	4	3	35	1	1		
Note: *Various Registered Providers identified for non-site specific schemes (eg. retrofitting, reconfiguration of sheltered housing stock)									

7.17 This is not intended to represent an exhaustive list of Registered Providers involvement with schemes identified in the LIP. In some cases, agreement with a specific Registered Provider has not yet been reached, while there were information gaps for a number of schemes (eg. no clear start date, numbers of housing units unknown). The substantial number of schemes associated with the Rooftop Housing Group reflects this Registered Provider’s significant presence in rural areas of Worcestershire.

## 8. Consultation and Engagement

8.1 Consultations with Local Authorities, Registered Providers, the Homes and Communities Agency have been essential in compiling the Local Investment Plan. These took place over the period from November 2010 to February 2011 and included:

- North and South Worcestershire Local Investment Plan Task and Finish Group (November)
- Consultation with Worcestershire County Council representatives, 15<sup>th</sup> November
- Meeting with Worcestershire Place Shaping Group, 29<sup>th</sup> November
- Scheme review discussion with Ruth Bamford, Daniel Russell (Redditch Council) and Andy Coel (Bromsgrove Council), 29<sup>th</sup> November
- Site visit and scheme review, Wyre Forest Council, 29<sup>th</sup> November
- Meeting with North Worcestershire Delivery Group, 29<sup>th</sup> November
- Scheme review meeting with Andy Coel and Mike Dunphy, Bromsgrove Council, December 2010
- Scheme review meeting with Alison Grimmett, Daniel Russell, Matthew Bough (Redditch Borough Council) and Mike Williams (Worcestershire County Council), December 2010
- Scheme review meeting with Kate Bailey, Wyre Forest Council, 9<sup>th</sup> December
- Roundtable meeting with Registered Providers, Malvern, 9<sup>th</sup> December. Attendees from Bromsgrove & District Housing Trust, Rooftop Housing Group, Worcester Community Housing, Community Housing Group, WM Housing Group, Waterloo Housing Group, Bromford Housing Group, Festival Housing Group
- Scheme review meeting with Wychavon Council representatives, January 2011
- Scheme review meeting with Worcester City Council representatives, January 2011
- Scheme review meeting with Malvern Hills Council representatives, January 2011
- Joint meeting with South Worcestershire Registered Providers and Local Authorities, January 2011
- Meeting with North Worcestershire LIP Task and Finish Group, January 19<sup>th</sup>
- Meeting with South Worcestershire LIP Task and Finish Group, January 19<sup>th</sup>
- Joint meeting with Local Authority representatives and HCA, Worcester, 19<sup>th</sup> January



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**BDC EXECUTIVE CABINET MEETING – 6<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2011**  
**UPDATE HCA BID PROPOSALS**  
**2011-2015 AFFORDABLE HOMES PROGRAMME**

**1.0 Summary**

- 1.1 This report updates the BDC Executive of the shape of the bdht/WM Affordable Homes Bid for 2011-15 and seeks BDC's support to the principles of the bid.
- 1.2 The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) will be expecting the outcomes of the bid and the necessary inputs to be the result of an agreement between the strategic authority and the Housing Association providers.
- 1.3 It is clearly the government's intention that the responsibility for the future provision of affordable homes, is in this sense joint responsibility, in order to give greater certainty to ensuring delivery.

**2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The affordable Homes Programme seeks offers from providers, such as bdht and WM, to work with the HCA to deliver a new supply of affordable housing over the next four years, to 2015.
- 2.2 At the highest level the framework offers greater flexibility and opportunity to developing associations, but also dramatically reduced grant rates within a higher financial risk structure, a structure supported primarily by revenue financed borrowed by Housing Associations rather than capital grant provided by the HCA.
- 2.3 Key to this new structure is a new affordable rent product which will be made available to new tenants up to a maximum of 80% of market rent and the extent to which the bidding Housing Associations can access additional borrowing, free land and other capital subsidies generated through efficiencies/ better use of existing assets.
- 2.4 None of these issues are new and have already been discussed in considerable detail with various key BDC officers and at the high level partner/ BDC meeting of the 10<sup>th</sup> February 2011.
- 2.5 bdht and WM are now in the process of preparing the detail of their respective bids. The bids will form part of a wider consortium bid within the governance of the Spectrum Development Consortium. Spectrum are already prequalified to bid and have an excellent track record of delivery with the HCA.

- 2.6 The bids will be framed as required by the process (within the Worcestershire region) and will align completely with the work of the Worcestershire Place Shaping Group – Worcestershire Local Investment Plan (LIP).
- 2.7 The detailed bid and funding for the Bromsgrove District is in the process of being developed and is to an extent, at this stage intuitive. We have now however been provided with the detail of the required structure and have up until the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2011 to complete the process and submit a competitive bid.

### **3.0 Bid Structure**

- 3.1 The HCA expect that the bid will reflect the priorities of the area which it covers. In respect of Bromsgrove District, the recent partnership work in the production of the LIP will meet this criterion.
- 3.2 The bid will need to be supported by a robust funding proposal and the HCA expect this to be produced through four broad funding streams:
- A) Free or discounted land.
  - B) Additional borrowing by the Housing Association funded by the conversion of social rent (existing and new properties) to affordable rent.
  - C) Cross subsidy, through Housing Association surpluses, outright sale, shared ownership sales, recycled grant (sales of previously grant aided developments) and more effective/creative use of existing equity through stock disposals.
  - D) HCA funding, but only where it is required to make a development viable.
- 3.3 In simple terms, the points covered above equate to the grant rate being reduced from 45-55% to 10-15%, the cost of the product to the consumer (tenant) being increased from 55% of market rent to 80% of market rent and the provider (Housing Association) funding the new homes through additional borrowing and internally produced capital subsidy i.e. more risk.

### **4.0 Bromsgrove District Area Outline Bid**

- 4.1 The following information is at this stage approximate only. We will continue over the period up to late April, to refine the detail; work that will take place in consultation with Spectrum Partners and importantly, BDC (Andy Coel).
- 4.2 We are at this stage assuming a bid over the programme period of approximately 250 units, which will match our joint performance in Bromsgrove District over the previous four years.
- 4.3 The bid will as stated previously, reflect the detail of the LIP.
- 4.4 To produce the funding for this programme, we will need to create a total fund from the four streams of circa £23 million.

## **5.0 Structure and Principles of Bromsgrove District Area Bid**

5.1 Although already stated, the following details must at this stage be considered approximate. The principles will however remain as essential constants in the final bid.

### **5.2 Bid Details:**

- A) 200-250 units to be provided over the period of the programme.
- B) bdht will input free land for 50 to 60 units. No other free land or discounted land is likely to be identified.
- C) bdht and WM will identify internal surplus subsidy although this will inevitably be a small element of the bid, as we have no real reserves.
- D) At this stage, we are assuming the need to borrow in the region of £12-15 million to support this programme. To facilitate this borrowing, we anticipate approximately half of all new lettings of existing stock being at 80% market rents.

The half at 80% rents will have to be frontend loaded within the period, but will exclude the 84 new social rental properties at Perryfields Road and most transfers to existing tenants. Most other new developments will be developed with a mix of shared ownership and affordable rent properties.

- E) We envisage a need to create an internal capital subsidy of between £2.5 and £3 million. To do this, we propose a disposal strategy focussing on two main areas:
  - i) Disposal of high value property from existing stock as they become vacant; 15-20 dwellings over the period of the programme.
  - ii) Conversion of existing social rents tenanted dwellings to shared ownership, through the encouragement of existing tenants to take up the option. Due to existing very low levels of activity through RTB, we are only estimating 10 conversions over the period of the programme.
- F) Capital Grant from BDC £200k.
- G) We are still trying to gain intelligence as to what will constitute a competitive bid, although are assuming a provisional figure of circa £3 million of HCA grant to support the Bromsgrove bid.

## **6.0 Recommendation**

6.1 That BDC confirm their commitment to the principles of the bid to the HCA for the Affordable Homes Programme, as detailed within section 5 of this report.

If there is anything in relation to this report which you do not understand, or if you would like to discuss the contents with the author, please do not hesitate to make contact as follows:-

**Mike Brown**  
**Chief Executive**  
**bdht**

**Tel: 01527 557508**



# Bromsgrove District Council



## Private Sector Housing Strategy 2009 - 2014

UPDATED JANUARY 2011

*'Making best use of existing accommodation by improving quality of accommodation and addressing the imbalance in the housing market through the provision of more affordable housing.'* District

Priority 2 'Improving the Quality and Availability of Private Sector Housing.'

# Executive Summary

## Executive Summary

Bromsgrove's new Private Sector Housing Strategy has been re-written as a separate document to clearly set out the role, aspirations and priorities that the Council has for improving the quality and availability of private sector housing in Bromsgrove District over the period 2009 - 2014.

The document has been developed in close relationship with partner agencies and revised in March 2011 to take into account more recent housing and demographic data from a the BRE report, priorities and objectives having been reviewed with stakeholders at two Strategic Housing Consultation Events held in November 2008.

One of the Council's four key housing priorities is to *improve the standard of private sector housing and increase the availability and accessibility of privately owned and rented housing*, especially to the vulnerable and those on lower incomes which includes the important role of administering Disabled Facilities and Home Improvement grants.

**Section 1-** details the local context of the District with its increasingly ageing population of 92,300 of which 17.2% are over 65 years of age and includes high levels of owner occupancy and issues of housing affordability. The section identifies the needs of the District and the role of the local authority when dealing with private sector housing with particular regard to advice, assistance and enforcement.

**Section 2-** identifies how the Strategy takes into consideration the national, regional and local priorities, and how this has helped shape our vision for Housing in the District.

**Section 3-** identifies the housing profile of the Bromsgrove District taking into account the most recent Stock Condition Survey and its key findings.

**Section 4-** identifies issues influencing Private Sector Housing in the District and explores the emerging and potential impact of the current economic downturn upon the local housing market.

**Section 5-** identifies the Council's priorities for private sector housing that were identified during consultation events with partners and stakeholders.

**Section 6-** details how the Local Authority currently meets these priorities and sets out further future initiatives

**Section 7-** provides information on resources and funding streams available in provide a range of grant assistance.

**Section 8** – sets out the outcomes and key performance targets relating to :  
Sustained long term 'Decent' housing conditions, improved quality of privately rented accommodation (including HMOs) and higher standards for healthier and safer homes.

Improved energy efficiency of homes.

Better support and assistance to older and vulnerable people in making home improvements and adaptations, healthier and safer homes.

Increased access and choice in the private rented sector.

The Private Sector Housing Strategy and Assistance Policy and action plan are attached at Appendix 1 and 2.

# Contents

1. **Introduction**
    - What is the Private Sector Housing Strategy?
    - Population
    - Economy
    - Sustainable Development
    - Deprivation and Health
    - What is the Council's role within Private Sector Housing?
    - Enforcement Policy
  
  2. **Private Sector Housing: National, Regional and Local Priorities**
    - National
    - Regional
    - Local Vision
  
  3. **Profile of Private Sector Housing in Bromsgrove**
    - Issues facing the Private Sector Housing
    - Bromsgrove's House Condition Survey
  
  4. **Current Issues Influencing the Private Sector Housing Market**
  
  5. **Consultation and Emerging Priorities**
  
  6. **Private Sector Housing Priorities in Detail**
  
  7. **Available Resources**
  
  8. **Outcomes and Key Performance Targets**
- Appendix 1. Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy**  
**Appendix 2. Private Sector Housing Action Plan**

SECTION 1 Introduction



# 1. Introduction

## What is the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy?

This document sets out the detail behind the Council's Private Sector Renewal Strategy that is embedded within the Bromsgrove District Council's Housing Strategy 2006 – 2011 - *'Unlocking the door to meeting housing needs in Bromsgrove District'* Priority 2 *'Improving the Quality and Availability of Private Sector Housing.'*

**KEY POINTS**

- Bromsgrove has a total of 31,479 private sector homes (BRE Report 2008)
- 63% of vulnerable households live within Decent accommodation
- Over 1600 non decent homes are occupied by vulnerable people (BRE Report 2008)
- An estimated £97m is required to bring all non decent properties up to a Decent Homes standard.

Bromsgrove District Council recognises that Private Sector Housing is a valuable and important resource with approximately 84% of households within the district being owner occupied (11<sup>th</sup> highest in England and Wales). This strategy therefore focuses upon the key challenges facing the private sector.

Private sector housing plays a significant role in shaping and supporting local communities. It is therefore central to the quality of residents lives by helping people meet their housing needs and aspirations by supporting economic activity and helping to create a pleasant environment to live in. The private rented sector plays an important role in a balanced housing market and is becoming a readily accessible choice for tenure. It offers flexibility and accessibility which is particularly important in times of economic downturn or recession. Private sector housing services can therefore directly support wider communities in terms of improving

health, addressing anti-social behaviour and crime, improving housing supply and providing access to decent accommodation. This strategy therefore details the Local Authorities priorities in meeting these objectives.

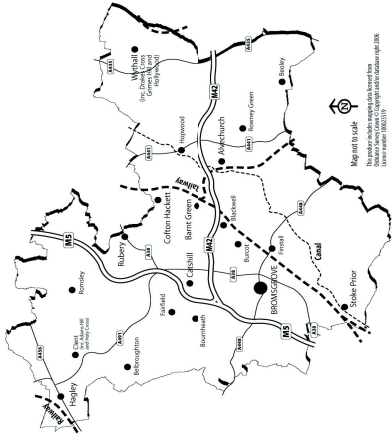
## Bromsgrove District

Bromsgrove District is in north Worcestershire, covering a large area of approximately 83.9 square miles. Whilst only 14 miles from the centre of Birmingham, the Lickey Hills country park provides an important dividing line between the urban West Midlands Conurbation and the rural landscape of north Worcestershire. Ninety percent of the District is greenbelt which impacts upon housing supply policy. Four radial routes pass through the District, each served by railway lines and major roads, including the M5 running north and south, the M42 running east and west, with further links to the M40 and M6.

Data suggests that 16,643 people travel into the District for work, with 26,112 (29%) of the population travelling out, a net commute out of 9,469.<sup>1</sup> Our main communities are detailed in the map (above). The District has no wards in the top 20% most deprived in England.<sup>2</sup>

## Population

The population of the District is 92,300<sup>3</sup> and the Office for National Statistics predicts that this will increase by 20.5% over the next 23 years to 111,200 in 2031.<sup>4</sup> The largest proportion of the population is within the age category 30-44 (22.3%). The



<sup>1</sup> ONS 2001 Census  
<sup>2</sup> DCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007  
<sup>3</sup> ONS 2007 Mid-Year Population Estimates  
<sup>4</sup> ONS 2006 Subnational population projections

over 65's population totals 17,000 (17.2% of the population)<sup>5</sup> and this older population is predicted to expand as a proportion of the overall District population significantly over the next 20-25 years, with the over 80s population estimated to increase by 132% by 2031.<sup>6</sup>

Migration into Bromsgrove has increased over the last decade, however Bromsgrove has the lowest rates within the County. The black and minority ethnic population (BME) is 6.4%, which is low for the region and nationally. This percentage comprises 1% Irish, 2.6% Asian, 1.2% Mixed, 1.0% Black and 0.6% Chinese.<sup>7</sup> There are no definitive data sources for the migrant worker population living in Bromsgrove, but indicative figures suggest this is in the region of 0.2%.<sup>8</sup>

The District ranks 299th out of 354 councils on the national index of multiple deprivation 2007 (where 1 is the most deprived), making the District one of the least deprived nationally.<sup>9</sup> 5177<sup>10</sup> households are in receipt of benefits in the District, which is a significant increase from 2008 where only 640 households were in receipt of means tested benefit. This is a 709% increase, however Bromsgrove still remains one of the lowest figures in Worcestershire.<sup>11</sup> As a result, identifying the vulnerable within our communities is more difficult than a district with geographic areas of deprivation.

Fuel poverty is becoming an increasing issue throughout the district, this is defined as households spending 10% or more of

<sup>5</sup> ONS 2007 Mid-Year Population Estimates

<sup>6</sup> ONS 2006 Subnational population projections

<sup>7</sup> ONS 2006 Resident Population Estimates by Ethnic Group

<sup>8</sup> Worcester County Economic Assessment 2007-2008

<sup>9</sup> & 16 DCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007

<sup>10</sup> BRE Housing Stock models update Worcestershire Private Sector Housing Group 2008

<sup>11</sup> Worcester County Economic Assessment 2007-2008

their earnings on heating costs. The average for this district is in line with the national average (12%) and a quarter of the wards within Bromsgrove exceed the national average for fuel poverty. The greatest percentage of households that are in fuel poverty within Bromsgrove District is in Woodvale with 28% of the properties deemed to be in fuel poverty.

Information received through the recent BRE Report indicates that a large proportion of vulnerable households (41%) in Bromsgrove, live in non decent accommodation. This therefore poses a health and a safety risk to the occupants, thus underpinning the importance of providing advice and assistance to home owners in improving existing stock and bringing back into use those properties that would otherwise remain vacant or derelict.

### **Tenure**

As around 89% of the District's residents live within private sector housing, the Local Authority has an important role in the delivery of statutory, discretionary and strategic interventions.

There are 37,492 households in the District<sup>12</sup>, with 32,216 private dwellings. The Regional Spatial Strategy (now due to be revoked) has identified that approximately 4,000 homes are required to be built within the District up to 2011. The approximate areas of growth being boarders with South Birmingham and Redditch.

The private rented sector accounts for approximately 16.6%<sup>13</sup> which is significantly below to the National average (31%) and the lowest percentage of private rented accommodation in Worcestershire.

<sup>12</sup> Worcestershire County Council RSS Household Forecasts Report 2008

<sup>13</sup> ONS 2001 Census

The profile of private sector housing types across the district, compared with England and Wales is set out below.

House Types	Bromsgrove (%)	England and Wales (%)
Detached	36	22.77
Semi Detached	33	31.58
Flat	6	19.19
Terraced	23	25.8
Other	2	0.42

(Source: 2001 Census)

### Economy

The economic picture of the District is generally very positive in spite of the current economic downturn. The mean household income is £38,690, which is the highest in the county (the county average is £35,656).<sup>14</sup> Bromsgrove District has the highest level of employment within the County which was recently calculated at 83%.<sup>15</sup> The majority of households have full time employment within the Public administration, education or health professions.

The district has, however seen a dramatic increase in unemployment figures since October 2008, there is currently 3.9% of Bromsgrove's population unemployed. This is still significantly lower than the County average of 4.5%.<sup>16</sup> The majority of unemployment rates are seen within the age group 18-24 years old, however overall Charford has the highest percentage of unemployment (8.5%), whereas Blackwell has the lowest unemployment rates of the district at 1.8%.<sup>17</sup>

### Affordable Housing

<sup>14</sup> PayCheck 2008  
<sup>15</sup> Economic Summary October 2009  
<sup>16</sup> Economic Summary October 2009  
<sup>17</sup> Economic Summary October 2009

One of the biggest issues facing the District is affordable housing: 83.4% of households are owner occupied,<sup>18</sup> the 11<sup>th</sup> highest figure in England and Wales, and the average house price being £205,962, although this figure is falling in line with the global economic downturn. Bromsgrove has seen the greatest fall in house prices throughout Worcestershire, with an average 11.7% decrease over the last 12 months.<sup>19</sup> The Council has lifted the planning moratorium, therefore delivery of new housing developments is expected to begin from the January 2011. The Housing Strategy sets a target of 80 units of affordable housing per year.

### Sustainable Development

We all need to make a decisive move toward more sustainable development, not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in our own long-term best interests. By thinking about the way in which we do things and becoming more sustainable, we can meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This is the concept of sustainable development, and must underpin all of our actions. We have undertaken a number of initiatives historically that improve our sustainability e.g. Renewable Energy Grant, Home Insulation Project and Warmer Worcestershire (Thermal Flyover). Funding however is currently limited to support such initiatives in the immediate future. The Local Strategic Partnership's Better Environment Group has assisted in a number of projects that are aiming to reduce our carbon footprint, help conserve and enhance our biodiversity, and reduce pollution e.g. warmer Worcestershire. The Council and its partners aim to ensure that the serious issue of climate change is addressed and the Council, LSP and the County have therefore made climate change a priority.

<sup>18</sup> ONS 2001 Census  
<sup>19</sup> Economic Summary October 2009

### **The Council's Role within Private Sector Housing**

Local Authorities have an instrumental role in ensuring that properties throughout the district are decent and safe to live in. This can be achieved through several tools available to the Authority in the form, of advice, guidance, assistance and/or enforcement.

Since transferring its social housing stock to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust in 2004, Bromsgrove District Council now focuses upon increasing the standard and quality of the private sector housing stock and enabling and providing more affordable housing. This strategy therefore details and supports the Council's overall aim to improve the quality and supply of private sector housing through assistance, advice and where necessary, enforcement thus improving health and community well being.

The Housing Act 2004 provides the Council with a number of legislative tools which focus upon health and safety. This has strengthened the drive to restructure the housing market, achieve decent homes and further enhance local communities. Intervention has a direct impact upon local health targets, fuel poverty, the availability of safe decent housing with independent living. The Act places a number of Mandatory duties on the Council which include:

- A duty to review the District's housing stock.
- A duty to intervene where a Category 1 Hazard exists (as determined by Housing Health and Safety Rating System)
- A duty to set up a Mandatory 'House in Multiple Occupation' licensing scheme
- A duty to issue Interim and Final Management Orders when appropriate

The Council also has the following discretionary powers -

- Power to deal with Category 2 Hazards.
- Power to set up an Additional Licensing Scheme.
- Power to set up a Selective Licensing Scheme .
- Power to issue Empty Dwelling Management Orders.
- Power to issue Special Management Orders.

In addition, Local authorities have the following mandatory duties:-

- License Mobile Home Site Owners under the Caravan Site, Control of Development Act 1960.
- A duty to assist people with disabilities to enable them to live independently within their own home (Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996).
- To adopt a strategy in order to assist homeowners to maintain and improve their homes. (Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order 2002.)
- To report on the satisfaction levels with regards to regulatory services within private sector housing inspections.

Whilst the responsibility for the maintenance of private sector dwellings ultimately rests with the owner-occupier or landlord, Bromsgrove District Council has in recent years, provided limited discretionary grants to assist more vulnerable households to improve their homes. Whilst this Strategy sets out principles upon which the actions are based, it is not the purpose of the strategy to set out in full the detailed procedures for various forms of assistance.

This strategy sets out the key priorities for the improvement of the quality, supply and suitability of privately owned accommodation to improve the ability of residents to live independently in decent homes. The key actions to implement the strategy are set out within the Action Plan at Appendix 1 of this document. The strategy however seeks to meet the



following brief objectives in order to meet the wider County vision of 'creating the right places to live within our local communities meeting needs by making the best use of existing resources.' :-

- Improve the standards of private sector housing through meeting statutory duties of the Local Authority in relation to responding to health, safety and management issues.
- Increase the number of vulnerable occupants living within Decent accommodation.
- Improve energy efficiency within the private sector by promoting Energy Efficiency measures to vulnerable households.
- Meet the statutory duties of the Council in relation to the provision of housing adaptations for disabled persons.
- Meet the recognised local needs of the District identified in the various local research papers e.g. Housing Needs Survey and BRE Report.

### Enforcement Policy

In accordance with the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008, the Local Authority has developed a corporate approach to Enforcement which is consistent, proportionate and transparent. The policy sets out the Council's priorities for taking appropriate enforcement action and links to a procedure that ensures consistency in the application of enforcement action in accordance with local and national standards. Key pieces of legislation relating to the regulatory and enforcement role of the Council are as follows: -

- Housing Act 2004
- Housing Act 1985
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Home Energy Conservation Act 1995
- Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960

- Mobile Home Act 1980
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

In line with the policy, a Local Authorities action is not just to enforce but also to raise awareness to the standards required to meet legal requirements. This supports local economic progress by supporting local landlords to maintain a healthy housing balance.

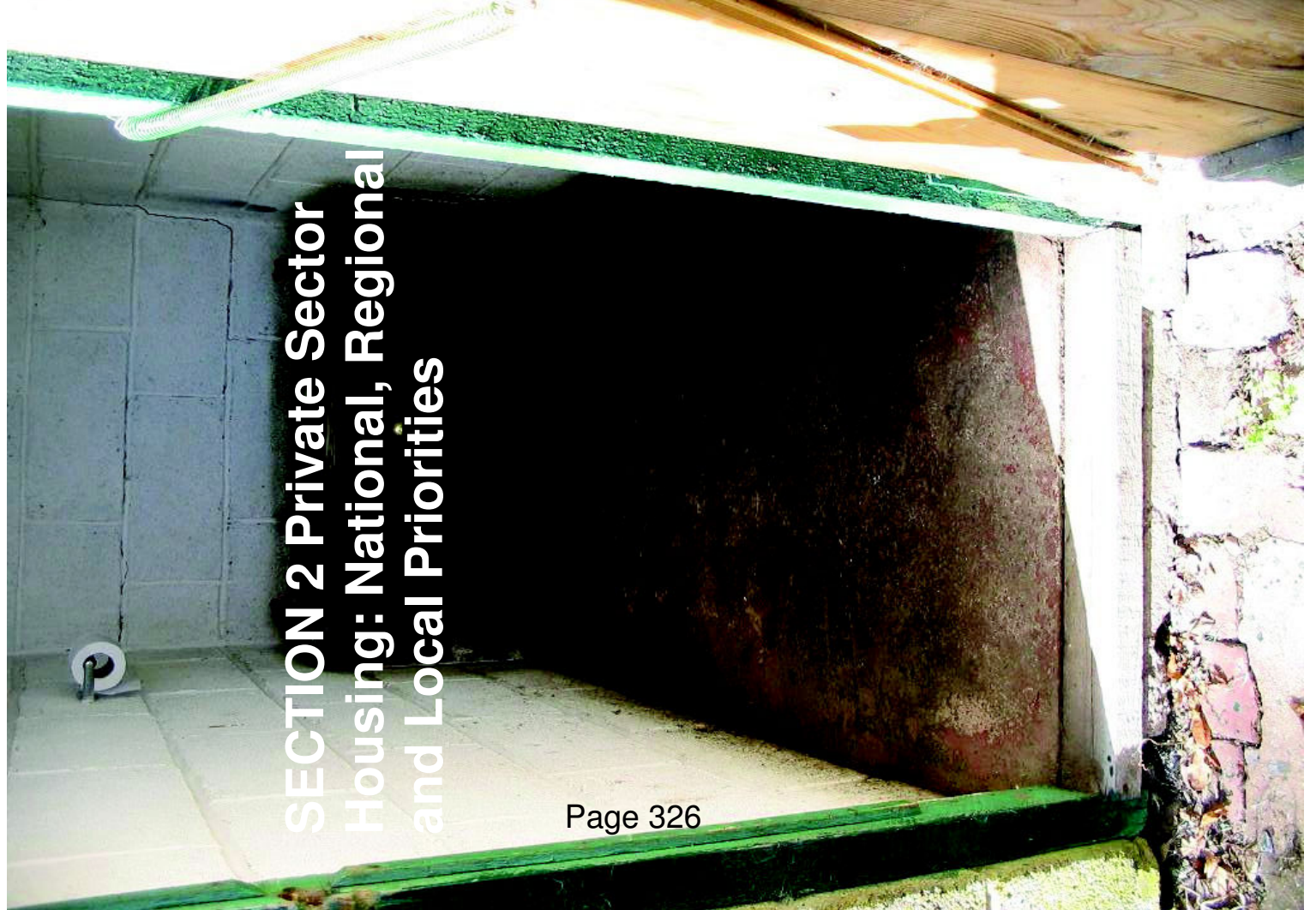
In line with enforcement the Local Authority currently collates data from customer satisfaction survey's in relation to regulatory enforcement. Throughout the Local Authority, 85% enforcement activity was found to be deemed fair and helpful by customers.

### BEFORE ENFORCEMENT



### AFTER ENFORCEMENT





**SECTION 2 Private Sector  
Housing: National, Regional  
and Local Priorities**

## 2. Private Sector Housing: National, Regional and Local Priorities

In order to manage the supply, demand and quality of private sector housing within the District, Bromsgrove District Council has to embody a broad range of national, regional and local, policies, strategies and legislation. The Private Sector Housing Strategy therefore embraces the following: -

### KEY POINTS

- The Local Authority has a variety of policies, National guidelines and pieces of legislation to work within.
- Bromsgrove District Council works in close partnership with a variety of agencies in order to meet national incentives and legislative requirements.

