



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY 1ST FEBRUARY 2012
AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP (Deputy Leader), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, M. A. Bullivant, C. B. Taylor and M. J. A. Webb

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. Referral from the Council - CCTV Motion

At its meeting on 18th January 2012, the Council agreed:

That the following motion submitted by Councillor P. M. McDonald be referred to the Cabinet for consideration as part of the budget process so that relevant facts and figures could be reported and taken into account.

“That this Council no longer monitors CCTV coverage outside of Bromsgrove and Redditch and gives due notice of this to those it may concern.”

(There will be a report from officers on this matter to follow).

4. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 4th January 2012 (Pages 1 - 4)

5. Minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 3rd January 2012 (attached) and 23rd January 2012 (To Follow) (Pages 5 - 8)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
6. To receive verbal updates from the Leader and/or other Cabinet Members on any recent meetings attended in an ex-officio capacity (Pages 9 - 10)
7. Medium Term Financial Plan 2012/13 - 2014/15 - Presentation (Pages 11 - 12)
8. Bromsgrove Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative - Draft Second Round Submission (Pages 13 - 16)
9. Homelessness Grant - Performance of 2011/12 Schemes and Proposed Funding of Schemes for 2012/13 (Pages 17 - 26)
10. Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Pages 27 - 30)
11. Revision of Licence Standards and Conditions for Mobile Homes and Caravan Sites (Pages 31 - 38)
 - Appendices For Item 8 - Bromsgrove Town Centre Heritage Initiative (Pages 39 - 210)
 - Appendix For Item 10 - Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (Pages 211 - 228)
 - Appendix For Item 11 - Revision Of Licence Standards And Conditions For Mobile Homes And Caravan Sites (Pages 229 - 234)
12. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

24th January 2012



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Access to Information

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

- You can attend all Council, Cabinet and Committee/Board meetings, except for any part of the meeting when the business would disclose confidential or “exempt” information.
- You can inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- You can inspect minutes of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards for up to six years following a meeting.
- You can have access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to six years from the date of the meeting. These are listed at the end of each report.
- An electronic register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc. is available on our website.
- A reasonable number of copies of agendas and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards.
- You have access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned, as detailed in the Council’s Constitution, Scheme of Delegation.

You can access the following documents:

- Meeting Agendas
- Meeting Minutes
- The Council’s Constitution

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Declaration of Interests - Explained

Definition of Interests

A Member has a **PERSONAL INTEREST** if the issue being discussed at a meeting affects the well-being or finances of the Member, the Member's family or a close associate more than most other people who live in the ward affected by the issue.

Personal interests are also things relating to an interest the Member must register, such as any outside bodies to which the Member has been appointed by the Council or membership of certain public bodies.

A personal interest is also a **PREJUDICIAL INTEREST** if it affects:

- The finances, or
- A regulatory function (such as licensing or planning)

Of the Member, the Member's family or a close associate **AND** which a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of the facts would believe likely to harm or impair the Member's ability to judge the public interest.

Declaring Interests

If a Member has an interest they must normally declare it at the start of the meeting or as soon as they realise they have the interest.

EXCEPTION:

If a Member has a **PERSONAL INTEREST** which arises because of membership of another public body the Member only needs to declare it if and when they speak on the matter.

If a Member has both a **PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTEREST** they must not debate or vote on the matter and must leave the room.

EXCEPTION:

If a Member has a prejudicial interest in a matter being discussed at a meeting at which members of the public are allowed to make representations, give evidence or answer questions about the matter, the Member has the same rights as the public and can also attend the meeting to make representations, give evidence or answer questions **BUT THE MEMBER MUST LEAVE THE ROOM ONCE THEY HAVE FINISHED AND CANNOT DEBATE OR VOTE.**

However, the Member must not use these rights to seek to improperly influence a decision in which they have a prejudicial interest.

For further information please contact Committee Services, Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council, The Council House, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA

Tel: 01527 873232 Fax: 01527 881414

Web: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk email: committee@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Agenda Item 4

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 4TH JANUARY 2012 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP (Deputy Leader), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, M. A. Bullivant, C. B. Taylor and M. J. A. Webb

Observers: Councillors C. Bloore, J. Brogan and L. Mallett.

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

90/11 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

91/11 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

92/11 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th December 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

93/11 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the Shared Services Board (part) held on 10th November 2011 relating to non confidential and non exempt items were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

94/11 **AUDIT BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 15th December 2011 were submitted.

RECOMMENDED that as set out in minute 21/11 of the meeting of the Audit Board held on 15th December 2011, the maximum level of investment to be held within a single organisation (bank or building society), as detailed in the report, be set at £3 million, subject to market conditions.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that in relation to the recommendation referred to above, the Audit Board be requested to note that the maximum level of investment to be held within a single organisation should be maintained at £3 million;
- (b) that the remainder of the minutes be noted.

95/11 **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 meeting of a Sub Group of the Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

96/11 **HOME INSULATION FUNDING**

The Cabinet considered a report on an offer of funding of £40,000 from Worcestershire County Council specifically for the purpose of installing free cavity wall, draught proofing and loft installation measures for homeowners within the Bromsgrove District aged 60 years or over. It was a requirement that the funding be utilised by 31st December 2012 and be promoted under the Warmer Worcestershire branding.

Members queried whether the funding had been “top sliced” by the County Council and the Portfolio Holder undertook to investigate this. In addition there was discussion on whether preference could be given to utilising contractors from within the Bromsgrove District to undertake the work. It was reported that whilst Contracts would need to be awarded in accordance with the Council’s Procurement Procedures, it would be reasonable to request officers to review the procedures with a view to increasing the weight given to local suppliers where appropriate.

RECOMMENDED that the funding of £40,000 from Worcestershire County Council be incorporated into this Council’s “Energy Efficiency Grants Home Insulation Projects” budget and that the Capital Programme be amended accordingly.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Head of Community Services be authorised to formally accept and account for the expenditure of the Worcestershire County Council “Home Energy Efficiency Improvements” funding offer of £40,000 and associated funding conditions;
- (b) that applications be invited from homeowners within the District aged 60 or over for the installation of loft and/or cavity wall insulation and draught-proofing measures installed in their homes free of charge; and
- (c) that the Head of Community Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be authorised (i) to expend up to the sum approved by the Council, for the purposes indicated in the report; and (ii) to utilise such funding remaining at 1st April 2012 to extend the insulation to offer to any resident of the District irrespective of age or status, or for other Home Energy Efficiency initiatives subject to the agreement of Worcestershire County Council; and

- (d) that officers be requested to review the Council's Procurement Procedures with a view to increasing the weight given to local suppliers where appropriate.

97/11 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2012/13 - 2014/15**

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources gave a presentation on the Authority's financial position for 2012/13 - 2014/15, together with Revenue and Capital bids forming part of the 2012/13 – 2014/15 Medium Term Financial Plan.

As part of the presentation reference was made to the recommendations arising from the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 3rd January 2012. The recommendations were in relation to the priorities to be attached to the various Revenue and Capital bids and were taken into account as part of the Cabinet consideration of the bids.

Reference was also made to the need to consider the potential impact on homelessness of the forthcoming Welfare Reform, in particular changes to the arrangements for Housing Benefit which would result in reductions in payments to claimants in particular circumstances.

Members' attention was drawn to the need to address any potential increase in homelessness at an early stage and it was noted that officers were taking steps to strengthen prevention measures as far as possible. This included close working between officers from the Strategic Housing and Housing Benefits Teams and in partnership with BDHT and private landlords.

Clearly even taking into account the strengthening of prevention measures, it was likely to be necessary to make some provision within the budget for an increase in the costs of temporary accommodation. It was suggested that an additional £35,000 could be allocated from balances, together with a total of £15,000 from unspent budgets from the current year, to establish a contingency budget of £50,000 to be used for preventative work and if necessary, temporary accommodation costs. Officers undertook to continue to review the position and to report further as appropriate.

Arising from the discussion on the Revenue and Capital Bids it was acknowledged that until the Council's Strategic Purposes had been fully defined it was inappropriate to make final decisions regarding the priority to be attached to some of the bids. It was important that the budget priorities were aligned with the Council's Strategic Purposes.

It was therefore

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the current position for 2012/13 - 2014/15 be noted and that officers be requested to review the savings that can be delivered to achieve a balanced budget;
- (b) that the Revenue bids in respect of an Energy Advisor and a Data Analyst for Procurement be reduced to a low priority;

- (c) that the Capital bid in respect of Planning – Town Centre be categorised as a high priority;
- (d) that the Capital bid in respect of replacement Christmas Lights be deleted and the work be undertaken as part of the regeneration of the Town Centre;
- (e) that the Capital bids as set out below be taken out of the budget process at present and that provided that the proposal meets the Council's Strategic Purposes as referred to in the preamble, officers be required to produce separate reports to include Business Cases as appropriate.
 - Toilets in Bromsgrove Cemetery
 - Improved Parking in Sanders Park
 - Improvement of Battlefield Brook Infrastructure
 - Allotment Extension

98/11 **ANTI-BRIBERY POLICY AND OFFICERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report which proposed the updating of the Council's Anti Bribery policies and procedures following the coming into force of the Bribery Act 2010. The report included a new Anti-Bribery Policy and the introduction of a Code of Conduct for Officers.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Anti-Bribery Policy attached at appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
- (b) that the Officers' Code of Conduct attached at appendix 2 to the report be approved and included in the Council's Constitution.

99/11 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

(Note: Although the Cabinet agenda had indicated that the public may be excluded during the consideration of this item, in the event it was considered in public).

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board (part) held on 10th November 2011 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted, including the recommendations contained at Minute 7 which had subsequently been approved by the Council on 16th November 2011.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 3RD JANUARY 2012 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. Lammas (Vice-Chairman), C. J. Bloore, J. S. Brogan, Dr. B. T. Cooper, Mrs. R. L. Dent, K. A. Grant-Pearce, Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, R. J. Laight, P. M. McDonald, S. P. Shannon, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and L. J. Turner

Observers: Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor L. C. R. Mallett and Councillor M. J. A. Webb

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

75/11 APOLOGIES

An apology for absence was received from Councillor P. J. Whittaker.

76/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

77/11 REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET BIDS 2012/13

The Board received a presentation on the Revenue and Capital Budget Bids for 2012/13 from the Executive Director, Finance and Resources. The Board was informed that any recommendations that were made in respect of the Bids would be fed into the Cabinet meeting to be held on 4th January 2012.

During the meeting Members referred to the following particular items, which were discussed in detail:

- Revenue Bid for Housing – Members discussed how the funding would be allocated, homeless prevention and funding provision provided by both District and County Councils.
- Maintenance and replacement of the Ledger system – Members discussed any benefit to having a single system across the Shared Service and the need for further information to be provided before any decision was made on these bids.
- Revenue Bid for Leisure Feasibility options appraisal – Members queried the purpose of this appraisal, the areas that it would cover and the possibility of it being carried out by the Council's own staff.
- Capital Bid to provide a grant to Registered Housing Landlord for affordable housing – Members discussed the need for one bed roomed accommodation and accommodation for families within the district. Any

claw back provision in new agreements and the need to ensure that the Registered Housing Landlord provided the appropriate accommodation. Members also raised concerns over the sale of particular properties.

- Capital Bid for a new toilet block at Bromsgrove Cemetery - the Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services, Environmental Services and Emergency Planning to provide Members with an update on this Bid.
- Capital Bid for Depot Security – Members were informed that the latest vehicles to be purchased did have tracking and safety cameras fitted. The Capital Bid would enable 18 of the Council’s other vehicles to be fitted with a similar system.
- Capital Bid for Fleet replacement – Members were informed that consideration was given to the condition and history of individual vehicles when they reached the end of their expected life and was taken into consideration when deciding whether or not to replace the vehicle. Costs and information from the mechanics were also taken into consideration.
- Capital Bid for improved parking at Sanders Park – the Head of Leisure and Cultural Services advised Members of the Health and Safety concerns and general issues in respect of car parking at Sanders Park.
- Capital Bid for allotment extension – Members discussed the location and number of plots available, the number of residents on the waiting list within the district as a whole and for the area where the new plots would be made available.

After further discussion it was

RESOLVED:

- (a) that all Members receive a detailed briefing following the Government response in relation to the Resource Review to include localisation of business rates and Council Tax benefits;
- (b) that the Board receive an update on the work of the Town Centre Steering Group and progress on the Town Centre improvements and regeneration at the meeting to be held on 23rd January 2012; and
- (c) that the Board receive a presentation on the Loans to Businesses scheme facilitated by Finance Birmingham.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Revenue Bid in respect of an Energy Advisor be reduced to a Low priority;
- (b) that the Revenue Bid in respect of Data Analysis for procurement be reduced to a Low priority;
- (c) that the Capital Bid in respect of the toilets in Bromsgrove Cemetery be rated to a High priority;
- (d) that the Capital Bid in respect of parking facilities at Sanders Park be rated as a High priority;
- (e) that the Capital Bid in respect of replacement Christmas Lights following the High Street refurbishment be rated as a High priority;

- (f) that the Capital Bid in respect of improvements to infrastructure at Battlefield Brook be rated as a Medium priority; and
- (g) that the Capital Bid for the Allotment Extension be increased to a High priority.

The meeting closed at 6.47 p.m.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 6

THERE ARE NO ENCLOSURES FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 7

THERE ARE NO ENCLOSURES FOR THIS AGENDA ITEM

This page is intentionally left blank

Bromsgrove Town Centre Townscape Heritage Initiative Draft Second Round Submission

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr D Booth / Cllr CB Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Director	John Staniland
Wards Affected	St Johns
Ward Councillor Consulted	No
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 In April 2010 the Council was provisionally awarded £1.2 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), to operate a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) in Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area. In order to release the full funding the Council is required to prepare a second round submission which provides much clearer detail on the Conservation area, the issues facing it and how they will be managed, and most importantly how the money will be spent which adds lasting improvements and historic value to the area.
- 1.2 The key elements of the second round bid are the bid document itself and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan; it is these documents which are the focus of this report. An essential part of the THI is that it has community buy in and therefore it is proposed that the draft bid document and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management plan are published for a period of public consultation, the results of which are then fed in to the final bid due to be submitted in April 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **The Bromsgrove Town Centre THI draft second round submission, and the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan is published for public consultation for a period of 6 weeks beginning 2nd February 2012**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no immediate financial implications of carrying out this consultation. Although without adequate consultation on the THI second round bid and the associated Conservation Area Appraisal and

Management Plan the success of the overall £1.2 million bid would be put in jeopardy. This funding is an essential part of the Town Centre regeneration without it many projects could fail and or have to be funded solely by the Council.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There are no immediate legal implications of carrying out this consultation.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 As stated in 1.1 the Council have been provisionally awarded £1.2 million from the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake a THI in Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area. £400,000 match funding has also been secured from Worcestershire County Council, bringing the total amount of funding available to £1.6 million. The purpose of this £1.6 million is to improve the look, feel and vitality of a key section of the Conservation Area. The money will be available for a selection of eligible properties in the form of grants to reinstate historic elements such as shop fronts, the grant rates offered will depend on the type of work being undertaken. A significant element of the THI will be focussed on the public realm. Alongside the wider scheme being developed for the Town Centre, new more traditional and high quality public realm will be a key element of the ongoing regeneration of the Town Centre. Full details of how the funding will be allocated can be seen in section 5 of the draft bid document at appendix 1.
- 3.4 The initial HLF award of £50,000 in April 2011 was to enable the Council to work up a full bid confirming to the HLF that Council can and will be able to spend the money on projects which THI's are designed for. Since April we have recruited a THI project officer who has then been responsible for the development of the bid into its current form. The development of the bid has focussed on those elements specified by the HLF in the first bidding round. Two key studies have been completed, an accessibility audit and a building condition survey. The building condition survey has provided more precise costs for renovating the key historic buildings in the high street. The accessibility audit has informed the development of the public realm scheme part of which will be funded by the THI. These studies were key pieces of evidence used to develop the funding structure as seen in section 5 of appendix 1.
- 3.5 Alongside the work done on developing the bid itself further work has been done on both the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management

Plan. The Management Plan is a significant document which will ensure that measures can be taken to ensure that current problems within the conservation area are properly dealt with such as the enforcement of unauthorised development. The Management Plan is also important because it will help to ensure that the improvements which are a result of the THI are permanent and not overshadowed by the return unauthorised or poor quality development.

- 3.6 It is an essential part of the process that the public are involved in the development of the bid, the Appraisal, and the Management Plan. The aim of this consultation is to ensure the issues which we are looking to address are also important to the people who use the Town Centre. Once this consultation has taken place the outcomes will be reflected as much as possible in the final bid document. It is also hoped that at the same time as approving the final bid the Council will also adopt the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan as a material consideration, therefore allowing it to be used more formally in the planning process.
- 3.7 As well as consulting on the specifics of the THI the council will also be able to consult on detailed proposals for the new public realm design. Combining these consultations will not only allow both projects to progress quicker but will also reduce duplicated consultation in the Town Centre.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.8 The Equalities Officer is a key member of the project team, and has and will continue to ensure that equalities and diversity issues are successfully incorporated in the THI bid and subject to HLF approval the THI implementation. The Worcestershire Association of Service Users who carried out the accessibility audit were procured with the help of the Equalities Officer.
- 3.9 In order for the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan to be adopted as a material planning consideration, consultation will be carried out inline with the councils adopted statement of community involvement. It is envisaged that publicity material will be produced for display in the customer service centre, and all the material will be placed on the councils website. Focussed consultation will take place with key stakeholders, and the views of people who use the area of the high street which form the THI will also be sought.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The most significant risk associated with this stage of the THI process is failure to meet the requirements of the HLF and not being awarded the funding. By ensuring that the consultation is carried out successfully, and that the views of Town Centre users are fed into the final bid and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan, the risks of failing on this part of the process are minimised.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Bromsgrove Town Centre THI: Draft Second Round Bid
Appendix 2 - Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Mike Dunphy
E Mail: m.dunphy@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel:01527 881325

HOMELESSNESS GRANT 2012/13

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Angie Heighway
Wards Affected	All wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	All
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 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. In dealing with the National Deficit, the coalition 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 increased the amount of homelessness grant to local authorities. For Bromsgrove, this resulted in the Homelessness Grant allocation increasing by 40% to £113,470 per annum, paid as part of the Area Based Grant for 2011/12 and 2012/13.

This report provides members with information relating to progress on schemes in place in this District funded by DCLG Grant during 2011/12 and seeks Member approval for the award of grant to specific schemes in 2012/13 that have been recommended by the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group.

- 1.3 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 awarded to assist 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 enabled two of the District's five mortgage rescues schemes to take place. The balance of £21,000 will be carried forward for 2012/13.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the update on the homelessness prevention and support schemes funded through DCLG Homelessness Grant during 2011/12 be noted.
- 2.2 That, subject to the special meeting of the Cabinet on the 22nd February 2012 formally agreeing to the allocation of Homelessness Grant for 2012/13 being fully utilised for homeless projects, the submissions for the funding of schemes during 2012/13 recommended by the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group set out at 3.9 of the report amounting to £92,100 be approved to receive funding from the Council's DCLG Homelessness Grant for 2012/13.
- 2.3 That the additional recommendation regarding use of £21,000 DCLG Homelessness Grant to fund an additional resource to deliver the Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme as set out at 3.11 of the report, be approved.
- 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 2012/13 in support of existing or new schemes and approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Financial Implications

- 3.2 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. Members are referred to para 3.7 which sets out how the funding was spent in 2011/2012. DCLG has allocated Homelessness Grant of £113,470 for the financial year 2012/13. Members are referred to the tables at paras 3.10 and 3.13 which show the intended spending for 2012/13. The grant from DCLG has been included in the medium term financial plan and the purpose of this report is to seek Members approval to the detail of how the grant will be allocated.

3.3 Legal Implications

The requirements imposed on Council's in relation to homelessness are set out in the Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 and the Homelessness Act 2002. As set out below, the Council has developed a Housing Strategy Action Plan to address the needs of the homeless. The CLG grant enables the Council to support the various schemes listed at para 3.10 below. This in turn assists the Council in meeting its statutory duties to homeless applicants.

3.4 SCHEMES FUNDED BY DCLG GRANT DURING 2011/12

3.5 Members may recall that as the Strategic Housing Authority, BDC coordinates and leads the Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group. Through this group which includes partners from a range of organisations, the Council's Housing Strategy Action Plan has been developed to address the support needs of the homeless and provide schemes that are aimed at the prevention of homelessness.

3.6 On the 6th April 2011 the Executive Cabinet gave approval to the grant funding for 2011/12 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 Community Services to re-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.

3.7 The table below sets out how the grant funding for 2011/12 has therefore been allocated and utilised:

Allocation of CLG Homeless Grant 2011/12		
Budget		
Amount Carried Forward from 10/11	14,035	
Homelessness Grant for 2011/12	113,470	
Total	127,505	
Award		
Amount of Grant surrendered to BDC Balances		11,770.00
To Discretionary Housing Benefit.		5,000.00
Private Sector Housing Options Post		10,100.00
CAB Mortgage Rescue Adviser allocated 08/08		17,600.00
Newstart Furniture Project		8,500.00
Baseline Rent Deposit Scheme		21,500.00
Housing Options Service		15,000.00

Floating Homelessness Prevention Officers		24,000.00
Land Registry Searches		100.00
Lashbrook House Accom for Young People		5,000.00
Homelessness Coordinator		1,875.00
Basement PTS Deposits		4,000.00
Night Assessment Centre		2,375.00
	Total	
	Budget Available to Spend	126,820.00
Underspend to C/F to 12/13		685.00

3.8 The initiatives funded during 2011/12 are progressing as follows:

CAB Mortgage Rescue Adviser

The Owner Occupier specialist adviser at the CAB helped more than 300 households to avoid repossession. 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

mortgage rescued. The remaining clients needs have been resolved by accessing additional benefits such as support for mortgage interest, debt prioritisation, negotiation with mortgage lenders or in a minority of cases where mortgage rescue and where other options were exhausted, working with households to plan their move on into other tenures.

Private Tenancy Scheme for under 25's

The private tenancy scheme for under 25's is a valuable resource for Bromsgrove. The current service is being delivered by Bromsgrove Basement Project, but is being reviewed to ensure that value for money is achieved. It is recommended that continuation funding for a Private Tenancy Scheme is approved but that a process undertaken to ensure best value for money is achieved.

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 from 646 in 2007/08 to 756 2010/11 and an anticipated 860 in 2011/12.

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 earlier and helps those who are on limited incomes to access cheap furniture and avoid getting into debt. The scheme helps approximately 200 households in Bromsgrove District per annum.

3.9 THE CLG HOMELESSNESS GRANT FUNDING REQUIRING APPROVAL FOR 2012/13.

3.10 DCLG has allocated Homelessness Grant of £113,470 for both financial years 2011/12 and 2012/13. The Bromsgrove Homelessness Strategy Steering Group met on the 29th November 2011 to consider bids for future funding and decide 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 existing initiatives continue to be funded at existing levels with any additional homelessness grant being directed towards the support of statutory services likely to be impacted upon by changes in Government policy regarding welfare benefits and the restructure of the Council's Strategic Housing Team under shared services.

Name of Project	Grant Approved £	Outcomes Other Considerations
Private Tenancy Scheme for under 25's	£21,500	A scheme to offer 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.
County Homelessness Co-ordinator	2,500	To lead on the development of the County Homelessness Strategy and ensure that the Actions within the Countywide Action Plan are taken forward either by the Countywide Officer or a designated lead officer. (All 6 Worcestershire Districts contribute)
Night Assessment Centre	3,000	The Night Assessment Centre is an important facility for Rough Sleepers during severe weather. Given the duration and extreme weather experienced during last Winter it is important to continue to invest in this service so that Rough Sleepers can be offered somewhere safe and warm during severe weather conditions. (All 6 Worcs Districts contribute)
	£92,100	

A number of other bids were considered by the Steering Group but not recommended for approval. These included bids for funding for £5,500 towards the Education Initiative with St Basils, £15,000 for the Both Ways tenant matching service with Ourways, £4,500 for a Prison In Reach service for Fry Housing and £8,000 additional funding for the bdht floating support service, all of which were turned down due to insufficient funds and the need to support existing services and the proposal to enhance the proposed Shared Services Strategic Housing structure with an additional resource to deliver the Step Up Private Tenancy scheme.

3.11 DETAILS OF ADDITIONAL INITIATIVE TO RECEIVE GRANT FUNDING FOR 2012/13

3.12 The restructuring of Strategic Housing under Shared Services means that there will be insufficient Council Revenue funded resources to continue offering the Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme. The Homelessness Strategy Steering Group have recommended that an additional tranche of Homelessness Grant is approved for the recruitment of a part time officer post within the team to deliver this service.

--	--	--

Name of Project	Homelessness Grant	Outcomes
Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme for over 25's	£21,000	Sustain existing placements of on average 20 homeless households into the private rented sector.
Total Additional Grant 2012/13	£21,000	

3.13 In summary the financial implications are as follows:

Carry forward from 11/12 assuming that current balance of £685.00 will be allocated under delegated authority.	£0.00
Homelessness Grant for 12/13	£113,470
Recommended for Approval (per 3.9)	£92,100
New Initiatives (per 3.11)	£21,000
Total	£113,100
Balance remaining	£370

3.14 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

3.15 Members are therefore asked to approve from the 2012/13 CLG Homelessness Grant, the funding of schemes set out above at 3.9 and 3.11.

3.16 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 2012/13 in support of existing or new schemes and approve expenditure of the Non Tenure Specific Economic Recovery Fund.

3.17 Service / Operational Implications

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

- 3.19 The number of people presenting as homeless, those accepted and the outcome of homelessness prevention services are monitored by the Strategic Housing Team on a quarterly basis. The demand on the housing options service in the District is expected to increase to 860 during 2011/12 and welfare benefit reform is only likely to exacerbate this increase in demand for advice and assistance.

Performance info 2009/10	Total 2006-7	Total 2007/8	Total 2008/9	Total 2009/10	Total 2010/11
Presentations	249	147	119	123	115
Acceptances	123	91	69	63	66
No of people in temp accommodation	63	16	13	14	31
Preventions	76	157	172	155	198
New homes	72	46	145	88	56
Voids	291	314	343	350	355
Housing advice (BDHT)		646	695	766	756

3.20 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.21 This grant 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.

- 3.22 The grant will also benefit the larger community as opportunities to prevent homelessness will be maximised.

Welfare and Housing Benefit changes are anticipated to impact on certain ethnic groups more adversely than others. 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.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 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.
- Increased Rough Sleeping in the District

5. APPENDICES

None

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name	A.M. Coel
E Mail	a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel	01527 881270

This page is intentionally left blank

CABINET

1ST February 2012

A PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY FOR BROMSGROVE DC

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision - Yes	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Local authorities are required to produce and publish an Enforcement Policy to demonstrate how national regulation will be enforced at a local level.
- 1.2 The responsibility for monitoring, maintaining and improving private sector housing standards and conditions remains within the Strategic Housing Section of Community Services which is now becoming a combined service for Bromsgrove DC and Redditch BC. The functions of this service includes licensing of both Houses in Multiple Occupation and Caravan & Mobile Home Sites, housing inspections and enforcement of the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System.
- 1.3 The service previously provided in each council has operated under the respective Council's Environmental Health Enforcement Policy. However, since the recent formulation of the Worcestershire Regulatory Service (which has developed its own enforcement policy particular to the functions for which it has responsibility) it has become appropriate for an Enforcement Policy to be developed for the Private Sector Housing Service covering Bromsgrove.
- 1.4 This report therefore seeks Members approval for the adoption of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at Appendix 1 which sets out the legal responsibilities, policies, principles and priorities that the Private Sector Housing Service will follow when enforcing legislation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy attached at appendix 1 be approved and adopted, subject to the proposed charges set out at Section 11 of the Policy being considered as part of a separate Cabinet report on Fees and Charges for 2012/13.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 Financial Implications

3.2 The costs of implementation will be contained within existing budgets representing improved Value for Money as the new policy will enable a targeted use of resources with better outcomes to customers.

3.3 Section 10 of the policy makes reference to the power under Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 to make a reasonable charge as a means of recovering certain administrative and other expenses incurred in serving enforcement notices. The charges set out in the policy are based upon 9 officer hours at a salary and overheads based upon £35,000pa. We will use these powers to recover our costs from those who have not complied with informal requests to carry out works or where charges are necessary to recover costs for carrying out works to protect public health or the environment.

3.4 Legal Implications

3.5 The statutory powers of Local Authorities to take enforcement action in relation to private sector housing are set out in a number of pieces of legislation. Where relevant reference is made in the Enforcement Policy to the enabling legislation. To summarise, the main provisions are contained in the following Acts:-

- Housing Act 1985
- Housing Act 2004
- Building Act 1984
- Environmental Protection Act 1990
- Public Health Act 1961

When determining any general policy or principles about the exercise of “regulatory functions” or when setting standards or giving general guidance about “regulatory functions”, the Council has a duty to have regard to the Statutory Regulator’s Compliance Code. This means that the Council must take into account the Code’s provisions and give them due weight in developing their policies or principles or in setting standards or giving guidance. “Regulatory functions” are only those functions specified by the Legislative and Regulatory Reform (Regulatory Functions) Order 2007, as may be amended from time to time. Many of the functions, including enforcement functions, undertaken by the Private Sector Housing team are covered by this Order.

Members are asked to note that although the Private Sector Housing Enforcement policy is a new document, it covers a range of activities

that are already being undertaken by the Strategic Housing Team in terms of enforcement work.

In relation to Empty Homes which are covered at part 10 of the Private Sector Housing Enforcement policy, Members are asked to note that although powers exist under the Housing Act 2004 to apply for Empty Dwelling Management Orders officers do not envisage that circumstance would arise for use of such powers except in extremely limited circumstances. The rules around EDMOs are very detailed and officers are intending to develop some specific guidance to look at the general issue of management of empty dwellings in due course.

3.6 Service/Operational Implications

3.7 The Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy gives specific guidance on issues that are particular to enforcement in Private Housing

3.8 Officers will always need to judge each case on its own merits and it is important officers use their discretion when making decisions within the framework of this policy.

3.9 Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.10 A full Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out and was made available as part of the consultation process.

3.11 The issues emerging from the Equalities Impact Assessment are:

- The importance of the policy to set out clearly how the service will approach enforcement issues including the flexibility to adapt to each case dealt with. Officers should be able to use the document as a reference to make sure their actions are justified and those who have enforcement action taken on them will be able to see that council officers are acting appropriately.
- The need to develop a guidance checklist for officers and managers to guide their decision-making particularly in relation to decisions to take formal legal action against someone.
- There will still be a need to guard against prejudice throughout the system particularly where discretion can be applied.
- When communicating on Enforcement issues there is the potential that a person may not understand what is expected of them or the consequences of not complying with what has been required as a result of a disability. This could include problems with literacy or language barriers, so it will be important to make sure that people

understand what is required of them and the consequences of them not taking action and that assistance can be provided where appropriate.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

4.1 The risks of not adopting this policy are that:

- Enforcement Action is not targeted to benefit those who are most disadvantaged or who would benefit most.
- The opportunity to improve clarity, consistency and transparency on why and how we take enforcement action may not be achieved.
- The profile of taking enforcement action to protect residents is not raised nor receives further political endorsement.
- There may be a greater risk of legal challenge against enforcement decisions.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Bromsgrove District Council – Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy. (Draft for approval)

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: A.M. Coel – Strategic Housing Manager
E Mail: a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: 01527 881270

CABINET

1ST February 2012

REVISION OF LICENCE CONDITIONS APPLICABLE TO MOBILE HOME AND CARAVAN SITES.

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision - Yes	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1. This report provides Members with an update upon the introduction of the Model Standard Licence Conditions for Caravan and Mobile Home sites that were approved for phased implementation by the Cabinet in September 2008.

- 1.2. The report details the objections registered by both site owners and some of the site residents of the two sites that have so far been re-licensed in accordance with the 2008 standards. The objections relate to the impact upon them of specific requirements within the new Model Standard License Conditions that relate to the reduced permitted height of fences and hedges forming the boundary between units and to the spacing that is required where non combustible structures are placed between units.

- 1.3. The routine inspection process has also revealed a number of cases where the positioning of sheds, outhouses and other structures made of combustible material have been located within the 6 metre separation zone (between mobile home units), which is a contravention of the existing 1989 standards and applicable to all sites.

- 1.4. Attempts by the Private Sector Housing Officers to encourage compliance by both residents and site owners with these specific contraventions of the site conditions have been met with considerable opposition from residents affected, many of whom are reluctant to make the alterations required.

- 1.5. In response to this opposition and feedback from ongoing consultation with site owners and residents, the officers have met with the Fire Service to consider the most appropriate way of dealing with these issues.

- 1.6. The outcome of the discussions concluded that:
 - The 2008 Model Standards be implemented only for the licensing of new sites, sites that have been substantially redeveloped, or those

sites where their current license conditions are inadequate in serving its purpose.

- Where the 2008 Model Standard Conditions are applied, 'Transitional Arrangements' need to be included within the Licence agreement allowing for contraventions of the standards to be risk assessed on an individual basis and enforcement undertaken where the level of fire risk is considered sufficient to necessitate action being taken.
- Contravention of existing 1989 Licence conditions, specifically where combustible structures are found to have been sited within the 6 metre separation zone between mobile homes should also be risk assessed on an individual case basis and enforcement undertaken only where the level of fire risk is considered sufficient to necessitate action being taken.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1. That Members approve a revision to the 2008 Mobile Home Site License Conditions to include Transitional Arrangements (subject to a risk assessment) for existing residents as set out at Appendix 1.
- 2.2. That the phased approach to implementing the 2008 Model Standards be limited to the licensing of new sites and sites that have been substantially redeveloped.
- 2.3. That cases of non compliance with either the 1989 or 2008 site condition standards be considered on a case by case, risk assessed basis and enforcement undertaken where the level of risk is considered sufficient to necessitate action being taken.

3. KEY ISSUES

3.1. Financial Implications

- 3.2 There would be no significant financial implications associated with the implementation of the revised conditions and inclusion of '*Transitional Arrangements*' within the Mobile Home Site Licenses and attached conditions.
- 3.3 There will be an officer resource pressure experienced in terms of the officer's time in the undertaking of risk assessments for each case where Transitional Arrangements are being considered because an existing resident has a combustible structure situated within the separation zone or other similar contravention of licence conditions. In cases where it was considered that enforcement action needed to be

taken this work would have to be carried out as part of the normal workload of the officers from the Strategic Housing Team and the officers from the legal team.

4. Legal Implications

4.1. Local authorities licence various types of caravan sites under the provisions of the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960. Under Section 1 of the Act, no occupier of land is allowed to permit land to be used as a permanent residential caravan site unless he/she is the holder of a site licence. The Local authority can attach any conditions to the licence which is considers necessary or desirable in the interest of persons living in the caravans.

4.2. A licence holder may appeal to the Magistrates Court against the imposition of a condition in a licence or any proposed alteration to a condition or a refusal to alter a condition

4.3. Under section 5(6) of the 1960 Act the Secretary of State may from time to time specify model standards with respect to the lay-out and the provision of facilities, services and equipment for caravan sites or particular types of caravan site; and that in deciding what (if any) conditions to attach to a site licence, the local authority shall have regard to any standards so specified. The model standards represent those standards normally to be expected as a matter of good practice on caravan sites.

4.4. New Model Standards were issues by the DCLG in 2008 to replace the previous 'Model Standards 1989'. These standards should be considered when applying licence conditions to new sites and sites that have been substantially redeveloped.

4.5. To assist Members in their consideration of the recommendations, the following extract is provided from the Model Standards Explanatory Notes issued by Department of Communities and Local Government for the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England which state that:

4.5.1. These standards should be considered when applying licence conditions to new sites and sites that have been substantially redeveloped. In considering variations to existing site licences or applications for new site licences for existing sites local authorities should consider whether it is appropriate for these standards to apply. In relation to variation of a licence the local authority must consult the site licence holder on its proposed variations and may wish to consult with residents

*or a Residents' Association, where appropriate. Where a current licence condition is adequate in serving its purpose, the authority should not normally apply the new standard. Where it is appropriate to apply the new standard to a condition the local authority should be able to justify its reasons for doing so, having regard to all the relevant circumstances of the site. **In deciding whether to apply a new standard the local authority must have regard to the benefit that the standard will achieve and the interests of both residents and site owners (including the cost of complying with the new or altered condition).***

4.5.2. The local authority must apply the Model Standards with regard to the particular characteristics of the site to which they are intended to apply, and in particular its existing layout and size. It is recognised that not all sites, will easily be able to meet the Model Standards in every case due to their particular characteristics, but a local authority will need to be able to justify any decision not to have regard to a standard in setting a licence condition.

4.6. As set out at para 4.1 above, it is an offence for an occupier of land to operate a caravan site without holding the appropriate licence under the 1960 Act. It is also an offence (under section 9) for an occupier to breach a licence condition and on summary conviction the offender can currently be fined up to £2,500. This is the provision that would be relevant to any enforcement action under the new Revised Model Standards. The reason for this is that by not requiring the necessary works to be carried out by the residents the site owner would then be in the position of being in breach of the site licence. Any enforcement action would be taken against the site owner as opposed to individual residents of the site. Where there was any conflict between the actions of the site owner and the co-operation of the residents affected .i.e. they were unwilling to carry out the necessary works, officers would take this into account when deciding what enforcement action to take.

4.7. The explanatory notes for the 2008 Model Conditions state that local authorities when considering taking enforcement action should follow the Compliance Code for regulators.

5. Service/Operational Implications

5.1. In 2003 the Council adopted a set of Mobile Home site license conditions based upon the 1989 Model Standards for all permanent residential home sites. Later, in 2008, the then Head of Planning and Environment Services recommended the adoption and phased

implementation of the more recently revised 2008 National Model Standards.

- 5.2. To date only two sites have been re licensed to the more recent 2008 Model Standards the other 11 sites remaining licensed under the 1989 site conditions. Under the phased approach to implementing the 2008 standards, sites have been considered as they change ownership or where substantial redevelopment has taken place.
- 5.3. Regular inspection of all 13 sites in the District takes place to monitor the level of conformity with Site Licence Conditions and overall, the level of compliance against the conditions set out in the 1989 Standards is in excess of 80% and the for the more recent 2008 Model Standards (where implemented) is over 70%. However, there are two specific conditions within the 2008 Model Conditions (one of which also featured in the 1989 standard conditions) where ongoing non compliance is evident and attempts by the officers to encourage conformity (other than by taking enforcement action) has met with strong opposition by residents and concern has been expressed by site owners who object to the standard being included in their site license conditions.
- 5.4. The specific conditions that are causing objection relate to the requirement to maintain a Separation Zone for the prevention of the transmission of fire of no less than 6m between mobile home / caravan units. Within this Separation Zone any structure that extends more than 1 meter into the Separation Zone will only be allowed if it is of non combustible construction (in both 1989 & 2008 standards) provided a 4.5 meter clear space can be maintained between it and the adjacent mobile home / caravan. The conditions also prescribe that fences and hedges forming a boundary between adjacent mobile homes / caravans should not exceed a maximum of 1 metre high (2008 standard only).
- 5.5. Since recent inspection and re-issue of site licenses it has become apparent that the conditions relating to protection of the fire Separation Zone between units is impacting quite significantly upon existing residents, a number of whom have non compliant combustible structures adjacent to their homes and boundary fences that exceed the 1 metre high standard.
- 5.6. In a number of cases, the contravention of these conditions by existing residents who have had combustible structures adjacent to their homes for many years is considered to be of a low risk by the Fire Officer (especially where the separation zone is found to be well in excess of the minimum 6 metre requirement).
- 5.7. A meeting with the fire Officer concluded that a common sense approach of risk assessing all cases where a contravention was

evident was the most appropriate way forward offering Transitional arrangements for existing owners. This would involve a risk assessment being carried out by the inspecting Private Sector Housing Officer and where the risk is assessed as being low, no action would be taken. However, where a unit changes ownership or a fence or shed is replaced they will be required to fully conform. Higher risk contraventions would have to be fully enforced.

5.8. Accordingly to enable this process to be put in place, a set of revised standards are attached to this report at Appendix 2 for member approval which include 'Transitional Arrangements' for existing residents that, subject to a risk assessment proving a low level of risk, would allow them to retain existing non conforming structures within the Separation Zone. Upon replacement of the structure or upon change of occupancy of the unit, the new Model Standard would be required.

5.9. The revised set of standards comes before Members for approval together with a recommendation that enforcement action be approved where the Transitional Arrangements cannot be allowed because a high level of risk has been identified by the Private Sector Housing Officers.

6. Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1. When considering the impact of this report and the proposed alterations upon the residents of mobile home sites it is important to consider the demographic make up of such sites. Mobile home sites within Bromsgrove District are generally available for elderly residents to which have been specified by the site owners. There is however one site within the district that is not age specific. The proposed amendments therefore will be implemented across the district irrespective of age, belief, sexual orientation, race or gender.

6.2. The change is likely to affect a higher proportion of older people and those with mobility issues; the rationale for making the amendments is to promote the personal safety of those residing on mobile home sites. Therefore it is considered that whilst a disproportionate number of older people and those with mobility issues are affected, this change is intended to protect their well being.

6.3. Residents may be expected to make changes that may result to ensure compliance which may result in them having to pay for additional works or removal of existing items. Whilst this would disproportionately affect older people and those with mobility issues it is considered that making the site safe is of paramount importance and therefore the adverse impact is justifiable.

6.4. It has therefore been considered that the benefits of complying with Central Government legislation and therefore the Councils duty to enforce non compliance out weighs any minimal equality and diversity issues that may arise.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

- If the 'hard line approach' is maintained when undertaking enforcement action there may be an increase in homelessness figures for the district as increased enforcement action and level of fines may result in site owners closing down sites thus resulting in displacement issues.
- Significant increase in enforcement activity may result in increased demand on workload not only internal to the Strategic Housing Department but also may increase pressure on the Legal & Democratic Services department in terms of taking prosecution.

7.2. These risks are being managed by the following risk register as follows:

Risk Register: Planning & Environment
Key Objective Ref No: 4
Key Objective: Provide an effective, efficient and legally compliant Housing Service

8. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Revised 2008 Model Standards and Conditions

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Model Standards Explanatory Notes provided by Department of Communities and Local Government for the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England
Caravan Site Register
License Conditions: Residential Caravan Sites
BERR Regulators Compliance Code
Model Standards 2008-Caravan Sites in England

10. AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: A. Coel – Strategic Housing Manager
E Mail: a.coel@bromsgrove.gov.uk
11. Tel: 01527 881270

This page is intentionally left blank

Bromsgrove Townscape Heritage Initiative

Stage II Bid

March 2012

Prepared by Bromsgrove District Council

A bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund

Townscape Heritage Initiative Stage II Bid & Action Plan

Contents

Section One – Summary

1.1 Our Organisation

Section Two – The Project Team and Partnership

2.1 The THI Project Team

2.2 The THI Project Officer

2.3 Other partners and their commitment to the scheme

2.4 The Partnership Steering Group

2.5 Decision-making processes

2.6 Skills and skills gaps of the Project Team and Partnership

Section Three – The Conservation Area

3.1 The area's social and economic context

3.2 Community Consultation

3.3 Statutory powers and planning policies

3.4 The Conservation Area and the THI area

3.5 The Character of the Conservation Area

3.6 The heritage need in the Conservation Area

3.7 Schedule of eligible projects

Section Four – The Conservation Area Management Plan

4.1 Adoption and publication of the Conservation Area Management Plan

4.2 Putting the Conservation Area Management Plan into practice

Section Five – The Action Plan

5.1 Vision and Strategies

5.1.1 The overall vision for the Conservation Area

5.1.2 Other regeneration strategies, projects or schemes impacting on the Conservation Area and surroundings

5.2 Scheme Outcomes and Benefits

5.2.1 Capital projects

5.2.2 Maintaining and managing the Conservation Area during the lifetime of the scheme

5.2.3 Community activities

5.2.4 Training activities

5.2.5 Benefits for people

5.2.6 The environmental effect

5.3 Scheme Delivery and Costs

5.3.1 Delivering the Action Plan

5.3.2 Risk Management

5.3.3 Eligible costs and the Common Fund

5.3.4 Partnership funding for the scheme

Section Six – Exit Strategy and Success Measures

6.1 What is our Exit Strategy?

6.2 How will we measure and evaluate the success of our scheme?

Stage 11 Appendices

CVs of new members of the Project Team
Job description/person specification for the THI Project Officer
Bromsgrove DC organisational and management information
Any appropriate planning committee reports and minutes
Development Plan and Regeneration Strategy policies, etc.
Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan
Photographic survey
THI building condition survey and costings
Valuation survey by chartered surveyor
Grant level calculations
Regional THI and other grant aid information
Details of Listed Buildings
Summary of the results of public consultation
Confirmation of matching funding
Letters from Partners in support of the scheme

DRAFT

1 Summary

Bromsgrove District Council are seeking to regenerate the historic town centre of Bromsgrove through a Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI) – a partnership project between Bromsgrove District Council, Worcestershire County Council and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The £1.6 million heritage-led regeneration scheme which is scheduled to run between 2012 and 2017 will help to achieve the long-term economic sustainability of Bromsgrove by preserving, restoring and enhancing the historical, architectural and cultural heritage of the town.

The THI area centres on Bromsgrove's High Street and Worcester Road and follows the medieval plan comprising the main south-west/north-east route between Worcester and Birmingham.

There is an assortment of notable historic buildings dating from predominantly the 18th and 19th centuries but with some earlier surviving timber-framed buildings. A range of architectural styles is represented from English vernacular, to restrained Georgian and more elaborate Victorian Gothic buildings. This variety of elevational treatments and styles demonstrates high quality construction and craftsmanship, giving a rich texture to the town centre, and are tangible reminders of the town's past prosperity.

The narrowness of the historic building plots, varied rooflines and the overall height of the buildings give an overall impression of vertical emphasis, and a strong sense of enclosure. The more modern developments unfortunately detract from this being generally set back from the established building line, sometimes a storey lower and include detailing which gives a horizontal rather than vertical emphasis. These infill sites do at least give opportunities for redevelopment in the future without requiring the loss of more historic buildings.

The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area was added to the national 'Heritage at Risk' register published by English Heritage in July 2010 as a result of a clear deterioration of the area's condition and appearance over the previous 3 years. This is one of only four 'at risk' areas in Worcestershire, and one of 51 identified across the West Midlands. The heritage at risk assessment process identified several noticeable problems that are contributing to the erosion of the character and appearance of the Conservation Area:

- Loss of historic detail or inappropriate change to doors and windows, front elevations, decorative features, shopfronts, signs and advertisements and new extensions
- Vacancies within buildings
- Signs of a lack of maintenance such as poorly maintained gutters or joinery
- The condition of the public realm
- Signs and advertisements, street clutter, highway works, traffic management, poor quality street furniture and a large number of planning enforcement cases were identified as particular problems
- The appearance and vitality of the Conservation Area has deteriorated over the last 3 years and is expected to continue to deteriorate in the next 3 years
- Condition and vulnerability both ranked at level 4 with a deteriorating trajectory

- Lack of adopted character appraisal, current management plan or LDF in place

We believe positive action is urgently required to give the town centre a new lease of life. A major new impetus is needed to rebuild Bromsgrove's distinctive offer, bring back the traditional life and vitality to the street, stimulate the introduction of year round outdoor activity and niche retailing and re-establish High Street and Worcester Road as a thoroughfare to be enjoyed by all. Our vision is the transformation of Bromsgrove back into a thriving market town.

This document and its appendices have been developed to support the Stage II Bromsgrove bid to the HLF for funding under the THI.

This Stage II bid reinforces information in Stage I and is submitted by Bromsgrove District Council. It has been developed by the THI Project Officer working alongside the THI Project Team and THI Partnership Steering Group - this latter a good showing of Bromsgrove's movers and shakers

The total overall cost of the projects proposed, including expenditure on public realm, staffing, publicity, education and training is £4,656,800 with £1,600,000 available from the common fund including £1,200,000 now being sought from HLF, match funded by £400,000 from Worcestershire County Council.

54 properties have been identified as priority, including 15 which are noted as requiring preference (marked P+) – there are 27 potential reserve properties. The list of eligible properties is fairly extensive but this is reflective of the real need for intervention in the town centre where a significant number of buildings are statutorily listed or are buildings of positive merit and they all require some form of investment for repair and reinstatement works.

We believe that the proposed priority plus properties reflect a good balance of works as one is wholly vacant, eight are partially vacant and all fifteen are deemed to be in the worst condition, having the most prominent negative appearance when the buildings themselves are of significant heritage value. Refurbishment, repair and re-use grants will be supported by strong planning policy, community involvement and skills training.

Training is central to the THI. A budget of £50,000 has been set aside for training, education and learning activities which have been designed to engage with all members of the local community. We feel that it is a comprehensive mix of informal and formal activities which provides over 35 different events, activities, courses, talks, projects etc to be undertaken throughout the life of the THI.

In developing the THI bid, the Council has made good progress on strategy and policy development, including the development of a Draft Area Action Plan for the Town Centre, a review of our Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the updating of our SPG on the design of shopfronts and advertisements. We are committed to delivering change in the Town

Centre and the delivery of the THI scheme will be a critical part of this planned transformation.

1.1 Our Organisation

Bromsgrove District Council
Planning and Regeneration
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

The THI area postcodes are B60 and B61, with the centre of the THI in B60

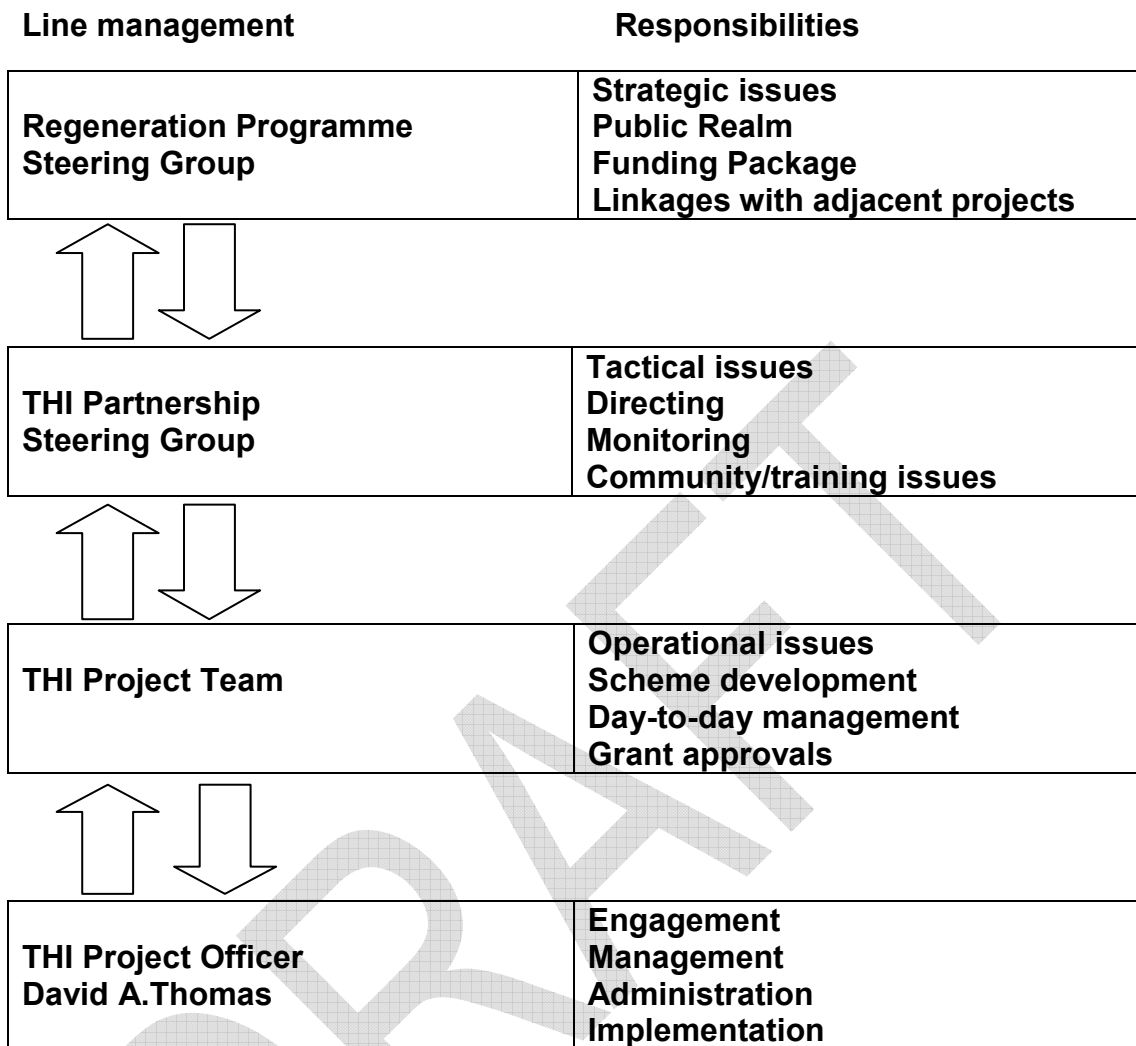
2 The Project Team and Partnership

The scheme will be led by Bromsgrove District Council which will be the responsible Lead Body, hold the contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund, manage - and be responsible for - the Common Fund and enter into contracts with individual property owners for delivery.

The THI Project Team and Partnership will provide a key element towards the Town Centre Regeneration Programme and will support and inform the projects developed by the Bromsgrove Regeneration Programme Steering Group.

Bromsgrove District Council as the lead organisation for this application has been holding regular meetings during the Development Stage of both the THI Project Team and the Bromsgrove THI Partnership Steering Group.

Figure 1: THI PROJECT TEAM & PARTNERSHIP LINKS AND STRUCTURE



2.1 The THI Project Team

We have established a small multi-disciplinary core THI Project Team which includes staff from both Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Worcestershire County Council (WCC). The responsibilities of the Project Team encompass operational issues, such as scheme development, day-to-day management and grant approvals. Individual team members and their skills are detailed in the table below. A core group of seven officers (marked with *) will be involved in all decision-making, the other project team members will be brought in as and when required.

Core THI Project Team Members

Name	Title	Skills
Martin Ashcroft *	Projects and Partnerships Manager (BDC)	Planning processes, project management & procurement
Dale Birch *	Development Control Manager (BDC)	Development control & planning enforcement
Mike Dunphy *	Strategic Planning Manager (BDC)	Strategic planning -policy development and implementation
Richard Savory *	Senior Projects Manager (WCC/BDC)	Project management, regeneration & economic development
Ross Walker *	Programme Support Officer (WCC)	Administration & project management
Mary Worsfold *	Conservation Officer (BDC)	Building conservation & heritage tourism
David A. Thomas *	THI Project Officer (BDC)	Building conservation, urban design, architecture & financial management

Since the Stage 1 bid, the THI Project Team has grown from seven to eighteen members. There are now three new members of the core group, namely:

- David A. Thomas who has filled the vacant post of THI Project Officer
- Mary Worsfold who has replaced Judith Carstairs as Conservation Officer providing specialist advice on building conservation and heritage issues
- Dale Birch, the development control manager for the town centre

The prime responsibilities of the core Project Team encompass operational issues, such as scheme development, day-to-day management and grant approvals. The core THI Project Team will meet six weekly during implementation.

The Project Team, together with the Project Officer, will have the technical expertise to manage all aspects of the project on a day-to-day basis reporting to the Partnership Steering Group on a regular basis.

Members of the core Project Team include particular skills and experience in the following areas:

- Community/business support and engagement
- Heritage interpretation and management
- Area-based initiatives for regeneration
- Previous involvement in THI schemes
- Project evaluation and monitoring
- Conservation
- Urban design
- Town centre economic development/entrepreneurial regeneration
- Project management
- Funding applications
- Liaison with relevant professions i.e. architects, surveyors, engineers
- Providing links with accredited training programmes
- Production of contract briefs for technical services and management

Following interviews, David Thomas was appointed as the Bromsgrove THI Project Officer in June 2011 and has taken responsibility for the development of the THI Stage 2 application. His line manager is Michael Dunphy who will assume overall responsibility for delivery of the scheme.

The THI Project Officer will prepare recommendations on grant applications which will be reviewed by his Line Manager before being passed through the Project Team and Partnership Steering Group for observations and endorsement. Colleagues on the Core and Supporting Project Team will assist with specific responsibilities including consultation with the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services.

Delegated authority to approve grant applications is set out in Section 2.5 below and the executive decision approving the delegated powers and grant scheme application and approval process is attached (Appendix 2).

Supporting THI Project Team Members

Name	Title	Skills
Andrew Bucklitch	Tree Officer (BDC)	Tree management & landscape works
Jack Carradine	Media Officer (BDC)	Media and Communications
Richard Clewer	(WWC)	Highway engineering, maintenance and public realm
Jennie Delorenzo	Officer (BDC)	Housing/vacancy initiatives

Jon Fraser	Highways Manager (WCC)	Highways, public realm
Kevin Hirons	Street Scene & Communities Manager (BDC)	Public realm – street scene & communities
Jayne Pickering	Head of Financial Services (BDC)	Financial
Christopher Holmes	Accountancy Technician (BDC)	Financial
Iain Mackay	Planning Enforcement Officer (BDC)	Planning enforcement
Rachel McAndrews	CCTV & Telecare Services Manager (BDC)	Public realm - CCTV
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer (BDC)	Equality/accessibility issues

Most of the supporting THI Project Team members have been involved in aspects of the preparation of this Stage 2 application, and selected officers have attended the THI Project Team meetings during the Development Stage.

During the Delivery Stage they will be kept up to date with meeting notes and will attend as issues of interest involve their advice and actions.

Led by the THI Project Officer, the Project Team will provide day-to-day support and have responsibility for making decisions and approving changes, as well as providing strategic direction to the Project Officer, during the delivery phase and reporting to and working with the THI Partnership Steering Group.

We previously provided Curriculum Vitae and track records of the Project Team with the Stage 1 submission which outline the necessary skills set required to deliver the THI. CV's for the new members of the Core Project Team mentioned above are attached (Appendix 1).

We are confident that we have the full range of necessary skills within the full Project Team and we will also be able to call on other officers within BDC and WCC to cover any issues that arise during the implementation of the THI.

Figure 2, below, identifies the linkages within the Project team and the focal role of the THI Project Officer, and its regular meetings with the HLF THI Monitor and Officers, the THI Partnership Steering Group and Bromsgrove Regeneration Steering Group with arrangements for wider Community Consultation.