### National Priorities

At a national level, there have been significant legislative and policy changes which have affected the way in which local authorities deliver their private sector housing services. The main policy changes are as follows: -

**The Housing Act 2004**; this is the most significant recent piece of legislation that replaced the 'fitness standard' with the introduction of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which directly links housing and health. The Act also strengthens the rights for privately renting tenants through the introduction of the Rent Deposit Protection Scheme, the mandatory licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and provides greater powers for tackling empty properties.

**Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All (2000)**; set out policies to achieve the aim of offering everyone the opportunity of a decent home and so promotes social cohesion, well-being and self-dependence including a new direction for the standards in the social and private sector.

**The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) 2002**; emerged from 'Quality of Choice: A Decent Home for All' and introduced a range of discretionary powers in order to provide a more flexible manner to deal with the standards of private sector dwellings.

**The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety Order) (England and Wales) 2005**; replaces many of the previous fire safety legislation. It is instrumental in placing the responsibility onto any person who exercises some control in a residential premises to take reasonable steps to reduce the risks from fire. The order details the Local Authority and Fire Authority's responsibilities particularly in the case of enforcing fire standards.

**Supporting People**; the government initiative that introduced centralised funding, multi agency strategic planning and commissioning of support services to vulnerable people with special needs, has been designed to promote peoples independence and ability to remain in their homes and community.

**The National Framework for Older People and Integrated Services for Older People** - relies on providing support in order to assist older people to live safely and healthily in their own homes.

**The Housing and Health Agenda** – highlights the high cost to the health service of delayed discharge of patients from hospital often due to the condition of their home or the urgent need for adaptations.

**Rugg Review** – a research paper that has been instrumental in the review of England's private rented sector provides recommendations to maximise the full potential of private rented accommodation to ensure that it is a well functioning element

and viable housing option.

**Home Energy Conservation Act 1995;** - influences the development of Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Policy and Government targets to increase Energy Efficiency and eradicate fuel poverty in all UK homes by 2016.

**Sustainable Communities: Building For the Future Plan (Feb 2003);** This paper introduced the government's new approach to maintaining and encouraging thriving communities where people want to live and have access to decent and affordable homes.

**Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods – National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society (2008)** Outlines where the Government aims to be in five years' time:

- Existing housing stock will be improved to raise it's quality and promote good health. Many more homes will be warm and comfortable.
- Major and minor adaptations will become easier to obtain.
- Major adaptations through the Disabled Facilities Grant will be quick and simple to obtain and appropriately linked to other services.
- Home improvement and handyperson services will be widely accessible. Home Improvement Agencies will be available in all parts of the country and will deliver a more proactive, wider range of services.
- People will get these services before a crisis happens.
- Where housing services are needed they will be personal, progressive, high quality and joined-up. They will provide choice and will give individuals more control to make housing-related decisions.

The following table indicates the National Performance Indicators:-

National Performance Indicators	Bromsgrove DC performance			
	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
To increase the proportion of vulnerable households achieving Decent Home Standard to in excess of 70% by 2010	77.30 %	77.83 %	63%	To be updated at next full survey.
Number of private sector dwellings brought back into occupation each year as a result of action by the Local Authority	19	33	38	13 up to Sept 2010
NI 187: - Monitor the proportion of households containing someone on means tested benefit (MTBs) that occupy a dwelling with a SAP rating less than 35 or greater than 65	N/A	Below 35 = 8.77%	Results being collated Nov 2011.	No longer being collected.

**Regional Priorities**

**The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy;** was been formulated by the Regional Housing Board who were responsible for the allocation of housing funding. The key aim is to address the condition of housing in the District through advice and enforcement action to ensure that dwellings meet Decent Homes standard.

**The Worcestershire Code of Practice for Home Adaptations for People with Disabilities;** adopted by Bromsgrove Council,

the protocol identifies best practise in the administration of Disabled Facilities Grants and identifies the role and responsibilities of the Local Authority, PCT and the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency and various partner agencies.

**Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy;** identifies the importance of the Home Improvement Agency as a vehicle for the delivery of low level housing support to older and vulnerable clients.

**Worcestershire County Housing Strategy;** this identified the needs of the county in line with current research that has been undertaken to assess housing needs, vulnerability and the condition of the current housing stock.

**Fire Protocol; Worcestershire Housing Authorities and Hereford & Worcester Fire Authority;** this is a fire protocol between Worcestershire Local Authorities and the Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority indicating its roles and regulatory enforcement within each type of property e.g. HMO's.

The following table indicates Countywide performance indicators:-

Countywide Performance Indicators	Bromsgrove DC performance		
	2008/9	2009/2010	2010/11 (up to Dec 31 <sup>st</sup> 2010)
Number of DFG referrals received in each category	1	50	43
	2	51	41
	3	66	59
DFGs completed paediatric cases (0 – 19 age group) New in 2008	9	14	

DFGs completed paediatric cases (16 -21 age Group) New in 2008	3	5	TBC
Number of Notices served under the Housing Act 2004	2	5	TBC

**Local Vision**

At a local level, this strategy has to link effectively with Bromsgrove District Council's corporate vision to **'work together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services'** and Corporate Objectives:

- Regeneration
- Improvement
- Sense of Community and Wellbeing
- Environment

From this foundation, the Strategic Housing vision is to provide a co-ordinated approach to improving the quality of life for everyone living in the District by **'making best use of existing accommodation by improving quality of accommodation and addressing the imbalanced housing market through the provision of more affordable housing.'**

This Private Sector Housing Strategy supports the **'Housing Strategy 2006 – 2011- Unlocking the door to meeting housing needs in Bromsgrove District'** by detailing the Local Authorities strategy for improving housing conditions in owner occupied and privately rented accommodation.

In addition, to national and regional policies there are a number of other priority areas identified within local plans, the key

documents are as follows: -

**Housing Stock Models 2008 update: Worcestershire Private Sector Housing Group;** this report produced by the BRE is an update to the Fordham Stock Condition Survey 2004. This is the main basis for the Strategy indicating areas throughout the district that have a high density of failure under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System.

**Warmer Worcestershire;** this information is web based from data gathered from a thermal flyover which took place at the beginning of 2009. Residents are able to focus on their property in order to establish its thermal efficiency.

**Customer First;** Bromsgrove District Council's approach to Customer Care is placed at the centre of all service delivery creating a golden thread throughout the authority by applying service standards that are continually monitored.

The **Affordable Warmth Strategy**, documents and through a subsequent area specific action plan, identifies areas and responsible officers required to reduce fuel poverty throughout North Worcestershire.

**Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2009 - 2012.** a "road map" for the Council's work between now and 2012 that sets out objectives of Regeneration, Improvement, Sense of Community & Wellbeing and Environment. The Council priorities include Housing and Climate Change.

**Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011;** Sets out the 10 year vision for Housing and improving Health and Wellbeing.

**The Climate Change Strategy;** details the actions the authority

intends to undertake in order to prevent or reduced the adverse affects from climate change.

**The Empty Home Strategy;** details the authorities Empty Home Policy and sets out the advice, guidance and assistance that is available to encourage owners to bring unused properties back into use.

**The Housing Assistance Policy;** sets out type of grant assistance currently provided by Bromsgrove District and details the eligibility criteria for accessing these grants.

**Houses in Multiple Occupation-Licensing Policy;** sets out the standards required of a landlord running a licensable HMO, licensing procedure, fees and the local authorities regulatory powers.

The following table sets out Bromsgrove District Council's local Performance Indicators that relate to private sector housing: -

Local Indicators	Performance	Bromsgrove DC performance			
		2007/8	2008/9	2009/10	2010/11 (up to Dec 31st 2010)
Time taken (weeks) to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant from referral to final payment for the following: -	Category 1(Highest Priority)	52	28.13	43.8	45.27
	Category 2(Medium Priority)	52	46.29	62.2	64.61
	Category 3 (Lowest Priority)	52	38.46	63.1	83.66
Number of Disabled Facilities Grants completed.		104	90	93	46
Percentage and amount of Disabled Facilities Grant budget spent in year.		64.6% (£507,727)	83.3% (£499,695)	92.4% (554,381)	49.7% (£298,746)
Number of discretionary grants completed.		57	48	36	
Percentage and amount of Discretionary Grants budget spent.		86.6% (£63,000)	89.3% (£115,204)	83.1% (£95,595)	68% (£68,442)

**SECTION 3 Profile of Private Sector  
Housing within Bromsgrove**





### 3. Profile of Private Sector Housing within Bromsgrove

#### Introduction

In order to identify the local housing needs and condition of the housing stock in the District, a Private Sector House Condition Survey was undertaken by Fordham Research has more recently been updated by the BRE Report in 2009. The BRE desktop survey assessed the details on the following areas of concern: -

- Decent Homes Standard taking into account, Category 1 Hazards, inadequate thermal comfort, disrepair and outdated facilities and services.
- The number of non decent homes occupied by vulnerable households.
- Dwellings with SAP Ratings of less than 35.
- Fuel poverty.

Whilst the survey took into account the main indicator of housing conditions within the District; Decent Homes, a considerable amount of attention was given to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System.

#### Housing Profile

Bromsgrove has a higher than the national average private sector housing stock and below average social and private rented

housing. The 'Right To Buy' scheme had a significant influence on the ratio of social to private sector housing in Bromsgrove with over 3,000 Council dwellings having been sold between 1980 and 2004. The percentage of social housing that is classed as non decent within Bromsgrove is around 3%.

Compared with the national profile, the proportion of detached and semi detached dwellings is above the national average, however terraced properties are less than half the average for both West Midlands and England.

Bromsgrove District has a significantly lower proportion of flats compared with the national average. 54% of properties within Bromsgrove District were built after 1964 a factor influencing the levels of non decent homes. The following table indicates the age profile of the housing stock.

Age profile of housing stock	Bromsgrove (%)	England and Wales (%)
Pre 1919	11	24
1919-1944	12	18
1945-1964	22	18
Post 1965	54	38

(Source: 2001 Census)

In Bromsgrove there is an estimated 38,500 homes across all tenures. A recent housing market assessment identifies the following tenure breakdown.

Year	Owner Occupier	Shared Owners	Socially Rented	Privately Rented	Other rented
2007	82.1	0.4%	9.8%	5.7%	2.0%

The profile of private sector housing types across the district, compared with England and Wales is set out below.

House Types	Bromsgrove (%)	England and Wales (%)
Detached	36	22
Semi-Detached	33	31
Flat	6	19
Terraced	23	25
Other	2	0.42

(Source: 2001 Census)

Of the 38,500 properties throughout the district, as of January 2011 there are approximately 992 empty properties. The analysis of these properties are as follows: -

- 603 empty properties have council tax exemptions
  - 399 of these empty properties are unoccupied and unfurnished
  - 150 of these exempted properties have owners that have deceased
  - 54 of these exempted properties are deemed to being uninhabitable
- 389 empty properties are considered long term empty properties to which the local authority is able to use their toolkit to bring back into use.

Empty homes and the initiatives associated with this problem are explored within the Empty Property Strategy which can be found on Bromsgrove District Council's website and can be requested from the Strategic Housing Department. Empty homes are a wasted resource both for the owner who could otherwise make financial gains by letting or selling the property, and for those who are in need of housing. In addition, empty homes can have strong

negative impacts both on residents living in the neighboring vicinity and the wider community. Bromsgrove District Council is therefore committed to ensuring that owners of empty properties are supported to bring properties back into use. A toolkit of options and ideas has been put together for owners of empty properties. These include:

- Property inspection and schedule of works.
- Grant assistance (subject to budget availability).
- Local contractor details.
- Information and assistance in letting property through the "Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme".
- Advice on selling the property

To support the authority's focus on returning empty properties back into use, the Council have utilised their power to charge 100% council tax rates on properties that have been empty for longer than six months. It is also important that owners of empty properties are aware that the Council have access to a wide range of enforcement legislation that can be used to force an owner to carry out certain works on their property to make it safe, secure, and to ensure that the property does not adversely affect the area it is in. Using the wide variety of tools available the Strategic Housing Officers target to encourage minimum of 25 properties back into use each year.

Bromsgrove District contains a wide variety of property types including 30 licensed private residential mobile homes sites and one RSL owned site. The Local Authority has a duty to license and monitor compliance with the Model Standards 2008 and provide advice, guidance or where necessary take formal action. Regular inspections are undertaken with a target to achieve and maintain a minimum of 90% compliance with the model standards.

Other licensable properties include Houses in Multiple Occupation that fulfil a certain criteria, there is however a duty for Local Authorities to ensure all Houses in Multiple Occupation meet the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and Fire Protocol measures. Bromsgrove District Council has been operating a public register for Licensable Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) since 2006. There are currently 4 Licensable HMOs; however the recent desktop stock condition survey indicated that this is a wider market than initially considered which is expected to increase. Houses that fulfil the following criteria are considered to mandatory licensable HMOs that must be licensed are those that fulfil the following criteria: -

- Three of more storeys
- Five or more occupants
- Two or more households

The illustration below indicates examples of the types of accommodation where it would be considered to be mandatory licensable.

Licensable	Licensable	Licensable	Not Licensable
Bathroom in Attic	2 Bedsits 2 People	3 Bedsits 5 People	Self Contained Flat
2 Bedsits 3 People	2 Bedsits 5 People	Landlord, Partner and Child	Self Contained Flat
2 Bedsits 2 People	Self Contained Flat	Shop	Self Contained Flat
			Second Floor
			First Floor
			Ground Floor

- Bromsgrove District Council is committed to ensuring that occupiers of all types of house in Multiple Occupation live in

safe and healthy homes. There are a number of reasons to which give reason for the local authority to visit and inspect the HMO which are as follows: -

- A routine inspection as part of a planned inspection program.
- A routine revisit to check that standards have been maintained.
- In response to a request to inspect the property.
- As a result of a complaint or enquiry.

Legislation places a responsibility on Local Authorities to assess the Health and Safety of all HMO's in accordance with the Housing Act 2004. The Local Authority also have a duty to work in partnership with the Fire Authorities in order to inspect Houses in Multiple Occupation to ensure the fire safety installations are up to current standard. Fire safety legislation has recently been amended to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, which places a responsibility on the Landlord to undertake a fire risk assessment.

Central Government consider living in a HMO high risk, with the biggest concern being fire safety as unlike normal domestic properties fire can spread quickly, affecting other households. When assessing the property an officer will inspect in accordance with the Housing Health and Safety Rating System, however the main emphasis of our enforcement role is based upon education, to both occupants and owners in order to ensure that properties within the District are safe, warm and in decent condition.

The BRE report in 2009 recognised the need for discretionary grant assistance to be introduced to target the most vulnerable households and assist those in the greatest of need. The survey indicated that demographic evidence suggests that the demand for Home Repairs Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grants will increase due to the aging population within Bromsgrove. The

Local Authority has worked in partnership with neighbouring authorities, Supporting People, Worcestershire County Council to jointly develop and fund the Home Improvement Agency to assist through Local Authority funding elderly, disabled and vulnerable people to repair and improve their homes.

**Decent Homes Standard and Vulnerable People**

Decent Homes are important for the health and well being for not only the occupants but also the district as a whole as a high proportion of Decent Homes is key to a thriving, sustainable community. In order for a property to be decent it should be warm, weatherproof and have reasonably modern facilities.

From the Countywide Housing Strategy consultation in January 2010, 88.7% of respondents stated that improvement to the condition of their existing homes was important.<sup>20</sup> Dwellings that fail any two of the following sections of the Decent Homes definition are considered to be non-decent. -

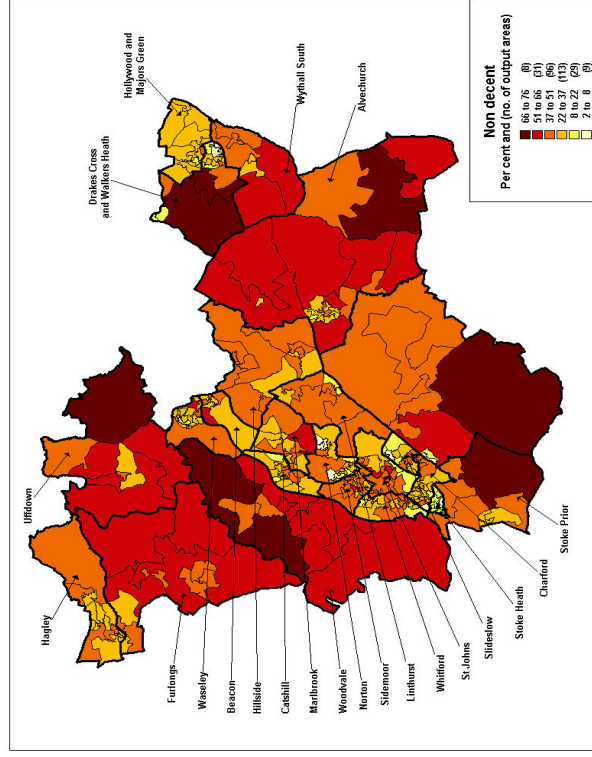
- (a) Presence of a Category 1 Hazard as determined under the Housing Act 2004.
- (b) Failure of a key building component as a result of age or condition or failure of two or more building components being in a reasonable state of repair.
- (c) Lack of modern facilities e.g. kitchen more than 20 years and bathroom more than 30 years old.
- (d) Thermal comfort, as assessed through the Housing Health and Safety Rating system.

Results from the recent BRE report (diagram 1) indicate that the number of private dwellings that fail the Decent Homes Standard within Bromsgrove is in line with the National average (36%). Bromsgrove has the second lowest number of non decent homes

throughout Worcestershire, Malvern has the highest percentage of non decent homes with 50% (13453) properties failing the decent homes standard and Redditch has the lowest number of non decent homes having 30% (7606 properties) failing the decent homes standard. The BRE report states that the average costs for bringing a property up to a Decent Standard within Worcestershire is on average £8,360.

There are areas of non-decency throughout the district, diagram 1 indicates 7 areas with a high density of non-decency. The highest proportion of properties are found to be within the Woodvale ward (489 properties amounting to 59% of the dwellings) In order to bring all properties within Woodvale up to a decent standard this would cost approximately £4,088,040.

**Diagram 1**



<sup>20</sup> County Housing Strategy Summary Analysis of Results Jan 2010

The highest number of properties found in a ward to be non decent is within Alvechurch where 1078 properties fail the standard (45%). In order to bring all these properties up to a decent standard this would amount to £9,012,080. Stoke Heath to the south of the District has the lowest proportion of non decent homes with 101 properties (11%) of the ward this would cost £844,360 to bring this ward up to a decent standard.

Both social housing and private accommodation have targets to meet the decent homes standard by 2010, the most significant target being to increase the proportion of vulnerable households living in Decent Homes to in excess of 70% by 2010 and 75% by 2020.

This Strategy therefore focuses its attention upon ways of providing assistance to vulnerable residents in order to ensure that where possible all vulnerable residents live in housing that meets the Decent Homes Standard. Vulnerable households are defined as:

- Any household where one or more occupant is in receipt of a means tested benefit.
- Any household that has an occupant aged 60 years or more, or
- Any household that has an occupant who is disabled or suffering a long term illness.
- Any household that contains one or more children aged 16 years or under.

The responsibility for the maintenance of private sector dwellings rests with the owner-occupiers. Figures released by the ODPM reveal that 12% of homeowners aged 70 or over would not be able to pay for major repairs to their homes.

From the recent BRE report it was estimated that approximately 15% (4605) of households within Bromsgrove contain at least one vulnerable occupant. Since the report in 2009 there has been a

significant rise in the number of households that are in receipt of a Means Tested Benefit therefore the number of vulnerable households have increased by from 4605 to 5178 this is a 12.4% increase.

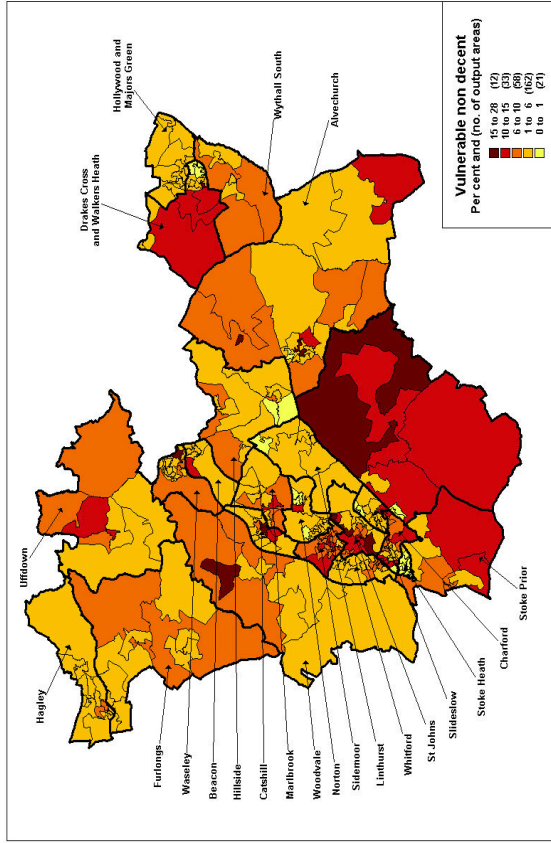
The greatest number of vulnerable households are found within the Waseley ward (22%) that borders Birmingham. The lowest numbers of vulnerable households are found within the Linthorst ward where there are only 46 residents that are deemed vulnerable, this represents 5% of the total vulnerable households.

Of the total number of vulnerable households an estimated 36.6% (1686) live within non decent accommodation and therefore 63.4% of vulnerable households live in properties that meet the Decent Homes standard , a lower proportion than previously estimated..

To improve to Decent Homes Standard the dwellings of the 1686 vulnerable households that are estimated to be living in non-decent accommodation is calculated to require approximately **£140,949,60** of investment. However, this does not take into consideration the number of properties falling out of the Decent Homes standard.

On average, across the district the number of properties that are occupied by vulnerable households which are non decent is 5%, this is however below the national average of 8%. Diagram 2 indicates that the majority of vulnerable households living within non-decent accommodation are located to the south of the District.

**Diagram 2**



The recent BRE report indicates that the main reason for homes failing to meet Decent Homes Standards is a result of the presence of a Category 1 Hazard as deemed by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS). The HHSRS replaced the 'Fitness Standard' and now looks at a range of risks (or hazards) that may be present within the home and calculates their impact upon the likely occupants. The HHSRS takes into account the deficiencies present, the age of the occupants and the potential harm outcome, this is then calculated to provide a hazard bandin which dictates whether the deficiency is so severe or will become so over the next 12 months for the Local Authority to take action.

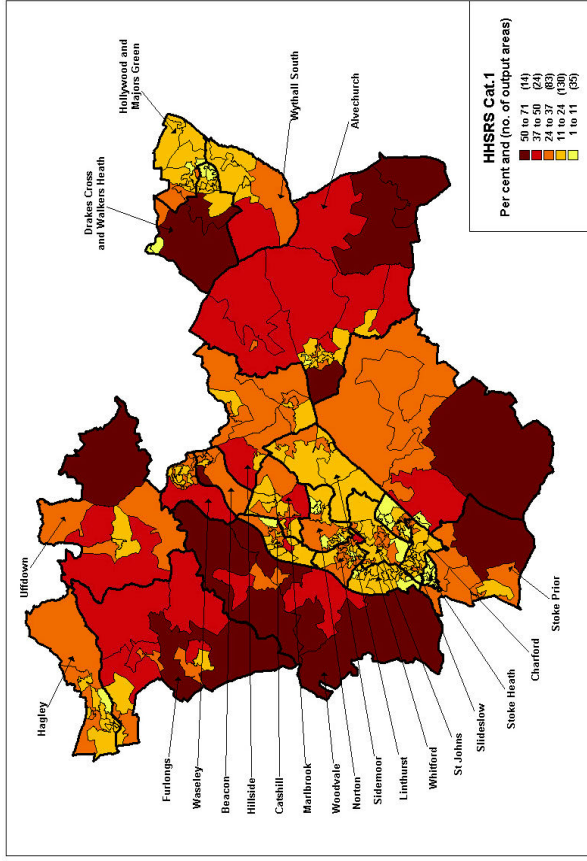
Since the introduction of the HHSRS there has been a significant increase in the level of housing inspections undertaken, advice and guidance provided and enforcement activity instigated. This information is currently being collated countywide in order to establish a trend and level of enforcement activity across all local

authorities.

The BRE report indicates that around 7,630 properties fail under the HHSRS opposed to the 865 properties which failed under the former Fitness Standard. The number of properties which fail under HHSRS amounts to 24% which is in line with the National average, however it is below the County average (28%). Diagram 3 indicates that the presence of Category 1 Hazards is widespread throughout the district.

The BRE report indicates that the majority of properties failing the HHSRS are as a result of inadequate thermal comfort; Hazard Title 2-Excess Cold is the most commonly occurring hazards in the HHSRS, it has been deemed by the HHSRS that the most vulnerable age group for this hazard is people over the age of 65 years.

**Diagram 3**



proportion at 10.9% (1482) and Telford & Wrekin being the lowest at 2.2% (299).

A recent Worcestershire PCT report on Excess Winter Deaths discovered that there was a 50% increase in winter deaths between 2008 and 2009 throughout Worcestershire where there was an additional 2,123 winter deaths recorded of which 34% (721) were recorded in the Bromsgrove District. Excess winter deaths are directly related to (but not fully responsible) age, fuel poverty and decent homes.

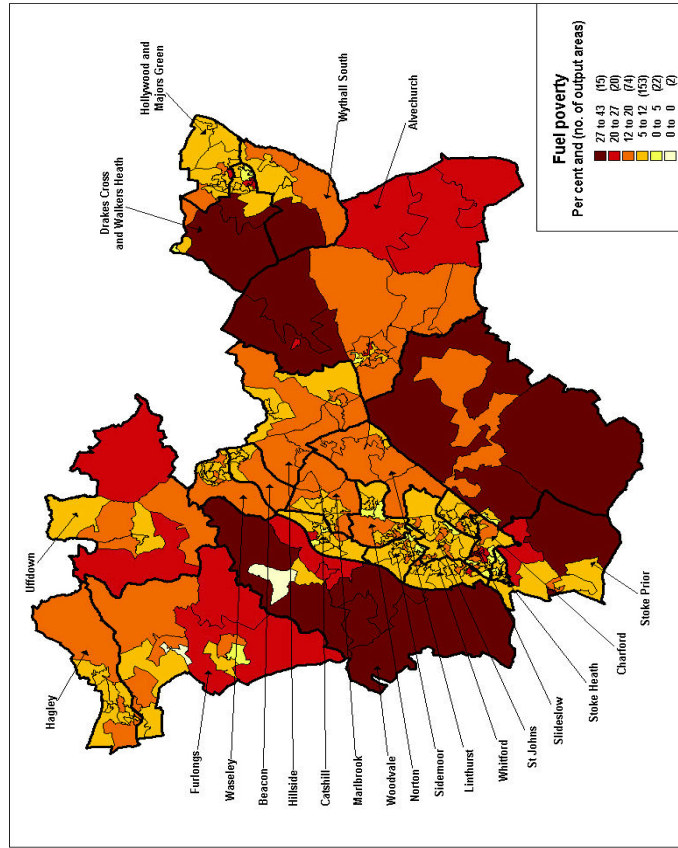
A key issue in reducing Excess Winter Deaths and energy consumption is tackling fuel poverty. Occupants of a dwelling are considered to be in fuel poverty if more than 10% of their net income is spent on heating and hot water indicated by residents inefficient dwellings which are very often occupied by residents who are least likely to be able to carry out improvements.

It has been discovered that deficiencies within the property which lead to excess cold problems have a direct impact upon the health of the occupant. Within the West Midlands region the number of Excess Winter Deaths within the age group of over 85 years old<sup>21</sup>, was above the National Average. This age group was confirmed as being at most risk of Excess Winter Deaths, with the main contributions being circulatory and respiratory diseases. Worcestershire has the 4<sup>th</sup> highest number of excess winter deaths (8.3% of regional total [1125]) when compared with all PCT's (Primary Care Trusts) within the West Midlands in between 2002 and 2007.<sup>22</sup> With South Staffordshire having the highest

<sup>21</sup> Excess Winter Deaths in the West Midlands (NHS West Midlands) 2008

<sup>22</sup> Excess Winter Deaths in the West Midlands (NHS West Midlands) 2008

**Diagram 4**



Dwellings occupied by older households (head of the household over the age of 65) are more likely to be in fuel poverty than dwellings occupied by younger residents. Due to the current financial climate it is proposed that a large number or younger households will be considered to be suffering fuel poverty and associated with receipt of benefits. Fuel poverty is as much a rural issue as it is urban, which is illustrated in diagram 4.