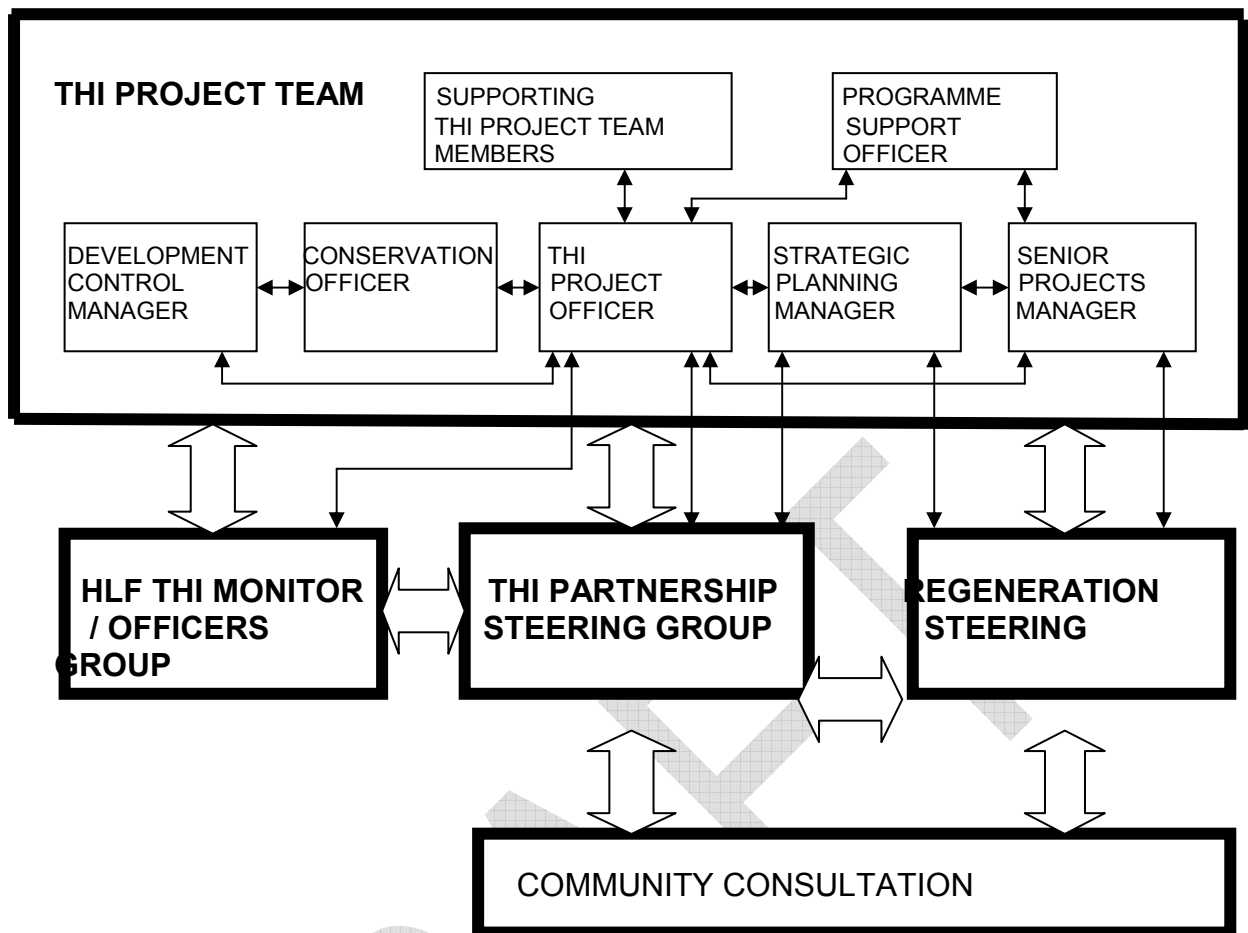


Figure 2: Project Team members and key HLF and Steering Group linkages

2.2 THI Project Officer

Following the award of a first-round pass of £1,250,000 which included development funding of up to £50,000, Bromsgrove District Council appointed a THI Project Officer to bring forward the scheme to Stage II submission. The recruitment process confirmed that the job description and person specification (Appendix 2), as well as the grade and salary, were correct due to the number of quality applicants and subsequent interviewing of 3 highly qualified candidates.

The THI Project Officer will continue in post on a 5-year fixed-term contract, funded through the common fund, following HLF approval of the second-round THI bid. The Officer has a proven track record in delivering conservation-led regeneration projects – including THI experience, coupled with negotiation, project management and communication skills and an ability to work with partners.

The THI Project Officer's fixed base will be in the Development and Regeneration Unit's Offices in Bromsgrove town centre where he will be located within the BDC Strategic Planning Team. He will assume much of the responsibility for the day-to-day management of the project, regularly

reporting on progress and any issues to his line manager - the Strategic Planning Manager, the Project Team and Partnership Steering Group. He will also act as the main contact with the HLF Monitor and Officers for the grant. We attach a letter, from Bromsgrove District Council, as the lead partner, confirming that the THI Project Officer is authorised to act on the Partnership's behalf (Appendix 2).

He will be supported by the Project Team and will be provided with administrative support from within BDC Strategic Planning Team. Additional support will also be provided from other Council Officers as identified. The Project Officer will work closely with the Conservation Officer as well as the Development Control Manager specifically dedicated to this town centre THI scheme.

THI Project Officer's tasks:

- First point of contact for all THI enquiries
- Day to day responsibility for implementation of the THI
- Providing guidance to property owners on THI application process
- Making principal assessment on all THI applications
- Monitoring THI approvals, both financially and physically
- Developing and Implement THI complementary initiatives
- Liaise with Media Officer to market and promote THI
- Engage with the community and voluntary sector
- Liaise with the BDC accountant to ensure grant claims and financial record keeping is completed efficiently
- Preparing agendas for Project Team and Partnership meetings
- And providing the primary contact for the HLF Monitor and Officers

Key competencies required from the THI Project Officer include:

- experience in project managing buildings projects,
- experience in building conservation/restoration,
- robust financial management skills,
- organisation and negotiation skills,
- and a focused and proactive approach.

A draft job description for the THI Project Officer is attached in appendix 3.

The salary of the THI Project Officer is to be confirmed. The post will be established on a temporary 5-year contract basis. A budget will be allocated for the THI Project Officer which will be split as detailed below:

Salary over 5 years (at current rate)	£TBC
Annual salary increase allowance	£TBC

Inflation allowance	£TBC
National Insurance	£TBC
Pension Contribution	£TBC
<u>Total over 5 years</u>	<u>£TBC</u>

2.3 Other partners and their commitment to the scheme

The economic vitality and the protection of the heritage of the town centre is considered a high priority for council members and, as a result, the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services chairs the Partnership Steering Group.

The Council has supported the submission of a Townscape Heritage Initiative application and has demonstrated further commitment by the allocation of £16,700 match funding for the development phase. A further £400,000 for public realm improvements - to be undertaken in conjunction with the THI scheme - has been added to the common fund by Worcestershire County Council.

The multi-disciplinary Project Team, described in 2.1, meets every six weeks to ensure there is momentum to the scheme and that all key departments are kept informed of progress and have contributed to proposals.

Bromsgrove District Council is the Local Planning Authority and remains strongly committed to the application. The commitment of council members to the project is also evidenced by a corporate integrated approach as illustrated in the letters of support (see Appendix 14).

The District Council has invited a range of organisations representing all aspects of the community to sit on the Partnership Steering Group and oversee the project. The roles of each current partner are described in 2.4 below.

The Steering Group includes elected members, representatives from the retail sector, community groups, religious bodies, heritage organisations, archaeological societies and the educational sector. We are conscious that our mix of partners may change, and that new partners may emerge, as the project proceeds and we will seek to consider these in order for the Partnership to be fully representative and inclusive.

From Stage I, the Partnership Steering Group has changed in the make-up of its members – there has been the addition of representatives from the retail sector, a religious leader and a specialist in archaeology. Their support letters and valuable contribution to the Steering Group are attached (Appendix 14). Other officers from within the District and County Councils will contribute as appropriate.

The Steering Group has approved the following terms of reference:

- To endorse and agree the details of the second-round bid to the HLF
- To oversee the implementation of the funded works and review progress

and confirmed their commitment to provide technical advice, guidance and strategic support to the District Council in the management of the initiative. The Steering Group will continue to meet bi-monthly to review progress.

Letters of support from the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council and the Leaders of both Bromsgrove District and Worcestershire County Councils (appendix 14) outline the Council's continued commitment to the scheme and the involvement of key officers to ensure its success.

2.4 The Partnership Steering Group

Bromsgrove District Council, as the lead partner and Local Planning Authority is represented on the Project Team at senior officer level and has already made significant strides towards the long-term management of the project. The Conservation Officer has updated the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area Appraisal and written a Conservation Area Management Plan to accompany it. The Strategic Planning team have produced a Bromsgrove Town Centre Draft Area Action Plan, a Town Centre Health Check and revised design guidance on shopfronts and advertisements (SPG). The Town Centre Steering Group, chaired by the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services, has endorsed a Draft Project Brief for the public realm upgrade. All these documents are attached (Appendix 4).

The Council has established a Partnership Steering group, chaired by the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services, which currently meets bi-monthly and has now met four times. The Steering Group membership includes:

- Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings
- The Victorian Society
- The Housman Society
- Artrix - Bromsgrove's Theatre, Cinema, Live Music and Comedy Venue
- The Bromsgrove Society
- Bromsgrove School
- North East Worcestershire College

- English Heritage
- Historic Environment and Archaeology Service at Worcestershire County Council
- St. John's Church
- Representative for the town centre retailers
- Andrew Oulsnam, Oulsnam Estate Agents
- Lesley Ashworth, Lesley Ashworth Accessories
- Councillor Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP
- Councillor Mrs. R. L. Dent
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Worcestershire County Council
- Clare Haines, Grants Officer, HLF West Midlands (by open invitation)
- Phil South, HLF External Monitoring Officer (by open invitation)

The role of the Steering Group is to contribute to the overall delivery and project management of the THI scheme and to ensure direction, commitment and joint working. Some members of the Partnership will be very directly involved in activities such as training, community engagement or even the potential purchasing of town centre buildings. The Steering Group is not constituted but has approved terms of reference as detailed above. The main objectives of the Steering Group are to:

- Promote conservation of the heritage and respect the distinctive quality of the historic buildings
- Work together to develop vision and strategy for the implementation of the THI scheme
- Develop a THI scheme that will regenerate and develop the town centre as a prosperous, vibrant, safe and accessible work place and visitor destination, providing employment in a high quality environment
- Promote the THI scheme actively and to work together to secure Bromsgrove's second-round bid to the HLF
- Help raise civic pride and promote an image demonstrating Bromsgrove town centre as a sound investment opportunity for new uses that will aid sustainable regeneration
- Develop community involvement in the regeneration of Bromsgrove town centre

The roles of each partner are as follows:

- The Director of **Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings**, just south of Bromsgrove, is providing valuable knowledge of traditional construction and repair techniques. The museum will host 3 days of courses for homeowners on historic building maintenance. There is also a commitment to procure traditional rural craft and trade workers for an archaeology open day scheduled for August 2012
- The Bromsgrove Casework Reporter at the Birmingham and West Midlands branch of the **Victorian Society** is providing guidance on the

reinstatement of missing architectural features as well as participating in our training and outreach projects

- The Chairman of the **Housman Society** through the THI scheme is promoting knowledge and appreciation of the life and works of A. E. Housman - a poet and pre-eminent classicist from Bromsgrove.
- The Director of **Artrix**, Bromsgrove's versatile multi-disciplinary arts centre, is working closely on a number of art in the public realm initiatives. Innovative artists, designers or makers with the vision to make their mark on the High Street will be invited to tender as an integral part of an exciting public realm scheme
- The Chairman of the **Bromsgrove Society** is providing the lead on a number of projects such as landscaping the Spadesbourne Brook, redesigning the town trail guide and a plan to address visual the backs of High Street properties from cars passing by on Market Street
- The Headmaster of **Bromsgrove School** is keenly supporting the history and regeneration of Bromsgrove. Representation from the school on the Steering Group will provide a valuable connection to local residents and young people specifically
- The Principal of **North East Worcestershire College**, through the Head of Business, Construction and Enterprise, is working closely with the THI Project Team and the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) on developing masterclasses in construction for 16 – 19 year olds
- The Historic Areas Advisor for **English Heritage** in the West Midlands is providing specialist advice on the proposed repair and improvement works, as well as guidance on our training and outreach projects
- The **HLF** Monitor and Officers will be invited to attend the Steering Group meetings to provide an understanding of HLF priorities and the THI progress
- Officers from the **Historic Environment and Archaeological Service** are helping to develop plans for a community dig which is proposed for Mill Lane off High Street. There will be a second community dig in Sanders Park culminating in an open day scheduled for August 2012
- **St. John's Church** is a key link to the local community and has a strong presence in the heart of the town centre which will help in promotion of the scheme and the history of High Street/Worcester Road as well as public consultation
- The Town Centre **Retail Representative** will help us contact and consult local businesses to identify their real issues and concerns and to promote and encourage both businesses and owners to become involved with the scheme
- **Lesley Ashworth** and **Andrew Oulsnam** have High Street businesses and have already taken up grants to reinstate traditional shopfronts from the Frontage Improvement Scheme
- **Bromsgrove District Council** is the Local Planning Authority and is the accountable body for the proposed THI. Staff members will contribute building, conservation and planning knowledge to the Steering Group. The BDC local Councilor will represent and interpret the requirements of both town centre owners and users.

- **Worcestershire County Council** includes the Highways Authority and are providing match funding of £400,000 for the THI bid. Their role will be to ensure coordination with other regeneration initiatives and to provide advice to the Steering Group on the proposed public realm works. The Worcestershire County Councilor for Bromsgrove will represent and interpret the requirements of Bromsgrove residents.

THI Partnership Steering Group tasks include:

- Hold Quarterly meetings to receive update reports
- Approve Annual THI Report
- Approve any proposals for changes to programme or individual project expenditure
- Approve expenditure on any new eligible THI item
- Approve any changes in Delivery Phase timetable
- Agree changes to the Financial Profile
- Review grant decisions and confirm decisions on all grant applications above £25k
- Monitor progress against annual action plan
- Promote the THI scheme to the wider community
- Providing technical expertise and guidance
-

The THI Project Officer will provide the secretariat for the Partnership Steering Group.

2.5 Decision-making processes

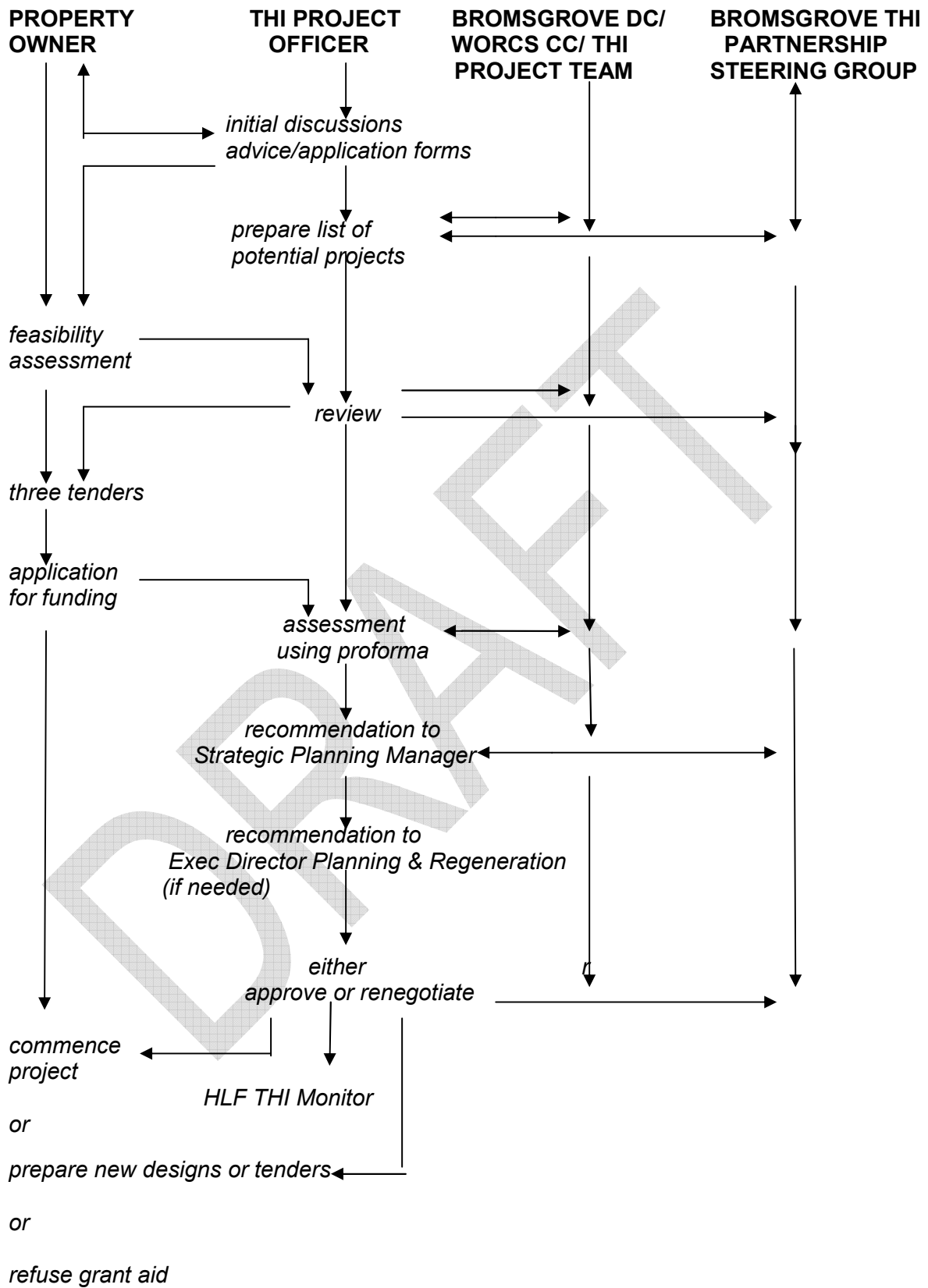


Figure 3: BROMSGROVE DECISION MAKING FLOW CHART

The scheme will be led by Bromsgrove District Council which will be the responsible Lead Body, hold the contract with the Heritage Lottery Fund, manage - and be responsible for - the Common Fund and enter into contracts with individual property owners for delivery. We envisage that the Project Team, together with the THI Project Officer, will have the technical expertise to manage all aspects of the project on a day-to-day basis reporting to the Steering Group at regular intervals.

The District Council will ensure that there are sufficient - and appropriately qualified - planning, conservation, property and economic development staff to manage the scheme on a day-to-day basis. Enforcement powers will be used where necessary in consultation with members of the Steering Group.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning, Regeneration, Regulatory Services and Strategic Housing will oversee the project at a political level. It is anticipated that the Steering Group will continue in some form when the project is completed thereby ensuring that the investment is protected and that 'best practice' as instigated during the course of the scheme continues after the completion date.

Additionally, the *Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan* and the *Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide SPG* will be used as material considerations when determining planning applications and will assist in dealing with breaches of planning control ensuring good practice continues during and after scheme completion.

The Council will be the accountable body for the THI and will manage the Common Fund. It has an excellent track record of administering its own and external public funds - the Town Centre Regeneration Programme Manager (who is a member of the THI Project Team) has 15 years experience of running major publicly funded grant schemes in the economic development and regeneration arena. These included Foot & Mouth Recovery, Rover Recovery, Rural Regeneration Zones - each with multi million pound budgets. We will ensure records are kept in such a way as to allow for internal or external auditing during and at the conclusion of the THI. The accounting and auditing principles set out in the Stage II guidance will be followed.

2.5.1 Pre-Application

The applicant will be advised to read the three Bromsgrove THI documents:

- Guide to Eligible Works
- Introduction to Grant Scheme
- Specification Requirements for Grant-Aided Work

and submit an initial Expression of Interest form before a full application can be completed. All potential applicants must take part in pre-application discussions with the THI Project Officer to discuss the proposed works and whether the proposals are eligible under the terms of the grant scheme. A site

visit will be undertaken and a specification and schedule of works, together with any drawings that may be necessary, will then be agreed in principle.

Other pre-application processes are expected of the applicant and include:

- The need for three competitive and detailed tenders - if the grant contribution is likely to be over £10,000
- Agreed specifications, priced schedules of work and drawings
- Any required consents such as listed building consent, planning permission, building regulations approval or advertisement consent

These will need to be submitted with a completed full application form as well as other relevant information as set out in the booklet: *Introduction to Grant Scheme* (see Appendix 10) before an application can be assessed.

2.5.2 Grant Application Decisions

The process for decision making for third party grants is shown in Figure 2. It confirms that the Project Team and the Partnership Steering Group will both work as part of the process to determine eligible applications and offer grants although the final decision will be taken by the Strategic Planning Manager under the guidance and full collaborative working of the Project Team and Steering Group.

Both the Project Team and the Partnership Steering group will be involved in the decision-making process from the beginning. Following an expression of interest, the THI Project Officer will liaise with the applicant to bring forward an application.

Once an application has been received, its assessment will be led by the THI Project Officer working with the Project Team, drawing down their relative expertise, to ensure that the all key areas, for example, conservation standards, planning policy and development control are rigorously tested. The Project Team and Steering Group will ensure that the application meets the assessment criteria and priorities as set out in the THI action plan.

Once the assessment has been undertaken, and the application amended where necessary, the THI Project Officer will put forward a decision request to provide grant aid or not. The Steering Group will provide any further observations and finally endorse the recommendation. The Strategic Planning Manager, following consultation with the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services, will then have the delegated authority to approve the grant application.

Some applications may require referral to the HLF, for example:

- Where the HLF grant is likely to exceed £100,000
- If an application is made by a member of the Steering Group
- If a project is selected by the HLF to be monitored

- If the building is owned by Bromsgrove District or Worcestershire County Councils

The Application Forms and Guidance Notes are attached (Appendix 10).

The Steering Group will endorse and monitor the annual action plan in terms of progress being made and act as a sounding board, offering support and guidance on any issues that might arise throughout the process.

Assessment Criteria

Applications for grant aid for properties will be assessed on a property-by-property basis, and against the following criteria:

- Whether the building is a 'Priority +'; 'Priority'; or a 'Reserve' property';
- The conservation and townscape merit of the building, and the extent to which the proposals will enhance these characteristics;
- The need for repair or replacement of elements of the building;
- The use of appropriate materials and techniques of repair and replacement, in keeping with national and local conservation standards;
- The extent to which architectural details will be reinstated;
- The regard paid to the special character and interest of the property and its Conservation Area setting;
- Whether proposals fully meet criteria set out in the *Guide to Eligible Works*
- Whether the cost of the project is reasonable and provides Value for Money
- Whether appropriately qualified and experienced professional advisors and contractors are proposed

Other documentation must be submitted with the application and the Project Team must be satisfied with:

- A full specification and priced schedule of works
- Drawings - relevant annotated plans, elevation and cross sectional drawings at an appropriate scale and a site plan (Ordnance Survey extract)
- Photographs of relevant elevations and details;
- Structural survey (if appropriate);
- An up-to-date valuation of the property in its current condition where the building is to be brought back into reuse with an estimated valuation of the building once the project has been completed;
- Historical justification for the proposals;
- Details of a suitable professional advisor to develop and manage the works, if the grant contribution is likely to be over £20,000;
- A work programme and cost plan as appropriate, providing value for money;

- Three detailed, itemised, like-for-like tenders for the work where the eligible works are over £10,000 and two detailed quotes when under £10,000;
- A development appraisal where the building is to be brought back into reuse
- Copies of any relevant notifications if the proposed works require any statutory consents (such as planning permission, listed building consent, building regulations approval or advertisement consent);
- Any outstanding issues of planning enforcement or unauthorised work to the property need to be resolved in writing to the satisfaction of Bromsgrove DC
- Copies of letters notifying the applicant of any other grant offers or awards from other sources;
- Proof of ownership and/or possession of the property;
- The consent of the lender if the property is mortgaged and/or of the freeholder if the property is leased;
- A Health and Safety Statement;
- Details of the buildings insurance and any additional insurance required.

Grants could range from £3,000 (eligible works under this threshold will not be considered for funding) to a capped maximum amount of £200,000 for each building. It is envisaged that few applications will be small or simple enough to not warrant the full scrutiny of the assessment process and therefore, all applications received will be assessed against the same criteria, in the same manner. It is also worth noting that if HLF approval is required for any project, the applicant will be advised that this may add anywhere between 10 and 31 days to the grant decision timetable.

To avoid any conflicts of interest, the members of the Project Team and Partnership Steering Group are required to declare any interests and should this be the case, will not be involved in any grant assessment or decision-making process for that particular application or activity. Declarations of interest have been asked for at previous Partnership Steering Group meetings and so is already part of the process. However, a formal conflict of interest form will be signed by each member of the Project Team and Partnership Steering Group prior to scheme commencement. A copy of the form is attached (Appendix 2).

Decisions on the learning, education and training plan, to be paid for by the Common Fund, will be made by both the Project Team and Partnership Steering Group.

2.6 Skills and skills gaps of the Project Team and Partnership

We have fashioned the Partnership Steering Group to have the multi-disciplinary skills and experience we require in taking the scheme forward. The Project Team includes people with a proven track record in project management, conservation, planning, economic regeneration, training, property management, heritage management and community engagement.

In reviewing the range of skills in the Project Team and Partnership Steering Group we have perceived few gaps. Where further advice is needed, specific officers from within the Council will be able to provide additional advice to the Project Team on such specialist areas as legal, tourism and events. This will strengthen the team and provide an additional pool of resource which can be called upon as and when necessary. See Tables in section 2.1 for details.

The skills set of the core members of the Project Team were included in the Stage 1 bid and their headline skills listed in section 2.1 above as are those of Officers who will provide advice and expertise as and when required. The key new member to have joined the Core Project Team since Stage 1 and offer skills in building conservation, urban design, architecture, financial management and heritage tourism is the THI Project Officer – David Thomas:

- THI Project Officer – a specialist in the conservation and management of historic buildings with considerable experience of Heritage Lottery Fund grant processes. An Affiliate member of the IHBC and ASCHB who has four years experience of conservation and urban design in a local authority. Chairman and Area Representative of the UK Association of Preservation Trusts in the Midlands. He was previously a THI Project Officer in Kent

Curriculum Vitae and track records of the new members of the Core Project Team are attached (Appendix 1).

As part of the development phase, we employed quantity and valuation surveyors to undertake surveys of properties to determine the type and cost of works required with current and future valuations to help determine baseline grant rates and expected conservation deficit. Future valuations will be prepared by applicants using surveyors from an agreed list. Estimates will be checked by Building Surveyor staff within Bromsgrove DC.

We intend to build training into all aspects of the project. This will include the role of the Partnership Steering Group, the THI Project Officer and the Project Team. We will work closely with North East Worcestershire College, and other training providers as appropriate, to ensure that everyone involved in the project has the skills required to successfully deliver their part in the project and can also improve their skills and knowledge, including conservation awareness and maintenance training for owners/tenants along High Street and Worcester Road.

3 The Conservation Area

3.1 The area's social and economic context

There are 23 wards across Bromsgrove District. The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area lies within the heart of the town and although it sits completely within the ward of St. John local residents from the neighbouring wards of Charford, Sidemoor, Slideslow and Whitford regularly use the area.

The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area is located in the very heart of Bromsgrove (see Appendix 15). St. John's Ward covers an area of 1.14 square miles and has a population of 4,655 (2010). High Street and Worcester Road, the twin foci of this application, form a long, predominantly commercial/shopping street in the centre of the ward but are disadvantaged by the greater range and size of stores and facilities in neighbouring centres such as Birmingham, Worcester, Redditch, Solihull and Merry Hill.

In Bromsgrove the business make-up consists of 4.6% in the wholesale trade, 8.5% in the retail trade, 14.8% in professional, scientific and technical roles, 14.1% in construction and 7.1% in health and education. Construction businesses are more numerous than in Worcestershire (11.3%), or the West Midlands (10.9%), but retail has less significance when compared with Worcestershire (10.3%) or the West Midlands (11.8%).

The majority of businesses within Bromsgrove are small to medium enterprises (SMEs) which have less than four employees. Only 7% of businesses employ over 20 people and just 0.8% have over 100 employees.

Significantly St. John's Ward has the following characteristics:

- 14.6% of the population are aged 16 or under compared to 18.1% in the whole of Worcestershire
- The population aged between 16 - 64 make up 55.9% of the total population - this compares with 62.6% in Worcestershire
- Individuals aged over 65 years make up 29.5% of the total population compared to a county average of 19.3%

Employment

The Town Centre is currently home to a variety of employers. In addition to those employed in the retail sector, significant numbers of people work in office-based jobs as well as some light industrial businesses. It is important that a wide mix of employment opportunities is maintained and expanded to allow for a Town Centre that can be successful in all market conditions.

An important part of this will be the significant improvement in the provision of office accommodation within the Town Centre. The expected expansion and increase in the population of the District as identified in the Core Strategy will bring with it a requirement for new employment opportunities. Whilst some of this will be provided for on existing employment sites and new development on the expansion sites, it is important that the Town Centre also offers new opportunities. Office based development within the Town is seen as important, particularly with the increased catchment area for business and employees offered by the planned electrification of the cross city railway line and in the longer term the provision of a new train station. These improvements will make Bromsgrove even more readily accessible from Birmingham. In order to capitalise on this it is important to offer a pleasant and affordable choice for businesses and commuters choosing to relocate out of very costly city centre accommodation.

The Council announced in October 2011 that it will be relocating over the next two years into the currently unused Parkside School building in the town centre, a measure not only ensuring that the Council's ability to provide accessible services is maintained but also that a significant number of employees are kept in the Town Centre adding to its overall vibrancy and vitality.

Education is a particularly large employer in Bromsgrove, accounting for over 13% of the workforce. In October, 2010, however, the Coalition Government Spending Review announced large scale reductions in public spending. It is anticipated that in the coming years this will have a marked impact on employment levels in public-sector dominated industries, particularly in Education, Public Administration, Defence and Health.

Education and Qualifications

In 2009 the percentage of pupils in St. John's Ward with 5 – plus GCSE A* - C Grades was 90.9%. This compares favourably with the percentages for Worcestershire (69.5%) and Bromsgrove as a whole (78.7%). In neighbouring Sidemoor, however, the picture is very different as the percentage considerably falls to 55%, faring little better in Charford at 63%.

Housing

The average price of a house in St. John's Ward during 2009 – 2010 was £171,721 considerably less than the £225,676 average for Bromsgrove as a whole. More dispiritingly, average house prices in the neighbouring wards of Charford and Sidemoor were £137,751 and £144,019 respectively. The percentage of dwellings in Council Tax Band A recorded in St. John's in 2009 was 23.1% compared to 8.4% for Bromsgrove as a whole. In Council Tax Band B the percentage rises to 26.8% compared to 18.2% for Bromsgrove.

Among neighbouring wards Charford and Sidemoor are exceptional in that they have even higher percentages of Band B category dwellings (58.2% and 45.7% respectively).

Town Centre residential development can be accommodated in a number of different ways although it is envisaged that capacity can be provided;

- In the conversion of vacant spaces above shops on the High Street and surrounding areas
- Within mixed use development schemes identified in the Draft Town Centre AAP
- And on Recreation Road in a dedicated retirement living complex, as highlighted in the Draft Town Centre AAP

Any new residential development in the town will provide a welcome addition to the overall housing offer and as such should reflect the needs of the District. New housing should focus on the provision of smaller affordable units, and housing suitable for the elderly, although more aspirational housing will also be welcomed in appropriate schemes and locations.

The Examination in Public into the Phase 2 Revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) was held in spring 2009. The Panel recommended an allocation of 4,000 dwellings in Bromsgrove for the period 2006-2021, with a further 2-3,000 for the period 2021-2026. However, following the change in Government the policy situation is complex. A draft of the Localism Bill was published in December 2010 highlighting the Government's intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. The Localism Bill is still passing through Parliament and is not likely to receive Royal Assent until later in the year. Whilst changes are being made to it during its passage through Parliament the Government has regularly reiterated its intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies. A series of legal challenges have been made by Cala Homes and on 27th May, 2011 the Court of Appeal dismissed Cala Home's claim that the Government's intention to revoke regional strategies could never be a lawful material consideration in planning decisions. It has been recognised in the majority of cases that the RSS is still a material consideration and therefore the housing targets set out in the Phase 2 Revision are still relevant. At present, the Panel Reports' recommendation of 4,000 dwellings up until 2021 is used when calculating targets and five-year land supplies. This figure was also the identified target recognised as part of the Council's Draft Core Strategy 2 consultation in early 2011.

Community Uses

All community groups need their Town Centre to be one that they can use and enjoy. The design of the public realm and open spaces will incorporate room for evening and day time events. These include Farmers Markets, Specialty

Markets, Christmas Events, Street Theatres, and Park Programmes etc., which bring many visitors into the vicinity of the Town Centre at certain times.

Retailer Representation

Despite the presence of multiple retailers, 83% of respondents in the Bromsgrove Town Centre AAP survey (2008) considered the range of shops in Bromsgrove as very poor or poor, only 16% considered them as adequate or good and none considered it as excellent. The top choices which respondents considered would make the town centre a better place to shop are:

1. More small independent and specialist shops (63%)
2. A department store (59%)
3. More national chain stores (53%)
4. Regular farmers markets (44%)
5. A high quality national food store for the Market Hall site (39%)
6. Occasional special markets such as a French street market (39%)

Index of Multiple Deprivation

Although the majority of the District performs well in terms of deprivation, there are small pockets of deprivation that need to be tackled. There are three LSOAs in the 30% most deprived nationally and the most deprived area in the District is in the northern part of neighbouring Sidemoor, which is ranked, 8,168th out of 32,482 most deprived areas nationally (DCLG Indices of Multiple Deprivation, 2010).

Earnings

In St. John's the proportion of households earning less than £10,000 a year is 12% while in neighbouring Sidemoor and Charford the percentage is slightly more alarming at 13%. Across Bromsgrove as a whole the picture improves at 9%. The average household income in St. John's Ward is £35,012, dropping to £33,309 in Charford and £32,336 in Sidemoor. In Bromsgrove households bring in £41,513 and across the County the mean income is £37,370.

Although Bromsgrove District's population earns higher salaries than average, it is known that they earn them in employment locations outside the District. Due to Bromsgrove's close proximity to a major urban area, many residents commute to jobs in and around Birmingham. Therefore, it appears that there is an imbalance between the types of jobs and pay available within Bromsgrove compared with the average wages of the population. Industries with higher paid jobs need to be encouraged to stay or locate in the District so as to correct this imbalance and reduce the daily flow of the population to other employment centres which is unsustainable.

Benefits

In St. John's there were 300 claimants of Out of Work benefits recorded in Feb, 2011, a figure representing 11.7% of the ward's population aged between 16 – 64 years. In neighbouring Charford, however, this figure rises to 575 claimants while Sidemoor records 370 for the same period. By October, 2011, St. John's Ward had 89 people claiming Job Seekers Allowance, representing 3.4% of the population aged between 16 – 64 years. Charford's claimants for Job Seekers Allowance reached 215 in October 2011 with even neighbouring Whitford showing 96 people making similar claims.

Travel to Work

Although commuting by car or van is the most common mode of transport, Bromsgrove has a significantly higher percentage of people using cars or vans and less using public transport than the regional and national percentage. The car ownership levels in Bromsgrove are 87%. Among them, 40% have 1 car/van, 36% have 2 and 11% have 3 or more. Compared with the regional and national average, which both have a car ownership of 73%, Bromsgrove's car ownership is significantly higher than the regional and national average. Together with the rural nature of the district, it is therefore not surprising that car is the main mode of transport for local residents visiting the town centre.

Crime

St. Johns ward remains the worse (rank 1) ward in terms of total crimes across the District. This is fully expected as this is the most urban and frequently used ward, especially late at night where people go to socialise and are subjected to alcohol.

The High Street in Bromsgrove town centre is a pedestrianised area and it creates a strong sense of enclosure. Although this creates a nice shopping environment, it affects the perception of safety to pedestrians after dark. The high enclosure means that pass-by traffic is unlikely to see what is going on in the street. The upper floors of shops currently are mainly used as shop storage or offices and there is a lack of natural surveillance outside shops' trading hours and office hours.

In the Bromsgrove Town Centre AAP survey (2008), respondents (59%) considered that a safe environment is the most important thing that will attract them into Bromsgrove Town Centre in the evening.

2011 Town Centre Health Check

The Town Centre Health Check is produced for a number of reasons:

- In accordance with PPS4 that supports the monitoring of town centres
- It helps assess the success of retail policies within the adopted Bromsgrove District Local Plan
- It will be used to assist the development of town centre and retail policies within the Local Development Framework, particularly the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP)
- It helps assist with retail planning and development management in Bromsgrove town centre
- It helps assist with the ongoing information required for the Townscape Heritage Initiative in the town centre

Bromsgrove town centre is constantly changing and therefore elements of the 2011 Health Check will only provide a snap shot in time, for example, the ground floor survey and pedestrian count. However, as the Health Check is updated comparisons can be made with previous years. There are also a number of other benefits this document will offer:

- It allows positive and negative aspects of the town centre to be identified, and in turn regenerated or enhanced
- It provides data that can be used to make sure that the centre remains competitive with neighbouring centres in the region
- It provides baseline data for comparative links to be made with future health checks

The 2011 Bromsgrove Town Centre Health Check follows on from the 2009 and 2010 documents, monitoring vitality and viability through the consideration of economic, environmental and social factors. Bromsgrove District Council has identified that a holistic approach to the redevelopment of the town centre is required, that takes into account the prime sites for regeneration and includes systematic consideration of other opportunities. The annual Town Centre Health Checks are a vital component to this regeneration process and a useful evidence based tool for the Bromsgrove Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and Townscape Heritage Initiative (THI). For full report see Appendix 4.

3.2 Community Consultation

3.2.1 Frontage Improvement Scheme

Bromsgrove's frontage improvement scheme was approved in May 2010 and launched shortly afterwards with an initial budget of £20,000 allocated which was raised by a further £50,000 in August, 2010. The scheme was originally launched with a leaflet posted to all the eligible property owners and handed to all eligible tenants (Nos. 61 – 97 High Street only). The scheme was further publicised via a press release and on the Council's website. During the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) consultation which took place on the high street in February 2011 further publicity for the scheme was undertaken.

Applications were approved for 4 properties totaling £15,460 and 3 of these had been for the maximum £4000 with the other one being for £3460. The grant was approved for minor window and brickwork improvements, and some limited external decoration on historic properties.

A number of inquiries were received from other landowners and tenants requesting assistance under the frontage improvement scheme for work which would cost more than the stipulated £4000 and two in particular were for the reinstatement of historically-accurate, nineteenth century shopfronts together with traditional, hand-painted fascias. For these works to be carried out the assistance available under the Frontage Improvement Scheme was not sufficient. At the time there was a grant rate of 80% of the cost of works (repair or reinstatement) to a maximum of £4,000 per building. In order to carry out more substantial works, however, such as reinstating a historic shopfront - a measure in keeping with the architecture of the rest of the building - it was necessary to remove the £4,000 limit. It was felt that whilst the £4000 limit was making a modest improvement to the character of the High Street, it was also preventing other opportunities from coming forward which would have a more substantial impact.

There were opportunities in the town centre to set an example of good shopfront design based on historic precedent as a benchmark for the Stage 2 Townscape Heritage Initiative proposal. Works were carried out at two properties in accordance with best practice in the enhancement of historic buildings and to a quality appropriate for an assistance scheme of importance to the national heritage. The reinstatement of historic shopfronts at Nos. 61 and 65 High Street, as supported by the Council, has gone a very long way we feel in strengthening our second-round bid and making our proposal an exceptionally positive one. The welcome publicity that such projects have brought is providing a positive message in the run-up to submission of the Stage 2 HLF bid.

3.2.2 Bromsgrove Fair Day, Annual Street Market

The well-known Court Leet event is the Annual Fair Day Street Market which in 2011 was held on Saturday, 25th. June. Members of the Court Leet, a sort of medieval forerunner of our modern Magistrate's Court, walked in procession from Housman Hall on Kidderminster Road to the Housman Statue in the centre of Bromsgrove dressed in full robes and regalia. Street market stalls were operated predominantly by fundraisers also in traditional costume. At this well-attended event a THI A5 flyer was handed out, and advice and information given, to the crowds thronging the town centre. The

same flyer was also handed out on the same day at a Community Consultation Conference opened by Kevin Dicks, joint Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils.

3.2.3 Avoncroft Museum of Historic Buildings

On Saturday, 19th November, 2011, the THI Project Officer and Conservation Officer manned a stall at the *Caring for your traditional building* event held at Avoncroft Museum as part of the SPAB National Maintenance Week. THI flyers and questionnaires were handed out and advice on the proposed THI scheme given throughout the day.

3.2.4 Equality and Diversity Forum

This was set up in 2005, originally to meet the requirements of Level 2 of the (now superseded) Equality Standard for Local Government. It has become a key link between the council and the community and has achieved a great over those years with many successful projects arising from issues raised by community members in Forum meetings. As the name suggest, this Forum covers all areas of equality including disability.

The THI Project Officer gave a presentation to the Forum on 8th December, 2011 with the Chief Executive for Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils in attendance. An update was given on the second-round bid and the results of the street access audit were discussed. Following the presentation questions from the floor were taken.

3.2.5 Questionnaire

In the week beginning Monday, 9th January, 2012, the THI Project Officer met with the owners of priority and priority + properties, as well as those properties on the reserve list, to discuss their needs and the opportunities for heritage protection in light of the proposed THI funding. Where properties had vacant historic floorspace above the ground floor discussions were also held to test the viability of bringing these spaces back into viable use. A *Questionnaire for Property Owners and Occupiers* was handed out at these discussions and the would-be applicants were encouraged to complete the form in order that the future potential of their buildings might be assessed.

3.2.6 THI website

Bromsgrove District Council's THI website has been upgraded to act as a hub of information for the public, stakeholders and potential investors. Typical information includes:

- Opportunities to influence and be involved in the THI scheme
- Progress of the THI scheme

- Interactive maps and images for every building in the THI scheme
- Before and after photos, rectified photography, facility to upload pictures (*Flickr*)
- Memories or comments on particular buildings or areas
- Individual histories of buildings
- News stories
- Blogs
- You Tube videos
- Project documents
- architects' drawings
- 3-D visuals
- Investment information
- Entertainment and leisure
- E-newsletter sign up
- Events information
- Questionnaires
- Consultation feedback
- Contact details

Some Primary Objectives

Rectified Photography

There exists a great selection of b/w photos from 1943, taken at an oblique angle on High Street and Worcester Road and these were *straightened up*, or rectified, made linear and then coloured in. The images produced were then fitted onto a scaled shopfront elevation. A rapid EDM survey of the street elevations was required to create an accurate basis for rectifying the photographs.

The process will make selling the idea of the THI grant scheme more acceptable to wavering shopkeepers. There may also be an application for the technique in the development of an *Unlocking Bromsgrove's Past* project such as Stourport has achieved after research carried out by their local civic society.

3.2.8 Accessibility Audit

Volunteers from the Worcestershire Association of Service Users (WASU) carried out an Access Audit on Wednesday, 20th. July, 2011. Their summary begins: *The town of Bromsgrove would not attract visitors in its current state. Some of the architecture of the building design lacks character and is depressing. There are many Health & Safety issues in the High Street ... the environment is gloomy.*

The report continues:

- Trees look neglected, causing semi-darkness. Wrought ironworks around the bases of trees are lifted through root growth and weeds. Other trees in the High Street lean to one side and have electric cables running through them which have embedded themselves into the expanding branches. There are cables which have an attachment/connector that hangs down at a level that can be touched/reached by the public. Some surveillance cameras were visible, but their view is obstructed from the height of the trees
- Signposts are inappropriately placed, not easy to follow and cause confusion and lead visitors in the wrong direction
- Some black bollard posts are not fixed firmly in place and leaning to one side
- Ground/block paving bricks move when walked upon
- Brick work and broken pavement slabs/bricks are extremely unlevel and make the surface an effort for people to walk on. It jolts and dislodges wheelchairs and pushchairs, causing the user to weave and struggle to balance
- Drains and manhole covers either protrude above or are sunk below the tarmac, the holes are wide enough for the rubber end of a walking stick to get stuck and become a trip hazard for people
- Some of the town's seats/benches are damaged and the back of the seats are warped resulting in the seat not being suitable, unsafe and uncomfortable to sit on
- The post box outside the post office protrudes far out into the pavement. The red support rail to the left of the post office (building) serves no purpose and is obscured from view if walking from the left of the town
- Movable tables and chairs from outside café's were randomly scattered outside the designated areas, causing obstruction to non-users and a reduction to the space of the pavement to walk down
- "A" boards blocked areas of the road and acted as obstacles for wheelchair and push chair users and people with visual impairment having to try and negotiate their way through
- Cyclists and skateboard users were speeding through the High Street. There were also cycles thrown down outside shop entrances restricting or limiting access
- Motor vehicles transporting goods accessing the High Street during the day time after 10.30am were observed weaving and swaying around the black bollards without warning lights flashing on their vehicles
- There is fast flowing traffic at the corner of High Street and New Road. The pedestrian crossing lights when changing are out of alignment with people's walking speed and is a danger point for people with visual impairment and people with hearing impairment
- The dropped kerb is flush with the road surface and wheelchair users can cross with reasonable ease, but the surrounding bricks work and pavement slabs are cracked and unlevel
- The pedestrian area by *Iceland* has no clear route through as it is obstructed by a flower stall. There is hardly sufficient space to

accommodate a wheelchair user. The pavement slabs in this area are cracked and undulating

- In the bus area there is no dropped kerb which makes it inadequate for wheelchair users to use when being dropped off by private transport
- There is double parking (buses and taxis) which causes congestion and blocking up of the road means large vehicles/taxis transporting wheelchair users may find it difficult to unload in a suitable place. This may force them to drop off passengers in the road (Crown Close).

WASU are consultees to the Bromsgrove Town Regeneration Programme and their comments on the public realm upgrade will be fed into the design architect's brief, along with the comments of the less formally constituted Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group.

3.2.6 Public Consultation

Information about the THI scheme and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan was disseminated over a 6-week consultation period beginning 16 January, 2012. Exhibition boards were prepared accompanied by a press notice and leaflet drop. The leaflet summarized key points of the proposed THI and Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan. Residents groups, business and amenity bodies were contacted at the start of the process and their initial responses and comments have informed the full draft out for consultation. A representative from Heritage and Regeneration Solutions supported by the THI Project Officer and Conservation Officer, attended a question and answer session to explain the implications of the findings and proposals. Comments from this stakeholder consultation are included in Appendix 12.

3.3 Statutory Powers and Planning Policies

There are 47 Listed Buildings within Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area. No scheduled monuments exist in the conservation area although there are two statues in the High Street that would benefit from refurbishment and possible re-siting. The THI area includes 30 listed buildings including one, 7 Worcester Road, at Grade 11*

The Council currently employs one Conservation Officer who will work with the THI Project Officer to manage, maintain and offer informal guidance both in policy terms and on the restoration of individual buildings during the lifetime of the THI. In addition, there are three officers on the Planning Enforcement Team who are responsible for enforcing breaches of Planning Control in the District and they will contribute proactively to the overall project programme.

We believe that with the policy framework, the THI Project Officer, the Conservation Officer and the Planning Enforcement Team, the Council has excellent resources available through which to deliver and maintain the THI. The Strategic Planning and Development Control teams in Bromsgrove District Council manage and enforce all policies and SPDs. The Conservation Officer sits within Strategic Planning and plays an integral part in the planning process.

The Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan and the SPD's lie within a framework of local and national planning policy for the historic environment. General planning objectives, policies and proposals for the control of development and use of land in Bromsgrove town centre are found in the current Bromsgrove District Local Plan (adopted 2004), the draft Core Strategy 2 (January 2011) and the Draft Area Action Plan (January 2011).

Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2011)

The Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 5) provides a clear account of the nature and special qualities of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area. It will be used as a technical document to provide both a sound basis for formulation of policies contributing to the Local Development Framework and to inform development control decisions. Ultimately, it will also be used as evidence in appeal decisions

The Appraisal has been prepared in accordance with the English Heritage document *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management*. In line with the advice given in this document, the Appraisal splits the Conservation Area into four smaller *character zones*.

The use of such character zones or areas assists clearer definition of the 'special interest' of each particular sub-area. The location and assessment of each of the separate sub-areas may be found in the Appraisal document at Appendix 5. It sets out the special interest of the Conservation Area as a whole and makes assessments of character, architectural qualities and general condition, including negative features, for each of the individual sub-areas.

Conservation Area Management Plan (2012)

The Management Plan (Appendix 4) provides a clear strategy for the management of Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area in a manner that will safeguard and enhance its character and appearance. It will be used as a technical document to guide the Council's approach to all works and matters considered to have a potential impact on the character of the Conservation Area. It will also assist in the formulation of policies contributing to the Local

Development Framework and will be used to assist development management decisions. The current Plan has been upgraded from the previous version, which was produced in conjunction with the Appraisal in June 2011. As well as updating the local and national planning policies, the current version includes sections on community engagement, training and monitoring to fully meet the requirements of the THI. The plan underwent a six week public consultation which is more fully detailed in section 4.2 of this document.

The Plan sets out the special interest of the Conservation Area, which is drawn from the Appraisal, and a series of management proposals are made under the following headings:

- The public realm
- Shop fronts and signage
- Market Hall site
- Modern infill
- Historic buildings in poor condition
- Loss of historic detailing
- Traffic management
- Historic rear areas
- Spadesbourne Brook

It has been prepared in accordance with the English Heritage document *Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation, Appraisal and Management* (2011). The proposed measures set out in the Draft Management Plan were strongly supported by all respondents

The buildings in the conservation area are generally of mixed use, including retail and commercial and/or residential elements or in leisure use (bars/restaurants), where permitted development rights are much more restricted, particularly as the whole area is designated as a conservation area. Given the nature of the High Street/Worcester Road area and the limited space for extension to these commercial buildings the effect of permitted development on the High Street and Worcester Road will be negligible, therefore, the introduction of an Article 4 Direction is not warranted.

The Council had also considered designating the town centre as an 'area of special control' in order to introduce stricter control of advertisements. However, upon further investigation, it was found that the level of extra control gained would be negligible, primarily as advertisements are already relatively strictly controlled by virtue of the area's conservation area designation. This measure has not, therefore, been pursued further.

It is proposed that, through the conveyancing process, those acting for prospective purchasers of buildings within the Conservation Area are sent information about the Council's responsibilities to ensure the preservation of character and appropriate maintenance and repair of buildings within the Conservation Area. This will involve distributing guidance with any land search information sent out for buildings within the Conservation Area.

The Council is currently working on a "Buildings at Risk" survey of listed buildings at risk in the District to establish the level of preservation of original windows, doors, roof coverings, chimneys and boundary treatments with a view to imposing selected Article 4 directions where justified. The Council will contact the owners of buildings in the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area, both statutorily listed or of positive merit considered to be 'at risk', in order to discuss ways in which the safe upkeep and future preservation of those buildings may be safeguarded.

A guidance manual entitled *Maintaining and Repairing your Historic Building* has also been produced to supplement the Management Plan providing advice and guidance to owners and occupiers of historic buildings in the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area. It includes information on permission requirements, general maintenance, brickwork and stonework, timber framed buildings and structural timbers, render, roofs, windows, doors and external joinery and rainwater systems.

Draft Project Brief: Town Centre Public Realm Upgrade (July 2011)

The early upgrade of the public realm in Bromsgrove is vital to enhance the heritage of the area and to recreate an attractive Town Centre with a more positive sense of place. These are the key factors in reinstating Bromsgrove as a unique and striking destination of character. It will signal that change in Bromsgrove is permanent, with a statement of intent that sets a benchmark for the standard expected of further regeneration and development initiatives that follow across the town. This project is central to Strategic Aim One of the Regeneration Programme, namely, a revitalised and attractive town centre. The Bromsgrove Town Centre Public Realm Upgrade will be a design-led scheme using a high quality palette of natural materials to deliver a definitive statement of intent.

Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide SPG (2012)

In 2004, the Council adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance entitled *Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide* (Appendix 16) as part of the LDF scheme. The document was a response to the growth of unsympathetic shop fronts and advertisements that were resulting in a loss of quality and interest in Bromsgrove's town centre. Although it provided generic guidance for all conservation areas, its principles applied particularly to Bromsgrove

town centre seving to establish a set of design principles and good practice relating to the provision of high quality shopfronts and advertisements that would respect the character both of individual premises and of the setting within the conservation area. A revised Supplementary Planning Document has since been prepared (2012) coupled with a proactive programme of investigation into breaches of advertisement control.

Draft Core Strategy 2 (January 2011)

The key challenge which the district faces has been identified in the draft core strategy document as the regeneration of Bromsgrove town centre. The creation of a thriving and vibrant centre providing facilities to meet the needs of Bromsgrove's residents is recognized as an important factor. The historic environment is key in making Bromsgrove unique and a source of local identity and pride.

Draft Area Action Plan (January 2011)

The Area Action Plan (AAP) will be used to provide the planning framework for Bromsgrove town centre where significant conservation is needed.

3.4 The Conservation Area and the THI Area

As discussed above, the Conservation Area Management Plan has been significantly upgraded from the draft June 2011 version and should be read in conjunction with the Conservation Area Appraisal (Appendix 4). The Conservation Area Management Plan was commented on by the Partnership Steering Group on the 16th. January, 2012. Endorsement of the Conservation Area Appraisal and Conservation Area Management Plan by English Heritage has been obtained and is attached, along with both documents (Appendix 4).

The Conservation Area boundary has remained unchanged since submission of the stage 1 bid, but the THI boundary has drawn in from the Strand area in a south-westerly direction towards the High Street, as shown in Appendix 15. The Project Team carefully considered re-adjusting the THI area to exclude the Strand and the most north-easterly section of High Street in order to achieve the maximum impact on the town centre. The Strand area has been removed because it presents a streetscape almost entirely composed of listed buildings and unlisted buildings that make a positive contribution. There were 4 buildings here labeled as reserve projects plus 3 priority buildings. The small section of High Street removed contains no proposed THI projects.

There are two further small changes to the THI boundary, measures merely designed to remove buildings that make a negative contribution and again in order to maximize the impact of the THI scheme on the High Street.

The Project Team has also agreed to no longer include three critical projects in the THI scheme and those previously identified as such have been placed on the priority plus (22 – 24 High Street) or priority (75 High Street) list. The Red Lion public house (73 High Street) has been downgraded to a reserve project in that this building has already benefitted from funds from the earlier Frontage Improvement Grant Scheme. A full review of all properties has been undertaken as part of the Development Phase given the high tenant turnover. Between Church Street and New Road we have added two buildings in reserve. Their improvement, by way of replacing inappropriate shopfronts, would have a significant impact on this section of High Street where buildings that make a negative contribution predominate on the south side. Similarly, replacing the shopfront canopy at 89 High Street would complement a good section of quality townscape. Another addition is 6 High Street where, again, the reinstatement of a traditional shopfront would significantly improve a key view into one of the main gateways into the town centre. One property has been upgraded from a reserve to a priority + status, namely, 134 - 136 High Street. This building follows the northern edge of the new THI boundary and along with the Post Office building opposite heralds the true beginning of architectural character to pedestrians accessing the High Street from the Strand area.

The priority and priority + buildings, including a reserve list, are set out in Appendix 7.

3.5 The Character of the Conservation Area

Understanding the distinctive historic and architectural character of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area is an essential starting point for ensuring that its unique and cherished qualities are safeguarded in the longer term. A clear and comprehensive appraisal of an area's distinctive character is therefore an essential tool for managing change.

High Street and Worcester Road are within the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area which was originally designated by Worcestershire County Council in 1968 containing *Area A - High Street* and *Area B - St John's*. The boundary was extended in 1983 and again in 1989 to include the Spadesbourne Brook, the Strand, Crown Close, 9-15 New Road, 64-78 Worcester Road and

Hanover Street. At some point the use of Areas A and B ceased and the area was formally designated as one complete Conservation Area.

An appraisal of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area was carried out in July 2009 in accordance with the guidance given by English Heritage in their 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' publication. As a result the boundaries of the Conservation were reconsidered and revised. The area around St John's Church was removed from the Conservation Area and a new St John's Conservation Area created. The area from Hanover Street to Bromsgrove School was removed because this area has a limited relationship with the rest of the Town Centre and all valuable historic buildings are already listed.

A further appraisal has been carried out in December 2011 in light of the Application for Townscape Heritage Initiative funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The appraisal has been carried out in accordance with the most recent guidance from English Heritage 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area, Designation, Appraisal and Management'. Although produced by the Council, local societies and residents will be encouraged to contribute to and comment on the draft document. This will result in a well rounded assessment of the area incorporating local knowledge, perceptions and suggestions.

The draft appraisal was made available on the Council's website, in the local library, at the Customer Service centre in the Dolphin Centre and the Council House to ensure that it reached a wide audience. There was also a small exhibition in the main foyer of the local library to explain the purpose of the document and collect local comments.

Bromsgrove had been an important Royal Manor but it was not until the second half of the 12th Century that the town really developed, particularly after the right to hold a weekly market was granted in 1200. The street system in and around the High Street is very clearly medieval, consisting of the main South West/North East route between Worcester and Birmingham which is the High Street itself. The 1839 tithe map (Appendix 17) shows many small lanes leading from the High Street to the backs of burgage plots, many of which are medieval in origin, with narrow frontages to the High Street. The buildings within the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area are now predominately in retail use with a mixture of A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses - traditional retail, financial institutions and some pubs and cafes. Some upper floors are in ancillary use, office space and storage; many others are vacant which has led to some condition and maintenance problems. Worcester Road is very much a secondary street to the High Street, with smaller local retail units.

The Conservation Area Appraisal states that several historic styles and periods are represented in High Street and that the oldest buildings are timber-framed dating from the 17th Century, some of which have been re-fronted at a later date, though with evidence of the earlier structure remaining

internally or to the rear. There are also numerous good examples of later periods of architecture such as Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian, as well as a significant number of vernacular buildings characterised by being two or three stories high, the upper storey comprising an attic space with a dormer window. Worcester Road is a continuation of the High Street and its west side is predominately Victorian with mainly three-storey buildings of brick construction beneath pitched tiled roofs. Occasionally there are simple decorative details to the windows, including some projecting first floor bay windows. Ground floors are predominantly retail including takeaway restaurants, whilst the upper floors are mostly used for storage or are vacant. There are around 266 properties within the Conservation Area Boundary including 45 listed buildings, a statistic that underlines the significance of the historic townscape.

However, the Appraisal notes that many of the shop fronts are poorly designed and the significant number of vacant or underused upper floors raises serious concerns as to the structural condition and the maintenance of the historic building stock. This is exacerbated by the complex, irregular rooflines with valleys and gutters which are difficult to access and maintain. The condition surveys recently undertaken have reinforced our concerns and highlight that unless there is significant rapid investment some of the buildings may well deteriorate to a point where they cannot be repaired. Indeed, some buildings are undergoing emergency repairs now. Please refer to Section 3.6 below which further details elements which detract from the area's significance and present an opportunity for enhancement.

We selected this part of the Conservation Area for our scheme because:

- It represents a 'cluster' of historic buildings in which real change can be achieved to great effect
- High Street and Worcester Road have been identified in several public exhibitions as the number one priority for revitalisation in the town centre
- Approaches to the proposed THI area are currently unwelcoming and neglected, the general impression being that of a tired and run-down High Street, unattractive and undesirable, with block paving that is dull, dirty and uneven
- The historic, linear streetscape is vulnerable to further decline, as identified by English Heritage in their *at risk* report, and needs a concerted approach to address the problem something which the Townscape Heritage Initiative can offer

The Townscape Heritage Initiative includes Worcester Road and High Street which follow the medieval plan comprising the main South-West/North-East

route between Worcester and Birmingham – this area represents a significant cluster of buildings within the Conservation Area.