In order to remedy fuel poverty it is necessary to address the elements that are making the dwelling inefficient. As it is not normally possible to alter the construction type and age of a dwelling, altering the heating and insulation provisions within the dwelling are considered the most effective methods of improving

energy efficiency.

In order to tackle fuel poverty a new National Indicator NI187 was developed to measure energy efficiency against the proportion of households that contain somebody on a Means Tested Benefit. The NI187 is split into two sections which are as follows: -

- Number of vulnerable households assessed living with homes with a SAP rating below 35
- Number of vulnerable households assessed living within homes with a SAP rating above 65

In order to develop a more comprehensive assessment on the properties energy efficiency, the Council has adopted the Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) rating is the Government standard rating for energy efficiency within a dwelling. The reading is expressed on a 1-100 scale, the higher the reading, the better the energy efficiency of the building. The average SAP rating for a dwelling within Bromsgrove is 52, which is slightly above the national average of 49.

From an NI 187 report undertaken in 2008 by Act On Energy, it was identified that 17% of properties in the Bromsgrove District have a SAP rating below 35, however only 8.77% have households containing one resident on a means tested benefit. This therefore indicates that there is a small percentage of vulnerable households suffering fuel poverty where it would cost on average £1043<sup>23</sup> per annum to heat and provide hot water. It is therefore positive that 36% of households on means tested benefits live in properties with a SAP rating of 65 or above, thus having approximately an average cost of £417. (2008)<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Bromsgrove District Council –NI 187 Survey Results 2008

<sup>24</sup> Bromsgrove District Council –NI 187 Survey Results 2008



Based on 2008 figures, the NI 187 survey results indicate that privately owned properties have the highest proportion of heating costs at £491 with privately rented accommodation at a slightly lower cost of £382. Housing association (RSL) dwellings have costs at around £245<sup>25</sup> as a result of the requirement upon RSLs to bring all of their stock up to the Decent Homes Standard by 2010.

In order to reduce the margins either side and to target resources a Thermal Flyover was commissioned for Worcestershire which was undertaken during the cold clear winter nights from November 2008 to March 2009. The company 'Blue Sky' carried out an aerial thermal imaging survey in Worcestershire. The data captured was used to produce a thermal map of the entire County, thus enabling residents to identify the amount of heat lost through their roofs.

The aim of the project is to reduce carbon emissions by increasing energy efficiency in homes in particular those with a high level of heat loss. The project aims to encourage residents to insulate their homes in order to save money, reduce carbon emissions and ensure good health. The project was co-ordinated through the Worcestershire Partnerships bringing together organisations responsible for local services, housing, energy advice and environment.

It was identified during the thermal flyover analysis that 68% of all buildings in Worcestershire are rated average or above, conversely this means only 32% of buildings throughout the county are considered 'Average Poor'<sup>26</sup>. The majority of historical building data was taken from sites within Bromsgrove District, these results are, however susceptible to interpretation as it only

takes into consideration the emissivity of the roof surfaces, thus not taking into consideration the cavity wall insulation etc.

### **Disabled Facilities Grants**

The Bromsgrove Housing Market Assessment (2008) identified that 19% of households within Bromsgrove District contain one or more members with identified special needs e.g. physical or mental disability. This has increased by 2% since the Stock Condition Survey was undertaken in 2004.

The demand for home aids and adaptations has increase by 145% since 2005 from 59 Occupational Therapists referrals to 149 referrals now being received on an annual basis. Few houses have an accepted standard of accessibility and most of the older housing has none at all. As most housing the UK is over 50 years old, the problem exists on a large scale. Historically government policy has been to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) to carry out individual improvement when the need emerges. According to research undertaken by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, one in four households includes a person with some form of disability, usually someone elderly. This is particularly evident in the Bromsgrove District with 19% of households containing at least one disabled/elderly person.

By 2026 older people will account for almost half of the national increase in the total number of households. Forecasts estimate that there will be an additional 6700 people aged 60 or over by 2026 living within Bromsgrove District. The over 60s age group is estimated to see the greatest increase in growth compared with the younger age ranges.

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<sup>25</sup> Bromsgrove District Council –NI 187 Survey Results 2008

<sup>26</sup> Heat Loss & Historic Buildings in Worcestershire Jan 2010.

SECTION 4 Current Issues Influencing the Private Sector Housing Market



## 4. Current Issues Influencing the Private Sector Housing Market

**The Bromsgrove District Housing Market** – suffers from an imbalance. A low level of social housing and lack of privately rented accommodation impacts upon the need to assist owner occupiers to maintain, improve and make best use of existing housing stock and encourage prospective landlords to let out under utilised accommodation.

The economic downturn being experienced at the time of developing this strategy has significant impact upon the private sector housing in the district:

- The reduced availability of credit and the increased requirement for prospective home buyers to provide larger deposits is increasing demand for social housing and privately rented accommodation. Housing inspections are identifying a resultant upward trend in overcrowding of privately rented and owner occupied dwellings.
- Values, sales and confidence in the housing market is impacting upon levels of empty homes and community cohesion. Downsizing has become increasingly difficult and a less viable option for under occupied homeowners in some circumstances increasing incidents of fuel poverty.
- Although house prices stabilised and reduced in 2008, the longer term impact of the rising housing market means that affordability in Bromsgrove District remains a significant issue.
- The economic downturn is slowing the delivery of newly built open market housing with larger scale developments being shelved. Nationally this is impacting upon the delivery of

affordable and social housing increasing pressure on privately rented options.

- Shared ownership forms of affordable housing have become less viable to both Registered Social Landlord providers and prospective purchasers.
- Complaints regarding health and safety and quality issues in privately rented accommodation is increasing as landlords become less financially able to maintain property standards by the Local Authority and its partners.
- Rising employment and the risk of increasing mortgage arrears and home repossessions is raising the need for support, advice and mortgage rescue services to be provided.
- In the longer term the economic downturn is likely to impact upon the condition of private sector accommodation both owner occupied and privately let as owners ability to invest in building maintenance and longer term improvements is reduced.
- Reducing household incomes are likely to increase incidents of fuel poverty and impede resident's ability to install energy saving measures in their homes.
- Current economic conditions may increase the number of vulnerable households in the private sector accommodation, this has had an impact upon the demand for Home Repair Assistance Grants provided.
- Central Government announced in July 2009 that £75million that had previously been allocated for the delivery of decent homes program and private sector renewal would be used to

construct affordable homes. This therefore presents a risk to the Discretionary grants provided by the Local Authority as government funding for private sector renewal is removed.

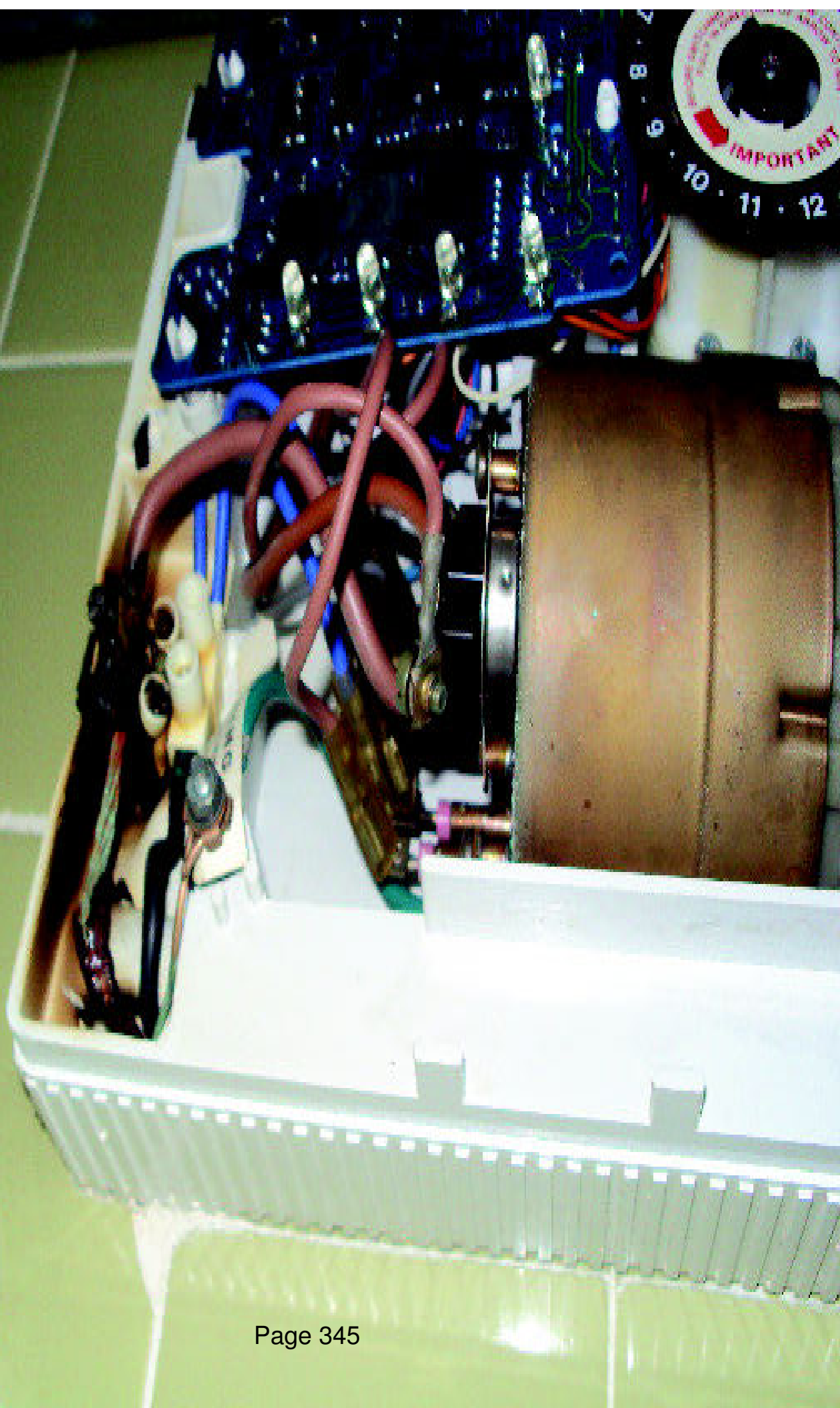
**The Proposed Town Centre Regeneration** is enabling an extensive survey of under utilised accommodation over shop units to inform future plans to encourage private landlords to convert, improve and let their property to meet local housing needs.

**The 2008 Bromsgrove Housing Market Assessment** – identified significant unmet housing need within the district with particular reference to the increasing older population and the requirement to provide a range of housing options for older people to encourage down sizing across all tenures. This therefore places a greater pressure upon the Local Authority to make best use of existing stock. The need is influencing the provision of an under occupation survey and the development of an incentive and support service to assist and encourage older people to move to accommodation that better meets their needs and requirements and thus free up family accommodation to the market.

**The ageing profile of the District's population** – impacts upon the increasing demand for disabled facilities grants for the adaptation of homes and assistance to home owners to maintain their dwellings in older age as their incomes decrease.

**Housing Benefit Reforms** coming into place from April 2011 will see reducing levels of benefit being available and the 'single room rate' now only being payable to single persons under the age of 35 increasing demand for housing in multiple occupation.

SECTION 5 Consultation and Emerging Priorities



## 5. Consultation and Emerging Priorities

Consultation has been undertaken in order to identify local priorities with residents, stakeholders and businesses. The process was fundamental to the production of this document and essential to identifying the concerns, aspirations and priorities of the community. The Stakeholder Consultation events that were held in November 2008 and supplemented by Countywide Housing Strategy consultation in late 2009 and 2010 to assist in the formulation of strategic priorities.

Thriving housing markets are the key to the creation of sustainable communities and our work with private sector housing has a major impact upon the wider housing strategy.

**Improving the standard of private sector housing, increase the availability and accessibility of private rented housing, and climate change are identified as Council Private Sector Housing Priorities.** These objectives closely overlap and assist the Council's other three housing priorities by:

- Increasing the availability of private housing for rent to supplement the limited supply of affordable social housing.
- Assisting the homeless to access the private rented sector to reduce the use of temporary accommodation.
- Supporting vulnerable people to live separately.

The support to private sector housing by the Council is of paramount importance in achieving a balanced housing market, long term benefits to the health and quality of life of our residents and protection of the environment.

The following Private Sector Housing priorities have been identified for service provision: -

1. Assistance to older people, the vulnerable and those with disabilities to live independently within their own homes and the community.
2. Provision of advice, guidance and assistance to reduce energy use and to help combat fuel poverty.
3. Improvement in the quality of privately owned and rented accommodation to Decent Homes Standard through advice and assistance and the enforcement of minimum house condition standards.
4. Improve access to privately rented housing and promote a strong and well managed private rented sector through the provision of support and guidance to landlords and tenants.
5. Monitoring and promotion of improved property standards within rented accommodation through inspection.
6. Investigation into levels of under-occupancy of housing throughout the District to promote more efficient use of housing stock and reduce the number of empty homes.
7. Improve standards and energy efficiency within Mobile Home sites.
8. Apply Value for Money measures to the grants process, the supply of materials and contractors and implement the optional use of the equity release Kick Start Scheme.

# SECTION 6 Private Sector Housing Priorities in Detail

## 6. Private Sector Housing Priorities in Detail

### Initiatives

To address the issues identified relating to the private sector housing stock in the Bromsgrove District this Strategy and it's Action Plan (Appendix 2) aims to achieve it's objectives by: -

- Working with people to help them improve their homes through assistance.
- Endeavouring to create the right conditions, incentives and financial packages to effectively assist people to improve their homes.
- Where co-operation and encouragement fails we will use our enforcement powers to ensure that tenants are living in safe and decent housing.

Building upon the strong countywide housing and support partnerships that exist a re-commissioning of HIA services in the form of a single countywide Home Improvement Agency has taken place providing a unique opportunity to improve and expand the range of services that improve the independence of older and disabled residents. The new HIA brings together statutory and voluntary sector partners to be more cost effective and innovative in meeting statutory requirements and key outcomes.

The role of a private sector housing team creates both challenges and opportunities, therefore in order to make best use of existing accommodation Bromsgrove District Council must look carefully at the private sector housing needs and previous

policies in order to develop a balanced housing market.

Based upon the BRE stock condition information held and Strategic Housing Consultation the priorities for Private Sector Housing set out in the Council's overall Housing Strategy (2006 – 2011) have been reviewed and are as set out below: -

### **1. Assistance to older people, the vulnerable and those with disabilities to live independently within their own homes and the community.**

Figures released by the ODPM reveal that 12% of homeowners aged 70 or over would not be able to pay for major repairs to their homes. Both Central and Local Government are therefore now addressing the requirement to make housing sustainable in order to address housing needs.

Bromsgrove District Council administers and finances eligible Disabled Facilities Grants, these are mandatory and available up to £30,000 for certain types of works. The private sector housing team has developed a contract framework with local contractors in order to ensure standard types of work are regularly market tested for value for money and quality.

Vulnerable households in need are able to access advice, guidance and assistance through the Home Improvement Agency, (The Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency). This new countywide HIA was developed in 2010 and is primarily funded through the Local Authority, Supporting People and fee income through nationally and locally funded grants. The countywide Home Improvement Agency is appropriately placed to address the themes of the national strategy to assist in improving social care, health and social wellbeing within the District by supporting choice, providing more options to fund works, providing handyman schemes and linking into the health and support personalisation agenda.



## **2. Provision of advice, guidance and assistance to reduce energy use and to help combat fuel poverty.**

Bromsgrove District Council encourages energy efficient lifestyles through advice, guidance and assistance. The Private Sector Housing Team work in close partnership with 'Act on Energy' our partner agency to provide initiatives to the residents of Bromsgrove District in order to improve thermal comfort within their dwellings. We currently inspect properties with the aim of assisting in bringing them up to the Decent Homes Standard and therefore thermal comfort is included within this remit.

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team works closely with other local authorities to develop and advise on energy efficiency initiatives, advice on renewable energy technology and tariffs provided by Central Government.

## **3. Improvement in the quality of privately owned and rented accommodation to Decent Homes Standard through advice and assistance and the enforcement of minimum house condition standards.**

Schemes have been developed by Bromsgrove District Council to assist and encourage homeowners to improve the standard of accommodation and energy efficiency measures. The Housing Health and Safety Rating System supports the need to encourage compliance with Category 1 Hazards.

Ultimately the responsibility for maintaining privately owned homes rests with owners and where they can afford to carry out repairs and maintenance through their own resources they are encouraged to do so. The Council, however acknowledges that it is essential to assist lower income homeowners with repairs in order to ensure people remain in their homes for longer and in safety through the provision of advice, guidance or assistance.

The Housing Act 2004 identified a direct correlation between housing quality and impact on the health of occupants, visitors and on the quality of life in an area. Bromsgrove District Council therefore aims to improve the standard of accommodation within the District to enable all residents remain in their existing property for a longer period in safety to maintain their independence. Providing and enabling properties to reach a Decent Standard (See Section 3) reduces the pressures on Social Housing, Social Services, National Health Service or Primary Care Trust pressures.

All properties are currently inspected to identify Category 1 Hazards and the works required to bring a property up to a Decent Home Standard. Bromsgrove District Council has an initiative to inspect and enable privately rented accommodation to be advertised and let through the Choice Based Letting Scheme to promote decent housing for those most in need.

Local Authority budgets are coming under increasing pressure and Government private sector renewal funding has been withdrawn. Discretionary home repair assistance grants are therefore being replaced with a Home Repair Assistance Loan facilities under which the full loan is repayable upon the sale or transfer of the property thus enabling a recycling of funding to benefit others in need of assistance in future years.

## **4. Improve access to privately rented housing and promote a strong and well managed private rented sector through the provision of support and guidance to landlords and tenants.**

Bromsgrove District Council provides advice, guidance and assistance to landlords and tenants during property inspections and through the annual landlord forum. A text message initiative has recently been launched to landlords that enable updates on events and legislative changes to be sent to all landlords throughout the District.

A review of the Housing Service provided by Bromsgrove District Council was undertaken by the Audit Commission, from this it was determined that particular attention must be made to all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) within the District. Consultation has been carried out in order to ascertain the needs of this sector assessing the assistance needs of new, existing and accidental landlords.

From the previous research, a Landlord Grant was developed in order to assist landlords in installing fire safety measures within the non-licensable HMOs, as it was identified that this was a high priority and high cost.

A **Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme** has been developed in order to enable vulnerable people over the age of 25 years to access decent private rented accommodation with the assistance of a Guaranteed Rent Deposit or a Guaranteed Bond Scheme which enables residents to access private rented accommodation by the Local Authority issuing a bond to secure a private tenancy. There has been over 130 applicants successfully assisted into private tenancies through the Step Up Scheme since it commenced in 2006.

Bromsgrove District Council has run an annual Landlords Forum for over 10 years with increasing attendance. The Landlord forum offers a 'fayre' with stands for partner agencies and presentations on the current issues affecting private landlords e.g. Housing Benefit.

#### **5. Monitoring and promotion of improved property standards within rented accommodation through inspection.**

The Council inspects properties upon complaint or enquiry, and advice, guidance and assistance is provided to the owner or occupier on the most cost effective method for reducing the hazards present. The Private Sector Housing Team works in

close partnership with the Choice Based Letting Scheme in order to expand the housing choice of residents throughout the District by allowing private Landlords to promote their properties on the Home Choice Plus website provided a satisfactory inspection has been undertaken establishing that the dwelling meets the Decent Home Standards.

#### **6. Investigation into levels of under-occupancy of housing throughout the District to promote more efficient use of housing stock and reduce the number of empty homes.**

To ensure that the Local Authority make best use of existing stock an under-occupancy survey was carried out in 2010 throughout the District's social housing stock to promote the release of under-occupied homes for larger families, thus maximising their potential. Bromsgrove District Council is working in conjunction with BDHT to assess the requirements of residents that are considering downsizing, to provide appropriate move on accommodation and to provide assistance and develop incentives.

#### **7. Improve standards and energy efficiency within Mobile Home sites.**

Mobile Home Site inspections form an essential part of the Private Sector Housing function to ensure health and Safety of residents and to develop initiatives to combat thermal inefficiency. A consultation event with site owners and residents is to assist with the full implementation to the Mobile Home Model Standards and improvement initiatives. The private sector housing team has partnered this initiative with regular inspections, therefore this has become a regular topic for discussion during compliance meetings.

Mobile home owners are also able to access the Home Repair Assistance loan currently offered by the Local Authority and

administered through the Home Improvement Agency up to the value of £5,000.

**8. Apply Value for Money measures to the grants process, the supply of materials and contractors and implement the optional use of the equity release Kick Start Scheme.**

Effective and speedy response to requests for home adaptation by disabled residents necessitates the careful monitoring of performance. Between 2007 and 2009 the average time taken to implement adaptations was reduced from 52 weeks (average) to 33 weeks (average) for a Category 1 DFG as a result of all policies, and paperwork being reviewed and procedures re-engineered.

The private sector housing team has developed a Procurement Contract Framework with local contractors, prices are regularly market tested and it has been identified that the average cost of works for this contract has been reduced on average by £2,000. This framework agreement has allowed the installation of works to be consistent across the whole district, along with shorter installation timescales.

**SECTION 7 Available Resources**



## 7. Available Resources

A realistic assessment of the availability of current and future resources to support the Private Sector Housing Strategy is fundamental to the Council's ability to deliver upon priorities and actions set. The table on this page sets out the resources available to support the key Private Sector Housing Services which primarily consist of:

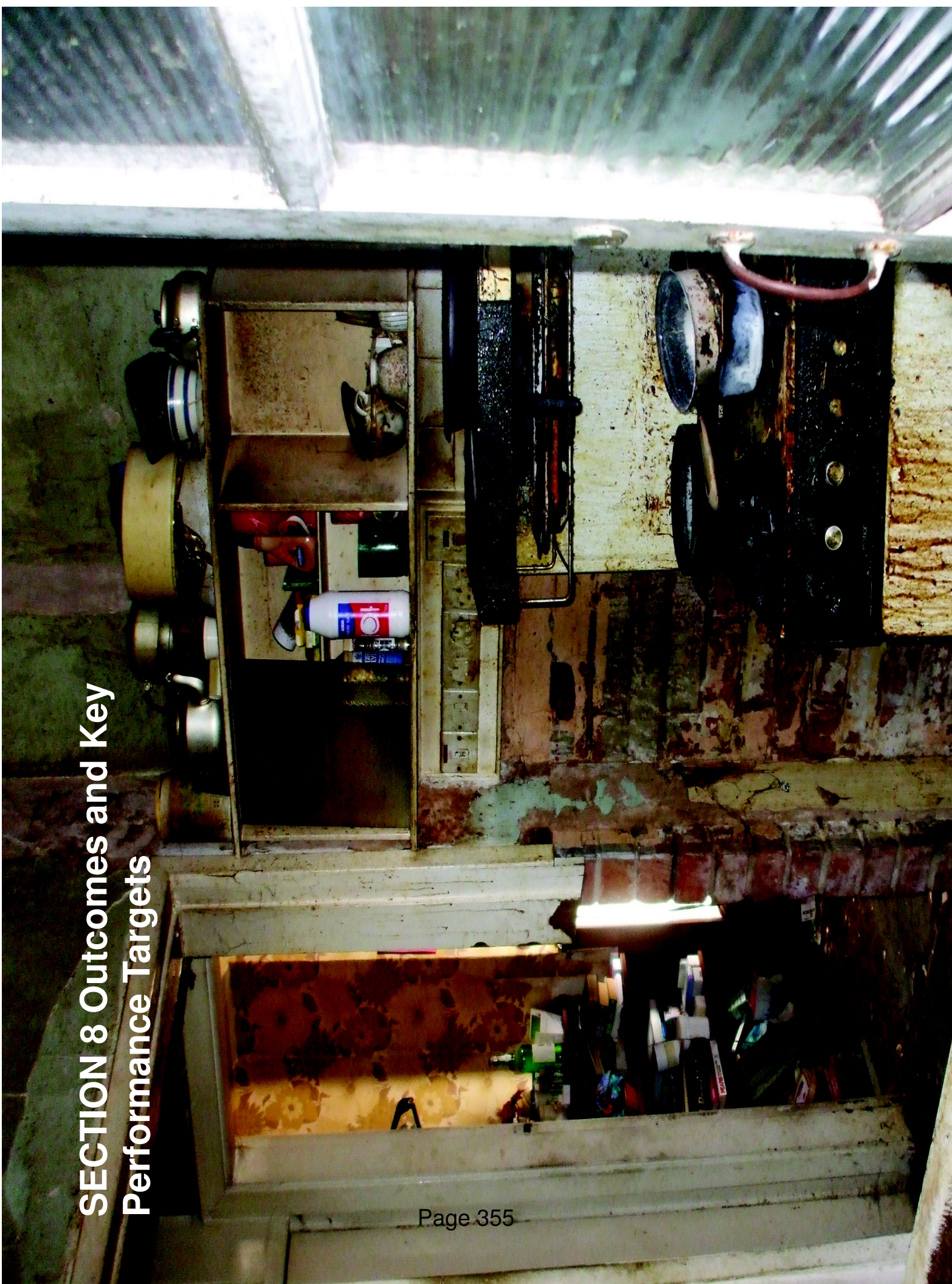
- The provision and support of the Council's Private Sector Housing Team (3 F/T staff members).
- Financial support to enable the provision of Home Improvement Agency services for the Bromsgrove District.
- The provision of Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants.
- The provision of a range of Discretionary Grants:
  - Home Repair Assistance Loan
  - Empty Property Grant

The Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (Appendix I) sets out the criteria for the application of grants and the council's intervention in the private sector, taking into consideration the powers contained within the Regulatory Reform Order.

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Funding Sources</b>	<b>2009/10 Budget</b>
<b>Private Sector Housing Team</b>		
BDC Revenue		£127,022
<b>Home Improvement Agency</b>		
Revenue Support	67,884	
Supporting People Funds	30,000	
Fee income	51,000	£148,884
<b>Disabled Facilities Grants</b>		
Central Govt Grant	£310,000	
Local Authority	£190,000	£500,000
<b>Discretionary Grants</b>		
West Midlands Regional Housing Pot L A Grant	Removed from 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011	
Local Authority	£63,000	£63,000
<b>Renewable Energy Grants</b>		
Local authority	9,000	£9,000
<b>Kick Start Equity Release Scheme</b>		
West Midlands Regional Housing Pot allocation	Removed 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2011	

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**SECTION 8 Outcomes and Key  
Performance Targets**



## 8. Outcomes and Key Performance Targets

### Key Strategic Outcomes

**Sustained long term 'Decent' housing conditions, improved quality of privately rented accommodation (including HMOs), higher standards for healthier and safer homes.**

**Improved energy efficiency of homes.**

**Better support and assistance to older and vulnerable people in making home improvements and adaptations, healthier and safer homes.**

**Increased access to private rented accommodation for the homeless, increased choice and increased support and assistance to landlords.**

**KEY TARGET** – To increase the proportion of vulnerable households achieving Decent Homes Standard to in excess of 70% by 2010 and 80% by 2014.

Performance

March 04 = 76.1%,

March 06 = 76.33,

March 07 = 76.66%,

March 08 = 77.30%

March 09= 63.00% (from BRE Desktop Survey)

**KEY TARGET** – To return private sector dwellings into occupation each year as a result of action by the Local Authority.

Performance

06/07 = 8 units,

07/08 = 19 units

08/09 = 33 units

09/10 T= 38 units

**KEY TARGET** – (NI187) To monitor the proportion of households containing someone on means tested benefit (MTBs) that occupy a dwelling with a AP rating less than 35 or greater than 65

	Below 35 (SAP)	Above 65 (SAP)
08/09	8.77%	36.11%
09/10	7.55%	42.32%
10/11	5.77% TARGET data to be received in Nov	39.11% TARGET data to be received in Nov

**KEY TARGET** – To monitor the time taken in weeks to complete a Disabled Facilities Grant from referral to final payment for separate Categories

DFG Category	2007/08 Performance	2008/9 Performance	2009/10 Targets	2014 Target
Category 1	52	35.2	43.8	28
Category 2	52	41.4	62.2	36
Category 3	52	57.6	63.1	38



# APPENDIX 1- Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy 2010

### Bromsgrove District Council's Private Landlords Newsletter

## Book early for the Landlord's Forum

**PRIVATE LANDLORDS FORUM**

Bromsgrove District Council would like to welcome you to our annual Private Landlords Forum on 30th February 2009.