The distinctiveness of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area derives from:

- its location at the heart of an historic market town containing an assortment of notable historic buildings dating from predominantly the 18th and 19th centuries but with some earlier surviving timber framed buildings
- its representation of architectural styles ranging from English vernacular to restrained Georgian and more elaborate Victorian Gothic buildings – this variety of elevational treatments and styles demonstrates high quality construction and craftsmanship, giving a rich texture to the town centre, and are tangible reminders of the town's past prosperity
- the survival of a medieval street pattern based upon an even older Roman Road between Droitwich and Wall
- its ability to tell a coherent story of continuous settlement from the Roman period to the present day
- its long term civic and educational role and associated range of historic buildings and spaces
- the narrowness of the historic building plots, the varied rooflines and the overall height of the buildings which give an overall impression of vertical emphasis, and a strong sense of enclosure
- its important views, such as the Grade 1 listed St John's Church on an area of raised ground
- the predominant use of red brick and clay tiles with a number of notable timber framed buildings – some with wattle and daub, some with brick infill panels
- its large number of buildings having decorative detailing in stone including keystones, quoins and window detailing, notably on the high status buildings at the Market Place end of the High Street, but even the later Victorian buildings have stone cills and lintels to break up their elevations
- its decorative brickwork, notably the Slug and Lettuce Public House which is constructed in blue brick with light brick polychromatic detailing (unusual for the area)
- its window frames generally of timber - some buildings have frames that are flush with the external brickwork, typical in early Georgian architecture
- its vernacular buildings with dormer windows in the attic space, as at 89 to 93 High Street
- its steeply-pitched, clay tile roofs, where some Georgian buildings having parapets

The Conservation Area is set within the historic heart of Bromsgrove. It is bounded by St. John's Conservation Area to the west (containing St. John's Church – the oldest building in Bromsgrove), Bromsgrove School to the south-west (whose oldest building is dated 1695) and the Strand to the north-east - an area formerly known as Rotten Row.

An archaeological assessment of Bromsgrove town centre was carried out in the mid 1990s. Our understanding of the town's archaeology and historic built environment has changed since then. It would be beneficial to update this assessment and include new techniques and other datasets that are now available. This assessment would benefit the public realm redevelopment programme as it would highlight areas of potential and significance. This would allow Bromsgrove District Council to plan for any archaeological issues well in advance and incorporate them into the redevelopment strategy as an opportunity for community engagement and educational experience. Reacting to archaeological issues on a case by case basis as areas come up for redevelopment could lead to greater risks for delay and missed opportunities.

In developing the THI, we have evaluated High Street and Worcester Road and identified those buildings that make a negative contribution to the character of the Conservation Area, those that make a positive contribution and those that are neutral (see Appendix 7). All buildings have been classified as either priority plus (P+), priority (P) or reserve (R) and assessed in relation to the works required to reverse the current negative impact e.g. shopfronts, façades, reuse of upper floors and general structural repairs. We have identified 15 priority plus (P+) properties, 39 priority (P) properties and 27 reserve (R) properties, making a total of 81 buildings requiring financial support of which 33 are Grade II listed and one (7 Worcester Road) Grade 11* listed.

3.6 The Heritage Need in the Conservation Area

The protection and improvement of the heritage buildings within Bromsgrove Conservation

Area is fundamental for the future of the local economy and the means to ensure its conservation. Although much of the historic townscape has been retained, there are a number of considerations for the future of the heritage that need to be addressed. A SWOT analysis identifies the key issues that affect the local economy and impact on heritage need.

Strengths:

- the catchment and the role of Bromsgrove as a local market centre;
- the importance and quality of the C19/early C20 historic buildings & townscapes;

- the mediaeval layout of the old town and the retention of the C13 plots resulting in an
- expressive mix of styles within each streetscape;
- the retention of historic architectural detail and materials on a number of buildings;

Weaknesses:

- the decline in the economy with weaker demand for local goods, services & property;
- low profitability of some businesses discouraging appropriate maintenance;
- visual impact of vacant shops and upper floors;
- replacement shop fronts damaging original heritage building designs;
- replacement shop signs dominate shop frontages disrupting original architecture;
- poor quality of replacement materials and detailing on many heritage buildings;
- lack of appropriate maintenance and care for heritage details;
- inappropriate designs and materials of some new and enveloping development;
- poor environments at 'gateways' to Conservation Area dominated by parking areas;
- enhancement of the public realm is confused and inappropriate;

Opportunities:

- improved heritage building maintenance and management;
- further sensitive regeneration of key sites;
- reuse of underused and vacant floor space;
- to increase town centre economic viability and sustainability by targeting niche
- markets with development of specialist shopping and leisure sectors;
- marketing of town centre heritage with interpretation initiatives including walks tracing
- the history of the town and its buildings;
- increase in planning and design controls and guidance;

Threats:

- continuing economic difficulties for businesses may discourage further private investment;
- increase in unused buildings lead to sense of neglect and decline;
- resistance to appropriate controls on historic building maintenance and alterations;

- inappropriate designs of new infill buildings, extensions, shop fronts & alterations;
- lack of resources to maintain high quality public realm within the Conservation Area;
- and continuing competition from retailing and services at other centres.

Many of Bromsgrove's historic buildings suffer from various levels of disrepair, inappropriate alteration, and under-use. The area within the Conservation Area targeted for THI improvements is especially important for the image of Bromsgrove as it contains not only the most prominent and potentially attractive townscapes and buildings in the town centre, but also includes a number of vacant premises, neglected buildings and examples of the loss of heritage details with poor quality or inappropriate replacements – particularly shop fronts and signage.

The THI is focusing on the central core of the town with the streets that belong to the earliest phase of the town's development as a market town. Although many are in reasonable structural order, many others require repair to the fabric and there are a significant number that have vacant floor space – predominantly above ground floor level.

A significant number are in a poor state of maintenance and some require comprehensive repairs and architectural replacements. In particular, individual buildings along Worcester Road require comprehensive works and repairs due to lack of maintenance.

The whole area has suffered from the gradual loss of architectural detail. Many of the properties, even those occupied and in reasonable structural condition, have lost original windows, doors, chimneys and shop-fronts, and iron work is missing or damaged. Although some of these original features have been replaced with inappropriate materials, this is now felt to be a priority for grant aid within the THI and the problems elsewhere in the Conservation Area will be addressed through planning controls.

Buildings throughout the THI area have empty upper floors but a few are completely vacant and on the market for new occupiers. Both the High Street and Worcester Road include buildings that require significant works to ensure their future sustainability.

The Bromsgrove town centre Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan provides a full description of the historic qualities of the area and the heritage need for protection and improvements (see Appendix 5). A complete photographic survey is attached as Appendix 6 providing current photographs of all properties selected for the THI, and comparing them with old photographs to demonstrate the potential repairs and replacements that are

needed. Appendix 7A THI building condition survey and costings report can be seen as Appendix 7. This provides a full listing of the potential repairs and replacements to protect and improve the heritage qualities of each building and respond to the heritage need.

Public Realm

The existing poor quality public realm affects both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and detracts from its historic setting. At present there is a mix of brick pavements and concrete paving slabs throughout the Conservation Area and some oddly random strips of buff concrete paving. There is no obvious pattern or delineation between 'pavement' and 'road space', and a lack of maintenance has resulted in a rather shabby appearance. Vehicles still use the High Street for deliveries which has resulted in a proliferation of protective barriers and bollards, to the detriment of the wider street scene.

The existing street furniture appears to be randomly located, with street signage, bins, seating and trees obscuring some of the possible views through the Conservation Area. Most of this was installed in 1995 and has been poorly maintained adding to the run down appearance of what should be an attractive retail area.

In general the public spaces within the Conservation Area have a tired feel that detracts from the appearance of the historic buildings.

The early upgrade of the public realm is vital to enhance the heritage of the area and recreate an attractive Town Centre with a more positive sense of place. These are key factors in reinstating Bromsgrove as a unique and striking destination of character. It will signal that change in

Bromsgrove is permanent, with a statement of intent that sets a benchmark for the standard expected of further regeneration and development initiatives that follow across the Town.

The High Street in the early twentieth century was roughly surfaced and dusty. Research continues into further historic evidence recorded in photographs or drawings:

- *"The harte of the town is metely well paved"* (Leland, 1540)
- *"flagstones and pebbles, white and brown, to walk on through this pretty town"*
(Crane, c.1806)

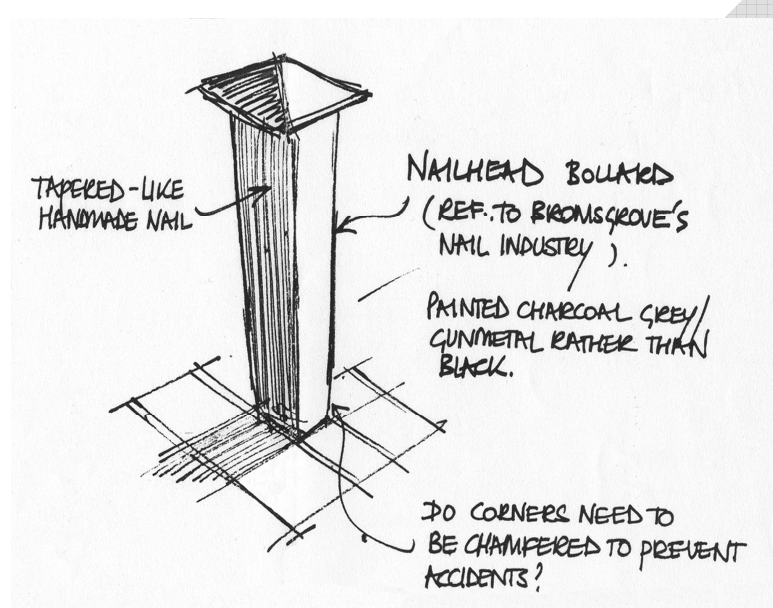
There are areas of cobbles surviving in alleys leading to the rear of buildings which were laid to keep feet out of the mud and these will be preserved as

part of the resurfacing project – the use of recycled dolerite cobbles is being currently explored.

Restoration and Improvement

Paving materials – we have considered that distinctiveness should be a result of quality rather than localness so flags might be Yorkstone, Caithness Stone or Forest of Dean Pennant Sandstone and kerb stones might be Blue Lias, Arden Sandstone, Carboniferous Limestone or Wenlock Limestone. It has been noted that granite setts for the roadway are no longer quarried in the UK.

Street Furniture & Local Distinctiveness



The design of new bollards is being put out to tender as public art, although reproducing and recasting those produced locally in bygone times is also an option.

Also, we aim to restore lost structures that once contributed to the character of Bromsgrove town centre, such as:

- The Hallelujah Lamp
- The medieval stocks
- Two traditional K6 red phone kiosks



EXAMPLES OF NEED FOR IMPROVEMENTS TO HERITAGE BUILDINGS:

46 High St - vacant building/shop front replaced

54-56 High St - missing architraves + mouldings/replacement windows

87 High St - replacement shopfront/obtrusive signage

29 High Street - replacement shopfront also defining building form

36 Worcester Road - oriel window replaced by inappropriate window;

52-54 Worcester Road - replacement windows/loss of mouldings

3.7 Schedule of Eligible Projects

3.7.1 Eligible Projects

The Eligible Projects have been identified as those buildings built before the First World War

– plus any more recent period buildings of notable design, which are important in the historic

townscape and are in need of repairs and/or replacement of heritage detail or have vacant floor space which can be reused. As explained above, the Townscape Heritage Initiative area has been selected to include the part of the Conservation Area of important historic interest and includes the most notable townscapes, properties of greatest historic interest and those in greatest need for heritage improvements which will benefit the local economy and have the potential to be self sustaining.

Within the proposed boundary of the Townscape Heritage Initiative, 81 properties in separate ownerships have been identified as satisfying the criteria to be included in the Initiative.

Surveys have been completed to assess the Conditions and Costs of carrying out the THI eligible works on all properties. Internal structure and condition surveys have been completed in a good sample of buildings but it has not been possible to gain access to all properties with empty floors above shops (see Appendix 7).

All properties have ground floor commercial uses and whereas a significant number of the buildings along the High Street are owned by multiple store companies, many on Worcester Road are owner occupied. All should be able to reclaim VAT. Current valuations with future estimates based on three levels of improvements have been prepared by Thomas Lister Ltd, Bromsgrove valuers/surveyors (see Appendix 8). Current photographs of each building

with historic photographs and a costed list of potential improvements are included in Appendix 6.

Consideration of any prioritisation as Critical, Priority and Reserve has led to the recommendation that it is not appropriate to identify any buildings as Critical projects as none satisfy the requirements on:

- the importance of their location and group value to the overall heritage townscape, and/or
- the need for urgent works to protect key heritage buildings.

As a result, the selected buildings have been identified as either Priority (P) or Reserve (R) to reflect the proposed efforts ensure their inclusion in the implementation of the Initiative. 54 properties have been identified as Priority – including 15 noted as requiring precedence (marked P+); with 27 potential Reserve properties (see Appendix 6)

The property condition survey carried out in September 2011 by a Conservation Architect and Quantity Surveyor reviewing each eligible building in the proposed THI area has identified the scale of disrepair and damage to individual buildings and lists the eligible works with potential costs. These results are listed in Appendix 7.

The main issues of concern throughout the THI area are:

1. Buildings in poor condition requiring significant works to repair structure and fabric

These display a range of conditions from semi-derelict, through to problems with roofs, fenestration, wall finishes and brickwork, etc. These include properties requiring major expenditure such as:

- Market Place, 6 High Street
- British Heart Foundation, 50 High Street
- Carpet Centre, 28-32 Worcester Road
- Adrian Kriss, 47-49 Worcester Road

2. Buildings with heritage detail removed and inappropriate shop fronts and signage which detract from the 'image' of the THI area

Although the traditional townscape scale has been retained, lack of maintenance and widespread individual improvements have resulted in the significant loss of heritage details and materials. As examples, these include replacing inappropriate windows and doors, replacing removed dormers and

replacing shop fronts. The large number of buildings with significant loss of heritage detail and requiring major investment include:

- Peacocks, 120 High Street
- Bromsgrove Advertiser, 3 High Street
- Vacant shop, 51 Worcester Road
- Worcester Road News, 52-54 Worcester Road

On some buildings, previous changes are in reasonable condition and it is unrealistic to expect that all owners will afford the cost for reinstatement with heritage materials solely to ensure historic accuracy when they are not immediately needed to maintain the buildings. The expected percentage of properties likely to apply for grants takes account of these owners.

3. Properties with vacant floor space

There are a few vacant properties and a significant number of buildings within the THI area with empty upper floors having potential for reuse.

- Prezzo, 22-24 High Street
- Vacant 46 High Street
- Ryman's, 95 High Street
- M & M's Hair Shack, 46 Worcester Road

4. Public Realm

An area in the centre of High Street between the Housman Statue and the junction with New Road has been scheduled for a complete upgrade using THI funding matched by £400,000 from Worcestershire County Council. This land is owned by Bromsgrove District Council and a brief detailing the HLF perspective and best practice design guidance regarding works to the public realm in conservation areas has now been passed to the architects - a copy of this brief is attached as appendix 18.

Enhancements to the public realm will be based on a detailed appraisal of those elements that make the town centre special and distinctive and all proposals for enhancements will be based on the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area Appraisal (2012). For example, at intermittent intervals, particularly on the West side of the High Street, there are alleyways of varying width leading to the rear of buildings. These are all that remains of the historic burgage plots and courts to the rear of buildings that were once used as workshops etc. Some small areas of cobbles survive in these locations and they should be preserved as part of any future resurfacing project.

The priority is for the reinstatement of historic surfaces in a traditional way and works should involve the use of traditional techniques, natural materials and local resources. For public realm works, we have provided formal assurances from Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and BDC about the future routine maintenance of the enhanced public realm (Appendix 3). No works to Gap Sites are proposed.

Summary:

The long list of buildings within the THI area requiring repair and improvement works eligible under the Scheme, and the proposed public realm works are shown below on:

diagram - Structure and Fabric Repairs

diagram - Reinstatement of Heritage Details

diagram - Reuse of Vacant Floor Space

diagram - Location and layout of Public Realm work

3.7.2 Condition and costs of eligible projects

The selected buildings within the THI area display a loss of some of their traditional heritage qualities that are gradually changing the overall historic townscapes. Of particular impact are the inappropriate replacement shop frontages and signage, and the poor designs of the public realm. The main examples of unsatisfactory building alterations, repairs and maintenance are:

- loss of heritage details and materials including low quality repairs;
- use of inappropriate roof materials;
- replacement of front doors with inappropriate designs and finishes;
- replacement of painted wooden sash windows with aluminium / UPVC frames and
different window bar designs;
- removal of heritage mouldings and other details;
- removal of chimney stacks and pots;
- addition of aerials and satellite dishes; and
- extensions of inappropriate design, scale and materials.

a. Priority and Reserve buildings condition and costs

The overall costs for conservation and renovation of the three listed THI categories of works (including contingencies and professional fees, etc but not VAT) on all the 81 selected heritage buildings in the THI area, both Priority and Reserve buildings, are expected to be in the order of:

- **£ 756,300 for repairs to structure and fabric**
- **£ 2,055,500 for replacement of heritage detail**
- **£ 1,047,000 for reuse of vacant floor space**

a total of £ 3,858,800

Appendix 7 the THI Building Condition Survey and Costings: provides a full breakdown of estimates for all selected 81 properties. These tables include:

- the property address;
- ownership and use;
- the works that are eligible for grant;
- and detailed costings of the eligible works;

b. Public Realm eligible costs

The good repair and routine maintenance of pavement and road surfaces is a statutory responsibility of Worcestershire County Council. As a result, the eligible costs of improvement to this type of public realm, and the grant towards them, must reflect the extra costs that arise from carrying out the works to high conservation standards. To work out the eligible costs the costs of repair to a basic, non-conservation area standard was subtracted from the costs of repair to more costly conservation standards – the grant will cover 100% of the eligible costs.

Grant for types of public realm improvement where statutory responsibilities do not apply can cover all of the costs of the works as long as the property is in public ownership. In this case, there is no need to compare the costs of repair to a basic standard with the costs of repair to more costly conservation standards. Grant will cover 100% of the eligible costs.

3.7.3 Assessing the financial need for THI grant

a. Justification of grant rates

THI grants need to be justified in financial terms on the basis that the work required cannot be achieved without public subsidy and must make sure that

any financial gain on the part of the owner is minimal. This means establishing the impact of the work on the property's value. This has been estimated by using the judgements of a Conservation Architect and Quantity Surveyor, and a Chartered Surveyor/Valuer with experience of the local property market – a Director of Thomas Lister Ltd who have a local office within Bromsgrove town centre.

The other consideration when assessing potential grant levels is the likely success of the Initiative in encouraging owners to participate and invest their own money. There are many areas with urgent heritage need where an additional problem is the inability of owners to raise even limited funds to protect their properties. This is an additional measure of the case for public subsidy.

The low commercial and residential rents, particularly for upper floors, mean that there is little incentive to undertake repairs that have no direct financial return. While other regeneration initiatives will tackle social and economic problems, none is specifically addressing the historic built environment.

The current property market throughout the Bromsgrove Conservation Area is slow and very patchy with very mixed market demand depending on location and resulting in few sales. Property values vary widely throughout the THI area and the effect of the recent economic difficulties has increased the number of properties with vacant floor space. This problem has been identified by the chartered surveyors though meaningful historic data on vacancies has not been found.

The selected properties included within the THI area are predominantly commercial with ground floor shops and the floors above used for a mix of uses – residential, office and storage, but many have been left vacant.

In the current uncertain and fluctuating market, where properties can be on sale for many months, even years, a process of typical building valuations to assess expected increases in market value after various improvements is difficult to prepare with great accuracy and then to use as percentages for overall guidance.

The report by the local valuer/estate agent (see Appendix 8) has provided some judgements, but any sophisticated analysis based on valuations is likely to be of limited accuracy. The tables in Appendix 9 demonstrate this uncertainty and the range of findings using Deficit Gap funding methods for properties with vacant floor space. With a deficit gap approach, the gap between improvement cost and increase in valuation can vary widely, with no constant percentage gap identified for different buildings in different conditions by the local valuer.

As a result, an assessment of appropriate grant rates for different categories of works also needs also to be identified by judgements based on recent past experience of the take-up on other grant-aided schemes in Bromsgrove and the West Midlands, a general knowledge of the local property market and the changing economic conditions, as well as by using the examples of potential valuations from the local valuer.

b. Grant-aided Schemes

The current levels of grant availability on similar initiatives provide some examples of comparable levels of assistance that are needed to achieve owner participation.

Examples of **Townscape Heritage Initiative** approved grant rates in the West Midlands for town centres with changing economic problems are as follows:

	Structure & fabric	Heritage detail	Vacant floorspace
	%	%	%
Wellington	60%	85%	40%
Bliston	70%	90%	60%
Willenhall	70%	90%	50%
Bloxwich	70%	90%	58%
Leek	65%	90%	40%

A recent small scale Council grant aided improvement scheme for shops in Bromsgrove is currently renovating two buildings (nos. 61 and 65 High Street) and has used a general grant rate of 80%.

Within the West Midlands the THI initiatives have been operating with various levels of success depending on local circumstances as well as the levels of grant. These examples above provide some guidance of expectations when determining a grant level that will succeed in Bromsgrove town centre.

c. Surveyors and valuers assessment

In recent years, commercial property sales in the Bromsgrove THI area have been slowing down with a number of the traditional stores closing down and only a few new national chain stores locating in the town centre. The difficult market has been most noticeable where commercial buildings display poor maintenance or are at a distance from the pedestrianised length of the High Street and town centre core. This is particularly the case for the properties along Worcester Road. Due to the lack of commercial demand and the poor image of some of the building groups, the sales have frequently been limited to the purchase of properties by small traders with low value goods, often with limited or no income from upper floors above shops.

The varying property values for such an established town centre location are primarily due to the recent difficulties in the local economy, the variations of distance from the core shopping area, and the attractions of competing centres – out of town and other larger centres.

There is unlikely to be a significant increase in demand for property within the Conservation Area until there is an improvement in the national economy and a regeneration of the economic opportunities within the town, matched by physical improvements and a resulting change in the public perception of this area.

The current downturn in property values and sales will have the greatest impact on those buildings in poor condition which are in the fringe town centre locations and not seen to be a retail attraction. Any decrease in value will also limit the likelihood of owners being able to repair and maintain their properties with appropriate conservation standards. As a result, investment in properties has been withheld by many owners until there is a clearer picture of the implications for future demand.

As a result, property valuations within the Conservation Area may vary according to the short term realities and the longer term hopes for the area. There will be significant uncertainty and this will particularly impact on the reuse of upper floor vacant floor space. Most operational THIs can influence changes in valuations.

The low valuation examples prepared by the chartered surveyor for some of the commercial buildings point towards the difficulties for achieving sales which result from the low levels of current demand. Equally, rental rates for flats and offices above shops are low because of the quality of the floorspaces and the excess supply.

Selected locations within the THI Area have different requirements and potential:

- **High Street (the Strand to New Road)**

The pedestrianised length of the High Street within the THI Area is the section of the shopping centre that achieves the highest commercial rental values and includes most national multiple stores. Even though this area has significant footfall and provides the prime shopping area, it still includes empty properties (eg. No. 46 vacant), buildings in poor condition (eg. No. 87 French Connection) and empty first and second floorspace (eg. No. 67 Oswald Bailey).

- **High Street (New Road to Market Place)**

Between the New Road and Market Place junctions on High Street, the road is open for vehicles, though traffic is not usually heavy. The lower footfall results in less demand for properties, and though the ground floors are mainly in retail use, few national multiples are located on this length and values are significantly lower.

This reduced demand is reflected in the empty properties (eg. Nos. 9 and 46), and the poor condition of some buildings – especially upper floors (eg. Nos. 33 Salvation Army and 22 Prezzo). The economic conditions are limiting the ability of many owners to maintain their properties or to ensure improvements achieve conservation standards.

- **Worcester Road (Market Place to Hanover Street)**

A fringe town centre shopping street with two and three storey properties in retail use. The buildings are smaller – both narrower and lower than on the High Street, with less space for larger retail users or spacious accommodation above.

The lower demand for properties in this area and lower values results from both its location – the distance from the core shopping area, and the lack of space suitability for many potential occupiers. As a result, most units are occupied by single shop businesses, often serving more specialist markets. These owners are less likely to have funding available for conservation standards of improvements.

In general within the THI area, expected improvements in valuation following repairs and enhancement to Structure and Fabric, Heritage Detail, and Vacant Floor Space are limited and it will only be when there is a combined impact of a large number of property improvements, supported by the changes proposed through other regeneration initiatives, that values will significantly change.

d. Proposed Grant Rates for each Category of Works

The prime concerns of a Townscape Heritage Initiative are to ensure that the selected heritage properties are improved and to make certain that they can have viable uses, while promoting the local economy and appreciation of the townscape, without significant financial benefit to the owner. The selection of the appropriate grant rates for each category of works needs to identify levels that will ensure implementation.

An additional issue is that some owners and their advisors are aware of the current grant levels available for similar works - particularly Repairs and Replacements, in Evesham, and as a result will press local representatives for equal treatment.

Therefore each of the three categories of work on privately owned buildings will require different levels of assistance, with the grant levels based on a judgement reflecting the calculated grant rates from valuations and the other factors discussed.

Grant levels for properties requiring building repairs to the structure and fabric, and replacement of architectural heritage details will be identified from a judgement based on the range of calculated grants required for the properties that have been valued and the recent and current experience with the THI grants in neighbouring towns.

Within Bromsgrove town centre, much of the vacant floor space is found on the upper floors above shops. To be realistic, improvements to these areas for rental income will only find new occupiers at a slow rate. A combination of the impact of the THI improvements and the other regeneration initiatives will be needed to increase demand. A 'chicken and egg' situation, but both actions are necessary. As a result, owners cannot guarantee early rental returns and this increases the uncertainties of calculations based on this approach.

Calculations for properties with Vacant Floor Space have been made using the total of the condition survey costs for each property, the expected increase in valuation and consideration of the potential additional annual rental income to calculate the possible rates of return. Whereas an average percentage will be chosen for use on all Structure and Fabric, Heritage Detail improvements, the appropriate rate for buildings with Vacant Floor Space will have to be recalculated at the time of each application.

• Structure and fabric

Selected buildings require work to the structure and fabric of the external envelope. The examples cover a range of problems from building deterioration which may in the future cause the need for major renovation,

and those with more minor concerns requiring action before serious problems result from delay.

The calculations of the potential grant rates using a gap deficit based on current and improved valuations vary widely with rates reflecting the particular considerations of each building. As the management of a THI requires an average grant rate for these types of work, it is necessary to identify a percentage that will ensure that key properties are viable and included.

In most cases, the added value to the property of the work being completed will be limited in the constraining and fluctuating market conditions. For owners, who often have limited resources, the benefits of structure and fabric improvements may only be clear in the most urgent cases. The financial inducement required will need to be significant to encourage most owners to invest their own money, while providing only a reasonable sum to cover the average expected development deficit. The wider benefits to the local community and economy do not often affect the decision making of the individual property owner.

The grant calculation findings shown in Appendix 11, Table 1, identify a wide range of potential rates providing no clear guidance except that most calculated rates are below those found in other THIs.

Therefore as a result of comparable grant scheme take-up experience, the local valuer/estate agents advice and valuations, and the review of the local economic conditions, we are suggesting a grant level for the THI scheme to be set at **up to 60% for structure and fabric repairs which will be used in the Grant Requirement tables for all selected commercial properties.**

A range of percentages may be appropriate depending on the type of works required for each building, but in most cases this will be complex to administrate except where the THI Project Officer deems suitable. Previous local experience shows that with improved proactive methods to encourage owners, assistance with applications and the potential for helpful funding arrangements with local banks etc., it should be possible to achieve a reasonable uptake of grants to ensure the implementation targets are achieved.

- **Architectural heritage details**

Most property owners, though attracted to the concept of historically appropriate architectural detailing on their buildings, are less certain about the direct benefits to increase property value or business levels.

In most cases, the added value to the property of improved and appropriate heritage architectural details will be very limited. Historically accurate replacement fenestration or shop fronts instead of existing inappropriate detailing will not often significantly increase individual property values. The economic benefits and increase in valuation will only accrue over time from the general improvement of the heritage qualities of the local townscape. As a result, the funding gap between implementation costs and short term increases in values will be large. Sample valuations have demonstrated this problem.

The findings from the valuations show that all of the examples, except for one, are within the 65% to 100% range, with most around the 80% range – see Appendix 11, Table 2,

Therefore as a result of current grant scheme take-up experience in nearby THI's, the local valuer/estate agents advice and valuations, and the review of the local economic conditions, we are suggesting a grant level for the THI scheme to be set at **up to 85% for replacement of architectural heritage details which will be used in the Grant Requirement tables for all selected commercial uses.**

This level will be required to ensure that these works, which will have a significant impact on the overall heritage townscape appearance of the town centre, will be carried out with the involvement of property owners.

- **Reuse of Vacant historic floor space**

There are significant areas of vacant floor space above the shops within the town centre and a number of shops that have remained vacant over a considerable period. As current demand for the use of the floors above shops in this part of Bromsgrove town centre is limited, the costing calculations and estimates of rental return have been based on preparation of the property for office use – as it would be less realistic to use the higher levels that should be expected for residential occupation except along Worcester Road. The potential costings are based on this use – higher levels would have been required for residential conversions.