We will offer all private landlords, letting agents and potential landlords the opportunity to discuss issues that affect the private rented sector.

Presentations will be available to announce that we have managed to secure speakers to you on "How the economic climate affects private landlords", "New - potential future changes to the private sector" and "How to advertise your private rented properties now, for free, via Lettings System".

A variety of stalls provided by local agencies who will be able to provide you with useful information.

Where you will be able to browse information on the available. Presentations will start at 6.30pm.

**avoid the rush and book your place at this year's landlord's forum, please contact:**

**citizens advice**

NEWS STORY 1  
Landlord's Forum Available

NEWS STORY 2  
Energy Performance Certificates are now Required

NEWS STORY 3  
Helping Hand from the CAB

NEWS STORY 4  
Citizens Advice

## Home Sweet Home

### Together

#### Making life better

For some, donating can be a positive means of helping, enjoying and sharing in the community. Only when the Board's members are not attracted to the idea of donating, there are no alternatives. The outcomes of the Board's members are not attracted to the idea of donating, there are no alternatives. The outcomes of the Board's members are not attracted to the idea of donating, there are no alternatives.

#### Regional Centre of Excellence

The Regional Centre of Excellence is a new initiative that will help to improve the quality of care provided to people in the region. It will be a centre of excellence for the region, providing a high standard of care and support for people in the region.

## Home Sweet Home

Bromsgrove District Council spent over £647,157 last year (an increase of 71% on the previous year) helping elderly, disabled and other vulnerable people stay in their own homes. Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repairs grants have helped 137 families (58% up on the previous year) by improving, adapting and repairing their properties.

**What are the grants used for?**

Disabled Facilities Grants are available for both BPH and privately owned properties, ramps, stair lifts, and such as level access showers, heating systems, bathroom adaptations, and weather-proofing. Grants are used for repairing the building to make sure it is safe, habitable, weather-proof and warm.

**How do you find out if you are eligible for a grant?**

A Disabled Facilities Grant is available to local residents on referral through the Occupational Therapist. The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA.

**Reducing your carbon footprint**

Help is on hand for households who want to reduce their carbon footprint. Renewable Energy Grants are available from our Energy Saving Team for a range of energy saving technologies, including Solar Hot Water, Ground Source Heat Pumps, Solar Photovoltaics, Wood Burners, Small Scale Hydro Turbines, Wood Centric units, Pellet Stoves must be met to qualify for the subsidy to the whole property to be replaced. The cost of the system is £1,000. Low income households are eligible for a grant to help with the cost of the system. For more information and to find out how to apply for a grant, please contact the Private Sector Housing Team on 01527 881436.

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## HOUSING SEES STARS

Our Housing Teams have worked hard to help independent housing inspectors give the services a top star rating.

### Housing services from council are improving

Our Housing Services have been awarded a top star rating by independent housing inspectors. This is a reflection of the high quality of our services and the commitment of our staff to providing a high standard of care and support for our tenants.

**Partnership Working Brings More Choice**

Partnership working with the private sector has brought more choice to our tenants. This has allowed us to offer a wider range of housing options, including private rented properties, which has helped to meet the needs of our tenants.

**Giving Ken back his independence**

Ken has been given a new lease of life thanks to a grant from Bromsgrove District Council. The grant has allowed him to have a ramp installed in his front door, which has enabled him to get in and out of his house safely and independently.

**Looking for Sites**

Landowners who have land available for housing are encouraged to contact us. We are currently looking for sites for new housing developments, and we would like to hear from you if you have any land that you think might be suitable.

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## 1 Introduction

### **The Reform Order**

In July 2002 the Government issued legislation, the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002, which requires all Councils to adopt and publish a policy as to how they intend to use the powers set out in this legislation.

### **The purpose of this document**

This Housing Assistance Policy, which has been revised to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, sets out the basis on which Bromsgrove District Council will offer financial assistance (“Housing Assistance”) for works of repair or renewal in the private housing sector.

All housing assistance approved under this policy is either discretionary (and subject to the District Council having sufficient funds) or mandatory Disabled Facility Grants.

The District Council will review this policy on a regular basis to take into account changing policies at national and regional level and all available information on the condition of private sector housing in the District.

The document outlines a range of financial assistance that are client and thematic based services, particularly focused on vulnerable people.

### **The aim of this policy**

This policy supports the Council’s overall aim to secure health and community well-being and supports the Council’s Housing Strategy by responding to locally identified needs within the national context of Homes for all.

The Council has four key Strategic Housing Priorities two of which are supported by this policy, - ‘Improving Private Sector Housing’ and ‘Assisting Vulnerable People to live Independently through Housing and Support’. The policy supports the Council’s Corporate values and objectives of Regeneration, Improvement, Sense of Community and Well Being and the Environment.

Discretionary financial assistance, advice and enforcement action that provides for energy efficiency and security measures to dwellings supports Community Strategy aims and assists vulnerable people achieve decent, suitable and affordable homes in sustainable communities and in particular aims to;

- Reduce the number of people living in homes in the private sector that have category one hazards.
- Reduce the number of vulnerable people living in non-decent homes.
- Reduce the number of households in fuel poverty.

- Increase the number of people who are able to live independently at home.
- Reduce the number of victims of domestic violence who are forced to leave their own accommodation because of a lack of alternative options.
- Increase the number of properties that are brought into to use particularly where that accommodation can then be used to reduce homelessness or the use of temporary accommodation.

The provision of mandatory grants and discretionary financial assistance will be subject to internal auditing and external auditing to ensure adequate procedures are in place and followed and that there is an appropriate use of public funds.

## **2 Purpose and Form of Housing Assistance**

Housing Assistance may be offered by Bromsgrove District Council in accordance with this policy towards the cost of:

- (i) The improvement, repair or adaptation of existing living accommodation including permanent residential caravans and houseboats .
- (ii) Any other initiatives which are consistent with the aims and objectives of the District Council's Private Sector Housing Action Plan.

Housing Assistance may be offered in any form including but not restricted to financial assistance, advice, provision of materials, carrying out of works or loans. The Council may enter into partnership with other organisations or agencies to deliver financial assistance.

The specific types of Housing Assistance available at the time of this policy and the conditions for eligibility are specified in Part 9 of this policy.

The assistance will be focused primarily on particular clients e.g. disabled, elderly and vulnerable households across the District and on particular themes, for example to improve energy efficiency and eradication of fuel poverty.

Housing Assistance will be provided for not only eligible works but also necessary associated costs including Care and Repair Agency fees.

Assistance and enforcement are options used by the Council when considered appropriate to ensure standards in relation to housing matters. The provision of financial and other assistance will be considered as an alternative to enforcement when considered appropriate and the relevant parts of this policy apply. Factors that will affect the decision to assist or enforce include individual's capabilities, personal circumstances and responsibilities and the legal and social responsibilities of the Council.

### **3 Persons Eligible for Housing Assistance**

Any person who makes an application for Housing Assistance must:-

- (i) be over 18 years of age at the date of the application, and
- (ii) live in the dwelling as his/her only main residence (except where the applicant is a landlord who intends to let the dwelling or where the housing assistance is in relation to an empty property), and
- (iii) have an owner's interest in the dwelling (other than an interest by virtue of being a Registered Social Landlord under Part 1 of the Housing Act 1996 or being eligible for such registration), or be a tenant or licensee of the dwelling, alone or jointly with others but not being a member of the landlord's family, with a tenancy or license permitting occupation of the dwelling for a minimum period of 12 months after approval of the housing assistance, and
- (iv) have the power or duty to carry out the works and where appropriate have the owner's consent in writing to carrying out the works, and
- (v) satisfy such test(s) of resources as the Council may from time to time have in place
- (vi) not be ineligible, by virtue of the Housing, Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996, regulations made under the Act or any other enactment.
- (vii) homeowners have the primary responsibility for ensuring their homes are properly maintained but we will assist vulnerable homeowners to make sure they have the opportunity for achieving decent homes. Where available we will assist homeowners to take advantage of private finance to resolve their problems, thereby maximising the impact of available public funds.

### **4 Types of Assistance Available**

- The provision of assistance other than mandatory disabled facilities grants is subject to the availability of funding.
- The type of assistance available to home owners and tenants will be based on a mixture of advice, private finance and public finance (if available) to priority cases. This is a hierarchy of assistance based on the need and circumstances of the applicant.
- The basic information, advice and "sign posting" service will cover repairs, maintenance and improvements including information on builders, energy efficiency, other re-housing options, etc.
- Advice to homeowners about where they might be able to access private finance. This includes the range of financial opportunities accessed via Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency and/or the Council

- A higher level of service, namely grant aided assistance and access to the Agency Service (for which a fee will be charged) for households to whom we have a mandatory duty and where they meet the means testing criteria.

### **5 Making a Formal Application**

All applications must be on a form provided by the Council / Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency and must include the following original documentation:-

- (i) Where the estimated cost of the works exceeds £10,000, three quotations are required to be set out on the schedule of grant works/housing assistance provided by the Council. If the estimated works is below £10,000 then there can be either two quotes or one if a comparable costed schedule exists to ensure value for money.
  - (ii) Particulars of the work to be carried out including where appropriate plans, specifications and specialist reports.
  - (iii) Details of any professional fees or charges relating to the work and for which assistance is being sought.
  - (iv) Confirmation of planning and/or building control approval where appropriate.
  - (v) Proof of ownership from a solicitor or mortgagee, or copies of the title deeds/land certificate, or copy of the tenancy agreement or licence to occupy.
  - (vi) Where the application is the owner or landlord, a signed undertaking to repay the Housing Assistance if the conditions imposed by this policy with regard to future occupation, letting or ownership are not met or complied with.
- The application will only be considered complete when the Council has all the information it needs to be able to make a decision on the application.
  - Worcestershire Care and Repair have their own procurement process where they act as Agency role, as outlined in the Service Level Agreement.

### **6 Restrictions on Assistance**

No assistance will normally be given for work started before formal approval of an application, except where:

- (i) The Council may in exceptional circumstances exempt an application from this condition for example where a defect may present a serious risk to health and safety.
- (ii) The Council may, with consent of the applicant, treat the application as varied so exclude any works that have been started before approval.

- The Council will not consider an application for assistance in respect of premises built or converted less than 10 years from the date of the application, except in the case of an application for a disabled facility grant.
- No assistance will be given in respect of properties owned by Statutory Authorities or trusts. This includes properties owned by Registered Social Landlord, NHS Trusts and Police Authorities except in the case of a disabled facilities grant.
- The Council will assess whether the scope of works are reasonable and eligible, in particular having regard to the age and condition of the property.
- The Council will assess whether prices given by contractors meet value for money. In determining this, the Officer will give consideration to similar jobs priced within the last year. The Officer may also choose to do a further check on the price by asking a regularly used contractor to price for the work.
- The Officer should also give consideration to the procedure for identifying new contractors.
- In the event that the Officer believes the price for contracts are too high and identifies an appropriate price for this work (which is lower), then they will advise the client that the total eligible grant or assistance will be the lower amount. The client is under no obligation to use the cheaper priced contractor but must be aware that the Council will only make a grant or assistance payment up to the value of the lower price.
- Grant assistance will not normally be provided for works covered by insurance. Where, before a grant or assistance is approved, it is found that an applicant can make an insurance claim, the insurance company will be requested to confirm in writing the level of their liability, if any. The level of grant or assistance will be reduced by an amount equivalent to the insurance company's liability. Where a grant or assistance is approved, a condition will be imposed requiring the applicant to pursue any relevant claim against an insurance company or third party for: -
  - a) claims for personal injuries where the applicant is in respect of works required under a Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grant.
  - b) claims on the applicant's property insurance or on a third party where the application is in respect of works for which financial assistance has been given and to repay the financial assistance provided out of the proceeds of such a claim.
- The Provision of grants/assistance is allowed for caravans and houseboats used as main residence, subject to meeting other eligibility requirements. It will not normally however be allowed for in the case of 'shacks' and chalet type structures. Holiday residences, caravans on holiday sites or those with restricted occupancy and second homes (as defined by Council Tax) will not be provided with grants/assistance.
- The Council recognises that these policies cannot cover every likely situation and there will be people who genuinely are in need of some form of urgent support that are precluded from accessing them due to a certain aspect. In these situations the Council may

consider offering assistance in exceptional circumstances, in particular where support would help the Council meet its strategic objectives, as determined by the Service Manager or above.

**7 Supervision of Works**

In the absence of any agency agreement with the Council or Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency, the responsibility for supervision of the works rests with the applicant or with any suitably qualified and indemnified building professional or agent acting on the applicant's behalf and not with the Council.

**8 Payment of Assistance**

The Housing Assistance will only be paid if

- (i) the assisted works are completed within twelve months from the date of approval unless the delay was caused by WCC, and
- (ii) the assisted works are carried out in accordance with the specifications set out in the formal approval or as varied with the prior agreement of the Council, and
- (iii) the assisted works are carried out to the satisfaction of the Council and the applicant, and
- (iv) the Council are provided with an invoice, demand or receipt for payment in an acceptable format. Any such invoice must contain sufficient detail for the Council to identify in full the works carried out and the price charged and must not be provided by the applicant or a member of his/her family.

- The Council may pay the Housing Assistance to the applicant or, if requested in writing by the applicant and agreed by the Council, direct to the builder or contractor engaged by the applicant. The Housing Assistance may be paid in one lump sum on satisfactory completion of the works or in instalments ("stage payments") as the work proceeds. Stage payments will only be made where the Council is satisfied the value of the work completed exceeds the value claimed. **A maximum of three stage payments will be considered, normally for 25%, 50% and then 100%.**
- No Housing Assistance will be given until binding agreements appropriate to the form of assistance have been formally executed.
- The Council will not enter into any Form of Contract with a builder or contractor and, in the absence of any agency agreement with the applicant, it is a matter for the applicant to agree any contract with the builder or contractor.

- Although not governed by Council Standing Orders in relation to procurement, as the payment of any assistance given is due principally to the applicant and not the builder but Standing Orders do act as a useful reference for determining the administration of procedures regarding obtaining quotes etc.

---

## 9 Types of Housing Assistance

The types of Housing Assistance offered from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011, and the conditions applicable, are as follows and will remain so until a further Housing Assistance Policy is published. All are discretionary (except in the case of a Disabled Facilities Grant) and are subject to the Council having sufficient resources.

### **Mandatory Disabled Facility Grants**

These grants are mandatory under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and are subject to statutory means test.

These grants are awarded to enable applicants to have access to and around their homes, or to use essential facilities in the home to enable them to live independently.

Ongoing maintenance and repair of adaptations and equipment provided under the grant will become the responsibility of the applicant or landlord as relevant.

No discretionary grant aid is payable towards the cost of aids and adaptations for Disabled Persons.

Whilst it is recognized that a DFG is a mandatory grant it is the council's intention where possible to investigate all housing options which could include moving to more suitable accommodation that may be available to the applicant before awarding a DFG

A disabled housing need can be met in a number of different ways and all options will be investigated to identify which will meet the needs of the applicant in the most cost effective and suitable way, whilst acknowledging that DFGs are a mandatory grant



<b>Eligible applicants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any applicant registered or capable of being registered under the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires adaptations to be provided.</li> </ul>
Qualifying criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A referral from the Occupational Therapist (OT) via Social Services confirming that the works are 'necessary and appropriate' is required. This referral will recommend works.</li> <li>Entitlement to a Disabled Facility Grant is mandatory but before approval the Council has to be satisfied that the relevant works are both necessary and appropriate for the Disabled Person, and also that it is reasonable and practicable to carry out the works.</li> </ul>
Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subject to a financial assessment of resources</li> <li>The Council will use its powers to place a limited charge against the property where the DFG grant exceeds £5,000 up to a ceiling of £10,000. Repayment of the grant up to a maximum of £10,000 will be required if the property is sold within 10 years of the grant being awarded.</li> <li>A means test will not be applied to parents where adaptations are required for a disabled child</li> <li>Proof of title is required.</li> <li>Landlord consent would be required where applicable</li> <li>Conditions relating to the recovery of equipment in specified circumstances are applied</li> </ul>
Maximum grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>£30,000.00</li> </ul>

Disabled Facilities Grants are dealt with in a priority order based upon a points system used by Occupational Therapists to classify need into three categories. This system may be subject to further review.

A disabled persons housing need can be met in a number of different ways and all options will be investigated to identify which will meet the needs of the applicant in the most cost effective and suitable way, whilst acknowledging that DFGs are a mandatory grant.

Discretionary Disabled Facilities Grants for costs above £30,000 will not be made available except upon the agreement of the Council and where justified to be the most satisfactory course of action in the circumstances or to have resulted from reasonable and unforeseen

additional works. Where works requested are in excess of £30,000 or considered to be unreasonable given the age and condition of the property, alternatives including the following will normally be considered:

- a) Referral to Social Services for their consideration of providing additional resources.
- b) Alternative schemes of work, including modular buildings.
- c) Provision of funding to enable a move to alternative accommodation with funding for adaptations to the new accommodation.
- d) Referral for consideration Equity Release scheme (if applicable).

## Home Repair Assistance

This is a discretionary grant and subject to available resources. A charge is placed on a property receiving Home Repair Assistance. If demand for assistance exceeds the budget available, the Council does not undertake to maintain a waiting list. This discretionary financial assistance will be provided in accordance with the hierarchy set out in Appendix A, where provision will only be considered after other avenues of funding have been considered and found not to be available.

<p><b>Eligible applicants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to carry out works to allow persons to remain in their home.</li> <li>• Owner-occupiers or private tenants with a repairing responsibility having savings of less than £16,000 and in receipt of one or more of the following means tested benefits:-             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working Tax Credit (with an income, after tax, of less than £15,460)</li> <li>▪ Income Support</li> <li>▪ Council Tax Benefit (doesn't include single person or disabled person discount)</li> <li>▪ Pension Guarantee Credit (not pension saving credit)</li> <li>▪ Jobseekers allowance (income based only, in receipt for longer than 6 months)</li> <li>▪ Employment Support Allowance (income related)</li> <li>▪ Income support / job seekers allowance / working tax credit/housing benefit / council tax benefit / pension guarantee credit.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Qualifying criteria</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Property in need of essential repairs as determined by the Housing Act 2004 as a 'Category 1 Hazard' or significant category 2 hazard, in order to make the property healthy, safe, wind and weatherproof. Assistance may be prioritised based upon the hazard score or circumstances of the applicant.</li> <li>• Works to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard will be aimed for if practical, reasonable and sufficient funds are available.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one application for assistance will be considered up to a maximum of £5,000 within any 5-year period. (this condition is at the discretion of the Strategic Housing Services Manager and only in exceptional circumstances)</li> <li>• Grant repayable in full to the Council should the property be disposed of or sold. The charge will be registered as a local land charge where the costs are below £500 and as a national land charge where the costs are £500 or above.</li> <li>• Must have lived at the relevant property for at least 12 months.</li> <li>• Once approval has been given, the applicant has until 12 months from the date of approval to complete the works.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maximum grant</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £5,000.00 for works.</li> </ul>

## Home Move Grant Assistance

This is a discretionary grant and subject to available resources. A charge is placed on a property receiving the Home Move Grant. If demand for assistance exceeds the budget available, the Council does not undertake to maintain a waiting list. This discretionary financial assistance will be provided in accordance with the hierarchy set out in Appendix A, where provision will only be considered after other avenues of funding have been considered and found not to be available.

<p><b>Eligible applicants</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to carry out works to enable a Disabled Facilities Grant applicant to move to a more adaptable property.</li> <li>• Owner-occupiers or private tenants with a repairing responsibility having savings of less than £16,000 and in receipt of one or more of the following means tested benefits:-             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Working Tax Credit (with an income, after tax, of less than £15,460)</li> <li>▪ Income Support</li> <li>▪ Council Tax Benefit (doesn't include single person or disabled person discount)</li> <li>▪ Pension Guarantee Credit (not pension saving credit)</li> <li>▪ Jobseekers allowance (income based only, in receipt for longer than 6 months)</li> <li>▪ Employment Support Allowance (income related)</li> <li>▪ Income support / job seekers allowance / working tax credit/housing benefit / council tax benefit / pension guarantee credit.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Qualifying criteria</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing home is unsuitable for improvement or adaptation and a move is the most cost effective and practical option.</li> <li>• Evidence of new property and inspection by Grants Officer and Occupational Therapist.</li> <li>• Subject to financial assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conditions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one application for assistance will be considered up to a maximum of £5,000 within any 5-year period. (this condition is at the discretion of the Strategic Housing Services Manager and only in exceptional circumstances)</li> <li>• Grant repayable in full to the Council should the property be disposed of or sold. The charge will be registered as a local land charge where the costs are below £500 and as a national land charge where the costs are £500 or above.</li> <li>• Must have lived at the relevant property for at least 12 months.</li> <li>• Once approval has been given, the applicant has until 12 months from the date of approval to complete the works.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Maximum grant</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £2,500.00</li> </ul>

### Empty Home Grant Assistance

This is a discretionary grant and subject to available resources. A charge is placed on a property receiving the Empty Property Grant Assistance. If demand for assistance exceeds the budget available, the Council does not undertake to maintain a waiting list.

This discretionary financial assistance will be provided in accordance with the hierarchy set out in Appendix A, where provision will only be considered after other avenues of funding have been considered and found not to be available.

<b>Eligible applicants</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Available to carry out works to enable an Empty Property to be bought back into use and encourage re-occupation.</li> <li>• Owner-occupiers who have owned the property more than 3 years.</li> </ul>
<b>Qualifying criteria</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning permission (if necessary) for any works prior to application.</li> <li>• Property in need of essential repairs as determined by the Housing Act 2004 as a 'Category 1 Hazard' or significant category 2 hazard, in order to make the property healthy, safe, wind and weatherproof. Assistance may be prioritised based upon the hazard score or circumstances of the applicant.</li> <li>• Works to bring the property up to the Decent Homes Standard will be aimed for if practical, reasonable and sufficient funds are available.</li> </ul>
<b>Conditions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only one application for assistance will be considered up to a maximum of £5,000 within any 5-year period. (this condition is at the discretion of the Strategic Housing Services Manager and only in exceptional circumstances)</li> <li>• Grant repayable in full to the Council should the property be disposed of or sold. The charge will be registered as a local land charge where the costs are below £500 and as a national land charge where the costs are £500 or above.</li> <li>• Once approval has been given, the applicant has until 12 months from the date of approval to complete the works.</li> <li>• For tenanted property subject to nomination rights being vested in the District Council for a period of 3years</li> </ul>
<b>Maximum grant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £5,000.00</li> </ul>

## 10 Repayment of Housing Assistance

### General

- Repaid grant/loan will be recycled into provision of future assistance.
- If an applicant is approved but it subsequently appears to the Council that the applicant (or one of two or more joint applicants) was not, at the time the application was approved, entitled to the assistance approved, then no payment shall be made (or no further instalments paid) and the Council may seek to recover immediately any payments made together with interest accruing from the date of payment.
- If the applicant is the owner of a dwelling in respect of which Housing Assistance has been approved and ceases to be the owner before the works are completed he/she shall repay to the Council on demand the total amount of Housing Assistance that has been paid.
- 

### Breach of Undertakings

- Where an owner occupier has given a signed undertaking to occupy a property as his/her principal residence after completion of the assisted works for a period of time, and if they cease to do so during that time, they shall repay on demand to the Council the total amount of assistance paid out.
- Where a landlord (or owner) has given a signed undertaking that the property will be available for letting for a period specified after completion of the assisted works, and if the landlord ceases to make the relevant property available for letting during the specified period then the landlord shall repay on demand to the Council the total amount of Housing Assistance paid out.
- Where the Council has the right to demand repayment but extenuating circumstances exist, the Council may determine to waive the right to repayment or to demand a sum less than the full amount of Housing Assistance.

### Death of Applicant

- If the applicant should die before the Housing Assistance is approved, the application will be treated as withdrawn.
- If the applicant should die after approval of the Housing Assistance or whilst the approved works are in progress, the Council may at its discretion agree to completion or making good of the works and pay the Housing Assistance in full or, if the works originally agreed are not completed in full, an appropriate proportion of the Housing Assistance.
- Where an applicant dies after completion of the works but before the expiry of the ten year undertaking, the Council will seek repayment of the Housing Assistance from the applicant's estate if a disposal by sale or a change in ownership / tenure takes place.

### **Additional Conditions**

- The Council reserves the right to impose additional conditions when making a grant approval. These may include but are not restricted to:
  - (i) A contribution to the cost of the assisted works by the applicant
  - (ii) The right to nominate tenants to housing accommodation available for rent
  - (iii) Housing accommodation being maintained in repair after completion of the assisted works.
  - (iv) The right of the Council to recover specialised equipment when no longer needed.
- Breach of any additional conditions gives the Council the rights to seek repayment of the Housing Assistance on demand.

### **Security and Repayment**

- Where a grant condition imposes a liability to repay the Housing Assistance, the condition will be registered by the Council either as a local land charge or on the national land charge register.
- The Council may at its discretion determine to require repayment of a lesser sum than the full amount of Housing Assistance.

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### **11 Enquires and Applying for Assistance**

- Persons wishing to pursue a grant where a test of resources applies will be asked to complete a preliminary assessment form to confirm whether they are eligible and their financial status. After preliminary assessment, the Council or the Agency will give an initial indication of the assistance likely to be available before the enquirer decides if they wish to proceed further with an application.
- Where a person decides to continue with an application, then an inspection of the property will be carried out and where appropriate to proceed a schedule of works drawn up. The schedule will specify the works to be carried out as a requirement for financial assistance and will be used by the applicant to obtain quotations from builders and/or specialist suppliers.
- The Council will include in any housing assistance provided an Agency fee for the Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency who assist eligible persons with their applications etc.
- The applicant may then submit a formal application along with a priced schedule and any other document required (such as plans, building and planning consents, specialist reports, etc).
- Once approval has been given, the applicant has until 12 months from the date of approval to complete the works unless otherwise stated.

- For disabled facilities grants, the applicant has the right to apply direct to the Council rather than through an Agency. However the Council would reserve the right not to assist the application process in the manner of an Agency in such circumstances.

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### **12 Decision and Notification**

- The Council will notify applicants in writing whether their application has been approved or refused. The decision will be notified as soon as reasonably practicable and in any event no later than six months after receipt of a valid application which includes all required supporting documentation.
- If the application is approved, the notification will specify the works that are eligible for assistance, the value of the assistance, the form the assistance will take and the builder/contractor who will carry out the works
- If the application is refused, the Council will give the reasons for the refusal and also confirm the procedure for appealing against the decision.

---

### **13 Re-determination of Amount of Grant**

Where the Council is satisfied that because of circumstances beyond the control of the applicant which could not have reasonably been foreseen, the cost of the assisted works has either increased or decreased, the Council may at its discretion re-determine the assistance given in accordance with grant framework set out in this document and notify the applicant accordingly.

Additional works carried out without prior approval of the Council will not result in increased financial assistance being provided and would be the responsibility of the applicant to fund.

---

### **13 Appeals Against Decisions**

- Any person who is aggrieved by a decision not to give financial assistance as a consequence of this policy may appeal to seek review of the decision.
- The appeal should first be made in writing to the Strategic Housing Services Manager. If the person appealing remains dissatisfied they have the right to go through the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure or approach the Local Government Ombudsman.
- Any possible departure from Policy will only be considered where the applicant can demonstrate both wholly exceptional circumstances to justify such a departure and also that the applicant has not means by which he or she could reasonably be expected to use for the work.



- Complaints about service delivery rather than policy should also be made in writing to the Strategic Housing Services Manager and will be investigated in accordance with the Council's Corporate Complaints procedure, a copy of which is available on request.