The costs for individual property owners to reuse vacant floor space will vary greatly depending on access arrangements and internal layouts. The methods to be used to evaluate grant levels will involve a 'case by case' review of the likely development conservation deficit when the application is made with the calculations based on a residual valuation covering the combined costs of all works to the building (repairs, replacements and reuse).

Individual assessments for each project will need to identify:

1. Existing value
2. Potential values to calculate a residual valuation
3. Construction costs
4. Abnormals
5. Fees
6. Interest
7. Potential rents and required rates of return
8. Profit

in order to calculate the developers' deficit and a funding deficit.

Appendix 11 tables demonstrate the method for calculating the vacant floor space grant levels. Due to recent fluctuations in property values it is particularly difficult to identify an average grant level for use in the Grant Requirement tables that will be useful over a three year period – Table 4.1 and previous experience in similar towns, suggests that the deficit valuations provide much more appropriate findings than the rate of return method. The results, and the current uncertainties which limit the viability of even medium term forecasts, do emphasise the need for the calculations to be carried out for each property when the scale of improvement works is accurately known at the time of the application.

The Grant Calculation results show a range between 38% and 79%, with a clustering between 50% and 68%.

As a result of previous experience in other THI areas, current local grant aid schemes and advice from the local chartered surveyor - **an average grant level to be used in the Grant Requirement tables for all selected commercial uses of 55% is expected for Vacant Floor Space**, when combined with Repair and Replacement works.

• **Public Realm**

The grant proposed for the public realm, with an explanation of how the grant amounts have been calculated is currently under assessment

e. Summary:

Proposed Grant Intervention Rates – Bromsgrove THI

Structure and Fabric	Heritage Detail	Vacant Floor Space	Public Realm
Up to 60%	Up to 85%	Average 55%	%

DRAFT

4 The Conservation Area Management Plan

4.1 Adoption and publication of the Conservation Area Management Plan

The Council's Management and Enhancement Proposals were included in the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area Appraisal (June 2011). However, these have now been strengthened and updated in terms of relevant policies and guidance and a new section included on community engagement and training to fully meet the requirements of the THI Guidance Notes.

The updated Management Plan is due before Cabinet on 4th. April, 2012 where it is expected to be adopted as a technical document for the purposes of guiding the Council's approach to all works and matters related to the continued preservation and enhancement of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area (minutes showing formal adoption will be forwarded). This will include using the document to support supplementary planning documents such as design guidance and to inform future planning policy and development management decisions. This is evidenced by the production of the *Draft Town Centre Public Realm Upgrade* (July, 2011), the *Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide* and the recently published guidance *Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area: Maintaining and Repairing your Historic Building* (Appendix 19). The production of all three of these documents was as a direct result of the findings of the Conservation Area Appraisal and measures proposed in the Management Plan. The Partnership Steering group formally adopted the updated Management Plan on 16 January, 2012, and the draft minutes are attached at Appendix 3.

The Management Plan will be available free to download from the Council's website, both from the conservation section of the Environment and Planning pages and from the dedicated Bromsgrove Town centre THI pages. Paper copies will also be available free to pick up from the Council House (Reception) and copies will be made available at any events promoting the THI scheme.

4.2 Putting the Conservation Area Management Plan into practice

Putting the Plan into Practice: Resources and Responsibility

The principal officers responsible for putting the plan into practice belong to the Council's Strategic Planning Team. These personnel are the Strategic Planning Manager and the Conservation Officer and they sit under the Executive Director for Planning and Regeneration, Regulatory and Housing Services. The Conservation Officer will have overall responsibility for ensuring that the measures put forward in the Management Plan are enacted and complied with as relevant. However, there are a number of other teams and

committees within the Council who will also have responsibility (to be discussed below). Development control and planning enforcement are represented on the Project Team by Bromsgrove's Development Control Manager and one of three Planning Enforcement Officers.

The Management Plan is split into separate sections setting out individual management proposals for different issues affecting the character of the Conservation Area. These are discussed below (with certain issues grouped under one heading) setting out responsibility for putting the plan into practice:

The Public Realm

The existing public realm is of a poor design and in addition has been poorly maintained. There is a mixture of materials, lack of obvious delineation between pedestrian and vehicular areas, randomly located street furniture and a proliferation of signage and other street clutter. All these items have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and detract from its historic setting.

Action

Work with other departments at Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council to implement a new public realm scheme. This will involve renewing the surface materials including the introduction of a more cohesive design, a new street lighting scheme, including more appropriately designed lamp posts, improved and more thoughtful illumination of some areas, the removal of redundant signage and CCTV poles, and the integration of new signage and other street furniture.

Shop Front and Signage

Shop fronts and signage that fail to respect the architecture of the remainder of the building in terms of design and use of materials detract from the architectural quality of the building and have a negative impact on the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Action

- Seek improvements to or replacement of shop fronts and signage where opportunities arise through development proposals. New proposals will be assessed against local and national policies in respect of listed buildings and conservation areas, and the revised Shop Front Design Guide.
- In addition address unauthorized alterations to shop fronts through enforcement action where appropriate in accordance with Enforcement Policies.
- We are applying for a Second Round Stage 2 Heritage Lottery Fund Bid having received the Stage 1 Pass, to grant aid repairs, new

historically more appropriate shop fronts to buildings and carry out works to upper floors, in the High Street and Worcester Road.

Market Hall Site

The Market Hall site lies immediately adjacent to the Conservation Area and any future development will impact on the setting of the Conservation Area.

Action

Pay particular attention to siting, scale and design of any new development proposals that come forward for this site in accordance with local and national policies in respect of conservation areas, to ensure that any new scheme enhances the setting of the Conservation Area.

Modern Infill

Several sites in the conservation area have been subject to redevelopment during more recent times. Many of the modern buildings erected exhibit design characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area. They fail to preserve or enhance the conservation area. Others are let down by poor attention to detail and materials.

Action

Seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development/redevelopment proposals particularly at key sites including Mill Lane and ?? to ?? High Street. New proposals will be assessed in accordance with local and national policies in respect of conservation areas, to ensure that any new scheme achieves better integration into the historic environment and enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

Historic Buildings in Poor Condition

Inadequate maintenance and repair of buildings is undermining the quality of the environment and will lead to a deterioration and ultimately to the loss of historic fabric.

Action

- We are in the process of applying for a Second Round Stage 2 HLF Bid having received a Stage 1 Pass, to grant aid repairs to buildings in the High Street and Worcester Road and to grant aid conversion works of upper floors.
- Seek retention of historic fabric where opportunities arise through development proposals.
- Identify Buildings at Risk and develop a strategy for their repair, including the potential use of Section 215, Urgent Works Notices and

Repairs Notices to improve the condition of some of the most at risk properties in the Conservation Area.

- Investigate initiatives to make use of the upper floors such as 'Living above the shop', in conjunction with the Housing Section at Bromsgrove District Council, or a local housing association.
- Produce guidance on the maintenance of historic buildings for property owners.

Loss of historic detailing

Several of the buildings in the Conservation Area have been adversely affected by the use of inappropriate modern materials and replacement of original architectural features with poor quality substitutes most notably uPVC and aluminium windows.

Action

- Address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our enforcement policy.
- Undertake a photographic survey of all the properties in the conservation Area. This will provide a record of the condition and appearance of each property, which would be useful in any future enforcement situations.
- We will consider the need for an Article 4 Direction to bring any permitted development works under planning control, to ensure that the special qualities of unlisted buildings of local significance are protected

Traffic Management

The current traffic layout in The Strand detracts significantly from the quality of the Conservation Area, acting as a barrier between this area and the High Street.

Action

- Work with other departments at Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council to devise a traffic scheme which will give more priority to pedestrians. Improvements to the pavement widths, parking layout, road markings and surface materials would soften the appearance and enhance the setting of the surrounding historic buildings.

2.8 Historic Rear Areas

A number of the historic buildings still exist to the rear of the High Street and Worcester Road. Many are in a poor state of repair and vacant.

Action

- Investigate the possibility of carrying out some historical research into these buildings and identify ways they could be repaired and brought back into use.

Spadesbourne Brook

The Spadesbourne Brook is a neglected feature of the Conservation Area. A number of the visible sections are heavily overgrown and in their current state do not contribute to the character of the conservation Area.

Action

- We will investigate the possibilities of tidying up the Spadesbourne Brook to make a more attractive feature in the Conservation Area

Local List

The Conservation Area Appraisal has identified a number of 'positive' buildings in the Conservation Area which are unlisted, and could form the basis of a Local List for the Town Centre.

Action

- Introduce local criteria for identifying important unlisted buildings, which would then form the basis for the creation of a local list.

Engaging the Community and Circulating the Plan

The Management Plan sets out those ways in which the Council will ensure that stakeholders and the community are engaged in decisions affecting the Conservation Area. They are as follows:

- The Plan will be reviewed every four years to ensure it contains current issues and relates to any changes in legislation or policy which may occur. The consultation on the plan will include a public meeting and exhibition, following engagement with key stakeholders at the time of the review
- The Council will ensure that all planning and associated applications are available on-line for ease of access to information. This will enable the community to engage at a deeper level
- The Council will seek to designate an elected member of the District Council as a Design and Heritage Champion. They will receive the relevant free training and ensure that design and heritage issues are considered in all areas of the Council's business. In addition, the Council is seeking membership of the *Historic Towns Forum*.

The extent of consultation undertaken on the most recent draft of the Management Plan demonstrates the Council's commitment to engaging stakeholders and the public in the management of the Conservation Area.

During the six-week consultation period, the draft documents could be viewed at the Council House, Bromsgrove Central Library, and other

local libraries, and on the Council's website. Letters were sent out to a wide-ranging list of consultees outlining the consultation process and issuing an invitation to an exhibition and public meeting. In addition, a press notice announcing the public consultation was placed in the local press and an article included in *Together Bromsgrove* (the Council's free newspaper circulated to all households in the district). The consultation was also promoted via the social networking site Twitter and a one-week public exhibition on the draft documents was held at the Council House. A questionnaire for comments was made available both as a download and for on-line completion, as well as a paper copy at each deposit location and at the exhibition. Responses could be submitted via the Council's website, by freepost or returned via a drop-in box at the Council House's reception area.

Alongside the measures set out above, the Council will continue to work with Bromsgrove Society: a group of local historians and people with a vast knowledge of, and strong interest in, the town's cultural heritage. Since the early 1980s they have led successful campaigns against the harmful alteration or loss of many of Bromsgrove's finest historic buildings and have also made successful applications for the listing of historic buildings in the town, for example, Parkside School which was listed Grade 11 in November, 2008. The Bromsgrove Society often meets with developers and agents at the pre-application stage to input advice on larger schemes proposed within the conservation area.

The Chairman of the Society is a member of the THI Partnership Steering Group which meets every six weeks to discuss upcoming initiatives, current applications, enforcement and general issues relating to the THI scheme.

In order to increase awareness and highlight historic environment issues more widely, the Council are to hold discussions with the Society regarding ways in which the membership and promotion of the Society may be increased. Those ways in which the Society may become involved more widely and effectively in pre-application discussions will also be addressed. The aim is that the Society effectively acts as an independent advisory forum for proposals within the Conservation Area which will be fed through to both the applicant and the Council.

The Plan also sets out the Council's commitment to providing training for the local community in order to widen and deepen local knowledge and practice of heritage education and skills, for example, the Council will widen and deepen awareness of heritage issues through the annual Heritage Open Days programme, held in September each year.

Monitoring

There are a number of measures proposed within the Plan for monitoring and review. They are as follows:

- The Council will ensure that, through the conveyance process, new owners are advised of the Council's responsibilities to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area and appropriate maintenance and repair of buildings within the Conservation Area
- The Council will actively work with building owners in pre-planning application discussions to achieve the most appropriate design solution for its context
- The Council will ensure that appropriate enforcement action is taken to preserve the character of the Conservation Area
- The Council will produce an Annual Monitoring Report to include the statistics on the number of enforcement cases investigated, number of enforcement breaches, number of successful enforcement cases in the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area and on successes achieved in respect of new works

In addition to these measures, the Council is committed to regularly updating the full photographic record of all buildings within the Conservation Area. A record was last taken as part of the Conservation Area Appraisal process. This will require a complete updating by 2012 to ensure that it maintains its usefulness as an enforcement tool in terms of demonstrating that an unauthorised alteration has been carried out within the previous four years.

It should also be noted that the Development Control Team maintains dated digital photographic records of all buildings within the District where a planning application or enforcement complaint has been made. With specific regard to High Street and Worcester Road the Council has two reasonably complete photographic surveys of the shopfronts and front elevations dating back to 1943, the 1970s and 1982.

Review

The Conservation Area will be reviewed on a four-yearly basis and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be updated where necessary. The current version of the Management Plan is actually an update on the proposals contained in the June 2011 Conservation Area Appraisal.

Section 5 – The Action Plan

5.1 Visions and Strategies

5.1.1 The Overall Vision for the Conservation Area

The regeneration of Bromsgrove town centre is public policy at national, regional and local level. The vision will be delivered through the implementation of policy and strategies as set out in the Bromsgrove Town Centre Draft Area Action Plan and the Bromsgrove District Council Draft Core Strategy 2 using a combination of public and private funding. These are further detailed above in section 3.3 setting out which specific policies and objectives are linked to the regeneration of the area. All of these policies have been consulted on and are signed up to by the Council and its partners. The visions, objectives and actions for each of the strategies and plans are widely evidenced and backed up by numerous studies, master plans and consultations of which partners have been actively involved.

Bromsgrove Town Centre Draft Area Action Plan (Jan 2011)

“Bromsgrove will be a thriving market town which attracts residents and visitors into the Town Centre, both for the shopping experience and its programme of events, activities and markets. The Town Centre will be significantly enhanced with an attractive and safe environment which will provide a focal point for the community.”

The vision above has been prepared by the Council but has been created by the townspeople and businesses of Bromsgrove. The Council has been asking the people of Bromsgrove and many other key stakeholders what they want for the Town Centre over the last few years the results of which has generated the vision above.

1198 responses were received for the Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration Area Action Plan Survey, showing why the respondents visited the centre and what they would like to improve the centre. New paving, improved appearance of historic buildings and making the look of shop fronts and signs in keeping with historic architecture are the top three responses on making the town centre an improved environment.

Regeneration Strategy

Bromsgrove Town Centre as identified on **figure 1** will be the focus of a number of complementary strategies and policies which will secure its long term future enhancing its vitality and vibrancy, fixing its place within the West Midlands and beyond as a desirable place to live, work, shop and invest.

The strategy focuses on the historic core of the High Street and Conservation Area and its surrounding street and lanes, opportunities for physical public realm improvement and new development which complement this core area are detailed in subsequent policies. All development in the Town Centre, or that will impact on the Town Centre, must have regard to the policies of this AAP and the Bromsgrove Core Strategy.

The regeneration will be phased over 15 years in conjunction with the development identified in the Bromsgrove Core Strategy.

The Objectives

Retailing and the local economy

- Improved retail offer through the development of new sites and an extended Primary Shopping Zone
- Improved range and quality of evening economy uses within the Town Centre, including a choice of bars, cafes and restaurants
- Number of employment sites for light industrial usage maintained
- Promoted local and niche shops in traditional High Street premises
- A regular high quality outdoor market in the High Street
- Instigation of an extended events programme

Living and working in Bromsgrove

- To deliver new high quality housing which provides a mix of unit sizes and tenure
- To ensure that residential unit numbers, densities and affordable housing provision is sufficient and appropriate for the local area
- Modern commercial office accommodation will be made available
- New technology businesses attracted as part of improved links with the technology park and A38 technology corridor
- The conversion of empty space above shops converted into flats
- A Care Village in the Town Centre to meet the needs of Bromsgrove

Public Realm and Open Spaces

- Upgrading the public realm and Primary Shopping Zone to a high quality including resurfacing and refurbishing the High Street
- Preserving and enhancing the Conservation Area's character and appearance
- Wherever viable renovating, refurbishing, rejuvenating or redecorating the Town Centre's historic buildings
- Utilising the natural assets in the Town Centre to provide enhanced green and open spaces including the Spadesbourne Brook and Recreation Ground

- Ensure a safe environment for all and a Town Centre enjoyable for everyone

Accessible and efficient public services in Bromsgrove Town Centre

- New Customer Service Centre and Civic Suite incorporating a review of public administration and library services
- New Leisure Centre
- New Health Centre
- New / Refurbished Public Toilets

Transport, movement and accessibility

- To reduce reliance on car use and reduce transport related carbon emissions
- An improved road network including the reengineering of junctions and traffic flows
- Improved pedestrian priority, accessibility, permeability, linkages and mobility within and across the Town Centre for pedestrians and cyclists
- Improved public transport infrastructure including the new or upgraded Bus Station, and new Town Centre bus routes
- Improved pedestrian and cycle linkages between Bromsgrove Station and the Town Centre, and the promotion of shuttle bus services between the two destinations
- A rationalisation of car parking provision in the Town Centre

Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy (2010-2013)

The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) sets out the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of the local area and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) is responsible for delivering it. In September 2010, the Worcestershire Partnership (in consultation with District Partnerships) approved proposals for a **new Single Countywide Sustainable Community Strategy for Worcestershire**. This was finalised in November 2011 and it includes a chapter specifically on Bromsgrove District from the Bromsgrove Partnership.

Bromsgrove Partnership Priorities

The Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy for 2010-13 and the priorities within that were based on an understanding of the available evidence and the views of the public. These priorities were reviewed in 2011 and simplified to the top three priorities. Key outcomes agreed for each priority and the Theme Groups responsible for delivering on those priorities, are shown in the table below.

Bromsgrove Partnership operates a Board and four Theme Groups and it is those Theme Groups which are the delivery arm of the Partnership. Theme Groups will decide the best way to meet the agreed priorities and their measures of success. Any barriers to delivery which they face will be dealt with by the Board. As many of the issues being tackled overlap across more than one Theme Group, all cross cutting challenges and identified gaps will be considered at Board level to ensure a truly effective and cohesive partnership approach is taken.

The Trunk is the Bromsgrove Partnership's Areas of Highest Need project and is a multi agency partnership which began in 2009. EPIC, a community interest company, was commissioned by Bromsgrove Partnership to run The Trunk and it is now delivering a programme of learning, skills acquisition, support activities and community resources for the residents of Charford and Sidemoor primarily with an outreach programme for Catshill residents. We will continue building on the project's success to ensure sustainability for the future. With many organisations seeing a reduction in resources, Bromsgrove Partnership believes good partnership working is now even more crucial. Therefore, we will continue to work hard to meet the existing and future needs of our local community in the most effective and efficient way.

Priorities	Key Outcomes	Theme Groups
Economic Growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regeneration of the town centre • Effectively market Bromsgrove District • Encourage business growth (including retention of businesses) 	Economic Development Theme Group
Balanced Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce alcohol misuse and smoking, encourage healthy diet and exercise and improve perception of mental health issues • Implement an age well scheme and focus on falls prevention • Deliver accessible, localised and sustainable services for vulnerable neighbourhoods via The Trunk (Areas of Highest Need Project) • Provide positive activities for 	Balanced Communities Theme Group

	young people	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the fear of becoming a victim of domestic burglary • Maintain safe clean streets by tackling night time economy and reducing graffiti • Protect communities by tackling domestic abuse, youth related anti-social behaviour and supporting vulnerable people 	Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce CO2 emissions through improved energy efficiency in housing and businesses • Explore improving biodiversity and nature in key strategic sites; and how land use influences carbon emissions/carbon sinks • Ensure shared priorities are delivered in a cohesive way e.g. environmentally sustainable town centre 	Better Environment Theme Group

Local Enterprise Partnership

Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) are currently being set up to deliver, amongst many things, coordinated economic stability and growth across areas which are typically bigger than one District Council. Bromsgrove District Council is currently a member of 2 LEP's, one which focuses on the Birmingham area and some of its surrounding Districts, and also the LEP which deals with issues within Worcestershire. The nature of where Bromsgrove District is within the region means it is important to look in all directions for new partnerships which can help the Town Centre to flourish. As the details of these LEPs become clearer it will be easier to establish what, if any, changes need to be made to the AAP to align with wider economic strategies across the West Midlands region and beyond.

Deliverability

The strategies above set out the long-term vision for the district, and the regeneration of the town centre is identified as the key challenge upon which development and change will be focused. A mixed use urban extension is proposed across three sites in Bromsgrove creating a sustainable and

balanced community that will integrate into the existing residential areas of Bromsgrove. The development will fully address the social, economic and environmental facets of sustainable development and will consist of a minimum of 1850 dwellings, 5 hectares of employment land, local centre(s) and retail and community facilities.

In order to strengthen the existing role and function of Bromsgrove as a key regional centre, priority has been given to the revitalisation of Bromsgrove town centre and the provision of new employment in the town. This includes enhancing retail, cultural and leisure facilities, new offices, centrally located overnight accommodation and developing cultural and heritage-focused tourism by enhancing existing, and providing new, cultural and heritage facilities and attractions.

The vision for the town centre and as such the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area will be delivered through direct funding from the Council, from central Government funding programs and obtaining external funding and commitments from partners. Bromsgrove is identified as a growth area and key centre on which development and change will be focused.

The historic market site occupies an area of 0.7 hectares and sits at a key southern gateway into the Town Centre where routes from Worcester and Kidderminster meet. This is a key strategic location as it marks the end of the linear High Street and one of the major pedestrian gateways into the Town Centre. It is important as a potential new retail-led, mixed-use location, adding to the overall retail offer and creating an anchor at the southern end of the Town, thus ensuring active retail uses along the entire length of the Primary Shopping Zone. To have a national food store on the Market Hall site was selected by respondents as one of the choices to make the town centre a better place to shop. The proximity to a proposed street café area and concentration of pubs and restaurants in the High Street South/Worcester Road make this site suitable for other supporting uses which could contain a small cinema and/ or other leisure uses such as cafes and restaurants, residential or offices are also other acceptable supporting uses on this site. The establishment of a new anchor store at the Southern end of the High Street is seen as a key element of the Council's land use strategy and the historic market site – in public ownership and highly visible - will therefore be a priority for early development.

The former Parkside Middle School is a Grade 11 Listed Building made redundant in 2008 and the District Council has worked closely with Worcestershire County Council to find a use for the building which ensures its long-term future and maintains it as a heritage asset for the Town Centre. That use has now been confirmed as a sympathetic conversion to office use for Worcestershire County and Bromsgrove District council services. The

move comes after agreement was reached in detailed negotiations over how public services could come together in one building central to Bromsgrove town. The proposals include moving into Parkside the Worcestershire Hub Customer Service Centre from School Drive, and Bromsgrove Library, along with back office staff from the Council House on Burcot Lane. If approved, this process is likely to take around two years.

The Dolphin Leisure Centre located on the main route into Bromsgrove from Redditch is approaching the end of its useful life and with this comes an opportunity to replace it with a modern facility that more successfully meets the needs of the residents. The possible relocation of public sector facilities could also form part of a dual use building. The scoping of a new multisport and fitness complex for the residents of Bromsgrove District required a consultation exercise to establish the leisure habits and needs of the community. The Bromsgrove Leisure consultation occurred during the summer of 2010 and received 866 completed questionnaires as well as determining current and future customer demand, travel habits, linked trips, and preferred location for a new leisure centre. 42% of the respondents supported that the Leisure Centre must be in Bromsgrove town centre. Almost a third of people currently visit Bromsgrove to use the Dolphin Centre. The site is predominantly in public ownership and the limited life of the Dolphin Centre makes this development an early priority, integrating the Artrix, Bromsgrove North High School, NEW College and the proposed replacement Fire and Police station into the Town Centre community.

The Council is currently working with Sainsbury's on a supermarket store for Birmingham Road on a site that currently has three warehouse-style retail premises. Pedestrian linkage with the Town Centre is essential and as such the development is contributing to public realm improvements in Birmingham Road, the Strand and High Street North. This will facilitate the extension of the Primary Shopping Zone to the new supermarket by ensuring a common public realm from the centre of Town to the store. The redevelopment of the site will deliver a number of social benefits and the introduction of a large retail store will increase the range of retail facilities on offer in the Town providing choice for residents. The planning permission ensures that the development of the site will retain the character and setting of the two listed buildings which provide a limited street frontage along Birmingham Road. Environmental improvements will occur due to the naturalization of the Spadesbourne Brook at the rear of the site contributing to a network of green infrastructure within the town centre.

The movement strategy for Bromsgrove will make the Town Centre more accessible for all modes of travel. It attempts to change the emphasis of the road network away from being a through route to other locations across north Worcestershire. A detailed Town Centre traffic management study in 2011 will

add to various studies already carried out. Though traffic will be discouraged, and the notion of Bromsgrove as a destination, rather than a cut-through will be promoted by a variety of actions and policy measures. Many of these actions and measures will take place much further afield from the Town Centre. They include alterations to signage and road junctions around the Town Centre, and on main routes into Bromsgrove. The Council will work with Worcestershire County Council to ensure these proposals are developed within the Local Transport Plan. The success of this will depend on the provision of viable alternative routes for the through traffic that is currently using Bromsgrove, combined with the implementation of measures to make routes through the Town Centre less desirable to through traffic. These measures will include signposting, change of priorities in favour of public transport and pedestrians, weight limits etc. Improvements to the Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road junction, a new regular bus link between town centre and rail way station, de-clutter pedestrian routes into the High Street and retain the bus stops in current location are considered as actions most useful to help respondents getting around Town.

A business case has been presented to the Department of Transport for a new four-platform railway station to accommodate trains from Birmingham every 20 minutes. The proposal is now being developed by Centro, Network Rail and Worcestershire County Council and includes a 350 space car park. The design is forecast to be completed early in 2012. Ongoing negotiations are being held with the Department of Transport to look at the demand revenue forecast – the level of service and revenue expected.

The early upgrade of the public realm is vital to enhance the heritage of the area and recreate an attractive Town Centre with a more positive sense of place. A safe and attractive public realm will attract visitors and shoppers and lengthen their stay, increase the number of people living in Town, and help attract businesses from all sectors by tangibly demonstrating public investment in the Town. It is envisaged that the revitalised public realm will form part of a Town Centre that is an accessible asset for the whole community.

5.1.2 Other regeneration strategies, projects or schemes impacting on the Conservation Area and surroundings

Vacant Retail Space

We are reviewing and promoting the potential for converting empty shops into a wide range of temporary uses. Empty spaces within Bromsgrove town centre make perfect places for short, temporary projects that embrace the

meanwhile – the time between the last commercial activity and whatever comes next. Closed shops can provide space for

- Pop-Up shops
- Community activities like exhibition spaces and information points
- *Art in Shop Windows* exhibitions
- Local archaeological collections – there will be two community digs in Bromsgrove scheduled between June and August 2012

By contacting owners of empty retail units the Council has managed to secure them for artistic groups and individuals to display their work. One of the best means of animating town centres during the economic downturn is by using the arts to make them attractive and vibrant places. The objective is to help regenerate the town centre and at the same time give the appearance of productivity making the units more attractive to potential purchasers and improving the area for shoppers and visitors. Empty shops will provide the space for celebrating the locally distinct, culturally diverse creatively rich nature of Bromsgrove's town centre.

Vacant Upper Floors

The aim is that the Council will enable the development of new private sector dwellings within the Town Centre which will help meet the local area agreement themes:

- Meeting the needs of young people – through the provision of more housing options for young people in the District.
- Economic Success that is shared by all – increasing the residential element of the Town Centre will help support the town centre economy both day and night.
- Communities that are safe and feel safe – having a residential presence in the Town Centre will contribute towards a passive surveillance of the Town Centre and help to discourage anti-social behaviour.
- Stronger communities – by offering young people a choice to stay in the district rather than finding cheaper accommodation in adjoining areas will contribute towards them being able to access their support networks thereby developing stronger communities.

Currently we have an imbalance in our housing market in that there is insufficient affordable housing to meet the identified needs of the District. In particular there is insufficient affordable housing for young people resulting in an outward migration to cheaper surrounding areas such as Redditch and Birmingham. In Bromsgrove District the average house price is £241,000 with the cheapest housing being just under £100,000, although these figures will now be falling as a result of the recession it is very difficult for a household with a moderate income to access market housing.

This issue is also intensified by the fact that the total number of households in the District is projected to increase by 8,000 from 2006 to 2026, a trend which implies a strong locally generated growth in the need and demand for housing.

In response to this growing need, Bromsgrove District Council is continually focussed upon exploring opportunities for new housing developments and also making the best use of existing accommodation within the district.

The Countywide Housing Strategy 2011-2015 *The right home, at the right time, in the right place* have indentified the priority to make:

Better use of existing homes and set the action to achieve this as being:

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 RPs (Registered Providers) to purchase or lease and to use enforcement powers but as a last resort

The Strategic Housing Team at Bromsgrove District Council have also set their strategic vision to guide the Council's approach to housing as being:

"Making best use of existing accommodation by improving the quality and accessibility, and addressing the in-balance in the housing market through the provision of more affordable housing."

Whilst the Council has always looked where possible at opportunities to encourage empty properties back into use, the Council's lack of resources have meant that this has been on a more reactive basis and therefore has had limited success.

In a recent Housing Market Study of Bromsgrove that was jointly commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust it was identified that:

"... the challenges facing the district in creating a more balanced housing market - especially to improve the choice of housing for local people - the priorities for intervention (include):

to stimulate the supply of private sector homes, for example, through bringing empty properties back into use and by developing flats over shops, including giving consideration to making Private Sector grants and loans directly to landlords to stimulate such activity."