Care & Repair Worcestershire HIA  
Funding hierarchy for Customers

*Care & Repair abides by the Home Improvement Agency regulations which define that the agency must act in the best interests of the customer. The hierarchy below generally represents the clients best interests but the customer may choose a different option if eligible (for example may refuse a loan if a gift or grant funding is offered). It should also be noted that some options may not offer a timely response which could materially effect a property or customers wellbeing, in which case another funding solution would be sought to meet those needs.*






**APPENDIX 2- Private Sector Housing Action Plan**

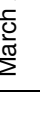

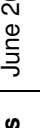


**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ACTION PLAN – April 2011 – 2016**

**GOAL 1 – BETTER USE OF EXISTING HOMES**

Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<b>CHALLENGE - Increase the number of empty homes brought back into use</b>				
1.1 Support the development a countywide toolkit for bringing empty homes, including flats above shops, back into use	April 2012 KSF/JDL	Worcester City Council setting up a working group.		
1.2 Appoint a temporary part time Private Sector Housing Options Officer (funded by Homelessness Grant) to liaise and assist landlords to provide housing in multiple occupation to homeless clients restricted by new Housing Benefit regulations.	June 2012 KSF/AG	Approval having been given to proposals for use of Government Homeless Grant to BDC.		
1.4 Pro actively seek out empty homes that could be converted to HMO's.	April 2012 KSF/JDL	Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using Homeless Grant		

1.5 Look to support and encourage the owners of empty space within Bromsgrove town centre to convert to residential and bring back into use.	April 2013 KSF	Achieving HCA or other funding to encourage landlords to convert their properties.		
<b>CHALLENGE - Increase the use of the private rented sector</b>				
1.8 Work with colleagues in North Worcestershire to consider benefits of developing a joined up approach for liaising with landlords, including newsletters and landlord's forums.	April 2012 KSF/JDL	Housing Initiatives Officer to set up a working group		
1.9 Continue to hold annual Landlords Forums to promote good practice, LL training opportunities and use of CBL to maximise knowledge of private letting opportunities to clients on the Housing Register.	March 2012 KSF/JDL			
1.10 Develop a handbook for Houses in Multiple Occupation to include all information needed for a landlord when looking to set up this type of let.	Oct 2011 KSF	Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using Homelessness Grant		
1.11 Look to actively encourage the conversion of properties into Houses in Multiple Occupation to meet the predicted increased need due to changes in Housing Benefit.	April 2012 KSF/JDL	Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using Homelessness		

	s Grant		
<b>CHALLENGE - Reduce the number of people living in overcrowded conditions</b>			
1.13 Improve our knowledge of levels of overcrowding in the District and work with countywide colleagues to develop a toolkit to address overcrowding and make best use of Choice Based Lettings to enable applicants to move on to more suitable accommodation.	March 2013 AG/KSF	Improve our knowledge of levels of overcrowding in the District	
<b>CHALLENGE - Enable people to make the right choice of home and where appropriate repair / adapt to meet the needs of the occupants.</b>			
1.14 Encourage landlords with adapted properties to approach the local authority for assistance in finding suitable tenants.	April 2012 KSF/JDL	Promotion at landlords forum and in landlords newsletter	
1.17 Improve housing opportunities for single people by developing a shared housing living model across all tenures – see Goal 1 Action 2 above	June 2012 AC/AG/JD/JB /KSF	Approval having been given to proposals for use of Government Homelessness Grant to BDC.	
<b>CHALLENGE - To address the issue of over/under and inappropriate supply of sheltered and supported housing within the county</b>			

### GOAL 3 – IMPROVING THE CONDITION OF EXISTING HOMES

Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<b>CHALLENGE - Improve the property standards (inc energy efficiency) across tenures using all of the tools at our disposal.</b>				
3.1 Develop the Uniform housing IT module to generate a routine inspection of previously inspected privately let properties.	Sept 2011 KSF	Private Sector Team Leader to take forward		
3.2 Work with Worcestershire local authorities to develop a consistent approach to working with private sector landlords to improve the overall condition of accommodation.	March 2016 KSF			
3.3 Re-inspect and review Fire Risk Assessment at Burcot Hostel.	Sept 2011 KSF / JB	Private Sector Team Leader to complete assessment.		
3.5 Review results of BRE private sector condition survey (if Kick Start funding bid is successful). Alternatively, review options/funding to update data.	Sept 2011 KSF	WM Kick Start being successful in bidding for funding for BRE Survey.		
3.6 BDC to lead on the development of framework procurement of level access showers and stair lifts by the Worcestershire Care and Repair Service.	March 2012 KSF			
3.7 Finalise enforcement policy and develop report for Cabinet approval.	Dec 2012 KSF			

3.8 Investigate the resource implications of developing a Lettings Agents training programme.	April 2012 KSF / JD			
3.9 Undertake a procurement exercise with other Worcestershire local authorities to review the provision of energy efficiency advice service.	March 2012 KSF			
<b>CHALLENGE – Attract investment to help improve property standards including energy efficiency.</b>				
3.10 Work with Worcestershire local authorities to develop partnership arrangements with private industry to provide greater levels of funding and way to improve property standards.	March 2013 KSF			
<b>CHALLENGE – Support households to take responsibility for improving their homes and reducing fuel poverty.</b>				
3.11 Develop an online House Doctor Scheme whereby self help advice and assistance can be accessed by home-owners or tenants on the following areas: ■ Energy Efficiency ■ Home Maintenance	April 2012 KSF	Appointment of temporary Private Sector Housing Options Officer using Homelessness Grant		

#### **GOAL 4 – PROVIDING HOUSING RELATED SUPPORT**

Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<b>CHALLENGE - Manage financial reductions to the Supporting People programme whilst continuing to meet housing related support needs in</b>				



<b>amore targeted way.</b>			
4.9 Look to actively encourage the conversion of properties into HMO's to meet the predicted increased need due to changes in housing benefit.	March 2016 JD / KSF		
<b>CHALLENGE – To provide equal access of opportunity to affordable housing and other housing options.</b>			
4.14 Carry out Equality Impact Assessments on any service changes and as per equality impact assessment timetable.	March 2016 AG / JB / KSF / JD		

**UNDERPINNING GOALS**

Action and Priority	Target Completion Date and Officer Responsible	Milestone	Progress upon implementation of action	Status
<b>CHALLENGE – To ensure that services are delivered efficiently balancing performance, customer satisfaction and cost</b>				
U 7 Carry out customer satisfaction surveys on front line services.	March 2012 AG/JB/JD/KSF			

## Contact List

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



# Bromsgrove District

## Council Plan 2011-2014

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



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



**EQUALITY**  
FRAMEWORK  
FOR LOCAL  
GOVERNMENT  
**ACHIEVING**



## Contents

1.	Foreword from the Leader	3
2.	What is the Council Plan?	4
3.	Bromsgrove- Introducing the District	5
4.	Who Are We?	8
5.	Our Priorities 2011-2014	11
6.	What We Do	12
7.	Partnership Working	13
8.	How We Will Deliver Our Priorities	15
9.	Risk Management	29
10.	Community Engagement (including Equalities)	30
11.	Budget and Value For Money	31
12.	Glossary	33

## 1. Foreword from the Leader

Welcome to the Bromsgrove District Council Plan. The Plan sets out a “road map” for the Council’s work between now and 2014.



The Council operates in a complex environment, having to balance public expectation of the Council’s services alongside the Government’s shared priorities for local government and statutory obligations, as well as understanding the demographic issues we face, in particular, a commuting workforce and an ageing population. The current climate of economic uncertainty has impacted on all public services; whilst we seem to be over the worst, there has been a year on year reduction in grants from central Government, as well as a loss in interest and significant reduction in turnover. The Council has a clear plan for addressing the current situation and was one of the first councils in the UK to pursue a single management team and shared services through our partnership with Redditch Borough Council. Shared Services is not just about saving money; it is about providing efficient and more cost effective services for our customers while keeping the uniqueness and political sovereignty of both Councils. What this means for customers is that we are giving ourselves the greatest possible opportunity of maintaining the best offer to the public.

The Council has managed to set a balanced budget in very difficult circumstances and a zero increase in Council Tax. However, the Revenue Support Grant from the Government has fallen by 27.7%. Over the next three years the Council will need to find £1,800,000. £200,000 will be found from additional income, £300,000 from various proposed savings, leaving an additional £1,300,000 to be found from shared services, transformation and alternative delivery.

As a Council, we recognise the issues that face the District and are working hard to tackle them. The need to regenerate our town centre is a key priority, with a super store and the Area Action Plan- the master plan for town centre regeneration- all planned for the next few years. We also need to ensure that we have sufficient affordable housing and that we meet the needs of our ageing population.

The Council Plan brings together all the different information that influences Council services and articulates our ambitions for the Council and the District into measures of success we understand and can work toward. The Council Plan is the starting point for driving the Council’s performance management framework, medium term financial plan, annual budgets and corporate risk register. As a result, we do not expect the Plan to be left on a shelf, but to be a living document, that decision-makers refer to in order to provide an effective strategic direction for the Council.

The Council Plan was developed by Members and officers considering a range of information from residents including customer surveys and focus groups, as well as considering our current performance, national legislation, the County and District Community Strategies and our financial position. I very much hope that the Plan reflects the best part of local, county, regional and national aspirations for our District. Every year we will refresh the Council Plan to ensure we are listening and reflecting the views of our communities.

**Roger Hollingworth**  
Leader of the Council

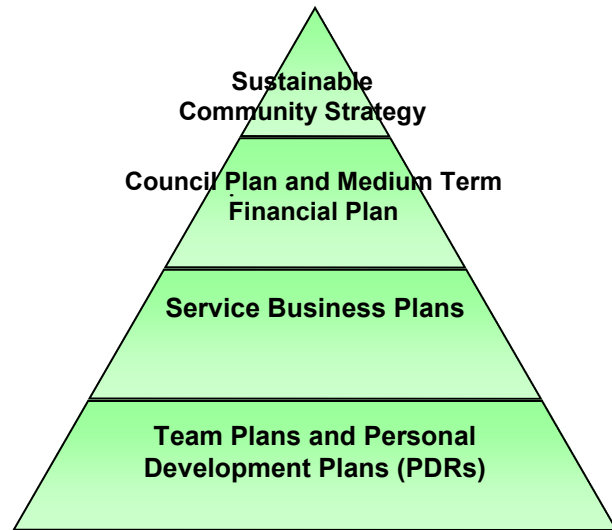
**Kevin Dicks**  
Chief Executive of Bromsgrove  
District & Redditch Borough Councils

An electronic version of this plan can be found on our website:  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

## 2. What is the Council Plan?

The Council Plan forms one link in a chain of plans and strategies that link to each other to achieve a vision for the County of Worcestershire. The priorities set out in each plan contribute to and complement those set in the level above them in the hierarchy.

### *The hierarchy of plans and strategies*



Bromsgrove District Council Plan for 2011 to 2014 is effectively the business plan for the Council and demonstrates how the Council will work towards achieving the overall vision for the District set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy which was developed on the basis of extensive consultation with our residents.

The Council Plan identifies our contribution to this vision, and gives firm commitments on how the Council will deliver on its vision. The Council has six priority areas:

- ⇒ Economic Development
- ⇒ Town Centre
- ⇒ Value for Money
- ⇒ One Community
- ⇒ Housing
- ⇒ Climate Change

It also explains what the Council will be doing to keep its own house in order, to ensure we continue to be a well managed organisation.

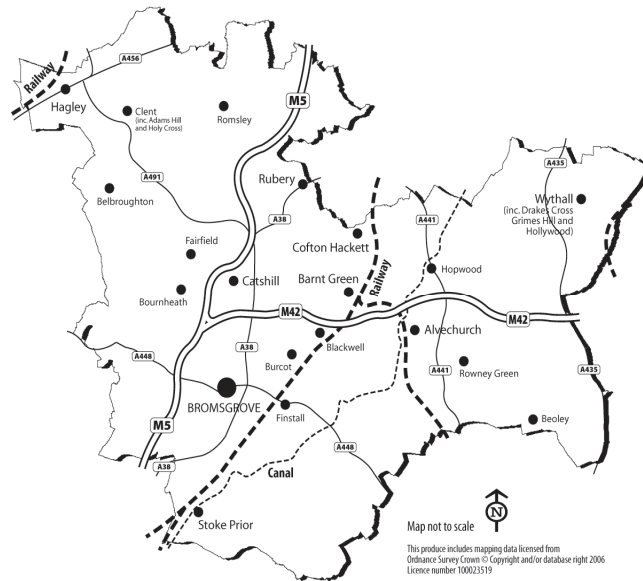
The Council Plan will be updated on an annual basis. A separate Annual Report will report on our performance demonstrating how well we are doing - our 'direction of travel' against our priorities. The Plan sets out actions over one to three years, demonstrating that continued improvement of the District is not a quick fix, but the result of focussed, long-term ambition.

In developing the Council Plan, we have taken into account not only the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), but also the aspirations of our residents and the particular features of Bromsgrove as a District.

The Council Plan predominantly addresses the short and medium term (up to three years) aims and objectives of the District Council, but recognises where issues are likely to be ongoing in the long term. The Plan also outlines how the Council will proactively manage its resources in order to achieve its objectives. The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) sets out the funding arrangements for the Council's priorities. The Plan seeks throughout to address the issues and views of a wide variety of stakeholders, including residents, Members of the Council and partner organisations.

### 3. Bromsgrove- Introducing the District

Figure 1: Map of Bromsgrove District



Page 387

The town of Bromsgrove accounts for just over a third of the total population of the District, with other population clusters including Hagley, Rubery and Wythall. Data suggests that 16,643 people travel into the District for work, with 26,112 (29%) of the population travelling out, a net commute out of 9,469.<sup>1</sup> There are congestion issues along the A38 to the M42 and the railway station does not have capacity to cope with demand. The District has no wards in the top 20% most deprived in England, in fact, there are a number of areas in Bromsgrove that fall within the least deprived 20% across the country, highlighting that the District is overall fairly affluent.

<sup>1</sup> ONS 2001 Census

### Population

The population of the District is estimated to be approximately 93,400 and there is a fairly even split between male and female inhabitants with 50.5% female and 49.5% male.<sup>2</sup> 92.5% of Bromsgrove residents are White British or White Irish and of the remaining 7% of the population, the ethnic group with the largest population size is White Other (1.6%), a group which includes people of Eastern European origin. 5.9% of the population is from other ethnic minority groups.<sup>3</sup>

A defining characteristic of the District is its ageing population. The District has slightly more people aged over 40 than the average for the County. Currently, approximately 20% of the population are aged over 65 and this proportion is set to increase around 30% by 2026.<sup>4</sup> It is expected that this increasing ageing population will have a significant impact on policy and planning for the District, with specific regard to community safety, health and the strength of communities.

### Economy

The economic picture of the District is comparatively positive despite the current economic downturn, although like everywhere, the District has really felt the impact of the recession. The mean annual household income is approximately £41,000, which is the highest in the County (the County average is approximately £37,000).<sup>5</sup> Whilst the average household income is high at District level, it is significantly lower in Charford, Sidemoor, Catshill and St Johns Wards. Unemployment, whilst comparatively low, has risen from 1.4% a year ago to 3.7% in June 2009.<sup>6</sup> This rate refers to the proportion of the working age population (based on the 2001 census) claiming Jobseekers Allowance. Data from May 2010

<sup>2</sup> ONS Mid-2009 estimates

<sup>3</sup> ONS mid-2007 population estimates

<sup>4</sup> ONS projections - Research and Intelligence Unit, Worcestershire County Council

<sup>5</sup> PayCheck 2010

<sup>6</sup> Monthly Economic Assessment, Research and Intelligence Unit, Worcestershire County Council.

indicates that just 7.3% of the working age population (based on mid-2007 population estimates) claim key out of work benefits<sup>7</sup> which is the lowest rate in Worcestershire.<sup>8</sup> VAT registrations have fallen slightly<sup>9</sup> and are consistent with the national trend away from manufacturing, towards more service based industries.

There are three major areas of economic regeneration within the District: the Longbridge site, Bromsgrove town centre and Bromsgrove railway station. The area action plan for the Longbridge is in place, but delayed due to the changing economic conditions. Bromsgrove town centre needs a major overhaul to encourage local shopping and to be able to compete with neighbouring shopping centres. Bromsgrove station's funding remains an issue- a new station would have a significant impact on Bromsgrove town, due to the planned Cross City Line electrification being extended to Bromsgrove and as a result bringing the town more into Birmingham City's economic orbit.

Page 388

## Housing

One of the biggest issues facing the District is affordable housing: 83.4% of households are owner occupied,<sup>10</sup> the 11<sup>th</sup> highest figure in England and Wales, and as of the summer of 2010 the mean average house price was £237,536.<sup>11</sup> This figure is only slightly below the 2007 annual house price of £237,599. The target for affordable housing, as stated in the Bromsgrove District's Housing Strategy for 2006-2011, is 400 over the 5 year period, equating to 80 units of affordable housing per year. The Council and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust will tackle this issue by ensuring the new developments (such as the Longbridge site, the town centre and any future housing allocation the District has to take as a result of future housing policy) have an appropriate mix of

<sup>7</sup> Key income related benefits include Jobseekers Allowance, Lone Parent on Income Support and Incapacity Benefits

<sup>8</sup> Department for Works and Pensions 2010

<sup>9</sup> ONS 2010- Worcestershire County Economic Assessment 2010-11

<sup>10</sup> ONS 2001 Census

<sup>11</sup> Land Registry 2010 - Worcestershire County Economic Assessment 2010-11

housing, for example, outright ownership, shared ownership schemes, low cost home ownership and rented accommodation.

Whilst ensuring we provide enough affordable housing, we will also need to take increasing account of the expansion of our older population. A housing market survey, commissioned by BDHT and the Council, suggests an estimated need of 7,350 properties across all tenures. To date the debate has tended to focus on affordable housing; however, the survey has also identified the need for housing for older people. Meeting the needs of the rising 85+ population will require a good supply of sheltered, care at hand and extra care housing.

The need to keep our young people in our communities and our older people cared for within our communities applies not just to planned big developments (like Longbridge), but also our existing urban and rural communities. We will also ensure an adequate supply of good quality temporary accommodation to ensure there is a safety net for those people made homeless through difficult circumstances.

## Education, Deprivation and Health

The overall proportion of the District's population (16-74) with no qualifications is lower than both the County and national averages at 26.1% compared to 28.1% and 28.9% respectively. Furthermore, the percentage of the population qualified to NVQ Level 4/5 is also higher than the regional and national averages.<sup>12</sup> GCSE results gained at local authority schools and colleges in Worcestershire in 2010 were amongst the highest in the country (64% achieved five or more GCSEs at A\*-C including English & Maths).<sup>13</sup> The District ranks 299th out of 354 councils on the national index of multiple deprivation 2007 (where 1 is the most deprived), making the District one of the least deprived nationally.<sup>14</sup> It is also the only district in

<sup>12</sup> ONS 2011 Census

<sup>13</sup> EPAS 2010- Worcestershire County Economic Assessment 2010-11

<sup>14</sup> DCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2007



Worcestershire to have become less deprived since 2004.<sup>15</sup> As a result, identifying the vulnerable within our communities is more difficult than a district with geographic areas of deprivation.

Overall, the District's population is healthier than the England average. Hip fractures in the over-65s are the one indicator which is worse than the England average. Some key points relating to the health of people in Bromsgrove are: early death rates from heart disease and stroke and from cancer are lower than both the regional and England average; levels of deprivation and children in poverty are lower than the England average; and teenage pregnancy rates remain below national levels; however, there is a concern that lifestyles are becoming less healthy and potentially, we could be storing up problems for the future. For example, obesity in both adults and children is seen by NHS Worcestershire as major concern for Bromsgrove.<sup>16</sup>

### Crime and Fear of Crime

Bromsgrove is known to be a low crime area and since 2008/09, total crime has reduced in the District, with British Crime Survey (BCS) Comparator Crime reducing by 12%;<sup>17</sup> however, despite an overall reduction in actual crime, the fear of crime remains an issue. In general, 76% of residents have felt fearful about the possibility of any crime happening to them in the last 12 months, which is a small decrease on the 2008 figure of 80%.<sup>18</sup> The crimes which residents fear the most are: house burglary and vandalism or damage to property. The issues of concern that were identified were: speeding traffic; groups of people loitering/hanging around in public places; and underage drinking<sup>19</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Department of Health – Bromsgrove Health Profile 2010

<sup>17</sup> British Crime Survey 2009/10

<sup>18</sup> West Mercia Crime and Safety Annual Survey 2009

<sup>19</sup> Ibid

### Climate Change and Sustainable Development

The Council shares a Climate Change Officer with Redditch Borough Council and agreed a Joint Climate Change Strategy in December 2010. In addition, the Council works with Act on Energy through the Bromsgrove Partnership. The Council is therefore well placed to respond to this agenda. Although there has been a change in national government, the desire to see our carbon emissions reduced remains a national priority and one that we want to play our part in locally.

The Climate Change Act (2008) requires an 80% reduction in our CO2 emissions by 2050. The Council measures the emissions from its operations every year and those of the Bromsgrove District as a whole. Through measuring our emissions, we have discovered that approximately 80% comes from our buildings and the rest from our fleet or business mileage. A key area of focus will therefore be our property assets. Where possible, we are installing energy saving technology in our buildings that will save us money and reduce our carbon emissions and using new technology, like solar panels, to generate energy. In order to progress this agenda, we need to make decisions on the future of our two main buildings – the Council House and the Dolphin Centre/Customer Service Centre – as part of the town centre regeneration project. Our Climate Change Officer is working closely with our town centre project team to ensure future plans town centre buildings are consistent with the climate change agenda.

Through the Bromsgrove Partnership Better Environment Theme Group, chaired by Act on Energy we are working in the community on fuel poverty, home insulation and micro-generation. At a strategic planning level, the Core Strategy, which is currently being consulted on, identifies the strategic issues the District faces over the next 15 years and how we aim to tackle these. The mitigation and adaptation of climate change issues is a key part of this document.

## 4. Who Are We?

We are a District-level authority within the county of Worcestershire and work closely with neighbouring Redditch Borough Council with a shared Corporate Management Team.

The Council has a majority Conservative administration, with twenty-five Conservatives, six Labour, six Independents & Wythall Residents' Association and one unaffiliated. There is one vacant Ward seat due to a resignation at the start of 2011. The Council operates a modernised political structure with the Leader/Cabinet model, supported by two non-Executive Boards: Audit Board and Overview & Scrutiny Board. There is also a Planning Committee, Standards Committee and Licensing Committee. The Council has a Corporate Management Team (CMT) and a Chief Executive, Kevin Dicks.

Page 39  
Currently, eight Councillors sit on the Cabinet, each of whom have a set of responsibilities referred to as a "Portfolio". Portfolio Holders are appointed annually by the Council and between them cover all areas of the Council's work and responsibility. "Portfolio" indicates a specified area of responsibility allotted by formal resolution, for the purposes listed below:

- Monitor Council performance.
- Monitor the implementation of Council policy and decisions.
- Act as consultee for Members and Officers.
- Act as "Spokesperson" for the Council (but not exclusively).
- Act as "Rapporteur" to Overview and Scrutiny and as a channel for feedback from representatives of outside bodies.
- Undertake a higher level of involvement with the Local Strategic Partnership.

The eight Portfolios are:

- **Policy, Performance, Partnerships and Economic Development**  
– Cllr R. Hollingworth – Leader of the Council
- **Resources (including Finance, Customer Services, Legal, Equalities, Democratic Services and Human Resources)**  
– Cllr G. N. Denaro – Deputy Leader of the Council
- **Community Services (including Leisure, Cultural Services, Environmental Services and Crime and Disorder/CCTV)**  
– Cllr M. J. A. Webb
- **Planning and Regeneration**  
– Cllr Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E
- **Business Transformation with special responsibility for Town Centre Regeneration**  
– Cllr Dr. D. W. P. Booth
- **Regulatory Services and Strategic Housing**  
– Cllr P. J. Whittaker
- **Older People, the Young and Vulnerable People**  
– Cllr Mrs. M. A. Sherrey
- **Community Cohesion and Engagement**  
– Cllr R. D. Smith

## Shared Services and Transformation

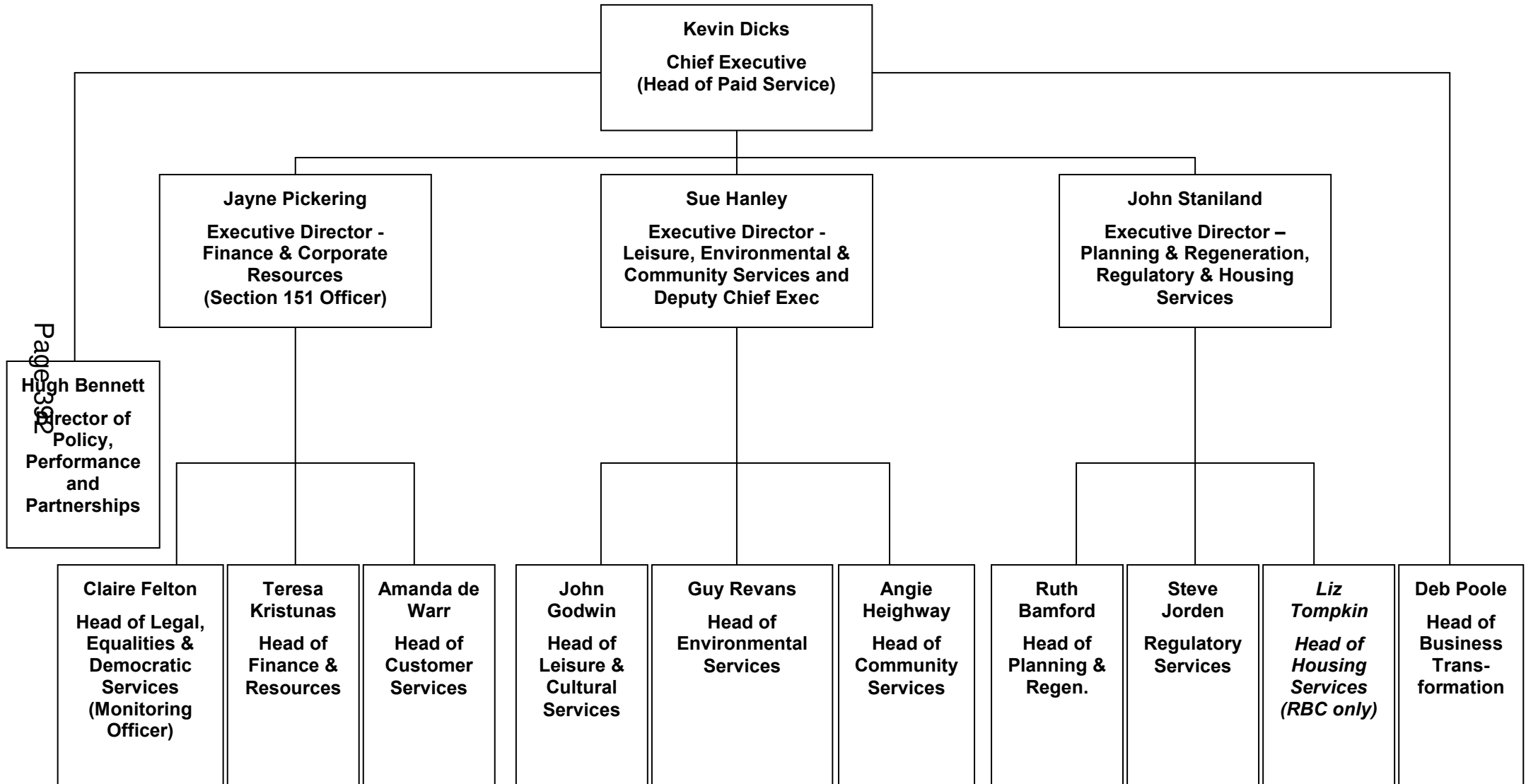
The Council has had a Shared Chief Executive with Redditch Borough Council on a trail basis since August 2008, an arrangement which was formalised in September 2009.

The formal appointment of a shared Chief Executive for the two councils has led to the subsequent appointment of a single management team for both councils. Four services are already shared: community safety, elections, CCTV and ICT.

A full transformation programme for both councils is currently being delivered, including a major review of the Revenues and Benefits service. The councils are also the host of the single county wide Regulatory Services function as part of the Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier programme, while internal audit and property services have transferred to other hosts in the county. During 2011 a single North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit will be established, covering Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest.

By pursuing Shared Services at a time when funding from Government for local authorities is being reduced, it will assist in providing a financially safer environment for both Councils to operate in. It will also give us a stronger voice both regionally and nationally.