As part of this, work has started in conjunction with the Town Centre Regeneration Project to identify available space above shops in the town centre that could be potentially converted into residential premises, to assist in the regeneration of the centre and also to contribute towards meeting the unmet housing need of the District.

It has been identified that there are 174 units in the town centre which do not have residential units above. Bromsgrove District Council has undertaken a survey to all freeholders of units in the Town Centre to identify what this available space is used for and to ask them whether they would consider what options and assistance would encourage them to consider conversion opportunities, such as:

- Financial assistance to convert empty space.
- Advice on what options may be available to maximise potential.
- Opportunities to assist in privately renting residential space.
- Opportunities to assist in renting space for commercial use.
- Provide opportunities for medium to long term leasing of empty space.

It is hoped that by entering into dialogue with owners, that officers will be able to discuss the most suitable and advantageous option with owners. It is anticipated that as part of this, owners may need to take advantage of the financial assistance available to convert space. Currently the only grant that is available to owners is the “Empty Homes Grant” which is funded through Bromsgrove District Council’s Discretionary Grant budget. This grant is available up to a maximum of £5,000, must be match funded by applicant, and they must agree to give the Council nomination rights to that property for a period of 5 years. The grant is also repayable if the property is disposed of within 10 years, which allows the funding to be recycled for further schemes

Since the grant has been available it has had limited take up, which is felt to be due to the fact that the owner must give the Council nomination rights and also that £5,000 is not enough to cover works required. In addition to this the budget for Discretionary Grants has been significantly cut from 08/09 to 09/10 with further projected cuts expected, which means that there will be significant limitations on the number of grants available in the future. Discretionary Grant funding must also be used for vulnerable homeowners in receipt of Means Tested Benefits to undertake essential repairs to their properties, which creates additional an burden upon the funding.

Financial Year

	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13
Budget	£164,000	£115,000	£100,000	£63,000	£25,000

These cuts will make it increasingly difficult to offer owners of empty space the financial assistance required to encourage them to do the works to convert empty space into residential accommodation.

The Strategic Housing Team has developed strong links with the private rented sector as part of their role to encourage the development of this sector.

As part of this therefore they are prepared to assist owners of empty space to make them aware of their options when converting empty space with the intention to make it available to privately rent. These options will include identifying current local need, and taking into consideration issues such as Housing Benefit changes, newly emerging trends, rent ability and rental amounts in the town centre. The team has also agreed to offer owners the option to maximise of the Council's Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme which will help landlords to find suitable tenants for their properties."

The Council's Private Sector Housing Team currently have a responsibility to inspect private properties within Bromsgrove District to ensure that they conform to the Housing Health and Safety Rating System as part of the Housing Act 2004. We are conscious therefore that as part of the administration of any future grant with respect to the conversion of empty space into residential accommodation that we show due regards to this legislation. The Private Sector Housing Team have agreed that during the grant application that they will review all plans and schedule of works to ensure that they comply to the standards that they would expect. They have also agreed to be able to make themselves available to attend a site inspection if required to ensure that owners of empty space in the town centre are given specific tailored advice to maximize the potential of the property in line with the current housing market trends.

Bromsgrove Town Centre Accessibility Audit

The aim of this study carried out on Wednesday, 20th. July, 2011 by the Worcestershire Association of Service Users was to undertake an objective assessment of the current town centre streetscape, focussing on the ability of people and/or goods and services to reach places and facilities. Elements such as ground surface quality, interaction with traffic, obstructions or trip hazards to pedestrians and lighting provision (including shop windows and floodlit buildings) were explored to produce an overall qualitative assessment of the town centre. This is now helping us to understand the way in which the

public spaces are used, identify existing gathering points and desire lines and highlight issues which are hindering pedestrian movement.

The full results of the Accessibility Audit received in September, 2011 has influenced our public realm strategy for the Town Centre, and supported the aims of the Town Centre Area Action Plan to ensure our regenerated town centre promotes the spirit of the Disability Discrimination Act whilst creating a safe and welcoming environment.

The study addressed the following issues using photographs, plans and illustrations as appropriate:

- Identify existing problems for mobility impaired and sensory impaired users and suggest options for improvements
- Highlight existing barriers to permeability and circulation
- Suggest opportunities to improve through-movement of pedestrians
- Assess the adequacy of existing signage provision and the ability of user groups to orientate themselves
- Identify hotspots of street clutter and suggest options to rationalise these
- Explore the potential for reintroduction of cycle access to the High Street including dedicated cycle paths
- Investigate existing CCTV and lighting provision and any gaps in coverage which need to be addressed

Better access to Bromsgrove's shops and public buildings is a need for disabled people who live in or visit Bromsgrove and in Summer and Autumn 2010 we held a consultation to ascertain views on an official award scheme for shops and businesses who provide excellent access and customer service for disabled people across Bromsgrove. In total there were 231 replies, all very positive.

Nominations for the 2011-2012 Bromsgrove No Barriers Disabled Access Awards closed on 13th May. Over 20 nominations were received for 14 businesses and service providers in Bromsgrove ranging from retail outlets, sports centres to market traders and day care providers. The nominations were considered by a panel of disabled volunteers who visited those businesses nominated or contacted them for further information to confirm the nominations received.

The panel met on 20th June to agree the final list of award winners who were then invited to a presentation by the Council Vice Chairman, Cllr. Mrs C. Spencer, on Saturday 25th June. The awards give recognition to those who make positive efforts to assist disabled people and will demonstrate to disabled customers that those businesses or services are accessible to them. An Access Guide for Disabled People is in production for Bromsgrove showing the businesses and services who have been awarded

recognition under the Bromsgrove “No Barriers” - Disabled Access Awards Scheme.

Economic Development Strategy

Visitor Growth Strategy

Bromsgrove Town Centre Transport Study

Wider Town Centre Regeneration & Key Initiatives

Bromsgrove in Bloom

Heart of England in Bloom could be a key objective for Bromsgrove District Council and there is a desire to achieve recognition within the Campaign. It is therefore our intention to seek funding and support for future years' submissions which will allow us to develop and strengthen our abilities to meet the Heart of England in Bloom criteria. Although 2012 will be our first year entering the competition we are striving to ensure that the ethos of the competition and the diverse manner in which it can be incorporated becomes part of our normal working practices. The competition is in keeping with the Council's core objects in providing a clean, green and safe district. Within the town centre we aim to have:

- pole-mounted two-tier baskets
- three-tier planters
- wall-mounted planters baskets
- dedicated and skilled horticulturists to maintain the town centre and other key sites in the District
- cleanliness of streets and roads within the town – no litter, graffiti or dog fouling
- excellent marketing and promotion of In Bloom campaign
- excellent local and national media coverage
- continued encouragement and support of local schools for the In Bloom campaign
- dialogue with local villages, e.g. Belbroughton, Dodford
- support and sponsorship from local business

There will be high visibility impact planting that not only provides a traditional-style, formal landscape theme but softens the impact of a mixture of architectural styles and colours in and around the Conservation Area. We will seek to use low maintenance and drought tolerant plants such as Geraniums, Begonias, Ageratum and Cineraria. The planters will all have water reservoirs in them which will help with lowering the watering maintenance that is required. They will also serve a practical use in that they will be mobile and capable of being removed or rearranged should the town space be required for an event.

We will use a number of media to broadcast Bromsgrove in Bloom to the public, such as:

- Together Bromsgrove – quarterly magazine delivered to every household in the District
- Friends Groups
- Press releases in local papers
- Worcestershire Walks Magazine
- Public consultation in areas where projects are to be carried out
- Bromsgrove District Council Website
- Letter / leaflet drops
- Staff and Councillor roadshows
- Facebook and Twitter
- Local radio
- Notice Boards around parks and allotments

Sanders Park is Bromsgrove's Premier Park attracting over 350,000 visitors per year. The park, located close to the town centre of Bromsgrove, was opened in 1968 and covers 16.3 hectares to the west of Bromsgrove linking to countryside beyond. The area of Sanders Park and the small valley of the Battlefield Brook has for centuries been an important green space for the town. In the area of the park by Watt Close there used to be an Elizabethan water mill powered by the Battlefield Brook. This was converted in the late eighteenth century to one of the first cotton spinning factories in England finally ending its life as the first open air swimming pool in the area which is now a water feature in the park.

Sanders Park was named after two sisters who bequeathed the site to Bromsgrove District Council to be used for the health, relaxation and wellbeing of the people of Bromsgrove. The District Council manages the park to meet the modern day needs of the local community.

The park offers a wide range of facilities for informal and formal recreation as well as a varied event programmes throughout the year. These facilities include a flat outdoor bowling green, two tennis courts, putting green, outdoor skate park, two Multi Use Games areas and a state of the art children's play area, Jubilee Bandstand and a pavilion housing a cafe, information desk, ladies, gents and disabled toilets.

Naturalisation of the Spadesbourne Brook

The Spadesbourne Brook rises in the Lickey Hills to the north and flows south through the town. The length of the Brook envisaged for enhancements runs from All Saints Church in Burcot Lane to Brook Lane in Sanders Park and is 2.15 kilometres in length. It runs past the existing Council House, through NEW College land behind Birmingham Road, past the Strand, along Market Street through the Bus Station, and across the historic market site into Sanders Park.

Parts of the Brook are naturalised, including areas between Birmingham Road and School Drive, and at the bus station. However, the majority of the Brook has been re-routed, culverted and effectively relegated to function as a storm drain through the Town Centre, hidden from view, and sometimes covered entirely by access roads to properties. Even in its urban context the brook contains some plant and animal life, and the water quality is good and clear. However it fails to provide any real amenity value for users of the Town Centre and its ability to support a wider variety of plants and animals is reduced by the its unnatural form.

The Environment Agency has confirmed, however, that Spadesbourne Brook currently supports dispersed colonies of water voles (a protected species) to the north and south of the town centre. However, the water voles and other wildlife find traversing the culverted sections of the brook difficult and cannot create habitats at certain sections due to the concrete sides.

The naturalisation of Spadesbourne Brook is a key component of the Land use (TC2) Movement (TC3) Public Realm (TC4) and Urban Design (TC5) and Historic Market

Site (TC8) strategies of the AAP. The relocation and naturalisation of specific parts of the brook will allow for greater use by the community. It will ensure that shoppers in the High Street are never more than a few minutes away from an attractive area of green and open space and it will improve permeability and legibility within the Town Centre. It will include relocation and naturalization of the watercourse where possible, a raised water level, improved flood capacity, a habitat appropriate for many plants and animals including water voles, high quality paving, seating areas, new trees and planting.

The naturalised watercourse will be designed with full consideration of highways and public safety requirements and developed in line with other key public realm areas to provide a holistic approach to design and access throughout the Town Centre. The Brook will form part of a green corridor running along Market Street providing links to other areas of the Town. Access requirements will be maintained and utilities and other services will be moved where necessary. Where the watercourse is relocated, existing culverts may be utilised to improve flood capacity. Existing trees and planting will be retained where possible or replaced with like-for-like specimens where removal is necessary. The watercourse will be engineered to allow wildlife including water voles, to traverse its length and to allow for the creation of new habitats to assist with the ongoing protection of biodiversity assets.

The Brook is in both public and private ownership, naturalising and in some cases relocating the Spadesbourne Brook will be achieved via different approaches dependent on whether the section is part of a development site or not. Other sections at locations that are not development sites such as the section running parallel to Crown Close will be funded from sources including (but not limited to):

- European Commission: Environment funding
- Natural England Biodiversity Fund
- Biffaward grants
- SITA trust: Enriching Nature Programme
- Big Lottery Fund: Community Wildlife
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- WREN: Biodiversity Action Fund
- Veolia Environmental Trust
- Big Lottery Fund: Changing Spaces / Community Spaces
- Esmee Fairbairn Foundation: Biodiversity Strand

Public Realm Improvements

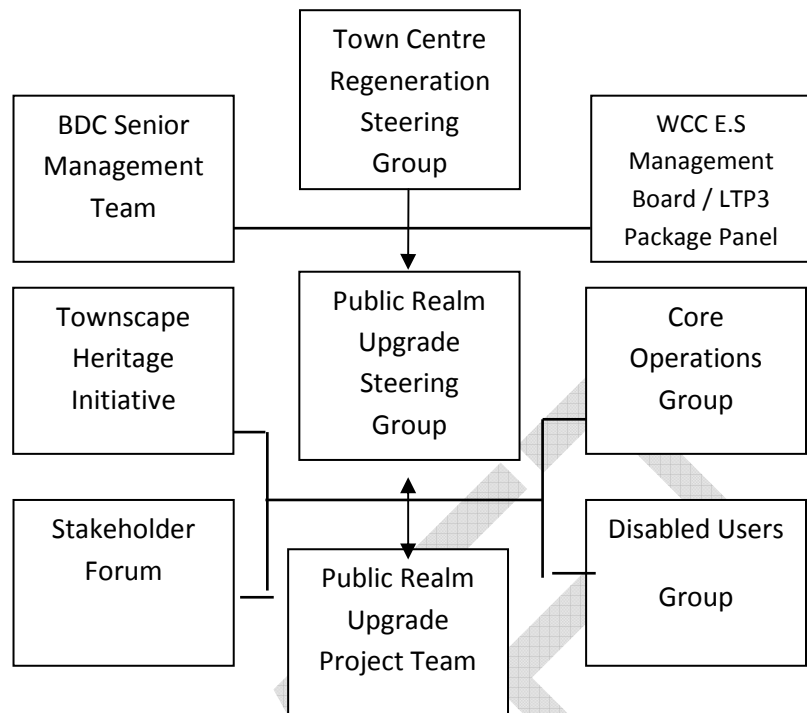
The town centre public realm upgrade is central to Strategic Aim One of the Regeneration Programme, namely, a revitalised and attractive town centre. The scheme objectives will be achieved through the following design principles:

- Paving - durable and sustainable natural materials such as granite and york stone that are in keeping or contrast positively with the character and appearance of the conservation area
- Lighting – a scheme which ensures public safety but minimises street clutter and highlights the high quality architecture and attractive soft landscaping along the High Street
- Public Safety – safety considerations will be integral to all design proposals
- CCTV – an effective CCTV Network that ensures public safety but minimises street clutter
- Accessibility – ensure straightforward navigation and movement and enable an easy flow into key spaces and from one micro destination to another
- Physical definition - use paving materials to create visually different linear and spatial zones that are recognisable as distinct areas within an overall coherent design
- Market – a defined optimum layout to include dedicated speciality market areas and ensure an unfettered carriageway and an ease of pedestrian movement in, around and through the Town Centre on market days
- Street Entertainment – defined open areas of varying sizes for the purposes of displays, street theatre, musical performances, dancing, busking etc.

- Trees and soft landscaping – to be integrated within the design and located to provide an avenue and reinforce rather the compromise or diminish the linear open nature of the High Street
- Street furniture – minimise street furniture such as bollards, signage, lighting and CCTV columns, notice boards. Designate street café areas. Cluster benches, planters and remaining furniture within linear zones defined for the purpose
- Gateway Sites – must be defined as welcoming and an entrance to the Town Centre to provide a sense of arrival
- Shared services – define using subtle level changes and the use of contrasting colours and textures: In this way they are shared services only in much as they can be used by vehicles and pedestrians and are part of a common materials palette
- Public Highway - discharge defined functional and technical requirements as are necessary to fulfil its function as a highway in respect of the prevailing Traffic Regulation Order that may apply to it
- Traffic Regulation Orders – to facilitate TROs used to define the necessary (time bound) vehicular access movements defined by consultation including decisions on:
 - Service Vehicles
 - Market Vehicles
 - Blue Badge Vehicles
 - Emergency Vehicles
 - Taxis
 - Cycles
- Parking and Loading Bays / Taxi Ranks – as required to facilitate TROs
- Carriageway - a demarcated and distinct straight carriageway constructed to accommodate TRO defined vehicular traffic and designed using natural materials to create an Avenue down the High Street.
- Maintenance – the design will not be unduly or unnecessarily compromised by future maintenance liabilities, which will be mitigated from a construction and financial point of view

The Partners in the Public Realm Upgrade are Worcestershire County Council (WCC) and Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and the scope of works covers a range of schemes to be carried out during 2012 and 2013.

Schematic of Project Governance Structure



DRAFT

Street Café Quarter

The enhancement of the public realm will also help facilitate a new café quarter at the southern end of the High Street near the junction with Worcester Road. Such an improvement can support and extend the concentration of bars and restaurants in that area. Similar but smaller zones could then be created in other suitable areas of the Town. Strict licensing agreements will be used and a common design of seating, tables and canopies etc will be imposed to ensure consistency and uniformity.

Bromsgrove High Street Market

Moving the market onto the High Street has been a success in terms of increased activity in the Town Centre. However, at the moment the public realm is not designed or adequately constructed for it. Stalls have to be laid out around trees, bollards and bins. The uneven surface compounds these problems. The result is that the market appears somewhat ramshackle and accessibility on market days is extremely difficult for all users of the High Street.

The new public realm design will ensure that the principles of ease of movement down the High Street will be maintained on market days. To accommodate this, a revised layout has been devised to optimise use of the space and to improve upon the appearance and scale of the market.

Permanent fixing points and services will be installed to ensure safe operation of markets and creating opportunities for staging other events in the future.

Our design brief for Bromsgrove High Street Market adheres to the following principles:

- The venue will be run as a “stalls-provided” market with marquee-type fabric stalls provided by the management - providing stalls rather than allowing a “trader-erect” market attracts larger numbers of traders and enables control to be maintained over their appearance
- At full capacity the Market will stretch the full length of the High Street from Worcester Road (“Poundland”) to the Strand (“Argos”) - the current designation of the highway as pedestrian-priority will be supplemented by additional Traffic Regulation Orders on trading days to restrict service deliveries
- The estimated maximum number of stalls on the High Street will be 80 catering for say 50 individual businesses - the recommended colour of the covers is a mixture of bright red, yellow or blue stripes on a white background with transparent side curtains
- The user-types, i.e. the range of products allowed to be sold on the market will be strictly-controlled by management. This is essential to both maintain quality standards and ensure the variety that attracts shoppers - maintaining the correct “balance of trades” also avoids

conflicts between traders wishing to sell the same lines as adjacent shopkeepers

- It is intended to increase occupancy of the general Market and introduce additional events e.g. a fortnightly antiques and bric-a-brac market on Saturday or Sunday - trading hours will be extended (particularly in the winter months) by improving lighting provision for stalls and improved welfare facilities for traders
- The minimum number of bollards, lighting standards, CCTV masts, bicycle racks, litterbins etc is desirable - they impose constraints on trader numbers and revenue. The street is too narrow to accommodate raised flowerbeds
- The design will recognise the importance of accommodating historic features newly reinstated, for example, medieval stocks, Hallelujah Lamp and two K6 telephone kiosks as well as the extant Housman statue etc
- The appearance of the paving on non-trading days is the primary concern for designers - we recommend natural, more traditional materials with an inherently non-slip finish suitable for wintry conditions and mechanical cleaning
- A Traffic Regulation Order will be required to prevent service deliveries to shopfronts on trading days – we have proposed 0300 - 2300hrs on trading days

New technology park

5.2 Scheme Outcomes and Benefits

5.2.1 Capital Projects

5.2.2 Maintaining and managing the Conservation Area during the lifetime of the scheme

Alongside the measures set out in the Management Plan, the following statutory measures have been investigated and taken forward where relevant to ensure the continued preservation and enhancement of the CA.

Article 4 Directions

The imposition of an Article 4 (1) Direction has not been considered for the town centre as there are no dwelling houses to which the removal of permitted development rights might apply. High Street and Worcester Road form a linear assortment of shops, restaurants, public houses, offices, cafes and banks, etc. either with vacant floors above or else flats or storage. Given the nature of the town centre and the limited space for extension to these commercial buildings, the

effect of permitted development on High Street and Worcester Road will be negligible therefore the introduction of an Article 4 Direction is not warranted.

However, the Council has produced design guidance to instruct owners and agents on appropriate alterations or replacement features. This guidance is two-fold and forms a comprehensive suite of documents to ensure the preservation and enhancement of the Conservation Area:

- Building Maintenance Guidance
- Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide

Area of Special Control

The Council had considered designating the commercial zones of the Conservation Area as 'areas of special control' in order to introduce stricter control of advertisements. However, upon further investigation, it has been found that the level of extra control gained would be negligible, primarily as advertisements are already relatively strictly controlled by virtue of the Conservation Area's designation and the Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide. This measure - more generally prevalent in National Parks and other significant rural areas such as North Yorkshire, Norfolk, Devon and Cornwall - has not, therefore, been pursued further.

Discontinuance Notices

The Council has already commenced sending warning letters to building owners on High Street/Worcester Road setting out their intention to pursue discontinuance notices against poor quality signage and advertisements that currently benefit from deemed consent but are considered to harm the character of the area. It is envisaged that such notices will become more and more prevalent as the quality of shopfronts and signage improves in the town centre by virtue of the THI scheme.

Other Enforcement Action

A Section 215 Notice and an Urgent Works Notice are being prepared, with guidance from English Heritage, for 22-24 High Street. This building is Grade 11 Listed and described as a priority plus (P+) project in the THI scheme.

Staff Resources

The Development Control and Strategic Planning Teams will all have some responsibility for managing and maintaining the Conservation Area. However, the principal responsibility will sit with the Council's Conservation Officer. The Planning Enforcement Team comprising three officers are responsible for dealing with any planning enforcement issues in the Conservation Area.

5.2.3 Community Activities

A number of activities were identified, as part of the Stage 1 bid to HLF; and further development has identified more detailed plans. A budget of over £50,000 has been set aside for “complementary initiatives” which will include training/education and activities designed to engage with the local community. These will be undertaken throughout the life of the THI. It is anticipated that responsibility for developing and delivering these initiatives will be shared between the:

- THI Project Officer & other council officers
- North East Worcestershire (NEW) College and SPAB
- Historic Environment and Archaeology Service (Worcestershire County Council)
- Local interest groups/organisations

A list of 12 schools in Bromsgrove was drawn up and emails of support from these schools are attached at Appendix 14, together with a similar letter from New College.

We are keen to actively involve local people, as well as owners/tenants, in the project. The success of the THI depends on ensuring that the community is aware of the project and that they can celebrate, care for and understand the importance of their town’s heritage which in turn will help generate local pride, increase confidence in the area and improve the image and profile of the area.

The THI will invest in community activities to enable people of all ages, 5-95, and of all communities, to access them in order to understand and learn, whether it be about the town’s history, conservation techniques or maintenance skills etc.

In addition to the community groups on the Partnership Steering Group, the community activities will require the help of some other groups, such as Bromsgrove Photographic Society, town trail guides, supporters of In Bloom, building preservation trusts, Earth Heritage Trust volunteers and members of archaeological societies etc. The outreach programmes will offer opportunities to the whole community, including hard to reach groups. Those community groups that have already taken part in consultation will continue to be involved. Through consultation, and through more informal conversations with the public and businesses, it is clear that many in Bromsgrove are keen to learn about their town’s history - the Bromsgrove Rousler published every December is a much read journal - and how to properly look after their historic buildings identifying problems early on in order to minimise the impact and subsequent cost.

The Learning, Education and Training plan (attached in full at Appendix ?) details the scope of each activity, cost and other resources, audience, benefits for people, timetable, targets and measures of success and methods of evaluation. The overall cost of this package is over £50,000, approaching approximately 5% of the

common fund overall. The main community activities envisaged, including budget, are detailed below:

- **Community Dig - £22,920**
- **Heritage in the Park Open Day - £4,000**
- **Bromsgrove Town Centre Walks - £300**
- **Heritage Interpretation - Building plaques/Interpretation panels - £5,500**
- **Bromsgrove Summer School – no cost**
- **Travelling Exhibition/Outreach Programme - £1,000**
- **Heritage Open Days – no cost**
- **High Street Businesses: Surgeries and Drop –in Sessions (no cost)**

Other profile-raising activities will be delivered as part of the THI Officer's general activities covered by the management overheads:

THI Newsletters

A high-quality newsletter will be prepared every spring and autumn with the first to appear in September 2012 when the scheme is launched. The second issue will go out in the spring 2013. Each newsletter will contain:

- Opportunities to influence and be involved in the THI scheme
- Progress of the THI scheme
- Before and after photos, rectified photography
- Memories or comments on particular buildings or areas
- Individual histories of buildings
- News stories
- Project documents
- architects' drawings
- Investment information
- Entertainment and leisure
- E-newsletter sign up
- Events information
- Questionnaires
- Consultation feedback
- Contact details

The newsletter will be distributed to each owner and occupier of a building within the THI boundary, it will also be distributed at events and available at local cultural and heritage facilities e.g. Artrix, St John's Church, district libraries, community halls and parish councils in order to encourage people to come and explore the town and get involved in the training and community activities.

Press Releases/Editorial in Local Newspapers

Press releases and editorial will be published as and when appropriate (approximately one per month) covering newsworthy stories generated by THI activity.

Upgraded THI Website

Web pages will be regularly updated (www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/bromsgrovethi) so that the site acts as a hub of information for the public, stakeholders and potential investors. A primary objective is *You Tube* and the filming of a number of 2-3 minute videos of interviews in the High Street. These will be based on THI/heritage/conservation issues. Other material might include:

- all forms, guidance notes and help guides
- newsletters
- progress updates
- case studies
- interactive maps and images for every building in the THI scheme
- facility to upload pictures (Flickr)
- Blogs
- 3-D visuals

New Business Start-up Programme

A Business Start-up Programme, which is an initiative consisting of business training and grants, has assisted a number of independent stores that have opened in the High Street. Bromsgrove District Council has a proactive policy aimed at filling shops when they become available. The quarterly 'Industrial and Commercial Property Guide' is produced and forwarded following any enquiry for commercial property. Likely prospects are also canvassed when a premise is known to be closing.

Building Preservation Trusts

Worcestershire Building Preservation Trust has been wound up and a proportion of its trustees have joined the West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust. It is hoped that either this Trust or a newly-constituted one dedicated to Bromsgrove District will take on a building, or buildings, in the High Street should any become available. While works are on site there will be a unique opportunity to involve members of the public, perhaps timetabled to link with the Heritage Open Days programme held annually in September as discussed above.

5.2.4 Training Activities

We see training as central to the THI. We want to provide opportunities for learning and, where possible, accredited learning in conservation and heritage management and maintenance skills for all involved in the project including property owners and tenants, architects/designers, contractors and sub-contractors, members of the general public, pupils and students. We want to support the development of skills amongst current heritage workers and volunteers, to encourage new employees and volunteers into the heritage sector and to increase awareness amongst the general public of the skills which have created, and continue to maintain, our heritage.

The programme will widen the knowledge of the historic environment of Bromsgrove within the construction industry providing relevant skills through CPD, NVQ and apprentice training, with practical experience on site in the town centre. The programme will allow for exploration of the history of Bromsgrove through the curriculum and community activities.

The majority of training will be provided in conjunction with North East Worcestershire (NEW) College College and Avoncroft Museum either in terms of:

- incorporating additional modules into current courses
- incorporating half-day training or talks/seminars into courses
- up-skilling their own staff
- further investigation of apprenticeships
- providing a free venue, etc.

The CVs for Charlotte Swain, Head of Business, Construction and Enterprise at NEW College and Simon Carter, Director of Avoncroft Museum are attached at Appendix 1. Where required, specialists procured by the Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) will be bought in to run courses.

A Contractor Survey was undertaken to determine what experience contractors have of working on historic properties:

- if they felt they lacked any skills in terms of heritage construction/conservation techniques
- if they would like any training to either improve or learn new skills
- what length of training was most preferable.

The outcomes of this have informed the type of training to be offered e.g. day courses on lime, damp and installation of services, etc.

Building owners and leaseholders have recognised their lack of knowledge in terms of maintaining their property, hence the publication of a Maintenance Manual for Owners of Historic Properties and the inclusion of surgeries/drop in sessions dedicated to this topic as well as lectures/seminars for owners as part of the community learning package.

Construction Training - NEW College

The Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings (SPAB) has been approached to run tailor-made courses for NEW College. These courses will cover a number of introductory conservation topics but will also include practical elements such as lime mortar specification and timber sash window repair.

SPAB have much experience in running courses for townscape heritage initiative schemes and will be procuring local craftspeople to deliver the courses. At NEW College, which caters for 16 – 19 year olds, there are currently three construction courses available to students - bricklaying, plastering and wood occupations/carpentry – and the aim is to deliver masterclasses in each of these. The specific craft skills most likely required for work within the THI area include bricklayers, carpenters, decorators, lead workers, roofers in both slate and tile, stonemasons and specialists in lime. In consultation with Charlotte Swain at NEW College it is envisaged that masterclasses will take place over three consecutive Fridays in the Fall Term.

The Council's Conservation Officer or the THI Project Officer will also provide one half day of time to discuss building repair, conservation techniques, urban design and architectural history with the students per year.

Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

These courses will also be hosted at NEW College. The THI aims to provide places to local contractors and practitioners free of charge, supporting participants to up-skill in relevant areas. Following the establishment and running of the stated number of courses, the College will be free to use the content and run additional courses to their own business model, subject to any intellectual copyright established by external tutors. Early indication from the Contractor Survey shows that there is a need to develop specialist one-off training days, such as dealing with damp in historic buildings, working with lime and inserting services in to older properties. Heritage specialists procured by SPAB will be contracted to run these courses, using the facilities at NEW College. Courses will take place on weekdays during the summer months.

Day Skills Courses – Avoncroft Museum

These courses will be hosted by Avoncroft Museum. The THI aims to provide places to domestic homeowners to increase awareness of the need for skilled craftspeople to work on historic buildings, to educate them regarding the need for sympathetic conservation and repair. This homeowners' introduction to the repair of old houses will highlight the need for regular maintenance, bringing practical and straightforward advice on maintenance and repairs to everyone who looks after a property. SPAB have also been approached to run this course, again procuring local craftspeople. In consultation with Simon Carter, Director of Avoncroft Museum, it is envisaged that courses will take place over three consecutive Saturdays during the late spring 2012. As above the Conservation Officer or THI Project Officer will provide one half day of their time.