**CORPORATE MANAGEMENT TEAM STRUCTURE**



5. Our Priorities 2011-2014

Bromsgrove District Council

# our Vision our Values and Objectives

## Vision

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

## Values

Leadership  
Partnerships,  
Customer First and  
Equality,  
Value for Money

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>Council Objective One</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">Regeneration</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>Council Objective Two</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">Improvement</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>Council Objective Three</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">One Community</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>Council Objective Four</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">Environment</div>
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>C01 Priorities</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">Economic Development Town Centre</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>C02 Priorities</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">Value for Money</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>C03 Priorities</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">One Community Housing</div>	<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: #008000; color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;"><b>C04 Priorities</b></div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; background-color: white; margin-bottom: 5px;">Climate Change</div>

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

## 6. What We Do

### *Our Services*

The Council is statutorily obliged to provide some services but has a choice about whether or not it provides the others. The services provided by Bromsgrove District Council include:

- Environmental Health
- Homelessness and housing advice
- Licensing Services
- Planning Services
- Revenue Collection
- Waste Collection
- Street cleansing
- Working in partnership with the Police and other organisations to improve community safety and tackle anti-social behaviour
- Economic Development
- Contact Centre and Customer Service Centres to provide a single point of contact for Council Services ( telephone and face to face )
- A subsidised Bromsgrove Urban Rural Transport community transport scheme for those who have difficulty accessing public transport in the District.
- Shopmobility disability scooters and wheelchairs to enable disabled people to access the Town Centre
- Play Areas and multi activity play areas
- Playing pitches and associated changing facilities
- CCTV/Lifeline

- Community Services
- Landscape maintenance/improvements
- Market Services

The Council also has a community leadership role. This commits us to develop, together with our partners, a Sustainable Community Strategy. This sets out the key issues faced in the District and a plan to tackle them. The Government also places a responsibility on local authorities to shape their communities around the needs and aspirations of their residents.

## 7. Partnership Working

### Bromsgrove Partnership

The Bromsgrove Partnership (the District's Local Strategic Partnership) is an established partnership of the key public, private and voluntary sector organisations operating within the District. The purpose of the partnership is to work together on a range of issues that require joined up thinking in order to deliver on our residents' aspirations. For example, we cannot regenerate the town centre, working on our own. We need to work with other property owners, both public, private and voluntary for a joined up solution to the town centre.

The partnership operates a board, chaired by the Leader of the Council Councillor Roger Hollingworth and series of theme groups, which are the delivery arms of the partnership. A diagram of the partnership is set out overleaf.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the business plan for the Bromsgrove Partnership and sets out a vision for the District and is concerned with addressing issues important to residents, the business community and visitors to the District. It is based on an understanding of the available evidence and focuses on the way in which services are delivered and how they can be improved for everyone's benefit. The Strategy is a developmental, rolling document and the priorities identified may change over time as improvements are realised and new issues emerge. The aims and objectives of the Strategy are to provide a co-ordinated approach to improving the quality of life for everyone in the District.

It is important that the Bromsgrove Partnership is accountable to Elected Members, so each year we produce an annual report on the partnership's work. Equally, every time the Sustainable Community Strategy is updated, it is agreed by Elected Members. The next update is due in 2013.

Bromsgrove Partnership **Your District Your Future**

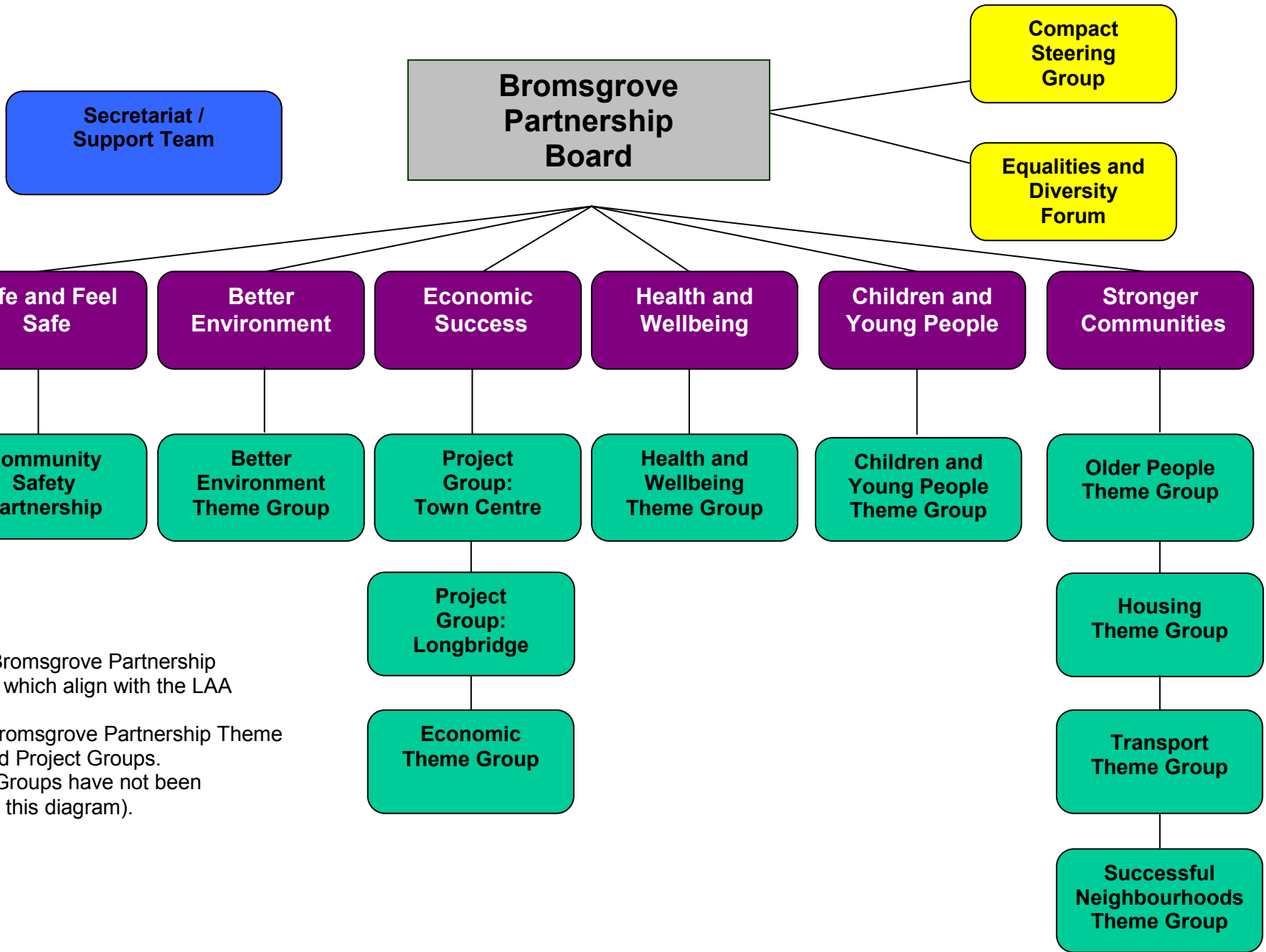


## Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2010-2013

**Our Vision:** "We will make Bromsgrove District a better place to work, live and visit by driving forward change"

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

**Bromsgrove**  
Your District Your Future **Partnership**



**Purple** = Bromsgrove Partnership Objectives which align with the LAA

**Green** = Bromsgrove Partnership Theme Groups and Project Groups. (NB: Sub-Groups have not been included in this diagram).



## 8. How We Will Deliver Our Priorities

For each of the Council's priority themes, a set of key outcomes have been developed. Some of these are cross-cutting throughout the organisation whilst others are specific to a service. Key performance indicators have been developed where appropriate to measure progress and enable Councillors, residents and partners to track performance against the Council Plan.

Projects and tasks to support these key deliverables are included in the relevant Service Business Plans which are monitored by Departmental Management Teams.

The Council monitors and manages performance against a range of national and local performance indicators which are published on the Bromsgrove District Council website.

The Council Plan includes high level actions and indicators with others being detailed in the relevant Service Business Plans.

The table shows, for each priority, the outcomes to be achieved; the key objectives that contribute to those outcomes; and the key actions needed to achieve the objectives.

<b>PRIORITY AREA:</b>	<b>Key Deliverables:</b>
<b>Economic Development (ED)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ED1: Improve the economic success of the district</li> </ul>

Key Deliverable: ED1	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators		
Improve the economic success of the district	✓	New business start-up rate for North Worcestershire		
Key Actions		Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
North Worcs Economic Development Unit live		Jun 2011	1/3 North Worcs Manager	John Staniland
Bromsgrove Marketing Campaign		Mar 2012	£20,000	John Staniland
Supporting business case for new train station		Ongoing	Subject to business case	John Staniland

<b>PRIORITY AREA:</b>  <b>Town Centre (TC)</b>	<b>Key Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TC1: Regeneration of the Town Centre</li> </ul>
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Key Deliverable:TC1	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators		
Town Centre regeneration	✓	Number of vacant units in the town centre (as defined in the Area Action Plan)		
Key Actions		Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
• Agreement of Town Centre Area Action Plan		Mar 2012		John Staniland
• Sainsbury's- agree S106		Jun 2011		John Staniland
• Agreement on District Council's buildings- Dolphin Centre & Council House		Dec 2011		John Staniland
• High Street- work commenced		Mar 2012	S106 Contributions	John Staniland

Page 39

<b>PRIORITY AREA:</b>  <b>Value for Money (VM)</b>	<b>Key Deliverables:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>VM 1: Transformation / Shared Services / WETT</b></li> <li>• <b>VM2: Corporate &amp; Financial Strategy</b></li> <li>• <b>VM3: Corporate &amp; Financial Management</b></li> <li>• <b>VM4: Corporate &amp; Financial Reporting</b></li> <li>• <b>VM5: Improved customer experience</b></li> <li>• <b>VM6: Engagement / Equalities / Communications</b></li> <li>• <b>VM7: Spatial planning</b></li> <li>• <b>VM8: Human resources</b></li> <li>• <b>VM9: Organisational Culture</b></li> <li>• <b>VM10: Employee Climate</b></li> <li>• <b>VM11: Governance</b></li> </ul>
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<b>Key Deliverable: VM1</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Transformation / Shared Services / WETT	✓	Savings achieved 2011/12 – 2013/14 - £1,300,000		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Shared services programme delivered		Jul 2012		Kevin Dicks
• Transformation programme completed		Dec 2012		Deb Poole
• WETT programme completed (Property, Regulatory Services & Internal Audit)		May 2011		Kevin Dicks

<b>Key Deliverable: VM2</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Corporate & Financial Strategy	✓	Overall savings achieved 2011/12 – 2013/14 - £1,800,000		

Key Actions	Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
• Council Plan 2011 – 14 approved and published	Apr 2011		Hugh Bennett
• Three Year Medium Term Financial Plan approved	Feb 2012		Teresa Kristunas
• Lessons Learned Exercise (budget setting process)	Mar 2012		Hugh Bennett

Key Deliverable: VM3	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators
Corporate & Financial Management	✓	<p><b>Additional procurement savings £50,000</b></p> <p><b>Percentage of invoices for commercial goods and services that were paid by the Council within 30 days of receipt or within the agreed payment terms</b></p> <p><b>The percentage of council tax collected by the authority in the year</b></p> <p><b>The amount of housing benefit overpayments recovered as a percentage of all housing benefit overpayments</b></p>

Page 401

Key Actions	Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
• Development of systems thinking dashboard and quarterly reporting process	Dec 2011		Deb Poole Hugh Bennett
• Utilisation of procurement to deliver cashable savings	Mar 2012		Teresa Kristunas
• Freeze on non-essential expenditure through financial and scrutiny of vacancies	Mar 2012		Teresa Kristunas

Key Deliverable: VM4	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators
Corporate & Financial Reporting	✓	<b>External Audit approval of full accounts</b>

<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Statement of Accounts presented to Full Council	30 June 2011		Teresa Kristunas
• External audit	30 Sep 2011		Hugh Bennett Teresa Kristunas
• Annual Report published	31 Oct 2011		Hugh Bennett

<b>Key Deliverable: VM5</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Improved customer experience	✓	<b>Percentage of customers satisfied with the service received</b> <b>Percentage of complaints handled within the agreed timeframes</b>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>	
• Improve the Customer Service Centre experience	Dec 2011		Amanda De Warr	
• Implement 1/3 Customer Experience Strategy Action Plan	Mar 2012		Amanda De Warr	
• Increase the range of services offered in the Customer Service Centre	Mar 2012		Amanda De Warr	

<b>Key Deliverable: VM6</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Engagement / Equalities / Communications	✓	<b>Percentage of residents who believe that the Council provides value for money</b> <b>Percentage of people who believe people from different backgrounds get on well together in their local area</b> <b>Percentage of residents who have been involved in decisions that affect</b>		

		the local area in the past 12 months Percentage who agree that they can influence decisions in their local area		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Proactive management of communications		Mar 2012		Hugh Bennett
• Development of a joint Community Engagement Strategy		Dec 2011		Hugh Bennett
• Review changes to equalities legislation and assessment mechanisms		Sep 2011		Hugh Bennett
• Review engagement and equalities mechanisms		Sep 2011		Hugh Bennett

<b>Key Deliverable: VM7</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Spatial Planning	✓			
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Consultation and agreement of the Core Strategy		Mar 2012		Ruth Bamford
• Adoption of the Core Strategy		Mar 2013		Ruth Bamford

<b>Key Deliverable: VM8</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Human Resources	✓	Number of working days / shifts lost to the local authority due to sickness per full-time equivalent staff member		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>

• Job Evaluation process completed	Mar 2011*		Teresa Kristunas
• Harmonise Terms & Conditions	May 2011*		Teresa Kristunas
• Review human resources capacity for the delivery of the shared services / transformation agenda	Mar 2011		Teresa Kristunas
• Hold monthly sickness absence management meetings	Monthly		Teresa Kristunas

\*subject to collective agreement

<b>Key Deliverable: VM9</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Organisational Culture	✓	Employee Survey results		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Management Development Strategy developed and implemented		Dec 2011		Teresa Kristunas
• Training and Development Programme developed and implemented		Mar 2012	£13, 000	Teresa Kristunas
• Launch new Appraisal Scheme		Jan 2012		Teresa Kristunas

Page 404

<b>Key Deliverable: VM10</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Employee Climate	✓	Employee Survey results		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Employee survey		Sep 2011		Teresa Kristunas
• Staff forums at least every three months		Triannual		Kevin Dicks



Key Deliverable: VM11	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators		
Governance	✓	Audit programme productive time 63% Electoral turnout 2011		
Key Actions		Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• District &amp; Parish Election</li> </ul>		5 May 2011		Claire Felton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Referendum</li> </ul>		5 May 2011		Claire Felton
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Proactive Risk Management</li> </ul>		Mar 2012		Teresa Kristunas
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complete Internal Audit programme</li> </ul>		Mar 2012		Teresa Kristunas

<b>PRIORITY AREA:</b>  <b>One Community (OC)</b>	<b>Key Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>OC1: Improve the quality of life for the areas of highest need</b></li> <li>• <b>OC2: Children &amp; Young People</b></li> <li>• <b>OC3: Older people</b></li> </ul>
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<b>Key Objective: OC1</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Improve the quality of life for the areas of highest need	✓	<b>Basket of Indicators as per Areas of Highest Need Proposal</b>		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Exit strategy for The Trunk		Mar 2012		Angie Heighway
• Continued performance management of the Trunk contract		Ongoing		Angie Heighway
• Support for Stronger Communities Theme Group		Ongoing		Hugh Bennett

Page 406

<b>Key Objective: OC2</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Children & Young People	✓	<b>% of Children &amp; Young People's Plan delivered / on target at year end</b>  <b>Number of locally delivered diversionary sessions</b>  <b>Numbers of users attending diversionary activities</b>		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Support Children & Young People's Theme Group		Ongoing		John Godwin

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolve young people's engagement as part of new Children &amp; Young People's Partnership Arrangements</li> </ul>	Sep 2011		Hugh Bennett
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Key Objective: OC3	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators		
Older people	✓	Number of people attending 'Age Well' scheme Number of over 60s swimming usage		
Key Actions		Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ageing Well</li> </ul>		Mar 2012		John Godwin

<b>PRIORITY AREA:</b>	<b>Key Outcomes:</b>
<b>Housing (H)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H1: Home Improvement Agency</li> <li>• H2: Implement Countywide Housing Strategy Action Plan</li> <li>• H3: Homelessness</li> </ul>

<b>Key Objective: H1</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Home Improvement Agency	✓	Time taken to complete Category 1, 2 & 3 priority Disabled Facilities Grants		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Evaluation of year 1 performance		Jun 2011		Angie Heighway
• Specification and tendering		Feb 2012		Angie Heighway
• Evaluation and appointment		Jun 2012		Angie Heighway

Page 408

<b>Key Objective: H1</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
Implement Countywide Housing Strategy Action Plan	✓	Net additional homes provided Number of affordable homes delivered Processing of planning applications (minor, major, other)		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
• Develop & implement local action plan		Jul 2011		Angie Heighway
• Gap analysis, review & evaluate		Mar 2012		Angie Heighway

• Delivery of 80 affordable housing units	Mar 2012	Angie Heighway
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Key Objective: H1	Community Strategy Impact?	Key Performance Indicators		
Homelessness	✓	Number of households living in temporary accommodation		
Key Actions		Timescales	Resources Additional to Base Budget	Lead Officer
• In conjunction with BDHT, review protocols and procedures relating to the homelessness service		March 2012		Angie Heighway
• Action plan of support measures to help improve the Housing Options Service		March 2012		Angie Heighway

<b>PRIORITY AREA:</b>  <b>Climate Change (CC)</b>	<b>Key Outcomes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>CC1: To reduce CO2 emissions</b></li> </ul>
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<b>Key Objective: CC1</b>	<b>Community Strategy Impact?</b>	<b>Key Performance Indicators</b>		
To reduce CO2 emissions	✓	To reduce CO2 emissions from local authority operations Per capita emissions in the District		
<b>Key Actions</b>		<b>Timescales</b>	<b>Resources Additional to Base Budget</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
Installation of Solar panels		Mar 2012	£20,000	Hugh Bennett
Annual review of the Climate Change Strategy		Dec 2011		Hugh Bennett
Improving the energy efficiency of buildings		Mar 2012	Interest free Salix loan of £37,000	Hugh Bennett

## 9. Risk Management

In setting out our plans for the District we recognise, as a well managed organisation, that there are a number of risks that may impact on the Council achieving all we have set out in this Council Plan. We will monitor these risks and take mitigating actions, where practicable, to minimise the impact on the Council, but some risks are unavoidable.

The key risks are related to:

- Economic changes creating additional pressures on services and resources.
- The ability to deliver services when resources are restricted or systems fail.
- That service improvements do not result in positive changes for the community.
- The delivery of resilience and efficiencies through partnership working.
- That advances in technology are not utilised to deliver efficiencies and improvements for the customer.
- Managing performance to ensure that the right things are delivered, in the right way, for the right people.

The Council's Risk Management Policy requires effective management of all risks. The Policy relates to all risks both at strategic and service level. The Council will monitor progress on the action plans developed to manage all existing and emerging high level risks.

## 10. Community Engagement (including Equalities)

At the Council, we have a strong commitment to engaging with our communities and to making sure that we communicate with them on issues that are important to the District. We work to ensure that all voices have a chance to be heard.

We have a well established Equality and Diversity Forum, whose membership reflects a diverse cross section of our community and has been very active in both its engagement with the Council and its contribution to projects such as BURT (Bromsgrove Urban Rural Transport) and the town centre toilets. The Forum has also played a key role in Community Consultation Conferences we have held over recent years and members of the Forum have had the chance to bid for funding for relevant projects, with successful bids helping to launch several worthwhile projects and events. We are also proud to have reached the 'Achieving' level under the Equalities Framework for Local Government. As part of the shared services restructure, an Equalities post will be retained by Bromsgrove District Council and shared with Redditch Borough Council.

The opinions of residents are key to our decision making processes, with public consultation being fed through to management and political leadership of the Council. We also hold an annual Budget Jury, where a group of residents consider the issues that are affecting the district, the work that the Council does and what priorities should be for the following year. They return a few months later to look at proposals for spending and savings, mirroring the process that the elected Members go through, with their opinions

being an important point of reference when the Members make the actual decisions about the budget. The process received coverage on BBC Midlands Today in 2010, further raising the profile of the role of our residents in local decision making.

Last year we coordinated a 'U Decide' event, in partnership with Worcestershire County Council, which saw groups of young people presenting projects to a room full of their peers, who then voted as to which groups they felt most deserved funding. We hope to look at how we engage with young people over the next 12 months, building on activities and engagement undertaken during our 'Democracy Week' in March 2011.

We will be developing a joint Community Engagement Strategy and Toolkit for Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils during 2011, which will inform how we engage with communities and provide guidance for officers across all departments.



**U Decide 2010**



## 11. Budget and Value for Money

The Council has set a balanced budget with a zero increase in Council Tax for 2011/12. This year's budget deliberations have been particularly difficult due to the Budget Settlement from Central Government. The Council's Revenue Support Grant from Central Government will fall by 27.7% over the next two years. These are challenging times for the Council; however, the Council is well placed to respond to this reduction. With a Single Management Team across both Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, the Council is further advanced than most councils on its shared services agenda. A number of services are already being shared, for example, Community Safety, Elections, Payroll, ICT and we are also the host for Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

The Council's approach to delivering the required level of savings is seven fold:-

1. To bring forward the remaining shared services programme with the bulk of services being shared by the 31 March 2012;
2. Undertake more fundamental transformation work using a technique called systems thinking;
3. Pay restraint, for example, there will be no pay rise for staff in 2011/12 and through the harmonisation of terms of conditions across both councils we are proposing to reduce car mileage rates and end essential car user allowances;
4. Continue to focus on good procurement in order to drive out the maximum value from all contracts;
5. Continue to challenge and review all budgets down to a line by line by line level, including careful consideration of the need for various reserves and carry forwards;
6. Use of reserves; and
7. Additional income, where this is possible, for example, the New Homes Bonus.

The table overleaf sets out the planned savings as per the Medium Term Financial Plan.

## SAVINGS PROPOSED 2011/12 - 2013/14

Description	Department	2011/12 £'000	2012/13 £'000	2012/13 £'000
Vacant post within service - aim to absorb current workload and to address as part of shared service proposals	Legal & Democratic Services	-36	-36	-36
Release of budgets relating to Equality and Diversity Bids to be reallocated in high bids.	Legal & Democratic Services	-9	-10	-10
Increase income target to level generated in relation to Garden Waste collection	Environmental Services	-110	-110	-110
Environmental Services Review - savings realised	Environmental Services	-13	-13	-13
Trade Waste income received	Environmental Services	-10	-10	-10
Additional Income from County for running costs of the Customer Service Centre	Customer Services	-4	-4	-4
Renegotiate Strand Contract	Business Transformation	-13	-12	-12
Phone System Savings - call costs reduced	Business Transformation	-10	-10	-10
IT licences budget - to partially offset costs of MS office high bid	Business Transformation	-46	-46	-46
Savings from reducing car mileage rate to 40p - proposals under consultation	Council Wide	-18	-18	-18
Savings from withdrawing essential car user allowance - proposals under consultation	Council Wide	-89	-89	-89
Savings to be realised from Shared Services/ Transformation and efficiencies	Council Wide	-266	-934	-1,270
Improved procurement opportunities	Council Wide	-50	-50	-50
Reduction in Together Bromsgrove by one edition (£5k ) and misc saving (£20k)	Policy, Performance & Partnerships	-25	-25	-25
Reduction in budgets allocated to the museum on the basis that it is sold in 2011/12	Leisure & Cultural Services	0	-10	-10
Victoria Ground Rent from current occupiers	Leisure & Cultural Services	-12	-12	-12
Sanders Park Pavilion Rent	Leisure & Cultural Services	-12	-12	-12
Allotments - increase income target to meet realistic level	Leisure & Cultural Services	-4	-4	-4
Various income generated - increase target to meet realistic level	Leisure & Cultural Services	-9	-9	-9
Market Income - additional income received	Planning & Regeneration	-10	-10	-10
Development Control - pre application fees now charged	Planning & Regeneration	-8	-8	-8
George House rental Income (lease ending April 2012)	Finance & Resources	-45	0	0
Revenues - court cost recovery (net)	Finance & Resources	-28	-28	-28
Additional Benefits Admin Grant income for 11/12	Finance & Resources	-48	0	0
<b>TOTAL SAVINGS</b>		<b>-873</b>	<b>-1,458</b>	<b>-1,794</b>

## 12. Glossary

Term	Definition
Building Pride	The Council's transformation programme designed to make Bromsgrove District Council an excellent local authority.
Corporate Management Team (CMT)	The Council's officer management team made up of the Chief Executive, three Executive Directors, one Director and eight Heads of Service (plus Head of Housing Services for Redditch Borough Council only and Head of Regulatory Services for Worcestershire)
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	A family of partnerships and organisations that is working to a common aim - to improve the quality of life in the District and deliver the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)	A three year budget for the Council's expenditure and income, linked to the Council's objectives and priorities.
Objectives	The broad goals for the Council, within which priorities are set.
Performance Development Review	A formal meeting between a member of staff and their line manager to review past work and agree future work, setting standards and targets.
Performance indicators	Yardsticks used to assess our achievements.
Performance Management Framework	Sets out the processes by which Elected Members, Officers and residents can monitor how the Council is performing.
Priorities	The six areas identified by Elected Members and Officers where we wish to make significant improvement in how we perform.
Service Business Plans	One year plans that set out what each department intends to deliver over the coming year.
Shared Services	Joint teams with Redditch Borough Council, which deliver services to residents across both council areas more effectively
Sustainable Community Strategy	A long-term vision for the District as a whole. The Strategy co-ordinates the actions of public, private and community organisations in meeting the needs and priorities of local communities. Under the Local Government Act 2000, all local authorities are required to work in partnership with the community, business, voluntary sector and other public sector partners to develop a long-term strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local communities.
Target(s)	A fixed goal or objective which results in improvements.
Transformation	A fundamental look at our processes and how we can change them to deliver more efficient and effective services to our customers.
Values	The fundamental principles that guide the way we work.
Vision	The ideal of how we would like the District and the Council to be in the future.
Worcestershire Enhanced Two Tier (WETT)	A county-wide one project which looks at services across Worcestershire and how, if at all, these can be shared or work better in partnership, particularly across the tiers of Local Government. Worcestershire Regulatory Services is an example of a WETT project, hosted by Bromsgrove and Redditch.

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**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

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

## **Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 Policy**



# Contents

Introduction.....	4
What are the origins of RIPA?.....	5
When does RIPA apply and who does it apply to?.....	6
European Convention on Human Rights .....	6
Definition of core functions .....	6
Private information .....	7
What happens if RIPA is ignored?.....	7
Surveillance outside of RIPA.....	7
What is surveillance? .....	8
Surveillance.....	8
Covert surveillance .....	8
Directed surveillance .....	8
Immediate response to events .....	9
Recording of telephone conversations .....	9
Intrusive surveillance:.....	9
Commercial premises and vehicles.....	9
Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS) .....	9
Conduct and use of a source .....	10
Management of sources .....	10
Tasking.....	11
Management responsibility.....	11
Security and welfare .....	11
Record management for CHIS.....	12
RIPA application and authorisation process.....	13
Application, review, renewal and cancellation forms.....	13
Applications .....	13
Duration of applications.....	13
Reviews.....	14
Renewal.....	14
Cancellation .....	14
Who can grant a RIPA authorisation? .....	15
Urgent oral authorisations.....	15
Local sensitivities.....	16
Authorising officers' responsibility .....	16
Necessity and proportionality .....	17
Collateral intrusion.....	18
Unexpected interference with third parties.....	18
Confidential information.....	18
Use of CCTV .....	19
Joint agency surveillance .....	20
Documentation and central record .....	20
Annual report to office of surveillance commissioners .....	22
Storage and retention of material .....	22
Training.....	23
Oversight.....	23
Reporting to members.....	23
Scrutiny and tribunal.....	23
Appendix 1.....	25

Appendix 2.....	27
Appendix 3.....	28

## Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to explain the scope of Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 and the circumstances where it applies to the Council. It provides guidance on the authorisation procedures to be followed in the event that you need to undertake surveillance, setting it into context so that its importance may be appreciated.

In preparing this policy the Council has followed the Revised Codes of Practice (April 2010) produced by the Home Office. It has also gained significantly from the advice and support provided by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners.

The subject covered by this policy is complicated but of major importance. It is likely that you may have questions which will not be answered explicitly by the content of this document and these should be referred to the Head of Legal and Democratic Services for assistance.

If having read this document you are unclear about any aspect of the process, seek the advice of an Authorising Officer or the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

However, if having taken advice doubt exists as to whether the circumstances require an authorisation for consideration under this legislation, you should submit an application form to be authorised. This will demonstrate to any examining body that Bromsgrove District Council has taken its responsibilities seriously with regards to the protection of a person's privacy against the need for the activity to take place in operational terms. If you do not secure an authorisation it leaves any evidence gathered open to challenge under section 78 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act as well as challenges for breach of privacy against the Council.

To assist with oversight of the Council's RIPA processes it has appointed Jayne Pickering (Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources) as the Senior Responsible Officer who will be responsible for the integrity of the process. However it must be stressed that all staff involved in the process must take their responsibilities seriously which will assist with the integrity of the Councils processes and procedures.

Claire Felton  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services  
Bromsgrove District Council  
November 2007

Updated March 2011



## What are the origins of RIPA?

The Human Rights Act 1998 brought into UK law many of the provisions of the 1950 European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. Article 8 requires the Council to have respect for people's private and family lives, their homes, and their correspondence. These subjects can be referred to as "Article 8 rights".

The Human Rights Act makes it unlawful for any local authority to act in a way which is incompatible with the European Convention on Human Rights. However these are not absolute rights and are qualified by the ability of the Council to interfere with a person's Article 8 rights if:-

Such interference is in accordance with the law

- is **necessary**
- and is **proportionate**

These three points are clarified further in the next paragraphs.

When we talk of interference being "in accordance with the law", this means that any such interference is undertaken in accordance with the mechanism set down by the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act (RIPA for short) and the Home Office Covert Surveillance Codes of Practice. The Codes of Practice deals with the use of Covert Surveillance and the use of persons such as informants and Undercover Officers who gather information in a covert capacity (Covert Human Intelligence Source or CHIS for short – refer to Page 9).

However a considerable amount of observations are carried out in an overt capacity by Council employees carrying out their normal functions such as parking enforcement, general patrolling etc. These activities are general and routine and do not involve the systematic surveillance of an individual. RIPA is not designed to prevent these activities or regulate them.

RIPA also applies to the Accessing of Communications Data under Part 1, Chapter 2 of the legislation. The Council has produced separate guidance dealing with the accessing of communications data under the SPOC (Single Point of Contact) provisions.

The Council has numerous statutory duties and powers to investigate the activities of private individuals and organisations within its jurisdiction for the benefit and protection of the greater public. Some of these investigations may require surveillance or the use of a CHIS. These may include

- benefit fraud
- environmental health
- housing
- planning
- criminal investigations by audit such as fraud offences

RIPA aims to provide a framework to control and supervise covert activities such as surveillance and the use of a CHIS in these criminal investigations. It aims to balance the need to protect the privacy of individuals against the need to protect others by the Council complying with its enforcement functions. There are two separate codes of practice, Covert Surveillance and CHIS.

Any covert activity carried out under this legislation must meet the test of necessity and proportionality. These are dealt with on page 18 of this policy.

## **When does RIPA apply and who does it apply to?**

RIPA applies to Public Authorities such as Local Authorities and permits them to conduct Covert Surveillance activities and use Covert Human Intelligence Sources (CHIS) such as informants and undercover officers (see page 7 and 9) for the **prevention and detection of crime or of preventing disorder**. This is the only lawful reason for Local Authorities to conduct activity falling under RIPA. As a local authority Bromsgrove District Council and its staff have a responsibility to adhere to the RIPA legislation and the Human Rights Act.

In addition to applying to all staff employed by the Council who are engaged in activities that involve the protection and detection of crime or preventing disorder, the BDC policy will also apply to the following categories of staff:-

- Contract or agency staff working at Bromsgrove District Council undertaking such activity as is covered by the revised Codes of Conduct.
- From 01 June 2010 all staff whose employment will transfer to Bromsgrove District Council as part of the WETT Regulatory Service.
- All staff employed by Redditch Borough Council but whose duties include performing services for Bromsgrove District Council under any secondment arrangements or under section 113 of the Local Government Act 1972.

## ***European Convention on Human Rights***

The RIPA Codes of Practice state where there is an interference by a public authority with the right to respect for private and family life guaranteed under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights, and where there is no other source of lawful authority, the consequence of not obtaining an authorisation under the 2000 Act may be that the action is unlawful by virtue of section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Public authorities are therefore strongly recommended to seek an authorisation under RIPA where the surveillance is likely to interfere with a person's Article 8 rights to privacy by obtaining private information about that person, whether or not that person is the subject of the investigation or operation. Obtaining an authorisation will ensure that the action is carried out in accordance with law and subject to stringent safeguards against abuse.

## ***Definition of core functions***

Recent case law has established that a public authority may only use the powers under the 2000 Act when in performance of its core functions. These are defined by section 28(3) of the 2000 Act. It has been held that disciplinary investigations are ordinary functions whereas the investigation of benefit fraud would be a core function. Using the RIPA application process when exercising core functions assists with protecting the Council from challenges. However, surveillance in the case of serious disciplinary issue would be outside of RIPA. Any type of

surveillance outside of RIPA should still meet the same tests of necessity and proportionality and advice should be sought from Legal Services prior to any such surveillance taking place.

### ***Private information***

Private information includes any information relating to a person's private or family life. Private information should be taken generally to include any aspect of a person's private or personal relationship with others, including family and professional or business relationships.

Whilst a person may have a reduced expectation of privacy when in a public place, covert surveillance of that person's activities in public may still result in the obtaining of *private information*. This is likely to be the case where that person has a reasonable expectation of privacy even though acting in public and where a record is being made by a *public authority* of that person's activities for future consideration or analysis.

Private life considerations are particularly likely to arise if several records are to be analysed together in order to establish, for example, a pattern of behaviour, or if one or more pieces of information (whether or not available in the public domain) are covertly (or in some cases overtly) obtained for the purpose of making a permanent record about a person or for subsequent data processing to generate further information. In such circumstances, the totality of information gleaned may constitute *private information* even if individual records do not. Where such conduct includes surveillance, a directed surveillance *authorisation* may be considered appropriate.

If you need to conduct surveillance or use a CHIS as part of investigating a criminal matter which might result in court proceedings or proceedings before some other form of tribunal, you should consider whether Private Information is likely to be gained as a result of the activities and whether RIPA applies.

### ***What happens if RIPA is ignored?***

If Investigators undertake covert activity to which this legislation applies without the relevant authority being obtained and the case progressed to criminal proceedings the defence may challenge the validity of the way in which the evidence was obtained under Section 78 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984. Should the evidence then be disallowed by a court, the prosecution case may be lost with a financial cost to the Council.

The person who was the subject of your surveillance may complain to the Ombudsman who may order the Council to pay compensation. The activity may also be challenged through the civil courts under the Human Rights Act 2000 for breach of privacy.

A properly obtained and implemented authorisation under RIPA will provide the Council with lawful authority to interfere with the rights of the individual. It is not simply enough that an authorisation for surveillance is obtained. It must be properly obtained, implemented, managed, reviewed and cancelled.

### ***Surveillance outside of RIPA***

As explained earlier there may be a necessity for the Council to undertake surveillance which does not meet the criteria to use the RIPA legislation such as in cases of serious disciplinary investigations. The Council still must meet its obligations under the Human Rights Act and therefore any surveillance outside of RIPA must still be necessary and proportionate having taken account of the intrusion issues. The decision making process and the management of

such surveillance must be well documented. Therefore before any such surveillance takes place advice must be sought from the Head of Legal Services or the Senior Solicitor.

## **What is surveillance?**

### ***Surveillance***

Surveillance is defined in paragraph 1.9 of the Revised Codes of Practice as:

Surveillance, for the purpose of the 2000 Act, includes monitoring, observing or listening to persons, their movements, conversations or other activities and communications. It may be conducted with or without the assistance of a surveillance device and includes the recording of any information obtained

### ***Covert surveillance***

Covert Surveillance is defined in paragraph 1.10 of the Revised Codes of Practice as:

Surveillance is covert if, and only if, it is carried out in a manner calculated to ensure that any persons who are subject to the surveillance are unaware that it is or may be taking place.

If activities are open and not hidden from the persons subject to surveillance such as Officers conducting Council business openly, e.g. a market inspector walking through markets, the RIPA framework does not apply because that is "Overt Surveillance". Equally, if you tell the subject that surveillance will be taking place, the surveillance is overt. This would happen, for example, where you warn a noisemaker that noise will be recorded if it continues. RIPA does not regulate Overt Surveillance.

RIPA regulates two types of Covert Surveillance which are

- **Directed Surveillance**
- **Intrusive Surveillance**

### ***Directed surveillance***

Directed Surveillance is defined in paragraph 2.2. of the Revised Codes of Practice as:

Surveillance is directed surveillance if the following are all true:

- it is covert, but not intrusive surveillance;
- it is conducted for the purposes of a specific investigation or operation;
- it is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about a person (whether or not one specifically identified for the purposes of the investigation or operation);
- it is conducted otherwise than by way of an immediate response to events or circumstances the nature of which is such that it would not be reasonably practicable for an authorisation under Part II of the 2000 Act to be sought.

Thus, the planned covert surveillance of a specific person, where not intrusive, would constitute directed surveillance if such surveillance is likely to result in the obtaining of private information about that, or any other person.

### ***Immediate response to events***

There may be occasions when officers come across events unfolding which were not pre-planned which then requires them to carry out some form of observation. This will not amount to Directed Surveillance. However the officer's objectives at that time will determine if they should then seek an urgent oral authority to continue to carry out the surveillance. Officers must not abuse the process and be prepared to explain their decisions in court should it be necessary. Therefore they should document their decisions, what took place, what evidence or information was obtained.

### ***Recording of telephone conversations***

The recording of telephone conversations connected to criminal investigations (outside of the Councils monitoring at work policy with its own equipment) falls under RIPA which provides that where one party to the communication consents to the interception, it may be authorised in accordance with section 48(4) of the 2000 Act. In such cases, the interception is treated as directed surveillance.

There may be occasions where this is required such as a witness who has text or voicemail evidence on their mobile telephone and we require to examine the phone.

### ***Intrusive surveillance:***

Intrusive surveillance is defined in section 26(3) of the 2000 Act as covert surveillance that:

- is carried out in relation to anything taking place on any residential premises or in any private vehicle; and
- involves the presence of an individual on the premises or in the vehicle or is carried out by means of a surveillance device.

Where surveillance is carried out in relation to anything taking place on any residential premises or in any private vehicle by means of a device, without that device being present on the premises, or in the vehicle, it is not intrusive unless the device consistently provides information of the same quality and detail as might be expected to be obtained from a device actually present on the premises or in the vehicle. Thus, an observation post outside premises, which provides a limited view and no sound of what is happening inside the premises, would not be considered as intrusive surveillance.

A risk assessment of the capability of equipment being used on residential premises and private vehicles should be carried out to ensure that it does not fall into Directed Surveillance.

### ***Commercial premises and vehicles***

Commercial premises and vehicles are therefore excluded from the definition of intrusive surveillance. However they are dealt with under the heading of Property Interference contained within the Police Act 1997.

Bromsgrove District Council has no authority in law to carry out Intrusive Surveillance or activity under the Police Act 1997.

### ***Covert Human Intelligence Source (CHIS)***

A CHIS could be an informant or an undercover officer carrying out covert enquiries on behalf of the council. However the provisions of the 2000 Act are not intended to apply in circumstances where members of the public volunteer information to the Council as part of

their normal civic duties, or to contact numbers set up to receive information such as the Benefit Fraud Hot Line. Members of the public acting in this way would not generally be regarded as sources.

Under section 26(8) of the 2000 Act a person is a source if:

he establishes or maintains a personal or other relationship with a person for the covert purpose of facilitating the doing of anything falling within paragraph (b) or (c);

he covertly uses such a relationship to obtain information or to provide access to any information to another person; or

he covertly discloses information obtained by the use of such a relationship or as a consequence of the existence of such a relationship.

By virtue of section 26(9)(b) of the 2000 Act a purpose is covert, in relation to the establishment or maintenance of a personal or other relationship, if and only if, the relationship is conducted in a manner that is calculated to ensure that one of the parties to the relationship is unaware of the purpose.

By virtue of section 26(9)(c) of the 2000 Act a relationship is used covertly, and information obtained as above is disclosed covertly, if and only if it is used or, as the case may be, disclosed in a manner that is calculated to ensure that one of the parties to the relationship is unaware of the use or disclosure in question.

### ***Conduct and use of a source***

The **use of a source** involves inducing, asking or assisting a person to engage in the conduct of a source or to obtain information by means of the conduct of such a source.

The **conduct of a source** is any conduct falling within section 29(4) of the 2000 Act, or which is incidental to anything falling within section 29(4) of the 2000 Act.

The **use of a source** is what the Authority does in connection with the source and the **conduct** is what a source does to fulfill whatever tasks are given to them or which is incidental to it. **The Use and Conduct require separate consideration before authorisation.**

When completing applications for the use of a CHIS you are stating who the CHIS is, what they can do and for which purpose

When determining whether a CHIS authorisation is required consideration should be given to the covert relationship between the parties and the purposes mentioned in a, b, and c above.

### ***Management of sources***

Within the provisions there has to be;

- (a) a person who has the day to day responsibility for dealing with the source and for the source's security and welfare (**Handler**)
- (b) at all times there will be another person who will have general oversight of the use made of the source (**Controller**)

at all times there will be a person who will have responsibility for maintaining a record of the use made of the source

The **Handler** will have day to day responsibility for:

- dealing with the source on behalf of the authority concerned;
- directing the day to day activities of the source;
- recording the information supplied by the source; and
- monitoring the source's security and welfare;

The Controller will be responsible for the general oversight of the use of the source.

### ***Tasking***

Tasking is the assignment given to the source by the Handler or Controller by, asking him to obtain information, to provide access to information or to otherwise act, incidentally, for the benefit of the relevant public authority. Authorisation for the use or conduct of a source is required prior to any tasking where such tasking requires the source to establish or maintain a personal or other relationship for a covert purpose.

In some instances, the tasking given to a person will not require the source to establish a personal or other relationship for a covert purpose. For example a source may be tasked with finding out purely factual information about the layout of commercial premises. Alternatively, a Council Officer may be involved in the test purchase of items which have been labelled misleadingly or are unfit for consumption. In such cases, it is for the Council to determine where, and in what circumstances, such activity may require authorisation.

**Should a CHIS authority be required all of the staff involved in the process should make themselves fully aware of all of the aspects relating to tasking contained within the CHIS codes of Practice**

### ***Management responsibility***

Bromsgrove District Council will ensure that arrangements are in place for the proper oversight and management of sources including appointing a Handler and Controller for each source prior to a CHIS authorisation.

The Handler of the source will usually be of a rank or position below that of the Authorising Officer.

It is envisaged that the use of a CHIS will be infrequent. Should a CHIS application be necessary the CHIS Codes of Practice should be consulted to ensure that the Council can meet its management responsibilities.

### ***Security and welfare***

The Council has a responsibility for the safety and welfare of the source and for the consequences to others of any tasks given to the source. Before authorising the use or conduct of a source, the Authorising Officer should ensure that a risk assessment is carried out to determine the risk to the source of any tasking and the likely consequences should the role of the source become known. The ongoing security and welfare of the source, after the cancellation of the authorisation, should also be considered at the outset.

## ***Record management for CHIS***

Proper records must be kept of the authorisation and use of a source. The particulars to be contained within the records are;

- a. the identity of the source;
- b. the identity, where known, used by the source;
- c. any relevant investigating authority other than the authority maintaining the records;
- d. the means by which the source is referred to within each relevant investigating authority;
- e. any other significant information connected with the security and welfare of the source;
- f. any confirmation made by a person granting or renewing an authorisation for the conduct or use of a source that the information in paragraph (d) has been considered and that any identified risks to the security and welfare of the source have where appropriate been properly explained to and understood by the source;
- g. the date when, and the circumstances in which, the source was recruited;
- h. the identities of the persons who, in relation to the source, are discharging or have discharged the functions mentioned in section 29(5)(a) to (c) of the 2000 Act or in any order made by the Secretary of State under section 29(2)(c);
- i. the periods during which those persons have discharged those responsibilities;
- j. the tasks given to the source and the demands made of him in relation to his activities as a source;
- k. all contacts or communications between the source and a person acting on behalf of any relevant investigating authority;
- l. the information obtained by each relevant investigating authority by the conduct or use of the source;
- m. any dissemination by that authority of information obtained in that way; and
- n. in the case of a source who is not an undercover operative, every payment, benefit or reward and every offer of a payment, benefit or reward that is made or provided by or on behalf of any relevant investigating authority in respect of the source's activities for the benefit of that or any other relevant investigating authority.

Please refer to the section headed "Documentation and Central Record" (page 20) for further information regarding the holding of records relating to CHIS sources/ authorisations by the Information Management Team.



## **RIPA application and authorisation process**

### ***Application, review, renewal and cancellation forms***

No covert activity covered by RIPA should be undertaken at any time unless it has been authorised by an Authorised Officer and the appropriate forms completed at the appropriate time.

All the relevant forms for authorisation through to cancellation must be in writing using the standard forms which are available from the Intranet site and the Information Management Team, but officers must ensure that the circumstances of each case are accurately recorded on the application form (see Application Process).

If it is intended to undertake both directed surveillance and the use of a CHIS on the same surveillance subject the respective applications forms and procedures should be followed and both activities should be considered separately on their own merits.

An application for an authorisation must include an assessment of the risk of any collateral intrusion or interference (see collateral intrusion on page 18). The Authorising Officer will take this into account, particularly when considering the proportionality of the directed surveillance or the use of a CHIS.

### ***Applications***

All the relevant sections on an application form must be completed with sufficient information for the Authorising Officer to consider Necessity, Proportionality and the Collateral Intrusion issues. Risk assessments should take place prior to the completion of the application form. Each application should be completed on its own merits of the case. **Cutting and pasting or using template entries should not take place as this would leave the process open to challenge.**

All applications will be submitted to the Authorising Officer via the Line Manager of the appropriate enforcement team, and for WETT service through the Head of Service, in order that they are aware of the activities being undertaken by the staff. The Line Manager will perform an initial quality check of the application. However they should not be involved in the sanctioning of the authorisation. Completed application forms are to be initialed by Line Managers to show that the quality check has been completed.

Applications whether authorised or refused will be issued with a unique number by the Authorising Officer, taken from the next available number in the Central Record of Authorisations. To obtain this number please contact Information Management Team on 01527 881654.

### ***Duration of applications***

<b>Directed Surveillance</b>	3 Months
Urgent Oral Authority	72 Hours
Renewal	3 Months
<b>Covert Human Intelligence Source</b>	12 Months
Juvenile Sources	1 Month
Urgent Oral Authority	72 Hours

Renewal

12 months

**All Authorisations must be cancelled by completing a cancellation form. They must not be left to simply expire (see cancellations page 15).**

### ***Reviews***

Regular reviews of authorisations should be undertaken to assess the need for the surveillance to continue. The results of a review should be recorded on the central record of authorisations. Particular attention is drawn to the need to review authorisations frequently where the surveillance provides access to confidential information or involves collateral intrusion.

In each case the Authorising Officer should determine how often a review should take place. This should be as frequently as is considered necessary and practicable and they will record when they are to take place on the application form. This decision will be based on the circumstances of each application. However reviews will be conducted on a monthly or less basis to ensure that the activity is managed. It will be important for the Authorising Officer to be aware of when reviews are required following an authorisation to ensure that the applicants submit the review form on time.

Applicants should submit a review form by the review date set by the Authorising Officer. They should also use a review form for changes in circumstances to the original application so that the need to continue the activity can be reassessed. However if the circumstances or the objectives have changed considerably a new application form may be more appropriate. The applicant does not have to wait until the review date if it is being submitted for a change in circumstances.

Managers or Team Leaders of applicants should also make themselves aware of when the reviews are required to ensure that the relevant forms are completed on time.

### ***Renewal***

If at any time before an authorisation would cease to have effect, the Authorising Officer considers it necessary for the authorisation to continue for the purpose for which it was given, he may renew it in writing for a further period of three months. Renewals may also be granted orally in urgent cases and last for a period of seventy-two hours.

An application for renewal should not be made until shortly before the authorisation period is drawing to an end.

A renewal takes effect on the day on which the authorisation would have ceased.

Authorising Officers should examine the circumstances with regard to Necessity, Proportionality and the Collateral Intrusions issues before making a decision to renew the activity. A CHIS application should not be renewed unless a thorough review has been carried out covering the use made of the source, the tasks given to them and information obtained. The Authorising Officer must consider the results of the review when deciding whether to renew or not. The review and the consideration must be documented.

### ***Cancellation***

The cancellation form is to be submitted by the applicant or another investigator in their absence. The Authorising Officer who granted or last renewed the authorisation must cancel it

if they are satisfied that the directed surveillance no longer meets the criteria upon which it was authorised. Where the Authorising Officer is no longer available, this duty will fall on the person who has taken over the role of Authorising Officer or the person who is acting as Authorising Officer

As soon as the decision is taken that directed surveillance should be discontinued, the applicant or other investigating officer involved in the investigation should inform the Authorising Officer. The Authorising Officer will formally instruct the investigating officer to cease the surveillance, noting the time and date of their decision. This will be required for the cancellation form. The date and time when such an instruction was given should also be recorded in the central record of authorisations (see paragraphs 2.14 - 2.15 in the Codes of Practice). **It will also be necessary to detail the amount of time spent on the surveillance as this is required to be retained by the Information Management Team.**

The officer submitting the cancellation should complete in detail the relevant sections of the form and include the period of surveillance and what if any images were obtained and any images containing third parties. The Authorising Officer should then take this into account and issue instructions regarding the management and disposal of the images etc.

The cancellation process should also be used to evaluate whether the objectives have been achieved and whether the applicant carried out what they stated was necessary in the application form. This check will form part of the oversight function. Where issues are identified they will be brought to the attention of the line manager and the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO). This will assist with future audits and oversight.

## **Who can grant a RIPA authorisation?**

Officers who are designated "Authorising Officers" may authorise the use of directed surveillance or the use of a CHIS whether on a written application or under the urgency oral procedures.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for the list of Authorising Officers, to show name, departmental details, contact number and levels of Authority.

The Chief Executive Officer or in his absence the Deputy Chief Executive and Executive Director - Leisure, Environment & Community Services will authorise cases where confidential information is likely to be gathered or in the case of a juvenile or vulnerable CHIS.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services will inform the Information Management Team of any changes to the list of Authorising Officers and will amend the policy accordingly. The intranet will also be updated appropriately.

### ***Urgent oral authorisations***

Urgent authorisations should not normally be necessary, but a verbal authorisation can be given if the time which would elapse before written authorisation can be granted would be likely to endanger life or jeopardise the investigation.

An authorisation is not to be regarded as urgent where the need for an authorisation has been neglected or the urgency is of the Authorising Officer's own making.

It will not be a case of urgency where you have simply forgotten about the requirement for authorisation.

An urgent oral authorisation may be granted by Authorising Officers designated for the purpose (see Appendix 1) and if authorized will last for 72 hours.

In such cases, a statement that the Authorising Officer has expressly authorised the action should be recorded in writing by both the Authorising Officer and applicant as soon as is reasonably practicable. Contemporaneous notes of the oral authorisation regarding the circumstances of the case, necessity, proportionality taking account of collateral intrusion should be recorded together with exactly what has been authorised. This effectively would be the same as what would be recorded in an application as the authorisation process must still be able to withstand scrutiny. There is no requirement to then subsequently complete an authorisation form.

A copy of both the applicant's and Authorising Officer's notes should be forwarded to the central register.

Urgent authorisations must be renewed or cancelled following the normal procedure.

### ***Local sensitivities***

Authorising Officers and Applicants should be aware of particular sensitivities in the local community where the directed surveillance is taking place, or of similar activities being undertaken by other public authorities which could impact on the deployment of surveillance. This should form part of the risk assessment.

It should be noted that although this is a requirement there is no provision made within the application form for this information. Therefore applicants should cover this area where they feel it is most appropriate such as when detailing the investigation or proportionality or within the separate risk assessment form. However it must be brought to the attention of the Authorising Officer when deciding whether to authorise the activity.

### **Authorising officers' responsibility**

Authorising officers should not be responsible for authorising investigations or operations in which they are directly involved, although it is recognised that this may sometimes be unavoidable such as where it is necessary to act urgently. Where an Authorising Officer authorises such an investigation or operation the Central Record of authorisations (see page 20) should highlight this and it should be brought to the attention of a Commissioner or Inspector should his next inspection.

Authorising Officers must treat each case individually on its merits and satisfy themselves that the authorisation is **necessary**, the surveillance is **proportionate** to what it seeks to achieve, taking into account the **collateral intrusion** issues, and that the level of the surveillance is appropriate to achieve the objectives. If any equipment such as covert cameras, video cameras are to be used the Authorising Officer should know the capability of the equipment before authorising its use. This will have an impact on collateral intrusion, necessity and proportionality. They should not rubber-stamp a request. It is important that they consider all the facts to justify their decision. They may be required to justify their actions in a court of law or some other tribunal.

Authorising Officers are responsible for determining when reviews of the activity are to take place. (see Reviews on page 14).

Before authorising surveillance the Authorising Officer should also take into account the risk of intrusion into the privacy of persons other than those who are directly the subjects of the investigation or operation (collateral intrusion). Measures should be taken, wherever practicable, to avoid or minimise unnecessary intrusion into the lives of those not directly connected with the investigation or operation.

In the absence of your particular Line Manager or Head of Department the application should be submitted to another Authorising Officer for authorisation. (see list of Authorising Officers - Appendix 1)

### ***Necessity and proportionality***

Obtaining a RIPA authorisation will only ensure that there is a justifiable interference with an individual's Article 8 rights if it is necessary and proportionate for these activities to take place. It must be necessary for the **prevention and detection of crime or of preventing disorder**. It must also be shown the reasons why the requested activity is necessary in the circumstances of that particular case. Can you achieve the same end result without the surveillance?

If similar objectives could be achieved by methods other than covert surveillance, then those methods should be used unless it can be justified why they can not be used.

Then, if the activities are **necessary**, the person granting the authorisation must believe that they are **proportionate** to what is sought to be achieved by carrying them out. This involves balancing the intrusiveness of the activity on the subject and others who might be affected by it against the need for the activity in operational terms. The activity will not be proportionate if it is excessive in the circumstances of the case or if the information which is sought could reasonably be obtained by other less intrusive means. All such activity should be carefully managed to meet the objective in question and must not be arbitrary or unfair. The interference with the person's right should be no greater than that which is required to meet the aim and objectives.

The onus is on the Authorising Officer to ensure that the surveillance meets the tests of **necessity and proportionality**.

The codes provide guidance relating to proportionality which should be considered by both applicants and Authorising Officers:

- balancing the size and scope of the proposed activity against the gravity and extent of the perceived crime or offence;
- explaining how and why the methods to be adopted will cause the least possible intrusion on the subject and others;
- considering whether the activity is an appropriate use of the legislation and a reasonable way, having considered all reasonable alternatives, of obtaining the necessary result;
- evidencing, as far as reasonably practicable, what other methods had been considered and why they were not implemented.

It is important that the staff involved in the surveillance and the Line Manager manage the enquiry and operation and evaluate constantly the need for the activity to continue.

## ***Collateral intrusion***

Collateral intrusion is an integral part of the decision making process and should be assessed and considered very carefully by both applicants and Authorising Officers.

The Revised Codes state Collateral Intrusion is intrusion into the privacy of persons other than those who are directly the subjects of the investigation or operation such as neighbours or other members of the subject's family. Where it is proposed to conduct surveillance activity specifically against individuals who are not suspected of direct or culpable involvement in the overall matter being investigated, interference with the privacy or property of such individuals should not be considered as collateral intrusion but rather as intended intrusion. Any such surveillance activity should be carefully considered against the necessity and proportionality criteria

Intended intrusion could occur if it was necessary to follow a person not committing any offences but by following this person it would lead you to the person who is committing the offences.

Where such collateral intrusion is unavoidable, the activities may still be authorised, provided this intrusion is considered proportionate to what is sought to be achieved. The same proportionality tests apply to the likelihood of collateral intrusion as to intrusion into the privacy of the intended subject of the surveillance.

Prior to and during any authorised RIPA activity, a risk assessment should take place to identify the likely intrusion into the subject and any collateral intrusion. Officers should take continuing precautions to minimise the intrusion where possible. The collateral intrusion, the reason why it is unavoidable and your precautions to minimise it will have to be detailed on any relevant application forms. This will be considered by the Authorising Officer.

Before authorising surveillance the Authorising Officer should take into account the risk of collateral intrusion detailed on the relevant application forms as it has a direct bearing on the decision regarding proportionality.

The possibility of Collateral Intrusion does not mean that the authorisation should not be granted, but you should weigh up the importance of the activity to be carried out in operational terms on the one hand and the risk of collateral intrusion on the other hand.

## ***Unexpected interference with third parties***

When you are carrying out covert directed surveillance or using a CHIS, you should inform the Authorising Officer if the investigation unexpectedly interferes with the privacy of individuals who are not the original subjects of the investigation or covered by the authorisation in some other way. It will be appropriate in some circumstances to submit a review form and in other cases the original authorisation may not be sufficient and consideration should be given to whether a separate authorisation is required.

## ***Confidential information***

Confidential information consists of matters subject to Legal Privilege, confidential personal information or confidential journalistic material and applications where there is a likelihood of acquiring such information can only be authorised by the Chief Executive or the Executive Director of Services.

No authorisation should be authorised if there is any likelihood of obtaining legally privileged material without consulting the Legal Section of the Council.

Confidential personal information is information held in confidence relating to the physical or mental health or spiritual counselling concerning an individual (whether living or dead) who can be identified from it. Such information, which can include both oral and written communications, is held in confidence if it is held subject to an express or implied undertaking to hold it in confidence or it is subject to a restriction on disclosure or an obligation of confidentiality contained in existing legislation. Examples might include consultations between a health professional and a patient, or information from a patient's medical records. Journalistic material is also mentioned in the codes however it is highly unlikely that this will be obtained. The definition should it be required can be obtained from the Codes of Practice at Chapter 4.

The following general principles apply to confidential material acquired under authorisations:

- Those handling material from such operations should be alert to anything which may fall within the definition of confidential material. Where there is doubt as to whether the material is confidential, advice should be sought from the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services before further dissemination takes place;
- Confidential material should not be retained or copied unless it is necessary for specified purpose;
- Confidential material should be disseminated only where an appropriate officer (having sought advice from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) is satisfied that it is necessary for a specific purpose;
- The retention or dissemination of such information should be accompanied by a clear warning of its confidential nature. It should be safeguarded by taking reasonable steps to ensure that there is no possibility of it becoming available, or its content being known, to any person whose possession of it might prejudice any criminal or civil proceedings related to the information;
- Confidential material should be destroyed as soon as it is no longer necessary to retain it for a specified purpose.

## **Use of CCTV**

The use of the CCTV systems operated by the Council do not normally fall under the RIPA regulations. However it does fall under the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Councils CCTV policy. However should there be a requirement for the CCTV cameras to be used for a specific purpose to conduct surveillance it is likely that the activity will fall under Directed Surveillance and therefore require an authorisation.

On the occasions when the CCTV cameras are to be used in a Directed Surveillance situation either by enforcement officers from relevant departments within the Council or outside Law Enforcement Agencies such as the Police, either the CCTV staff are to have a copy of the application form in a redacted format, or a copy of the authorisation page. If it is an urgent oral authority a copy of the applicants notes are to be retained or at least some other document in writing which confirms the authorisation and exactly what has been authorised. It is important that the staff check the authority and only carry out what is authorised. A copy of the

application or notes is also to be forwarded to the Information Management Team for filing. This will assist the Council to evaluate the authorisations and assist with oversight.

Operators of the Councils CCTV system need to be aware of the RIPA issues associated with using CCTV and that continued, prolonged systematic surveillance of an individual may require an authorisation.

## **Joint agency surveillance**

In cases where one agency is acting on behalf of another, it is usually for the tasking agency to obtain or provide the authorisation. For example, where surveillance is carried out by Council employees on behalf of the Police, authorisation would be sought by the police. If it is a joint operation involving both agencies the lead agency should seek authorisation.

Council staff involved with joint agency surveillance must ensure that all parties taking part are authorised on the authorisation page of the application to carry out the activity. When staff are operating on another organisations authorisation they are to ensure they see what activity they are authorised to carry out and make a written record. They should also inform the Information Management Team of the unique reference number, the agencies involved and the name of the officer in charge of the surveillance. This will assist with oversight of the use of Council staff carrying out these types of operations.

## **Documentation and central record**

Authorising Officers or Managers of relevant enforcement departments may keep whatever records they see fit to administer and manage the RIPA application process. However this will not replace the requirements under the Codes of Practice for the Council to hold a centrally held and retrievable record.

A centrally retrievable record of all authorisations will be held by the Information Management Team and regularly updated whenever an authorisation is refused, granted, renewed or cancelled. The record will be made available to the relevant Commissioner or an Inspector from the Office of Surveillance Commissioners, upon request.

All original surveillance Authorisation (whether authorised or refused), Review, Renewal and Cancellation documents will be forwarded to the Information Management Team in a sealed envelope for security purposes. The Information Management Team will be responsible for maintaining the Central Record of Authorisations and will ensure that all records are held securely with no unauthorised access. The only persons who will have access to these documents will be the Information Management Team, the Senior Responsible Officer and the RIPA Co-ordinating Officer. The Head of Service of the WETT Regulatory Service will have access to a "read only" copy of the Central Record of Authorisations.

**The contact number for the Information Management Team is 01527 881654**



The documents contained in the centrally held register should be retained for at least three years from the ending of the authorisation or for the period stipulated by the Council's document retention policy, whichever is greater. The centrally held register should contain the following information:

- if refused, that the application was not authorised and a brief explanation of the reason why. The refused application should be retained as part of the Central Record of Authorisation.
- if granted, the type of authorisation and the date the authorisation was given;
- name and rank/grade of the authorising officer;
- the unique reference number (URN) of the investigation or operation;
- the title of the investigation or operation, including a brief description and names of subjects, if known;
- whether the urgency provisions were used, and if so why.
- frequency and the result of each review of the authorisation;
- if the authorisation is renewed, when it was renewed and who authorised the renewal, including the name and rank/grade of the authorising officer;
- whether the investigation or operation is likely to result in obtaining confidential information as defined in this code of practice;
- the date the authorisation was cancelled.
- authorisations by an Authorising Officer in urgent cases where they are directly involved in the investigation or operation (see Authorising Officer Responsibility page 17.) If this has taken place it must be brought to the attention of a Commissioner or Inspector during their next RIPA inspection.
- the date and time when any instruction was given by the Authorising Officer.

As well as the Central Record the Information Management Team will also retain:

- the original of each application, review, renewal and cancellation together with any supplementary documentation of the approval given by the Authorising Officer
- a record of the period over which the surveillance has taken place;

**For CHIS applications the Codes state;**

In addition, records or copies of the following, as appropriate, should be kept by the relevant authority:

- the original authorisation form together with any supplementary documentation and notification of the approval given by the Authorising Officer;
- the original renewal of an authorisation, together with the supporting documentation submitted when the renewal was requested;
- the reason why the person renewing an authorisation considered it necessary to do so;

- any authorisation which was granted or renewed orally (in an urgent case) and the reason why the case was considered urgent;
- any risk assessment made in relation to the source;
- the circumstances in which tasks were given to the source;
- the value of the source to the investigating authority;
- a record of the results of any reviews of the authorisation;
- the reasons, if any, for not renewing an authorisation;
- the reasons for cancelling an authorisation.
- the date and time when any instruction was given by the Authorising Officer to cease using a source.

The records kept by public authorities should be maintained in such a way as to preserve the confidentiality of the source and the information provided by that source. There should, at all times, be a designated person within the relevant public authority who will have responsibility for maintaining a record of the use made of the source.

## **Annual report to office of surveillance commissioners**

The Council is required to provide statistics to The Office of Surveillance Commissioners every year in March for the purposes of the OSC Annual Report. The Information Manager shall be responsible for completing the return and providing the statistics.

## **Storage and retention of material**

All material obtained and associated with an application will be subject of the provisions of the Criminal Procedures Investigations Act 1996 (CPIA) Codes of Practice which state that relevant material in an investigation has to be recorded and retained and later disclosed to the prosecuting solicitor in certain circumstances. It is also likely that the material obtained as a result of a RIPA application will be classed as personal data for the purposes of the Data Protection Act. All officers involved within this process should make themselves aware of the provisions within this legislation and how it impacts on the whole RIPA process. Material obtained together with relevant associated paperwork should be held securely. Extra care needs to be taken if the application and material relates to a CHIS (see page 9 and 10)

Material is required to be retained under CPIA should be retained until a decision is taken whether to institute proceedings against a person for an offence or if proceedings have been instituted, at least until the accused is acquitted or convicted or the prosecutor decides not to proceed with the case.

Where the accused is convicted, all material which may be relevant must be retained at least until the convicted person is released from custody, or six months from the date of conviction, in all other cases.

If the court imposes a custodial sentence and the convicted person is released from custody earlier than six months from the date of conviction, all material which may be relevant must be retained at least until six months from the date of conviction.

Each relevant service within the Council may have its own provisions under their Data Retention Policy which will also need to be consulted to ensure that the data is retained lawfully and for as long as is necessary

## **Training**

There will be an ongoing training programme for Council Officers who will need to be aware of the impact and operating procedures with regards to this legislation. The training officer will be required to retain a list of all those officers who have received training and when the training was delivered.

Authorising Officers must have received formal RIPA training before being allowed to consider applications for surveillance and CHIS.

## **Oversight**

It is important that all staff involved in the RIPA application process take seriously their responsibilities. Careful management and adherence to this policy and procedures will assist with maintaining oversight and reduce unnecessary errors. A yearly audit of the process will be carried out to evaluate the use of RIPA.

### ***Senior Responsible Officer and RIPA co-ordinating officer***

Overall oversight within the Council will fall within the responsibilities of the Senior Responsible Officer (SRO) for the Council. The Senior Responsible Officer is Jayne Pickering - Executive Director (Finance and Corporate Resources). To assist the SRO with monitoring, ensuring the policy is kept up to date, liaising with the Office of Surveillance Commissioner and organising training for staff, Sarah Sellers (Senior Solicitor) has been identified as the RIPA the Co-ordinating Officer.

### ***Reporting to members***

Quarterly returns of all surveillance activity undertaken by Council staff including joint surveillance and Directed Surveillance using the CCTV system will be compiled by the Senior Responsible Officer and the RIPA Co-ordinating Officer and reported to the Portfolio Holder for Resources in line with the current advice in the Codes of Practice. It will be the role of the Portfolio Holder to report to the Cabinet any issues of concern arising out of the quarterly returns. Members will review the policy on a yearly basis to assess whether the activity undertaken is in line with this policy.

## **Scrutiny and tribunal**

Scrutiny will be provided by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner (OSC) The Surveillance Commissioner will periodically inspect the records and procedures of the Authority to ensure the appropriate authorisations have been given, reviewed, cancelled, and recorded properly.

It is the duty of any person who uses these powers to comply with any request made by a Commissioner to disclose or provide any information he requires for the purpose of enabling him to carry out his functions.

A tribunal has been established to consider and determine complaints made under RIPA if it is the appropriate forum. Persons aggrieved by conduct, e.g. directed surveillance, can make complaints. The forum hears application on a judicial review basis. Claims should be brought within one year unless it is just and equitable to extend that period.

Complaints can be addressed to the following address:

Investigatory Powers Tribunal

PO Box 33220

London

SW1 H9ZQ

# Appendix 1

## List of Authorising Officers and authorising levels

Name	Department	Contact Number	Level of Surveillance Authority			
			Juvenile or Vulnerable CHIS and/or Confidential Material from CHIS or Directed Surveillance	CHIS	Directed Surveillance	Oral
Kevin Dicks	Chief Executive	01527 881487	Yes	No	No	No
Sue Hanley	Deputy Chief Executive / Executive Director for Leisure, Environment & Community Services	01527 534118 (RBC) and Bromsg 01527 881483 (BDC).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
John Staniland	Executive Director of Planning, Regeneration and Housing Services	01527 534002 (RBC), and 01527 881417 (BDC)	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Deborah Poole	E-Government & Customer Services	01527 881256	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Steve Jordan	Head of Service for Worcestershire Regulatory Service (WRS)	01527 881466	No	Yes	Yes	Yes

Simon Wilkes	WRS Business Manager (Community Protection)	01905 728779	No	No	Yes	Yes
Chris Phillips	WRS Team Manager (Business Compliance- West)	01905 765375	No	No	Yes	Yes
Geoff Carpenter	WRS Team Manager (Community Protection- West)	01386 565186	No	No	Yes	Yes

**Senior Responsible Officer**

**As stated on page 23 of the policy the Senior Responsible Officer is Jayne Pickering Executive Director for Finance and Corporate Resources – contact number 01527 881207.**

## Appendix 2

**\*\*This box is to be completed by police/BDC Authorising Officer, prior to attending CCTV room\*\***  
OFFICER IN CASE: DATE:  
AUTHORITY NUMBER: AUTHORISING SUPT/OFFICER:  
DETAILS OF OPERATION i.e. dates/times and non sensitive information

This operation has received the necessary authority as required under RIPA legislation  
Signature: Date:

**\*\*To be completed by ..insert your council name..... Council Supervisor\*\***

1. Grounds on which this action is necessary, please circle:

Interest of National Security / Public Safety / Protecting Public Health / Economic well being of UK / Preventing or Detecting crime or preventing Disorder.

2. Is the use of the CCTV systems for the directed surveillance; proportionate to what it seeks to achieve?

YES / NO (please circle one)

3. Have you discussed alternative methods of obtaining this private information and agreed the use of directed surveillance as the most appropriate method?

YES / NO (please circle one)

4. Have you discussed collateral intrusion implications and methods to minimise the risk to other persons?

YES / NO (please circle one)

5. Have you discussed the obtaining of private and confidential material through the use of the CCTV system and been assured of its future use and integrity?

YES / NO (please circle one)

I hereby confirm that I believe the use of ... insert your council name Council CCTV is necessary and proportionate for this operation and that RIPA and Human Rights considerations have been considered. The use of CCTV systems for the directed surveillance is granted.

Signature of Council Supervisor

Date:

Name:

For Auditing & Monitoring Purposes by CCTV Control Room

Police/BDC RIPA authority valid from dates ..... to .....

Police/BDC operation planned for dates ..... to .....

Police/BDC operation actually took place from dates .....to .....

### Appendix 3

**Risk Assessment form for Surveillance**  
(to be completed by Investigating Officer)

Is target suitable for surveillance? Is target known to be surveillance aware?	
Has property/target been assessed for suitability?	<b>YES/NO</b>
Type of property, e.g. flats/house etc	
Number of property entrances/exits	
Is there any public transport nearby? If yes, what is it? Will subject be likely to use public transport? What measures are to be taken to account for this type of transport? Will surveillance task include following on public transport?	
Please describe Locality. E.g. type of area/type of road, cul-de-sac etc/shops/neighbours/schools/lighting etc.	
Please describe any collateral intrusion and how it is to be minimized. E.g. Family/other occupants/neighbours/visitors/other buildings/correct use of camera or technical equipment to reduce etc.	
Is there likely to be any confidential information obtained?	
What risks were identified as part of this assessment?	
What actions can be taken to reduce risks to officer? E.g. position of officer/vehicle	



Can task be undertaken without compromise to Officer?	<b>YES/NO</b>
Is the area “safe” for Officer whilst undertaking such duties? Is it known to be a “difficult area” either by position or residents/passers-by/activities	<b>YES/NO</b>
Communications & Equipment: Have they been tested in the area to ensure they work, e.g. mobile phones vs black spots? What security has been put in place for equipment sited, e.g. static cameras?	
How many Officers are required to undertake task?	
If vehicles are required, are the vehicle(s) taxed, MOT’d and insured for such activities?	<b>YES/NO</b>
If undertaking mobile surveillance is it anticipated that the officer may travel further than 50 miles from Bromsgrove Council Offices? How far is the officer expecting to travel?	<b>YES/NO</b>
If yes, please provide justification for undertaking such extensive surveillance.	
Confirm that the Officer advised the Police of activity being undertaken, to confirm presence in area and ensure that any concerns by the public who contact them, are allayed? Incident number raised?	
Please note:	Copy of GIS map to be provided with this document and request for authorization, showing target of surveillance

Please note:	<p>If surveillance is authorized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Agree method of communication between Officer and Line Manager/office whilst out undertaking surveillance (e.g. phone/text/personal interaction)</li><li>• Notify the Line Manager/Colleague who is monitoring Lone Working, of start and finish times</li><li>• If undertaken prior to 9am and/or after 5pm, ensure Line Manager is aware of the activity</li><li>• Provide Lone Working monitoring officer with details of address, start and finish times</li><li>• Officer should contact monitoring officer both on arrival and on departure from task</li></ul>
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Investigating Officer Name:

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date:

## Planning Enforcement Policy

## APPENDIX 1

### 1. Introduction

1.1 Under the provisions of The Town and Country Planning Act 1990, planning permission is required for the carrying out of any development on land. The definition of development includes the carrying out of building, engineering, mining or other operations in, on, over or under land and also the material change of use of land and buildings.

1.2 A breach of planning control occurs when:

- Development takes place without the relevant planning permission.
- There has been a failure to comply with a condition on a planning permission.

Any breach of planning control is unlawful. However, it is not illegal, even in those cases where planning permission has been applied for and refused. It is not until the breach is in defiance of a confirmed Enforcement Notice that a criminal offence is committed. The situation is different in such cases as unauthorised works to a listed building, the felling of a protected tree or the display of unauthorised advertisements. In these circumstances, criminal liability can arise directly from the unauthorised action.

1.3 The processing of planning and other applications, subsequent monitoring of approved development and the investigation of breaches of planning control is carried out by officers within the Council's Planning and Regeneration Services.

## **2. Aims and purpose of the Enforcement Policy**

2.1 The main aims of the policy are:

- To set out realistic, achievable objectives on planning enforcement.
- To define the range of options available to achieve objectives, having regard to statutory and non-statutory advice from Government.
- To provide a clear and accountable audit trail of decision-making processes.
- To adhere to and implement best practice in terms of planning enforcement.

2.2 The policy has been published having regard to planning policy advice provided by the Government and The Royal Town Planning Institute.

2.3. The main objectives of the planning enforcement process are:

- To remedy undesirable effects of unauthorised development.
- To bring unauthorised activity under control to ensure the credibility of the planning system is not undermined.

### **3. Investigating alleged breaches of Planning Control**

- 3.1 Complaints received by the Council regarding alleged breaches of planning control can be split into two broad categories; complaints about unauthorised developments or changes of use of land and complaints about possible breaches of planning conditions where this Council has granted permission.
- 3.2 The Council investigates all alleged breaches of planning control whether they are reported by third parties or found as part of the Council's own monitoring procedures. The Planning Enforcement Officer, who is supported by other relevant officers when required, carries out these investigations. In addition, the Council's Building Control Officers monitor developments for which they are responsible under the Building Regulations. All Council Officers undertaking investigations of any kind are required to do so in a professional, accountable, fair and consistent manner.
- 3.3 All incidences of alleged breaches of planning control are thoroughly investigated with particular regard to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and relevant Government guidance. Many factors have to be assessed before commencing formal enforcement action. These include:
- The case specific facts unique to each investigation.
  - The amount of actual or potential harm resulting from or caused by the development.
  - The policies in the Local Development Framework and any other material considerations.
  - Full consideration of the prospect of success of different enforcement procedures.
- 3.4 A small proportion of all investigations result in some formal enforcement action. The Council exercises discretion in relation to enforcement matters and seeks to ensure that any action is appropriate and in proportion to the seriousness of the breach. In some cases it may decide to take no formal action. For example, when there is insignificant or no harm caused by a 'technical' breach of a planning condition, time-consuming and costly legal procedures would not be justified if there would be no clear benefit to the environment or local amenity.
- 3.5 In cases where the Council's planning powers overlap with those of other regulatory agencies or other Council services, it may be more appropriate for those other agencies to take action, particularly if such action is likely to be quicker and more effective. In some cases a combination of powers may be used. Worcestershire County Council is likely to take the lead in respect of any enforcement action concerning mineral undertakings and the deposit/ tipping of waste materials.

#### **4. Enforcement Procedures (Informal)**

- 4.1 The Council will initially seek to ensure that breaches of planning control are resolved without having to resort to formal enforcement action. Relevant information will be made available to those involved in enforcement issues and appropriate guidance given to try and secure a satisfactory outcome for all concerned. The needs/difficulties of individuals, small firms and organisations will be taken into account with regard to compliance with Council requirements and to prevent any undue hardship or unnecessary expense.
- 4.2 Breaches often occur where a person is genuinely unaware that planning permission is required for works they are undertaking. Negotiation and persuasion are therefore the 'tools' most often used in dealing with many breaches. This not only saves time and resources but can also achieve immediate cessation of any unauthorised development and/or remedial works to rectify damage. Remedial works could involve alterations to the development to make it more acceptable or in some cases, the complete removal of an unauthorised development. Where a breach has been satisfactorily resolved in this way, then the Council will not usually initiate formal enforcement action, unless the breach recurs.
- 4.3 Where an activity or development has taken place without planning permission, the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 allows for the submission of an application for retrospective planning permission. However, the Council would only encourage this where it appears that the use or development is appropriate or can be adequately controlled by planning conditions<sup>1</sup>. In such cases, the application is treated on its merits. Property sales are often delayed or fall through because searches reveal householders have not obtained planning permission for extensions they believed did not require permission. It is therefore in everyone's interests that unauthorised development is properly regularised.

## **5. Enforcement Procedures Available (Formal)**

5.1 Should negotiation and persuasion fail then formal enforcement action may be necessary. There are a number of options available and the choice of procedures is carefully considered before commencing action.

### **5.2 Planning Contravention Notice**

This Notice can be used to obtain information from landowners/developers where it appears that a breach of planning control has taken place. The Notice will seek information regarding the development or activities being carried out and ask about anyone who has an interest in the land. A period of 21 days is given in which to respond. Failure to provide the information or to knowingly provide false information is an offence and on summary conviction at a magistrates court could result in a fine if the Council decides to pursue a prosecution.

### **5.3 Breach of Condition Notice**

Where planning permission has been granted subject to conditions and one or more of those conditions has not been complied with, a Breach of Condition Notice can be served on all interested parties. The Notice will specify the steps that need to be taken to ensure full compliance with the condition and why they are necessary. Although the recipient of such a Notice has to be given at least 28 days for compliance, service of the notice can secure an immediate effect e.g. cessation of work outside the permitted hours. There is no right of appeal against such a Notice and failure to comply with its requirements may result in prosecution in a Magistrates' Court.

### **5.4 Enforcement Notice**

Where it is expedient to do so and there is clear evidence of a breach of planning control, an Enforcement Notice may be used. This Notice is served on all interested parties where harm to the environment or the local amenity has been caused by a breach of planning control. Such a notice will specify the works to which it refers, what steps are required to be taken, or what activities are to cease, to remedy the breach and also the time period within which these steps need to be taken. An Enforcement Notice does not take effect for 28 days and within this period there is a right of appeal by the recipient of such a Notice. If there is an appeal, then the requirements of the Notice are suspended until the Secretary of State confirms the Notice. An appeal is made to the Planning Inspectorate and will be decided by an independent Inspector.

5.5 The Inspectorate set out that an appeal can be made on the following grounds:

1. Planning permission should be granted for the development or change of use.
2. The development does not require planning permission.
3. No breach of planning control has taken place.

4. Sufficient time has elapsed since the development took place (4 years for development, 10 years for change of use) so that enforcement action cannot now be taken.
5. The Enforcement Notice has not been properly served.
6. The requirements of the Enforcement Notice are excessive.
7. The period for compliance stated in the Notice is too short.

In the case of an appeal on ground 1), a fee would be payable equivalent to the normal planning application fee for the development involved. Fees are not applicable in the other cases.

Once the Notice takes effect, its requirements must be met and failure to comply constitutes a criminal offence. The Council may decide to prosecute in certain cases. If an appeal is allowed, the Notice is quashed and in appropriate cases, planning permission granted.

#### **5.6 Stop Notice**

Stop Notices may only be issued accompanying or following the issue of an Enforcement Notice. Stop Notices normally take effect after three days and are used where there is significant or irreversible harm taking place through an unauthorised activity that needs to be controlled within a short timescale.

#### **5.7 Temporary Stop Notices**

Temporary Stop Notices were introduced in 2005 to allow local planning authorities to bring a halt to unauthorised activities where it is in the interests of the amenity of the area to do so. A Temporary Stop Notice does not require the issue of an Enforcement Notice and its effect is immediate. The Council has due processes in place to address these instances if they happen out of hours, including over Statutory holiday periods.

#### **5.8 Court Injunction**

Where action is necessary to curb or prevent a serious breach of planning control, the Council may apply to the High Court or County Court for an Injunction. Such an application can be made even if the Council has not used other enforcement powers. The advantages of this are that failure to comply constitutes a penal offence.



## **6. Procedure Following Service of an Enforcement/ Stop Notice/ Injunction**

The length of time for compliance with notices is case specific and depends on a number of factors. An appeal lodged against an Enforcement Notice may delay the enforcement process unless a Stop Notice has also been issued.

### **6.1 Compliance with Notice(s)**

Following the Service of a Notice the Council visits the site on a frequent basis to monitor compliance. Landowners/operators are advised of the possible consequences should the rate of progress appear to be slow or inadequate to meet the requirements of the Notice. Once the Notice has been complied with then the Council will resume its normal monitoring procedures for that site.

### **6.2 Injunction**

Where an injunction has been granted, breach of it is a contempt of court and the Council may apply to the court for committal of the person in breach of the injunction. This may lead to fines or imprisonment.

### **6.3 Prosecution**

Where the requirements of a particular Notice are not met, then the Council may decide to prosecute for non-compliance. The Council's main aim in all its enforcement activities is not primarily to penalise or punish, but to prevent further harm to the environment and the local amenity, and also to act as a deterrent to other potential offenders. Prosecution is very serious, expensive and time-consuming and will only be initiated after full consideration of all relevant facts, including:

- The harm caused by the offence.
- The intent and personal circumstances of the offender.
- The history of the offender.
- The deterrent effect of a prosecution.
- The likely chance of securing a conviction – availability of reliable evidence/ 3<sup>rd</sup> party witnesses etc.
- The benefit to the local community/Public interest.

### **6.4 Direct Action**

Exceptionally, the Council may decide to enter land and carry out remedial measures or emergency works to ameliorate the effects of a significant breach of planning control. Prior to this a full cost/benefit analysis will be undertaken. The Council will seek to recover the costs involved in such direct works from the relevant persons in these cases.

## **7. Council's Commitment to Complainants**

The Council's response to those persons reporting alleged breaches of planning control is set out below:

- All alleged breaches of planning control within the Council's jurisdiction will be recorded on receipt and given a unique investigation number.
- Complaints about matters outside the Council's area of jurisdiction will be passed on to the relevant person/authority and the complainant informed.
- The confidentiality of those reporting incidents will be maintained.
- Investigations into alleged breaches will normally start within 24 hours of a complaint being received and where appropriate an initial site visit to assess the situation will be carried out within 3 – 5 working days.
- Within 7 working days of the complaint being received, the Council, will formally acknowledge receipt of the complaint.
- Within 10 – 15 working days of the complaint being received, the complainant will be advised of action taken and/or proposed.
- Within 10 working days of the investigation being formally closed, the Council will write, if requested to do so, to complainants detailing the outcome.
- Should an investigation be complex and/or lengthy then the Council will provide regular feedback to the complainant(s) if requested to do so.
- Where no formal action is taken the Council will provide an explanation of the reason, if so requested.

Where there is the possibility of Court proceedings resulting from any investigations, detailed feedback may not always be possible to ensure that any subsequent legal action is not compromised.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

- 8.1 Bromsgrove District Council is fully committed to protecting and enhancing the environment and the local amenity through the effective discharge of planning enforcement duties. All alleged breaches of planning control will be recorded and thoroughly investigated, if appropriate and the Council will be accountable for all decisions, actions and service delivery relating to planning enforcement.
- 8.2 In the majority of cases, negotiation and persuasion should be enough to remedy breaches but the Council will not hesitate to use formal enforcement powers should the need arise. These powers will be used in a manner proportional to the amount of harm caused by a breach.
- 8.3 This policy is intended to provide a general framework for the Council to control unauthorised development effectively, to target its resources efficiently and to ensure that the residents of the District are not subjected to unacceptable harm as a result of breaches in planning control. The policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.

**Should you require any further information on planning enforcement matters visit our Website at [Bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://Bromsgrove.gov.uk)**

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<sup>i</sup> Government policy on planning enforcement is provided by Planning Policy Guidance Note 18 (issued December 1991), Department of the Environment Circular10/97 (issued July 1997) and Good Practice Guide for Local Planning Authorities (DETR 1997).

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