Other training courses and schemes will be investigated during the THI as and when they become available, provided as additional to the training programmes already included or as new initiatives through partnership working.

5.2.5 Benefits for People

One of the aims of the THI is to help more people, and a wider range of people, to take an active part in and make decisions about their heritage as well help people to learn about their own and other people's heritage.

Within this context we believe the THI will improve the quality of life for the community and create a more attractive living and working environment by:

- improving the visual quality of the street with new shop fronts, attractive façades etc
- enhancing the shopping experience with attractive shop fronts (linked to high quality window dressing) which will improve economic performance and establish a niche retail destination in the town centre
- improving the public realm on High Street between the Housman Statue and the junction with New Road which will contribute to an improvement in the attractiveness of the conservation area and improve access for people using wheelchairs or buggies
- introducing an improved street market as well as events at weekends where appropriate, enabling the local community and visitors to gain a greater understanding of the High Street's historic environment including its significant architecture and to encourage use of the enhanced space and enjoy the pedestrianised High Street
- bringing vacant property back into profitable use for residential and commercial purposes which will bring increased activity, footfall and local spend
- increasing the number of jobs along the street by stimulating new businesses to establish on the upper floors and through niche retail activity thus improving the economic performance of current businesses and securing the success of new ones

- raising the image and attractiveness of the street by encouraging businesses to spill onto the street on Saturday evenings and Sundays and stimulate a café culture
- raising awareness of the history and heritage of the street through a range of innovative interpretive initiatives which will enable local people and visitors to appreciate the immense cultural heritage of the town in an interactive and appealing way and make the town centre more understandable
- creating a High Street which is accessible for all at all times, reducing the fear of crime and developing civic pride in the area in the hearts and minds of residents, businesses and visitors
- raising awareness of the need to respect and care for the historic part of the town centre, securing its buildings, and new interpretive features for future generations
- making learning about the town's history and heritage accessible to all including people who might otherwise not be aware of, or interested in, their heritage
- enabling businesses to have a greater understanding of their business and better equip them to maintain their specific building and others in the future which will improve the number and success/survival rate of start up businesses which will in turn reduce the vacancy of buildings in High Street and will generally better inform owners/occupiers about issues and to seek advice and skills training

In terms of the formal and informal training to be provided, we believe this will improve the quality of life for the community by encouraging local students, contractors, owners/tenants and the general public (including hard to reach groups) to access their heritage, understand the town's history better and get involved in the heritage sector leading to further job opportunities, improved skills and qualifications, improved earning potential and growth in businesses.

It will enable people to learn about and enjoy heritage and increase community participation in managing the conservation area and caring for our heritage. The activity plan outcomes are defined as follows:

- Trainees at NEW College will learn more about their historic environment and the history of High Street; the importance of their trade to the historic environment and the career opportunities available - new skills which will enable them to get into heritage construction, whether further training, employment, or education, and also life skills
- NEW College Construction Staff will learn new skills to enable wider teaching and assessment of heritage skills, update their knowledge, learn new heritage and conservation skills and enter the local heritage sector workforce
- Contractors will be able to work on historic buildings with greater confidence and broaden their skills base and knowledge ensuring more local contractors can work on local historic buildings. They will have received

specific continuing professional development training as part of the scheme which will enhance the quality of their work in the long term

- Existing skills of developers, agents and development control staff at Bromsgrove District Council will be refocused on design in the historic environment and new tools added to their skills base
- Environmental/sustainability events will ensure more businesses and individuals will consider the use of sustainable products and services and introduce energy efficient ways of working and living

5.2.6 The Environmental Effect

The THI scheme will have the following positive effects on the environment:

- Improvements to the public realm in the High Street, including improving the quality of the paving in the pedestrianised area, improving the quality of shop fronts and reducing street clutter
- Involvement of the local community in the Town Centre public realm improvements
- Implementation of a regular maintenance programme for the High Street
- Re-landscaping/culverting of the Brook and improving the environmental quality of the surrounding area - restoring the natural habitat of the Brook as much as possible in order to enhance biodiversity

Table showing which projects are likely to receive grants over £50,000

No	Occupancy	Works	Cost (£)
22-24 HS (P+)	Vacant 1, 2 & 3 floors	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	314,000
2-4 HS (P+)	Occupied	Modest repair & reinstatement	114,200
46 HS (P+)	Vacant 1 & 2 floors	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	192,000
134-136 HS (P+)	2 nd floor vacant	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	91,000
89-91 HS (P)	Vacant 1 & 2 floors	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	85,600
67 HS (P+)	2 nd floor	Re-use inc	91,000

	refurbishing	modest repair & reinstatement	
33-35 HS (P+)	Vacant 1 & 2 floors	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	131,000
3-5 HS (P)	Occupied	Modest repair & reinstatement	93,200
15 HS (R)	Vacant 2 & 3 floors	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	97,000
Tudor House, New Street (P)	Part vacant	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	112,000
46 WR (P)	Vacant 1 & 2 floors	Re-use inc modest repair & reinstatement	101,500

P+ = priority plus P = priority R = reserve

Of the 81 eligible projects 11 are likely to receive grants over £50,000 - 6 of these are priority plus projects, 4 are priority and 1 is in reserve. 9 properties have a re-use element while the remaining 2 require modest repair and reinstatement works, including shopfronts.

The aim of the THI is to conserve the High Street's heritage for present and future generations to experience and enjoy. However, we are conscious of the impact each of our projects will have on the environment and the ways by which we can reduce, as far as is realistic, any negative impact.

We envisage setting up a series of principles in order to establish our grants programme - principles that we would expect each third party recipient to adhere to. We will carefully consider all projects in the context of the guidance given in the HLF's *Planning Greener Heritage Projects* and will seek to minimise the impact on the environment of each scheme. We have taken into account the additional costs that may be incurred in terms of building repairs in our estimate of scheme costs and grant offers.

We will also provide links to the Government guidance on sustainable management of historic buildings (in particular the English Heritage site *Climate Change and your Home*) and continue to promote the Council's new guidance for *Maintenance of Historic Buildings in the Conservation Area*. In addition to the

requirement for schemes to meet Planning, Listed Building and Building Regulations Consent we will expect projects to:

- investigate and introduce energy efficiency savings in relation to lighting (including movement sensor communal lighting), fittings, building design layout, boilers and (in particular) insulation to at least the standard sought by Building Regulations including consideration of draught proofing, weather stripping, secondary glazing, insulation (from natural materials), fittings and equipment, with little impact on the appearance of the buildings
- consider renewable energy systems e.g. heat pumps, and take advantage of the grants that are available
- control the use of water through the types of taps and W/Cs' used, etc
- use traditional building materials, sourced locally, low in embodied energy, not just for use in buildings but public realm areas as well e.g. lime, local timber
- use low VOC paint for both internal and external use and where appropriate mineral based paint, such as Keim, for the exterior of buildings and public realm areas
- using timber from verifiable legal sources and sustainably managed forests by reference to the Forest Stewardship Council
- minimise use of toxic materials, non-recycled aggregates and reduce and recycle waste during construction
- use local suppliers where appropriate to limit distance travelled of materials, personnel, waste etc in order to minimise the carbon footprint as well as supporting local businesses

In undertaking any works in the historic environment or to heritage assets, the impact of those works on the significance of the asset(s) needs to be assessed. The overall aim of the THI is to reverse the negative impact of the economic decline of the High Street with regeneration of the historic environment.

5.3 Scheme delivery and costs

5.3.1 Delivering the action plan.

THI target programme:

The key targets are:

1. to implement projects which require the full public sector Common Fund and result in leverage of private sector finance at the levels identified in Table 5.2 within the 3/5 year life of the THI scheme, and

2. to ensure that a significant percentage of the 'PRIORITY +' Projects are completed within this timescale, with particular efforts to ensure that approvals are given and implementation commences within 2 years.
3. and to encourage owners of PRIORITY +' and 'PRIORITY' Projects to apply for grant aid, leaving some opportunities for 'Reserve' Projects, to ensure that all of the Common Fund identified for capital building projects is 'approved' within three years.

Approval of projects are expected to be spread throughout the first three years from receipt of the HLF contract to proceed, with implementation and expenditure from the Common Fund expected to spread over five years.

The targets for **approvals** should aim at:

- a minimum of 15% of the Common Fund during year one
- a minimum of 50% of the Common Fund by the end of year two,
- and 100% of the Common Fund by the end of year three.

Table 5.1 below, sets out an indicative budget and programme for **approvals** for the first three years of the THI.

The targets for **completion** should aim at:

- a minimum of 20% expenditure of the Common Fund at the end of year 2;
- a minimum of 40% expenditure of the Common Fund at the end of year 3;
- a minimum of 70% expenditure of the Common Fund at the end of year 4;
- and, 100% expenditure of the Common Fund by the end of year five.

The outline programme presented in Table 5.1 identifies annual expenditure based on Approvals:

- Potential properties given approval in year 1;
- Annual expenditure on Education & Training (see section 5.2 for detailed breakdown)
- Annual expenditure on Staffing & Publicity (see section 2.2 for detailed breakdown)
- and identifies the minimum targets for each year.

TABLE 5.1 Bromsgrove THI Budget for Grant Approvals & Common Fund expenditure

Grant Rate	60%	85%	ave55%	100.00%		
	Building Repairs	Replace Archit features	Vacant floor space	Pub Realm Comp Inits Staff etc	Total	Cumulative Total
Year 1 Properties						
46,High Street	16,000	75,000	101,000		192,000	
2-4 High Street	9,200	45,000	60,000		114,200	
44 Worcester Road	17,000	31,000	53,500		101,500	
High Street Public Realm				200,000	200,000	
Complementary Initiatives				15,000	15,000	
<u>Staffing & Publicity</u>				<u>45,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>	
Sub Total to end year 1	42,200	151,000	214,500	260,000	667,700	667,700
<i>Minimum target for year 1 approvals (15%)</i>	62,500	79,500	61,500	260,000	463,500	
Year 2 Properties						
Estimated Building Repair approvals in Year 2 (35%)	146,000				146,000	
Estimated Heritage Detail approvals in Year 2 (35%)		185,500			185,500	
Estimated Vacant Floorspace approvals in Year 2 (35%)			143,500		143,500	
High Street Public Realm				200,000	200,000	
Complementary Initiatives				15,000	15,000	
Staffing & Publicity				45,000	45,000	
Sub Total to end year 2	188,200	336,500	358,000	520,000	1,402,700	1,402,700
<i>Minimum target for approvals to end of yr2 (50%)</i>	208,500	265,000	205,000	337,500	1,016,000	
Year 3 Properties						
Estimated Building Repair approvals in Year 3 (<50%)	228,800				228,800	
Estimated Heritage Detail approvals in Year 3 (<50%)		193,500			193,500	
Estimated Vacant Floorspace approvals in Year 3 (<50%)			52,000		52,000	
Complementary Initiatives				10,000	10,000	
Staffing & Publicity				45,000	45,000	
Sub Total to end of year 3	417,000	530,000	410,000	575,000	1,932,000	1,932,000
<i>Minimum target for approvals to end of yr 3 (100%)</i>	417,000	530,000	410,000	575,000	1,932,000	
Complementary Initiatives + Staffing, etc. for Year 4 and 5				10,000 90,000	100,000	
end of year 5 TOTAL	417,000	530,000	410,000	675,000	2,032,000	2,032,000

Year One Potential Building Projects:

Potential Year One projects include both PRIORITY + projects and buildings where there is a likelihood of early action as the owner has expressed particular interest in immediate implementation involving THI funding. The following properties have been selected from discussions with the owners and the local experience of the THI Project Officer, Development Control and Conservation Officers and their confidence that the projects will start during year 1:

- Vacant corner site, 48, High Street
- Motorworld, 2-4 High Street
- M &M's Hair Shack, 46 Worcester Road

There is confidence that these buildings will come forward in Year One though an accurate summary of the likely Common Fund expenditure on all the buildings to be approved during Year One is not currently feasible. If any of these projects do not proceed during year one, alternative properties are certain to be considered as there was a backlog of unsatisfied expressions of interest. Accurate estimates of the projects likely to be given approval or likely to start is currently impossible. A potential Year 2 programme will be prepared at the end of Year 1 with the Annual Report when there should be further information on expected progress. Potential Year 1 projects and their likely costs are shown below, but the primary aim will be to achieve the target for total **approvals** listed in Table 5.1 for Year One.

The following listing provides an indication of the potential approval of expenditure on likely projects – including contingencies, etc. but not VAT, and the HLF contribution if the buildings listed above are approved in Year One:

- Vacant corner site, 48, High Street

Eligible project costs for Repairs to structure and fabric/Replacement of architectural heritage detail/ and Vacant Floor Space – approx. £ 192,000:

	<u>eligible costs</u>	<u>% grant</u>	<u>potential grant</u>	<u>HLF contribution</u>
Structure & Fabric	£ 16,000	60%	£ 9,600	£ 9,600
Heritage Detail	£ 75,000	85%	£ 63,750	£ 63,750
Vacant Floor Space	£101,000	ave 55%	£ 55,550	£ 55,550
Grant requirement calculated from figures above: £ 128,900				

- **Motorworld, 2-4 High Street**

Eligible project costs for Repairs to structure and fabric/Replacement of heritage detail/ and Vacant Floor Space – approx. £ 114,200:

	eligible costs	% grant	potential grant	HLF contribution
Structure & Fabric	£ 9,200	60%	£ 5,520	£ 5,520
Heritage Detail	£ 45,000	85%	£ 38,250	£ 38,250
Vacant Floor Space	£ 60,000	ave 55%	£ 33,000	£ 33,000

Grant requirement calculated from figures above: £ 76,770

- **M &M's Hair Shack, 46 Worcester Road**

Eligible project costs for Repairs to structure and fabric/Replacement of heritage detail/ and Vacant Floor Space – approx. £ 225,500:

	eligible costs	% grant	potential grant	HLF contribution
Structure & Fabric	£ 17,000	60%	£ 10,200	£ 10,200
Heritage Detail	£ 31,000	85%	£ 26,350	£ 26,350
Vacant Floor Space	£ 53,500	ave 55%	£ 29,425	£ 29,425

Grant requirement calculated from figures above: £ 65,975

With approval of the sum for these potential year 1 projects of over £270,000 from the Common Fund, the total will be above the year 1 target of 15% approvals.

It must be emphasised that the above list and costings indicates potential Year 1 projects and that there will also be variations to the individual costings of the listed projects when detailed condition appraisals for each building are carried out. At this stage this is only an indicative list and cannot be considered a detailed 'programme'. Once the THI starts, the THI Project Officer will define a potential programme of likely properties after the public meetings to launch the Initiative.

Actual expenditure on these projects is even more difficult to determine. This will depend on the actions and timetable of individual owners. We are certain that at least one project will be underway and some grant will have been paid towards capital expenditure on construction.

Year One Public Realm expenditure:

Assume actual expenditure during year 1 will be £200,000 – 50% of the total £400,000 for the Public Realm.

(see section 3.7 for breakdown and justification of costs)

Year One Education and Training expenditure:

Assume actual expenditure during year one will be £15,000, with another £15,000 during year 2, £10,000 during year 3, and the final £10,000 during years 4 and 5 – a total of £50,000.

(see section 5.2 for breakdown and justification of costs)

Year One Staffing and Publicity:

Staffing costs over the five years will total £200,000; and £25,000 to be available over the 5 years for other overheads including publicity, exhibitions and publications. This is averaged out at £45,000 per year.

(see breakdown and explanation in section 2.2)

5.3.2 Risk Management

Risk	How likely is the event ?	How serious would the effect be?	Consequence	Action you will take to help prevent the risk	Who is responsible for dealing with the risk?
THI Project Officer leaves job early	Low	Medium	Delivery of the scheme might get delayed. Community engagement suffers. Knowledge drain	Keep Project team up-to-date with progress. Maintain records so that project not over-reliant on one individual. Start recruitment process asap.	Lead Partner
External funding not secured or reduced	Low	High	Scheme unable to proceed or greatly reduced in scope	Retain close relationship with county council match funder	Lead Partner
Difficulty in persuading owners to take up	Medium	High	Under-spend. Buildings left unrepaired. Impact of scheme	Continuous engagement with owners of eligible properties – site visits, promotional events.	Lead Partner, Project Officer

grants			reduced	Increase level of grant as last option	
Lack of community engagement	Medium	High	Loss of support and lack of interest in grants	Base the project officer within the heart of the community and organise a series of consultation events & other community activities, making sure that the community is represented in the THI Partnership Steering Group	Lead Partner, Partnership Steering Group
Lack of local conservation skills	Medium	High	Sub-standard work which does not meet conservation standards. Reduced impact on townscape. Possible breach of contract	List of able and experienced contractors drawn up. Programme of skills training for local companies. Detailed specifications of works approved by council. Regular monitoring and management of work - by architect and by applicants. Payments stopped for poor work	Lead Partner Project Officer, Partnership Steering Group
Lead partner approves poor quality developments in conservation area that detract from	Low	High	Reduced impact of the THI scheme Conservation area not enhanced	Ensure planning control department is aware of scheme aims. Inform council members and officers of the aims of scheme. Education/skills training for other development control/planning teams. Good contacts with local press and public groups to inform public opinion	Lead Partner Project Officer

THI scheme					
Unexpected additional works revealed during the delivery phase	High	High	Results in extra costs & possibly to fewer projects being tackled, reduced impact of scheme	Produce detailed surveys of critical projects and those eligible projects where the risk is greatest during the development phase to reduce cost uncertainty. Try to gain internal access to estimate costs of projects in need of structural repairs.	Lead Partner Project Officer
Adverse change in property market	Medium	High	Businesses and property owners see no advantage in applying for a grant and investing their own money	Difficult to address, but generally important to develop a good understanding of the local property market and a clear vision for the area to help businesses/owners understand what the scheme is about and how they can benefit	Lead Partner Project Officer
THI-funded public realm brief not sensitively adhered to by Highways Authority	Medium	Medium	Regeneration strategy, vision for the area and implementation of conservation area management plan put at risk	Joint working with relevant county department, input from relevant county/district departments into conservation area management plan, shared vision	Lead partner

Lack of staff resources	Medium	High	Unable to deliver scheme to its full potential	Reaffirm high level commitment to the scheme from all members of the Partnership Steering Group and appropriate budgetary provision. Obtain commitment from all key council departments/ teams that staff resources will be made available.	Lead Partner, Project Team
-------------------------	--------	------	--	---	----------------------------

5.3.3 The eligible costs and the common fund

The total expected cost to complete all potential eligible works to the selected buildings in the THI area could total almost £ 3.9 million - see section 3.6 and Appendix 7. The expected funds available to carry out these works including both Common Fund and private owners contribution should total over £2.0 million. After deducting an expected £ 675,000 required for works to the public realm, complementary initiatives and staff training costs (see section 5.3.1), this could enable a local take-up of grants for property improvements of £1,357,000 - about 32% of the works to the eligible properties.

An explanation of these totals is presented below following the valuations, building condition and cost surveys of all eligible properties within the proposed THI boundary:

Total estimated approx cost for all eligible properties:	£ 3,858,800
Assume expenditure on 32% of properties:	£ 1,234,000
Add total average (at 2.5yrs) inflation over 5 yrs of 10%:	<u>£ 123,000</u>
Likely cost of expected building works	£ 1,357,000
Add VAT costs – as all properties are in commercial use, VAT is reclaimable	<u>£ 0</u>
Approx likely total expenditure on properties during THI period	£ 1,357,000

Assume on average over 30% of costs are funded by owners	<u>£ 432,000</u>
Remaining funds available for properties from THI Common Fund	£ 925,000
Expenditure on Public Realm	£ 400,000
Add overheads, staffing and publicity costs over 5 yr	£ 225,000
Add Complementary Initiatives + education and training costs over 5 years:	<u>£ 50,000</u>

Total of Common Fund required for the THI over 5 years: £ 1,600,000

This assumes that the total expenditure over 5 years on:

• THI properties (Common Fund Grants+ owners contribution) will be:	£1,357,000
• + public realm	£ 400,000
• + complementary initiatives and staffing, etc	<u>£ 275,000</u>

Total THI expenditure (THI Common Fund + owners contribution) = approx £2,032,000

- The assumption that over 30% of costs will be funded by owners is based on the findings for proposed grant rates set out in section 3.6 and on tables 5.2 and 5.3 below. Grant rates have been derived from valuations and set at the minimum amount needed to achieve results.
- The Condition and Cost surveys include sums built into project costs for each property that cover fees, preliminaries and contingencies.
- As all of the selected THI properties are in commercial ownership they should all be able to reclaim VAT, and therefore additional sums are not included in this appraisal to cover this cost.
- The Common Fund contribution to public realm works and gap site developments is limited to a maximum of 25%. Staff costs and overheads are less than 15% of the common fund, with complementary initiatives less than 5%.
- The percentage of properties that will be able to be funded by the Common Fund grants will be reduced by inflation over the five year period, so the assumption is presented above that over the five years we can expect budget costs to increase by inflation of 10%. (ie. an expected increase of 10% by year 2.5.)

Expenditure at this level should have a significant impact on the appearance of the heritage properties in the Bromsgrove town centre THI Area, will create

new floor space and assist with local economic regeneration. In combination with other regeneration initiatives, this will improve the image of the centre, assist local market demand from surrounding areas and support the sustainability of the wider town centre.

The following **Tables 5.2 and 5.3**, set out the THI Financial Arrangements and Allocations with a presentation of funding by agency, and as the THI Action Plan summary:

Table 5.2 Bromsgrove THI Financial Arrangements/Allocations (£000s/rounded)

Eligible THI Works	HLF	Worcs CC	Broms DC	THI Total common fund	THI grant %	Private sector	Total eligible cost	% common fund allocation between category	HLF grant % of total common fund	HLF grant % of
A Building repairs to structure and fabric	250			250	60%	167	417	16%	100%	60%

B										
Restoring architectural features	450			450	85%	80	530	28%	100%	85%
C										
Bringing vacant historic floor space back into use	225			225	55%	185	410	14%	100%	55%
D										
Gap Sites				0			0			
E										
Public Realm		400		400	100%		400	25%	0%	0%
F										
Complementary initiatives	50			50	100%		50	3%	100%	100%
G										
Staffing/ Publicity	225			225	100%		225	14%	100%	100%
Total	1200	400		1600		432	2032	100%	75%	59%

Table 5.2 showing Financial Arrangements identifies the breakdown of potential expenditure and grant availability by category of works and funding organisation. The % of these totals provided by the HLF THI funds are also presented. The

breakdown between agency and types of work is indicative. **Table 5.3** shows a breakdown of the same figures in the format requested by the HLF as the THI Action Plan Summary.

Table 5.3 Bromsgrove town centre THI Action Plan summary

A. Category of work	B. Total Eligible costs	C. THI Common Fund	D Grant Rates	E. HLF contribution to THI grant	E. % Common Fund allocation between category
No Critical Project listed					
PRIORITY+ Projects totals	<i>To be completed</i>				
<i>PRIORITY + projects included in totals below:</i>					
Repairs to buildings	<i>417,000</i>	<i>250,000</i>	<i>60%</i>	<i>250,000</i>	<i>16%</i>
Restoring architectural features	<i>530,000</i>	<i>450,000</i>	<i>85%</i>	<i>450,000</i>	<i>28%</i>
Bringing vacant historic floor space back into use	<i>410,000</i>	<i>225,000</i>	<i>55% average</i>	<i>225,000</i>	<i>14%</i>
New-buildings for gap-sites	<i>0</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
Public realm works	<i>400,000</i>	<i>400,000</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>0</i>	<i>25%</i>

Complementary initiatives	<i>50,000</i>	<i>50,000</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>50,000</i>	<i>3%</i>
Staff costs and overheads	<i>225,000</i>	<i>225,000</i>	<i>100%</i>	<i>225,000</i>	<i>14%</i>
TOTAL	<i>2,450,000</i>	<i>1,900,000</i>		<i>950,000</i>	<i>100%</i>

Most of the proposed THI selected buildings are shops. Of the total 81 properties, 67 are shops (usually with room for storage or offices above and a few with accommodation), 5 are offices, 3 are public houses, 4 are restaurants, 1 is a club and there is 1 Post Office. It is expected that about 32% (see Section 5.3.3) of the eligible works in the area will be improved with grant aid.

As there is no certainty about the proportions of different types of properties that will apply for assistance, it is only possible at this stage to assume an average percentage as a basis for monitoring. Therefore for guidance only, it can be assumed that:

- 26 properties are expected to be improved during the THI;
- including 22 shops and traditional shopfronts;
- 1 or 2 offices;
- and 2 or 3 public houses/restaurants/clubs.

5.3.4 Partnership funding for the scheme

The proposed Common Fund - the total public sources of finance, has been based on the following totals being available over the 5 year construction period without annual constraints on expenditure:

* **£ 1,200,000 available from HLF;**

* **£ 400,000 available from Worcestershire County Council**

*

The resulting Common Fund total will be £ 1,600,000

The funding provided by Worcestershire County Council will be used solely for the Public Realm works – see section 3.7 and Appendix 7. This funding is expected to be completely used during years 1 and 2.

All other expenditure will be funded by the HLF THI grant. Drawdown of the total is expected to occur over the five years of the project approval and implementation stages. See below for an indicative drawdown:

Table 5.4 below identifies the likely fund scenario for the next 5 years:

Anticipated Funding Expenditure

Funding Source	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	TOTAL	%
Heritage Lottery Fund	80,000	240,000	320,000	360,000	200,000	1,200,000	75.0
Worcester County Council	200,000	200,000				400,000	25.0
Total Common Fund	150,000	350,000	500,000	500,000	400,000	1,600,000	100.0

Evidence to demonstrate the availability of the matching funds from Worcestershire County Council, the funding partner, and the certainty of year 1 funding is included in Appendix 4. See Sections 3.7 and 5.2.1 and table 5.2 to identify how the partnership funding is allocated according to the project or type of work.

6.1 Exit Strategy and Success Measures

6.1 What is our Exit Strategy?

Following completion of the THI scheme in 2017, it is hoped that the Partnership Steering Group will continue in some form, either as a Legacy Partnership or as a 'friends of' group in order to build on the success of the THI by ensuring that:

- heritage and conservation remain a priority and driving force for town centre regeneration
- improvements are properly maintained and managed
- the benefits to owners and occupiers are promoted to secure future schemes etc.

We are anxious that the legacy of the THI will continue long into the future and will ensure this by:

- using the Conservation Area Management Plan and the *Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide* SPG as a strong planning tool to maintain standards and to drive these up by the use of Discontinuance and Section 125 notices. The SPG will be reviewed on a regular basis and updated as necessary
- use our Conservation and Planning Enforcement Officers to provide support and encouragement to owners during the THI delivery stage and beyond coupled with strong enforcement action when required to maintain standards and control non-compliance
- investigate the potential to establish a second Frontage Improvement Grant Scheme to build on the achievements of the THI and assist other buildings that were unable to be included in the THI programme for whatever reason
- keep in contact with local contractors and continue to support them with heritage training programmes, talks, newsletters etc on a regular basis
- strengthen the links between contractors and NEW College so that contractors can continue to offer/be offered practical work experience, work placements, apprenticeships and volunteering for young people and mature students as appropriate
- integrate the THI events (including talks, workshops, guided walks and open days etc) into the town centre events programme
- build on the relationships with owners/tenants established during the THI to continue to provide support and advice in relation to maintenance and management of historic properties

Above all, the Conservation Area Management Plan will help guide and inform the maintenance and management of the Conservation Area in the long term, as set out in section 4.2 above. The longer term management of the heritage and regeneration of the THI area, after the completion of the Initiative, will be based on the continuing implementation of the structures and methods identified in the Management Plan including amongst others:

- the more rigorous actions by Development Control and Enforcement sections to ensure continuing protection and encouragement of heritage standards to assist the local economy
- the continuing concern and pressure for heritage conservation by a dedicated building preservation trust for Bromsgrove District

It also relies on the continued awareness within the local authority of the linkages between heritage and economic regeneration which has been developed and strengthened as the bid has been put together.

Implementation in the THI area

The programme of actions to alleviate the heritage and economic needs of the THI area require financially viable solutions that will be sustainable in the future.

The THI programme of repairs to structure and fabric, restoration of architectural heritage detail and the reuse of vacant floor space will only succeed if the property owners are able to:

- foresee viable benefits from the improvements – particularly with the reuse of vacant floor space
- fund their percentage of the costs.

In an area with such heritage deterioration and difficult economic and market conditions, it is essential that there are proactive arrangements to support this initiative.

Without significant private sector involvement and investment in their properties, the THI scheme cannot achieve its aims. Local property owners need appropriate information, encouragement and support to make sure they are able to participate in this initiative. The starting point is to ensure that the private owners have confidence in the economic future of the Conservation Area. The coordination of the THI with other regeneration efforts will be important to achieve this, as will the impact of the early THI investment within the Conservation Area. Early improvements to a few key buildings should encourage local optimism.

6.2 How will we measure and evaluate the success of our scheme

The THI Project Officer will be responsible for preparing the evaluation report and completing the evaluation questionnaire which will be prepared in close consultation with the Strategic Planning Manager, Project Team, Partnership Steering Group, other partners, owners/occupiers, contractors/sub-contractors, participants of the activity plan and the general public (including hard to reach groups). Each individual will be able to provide inputs from their own personal,

professional, departmental or organisational point of view.

We see evaluation as central to the project and data has been collected since before the submission of the Stage 1 Application in November 2010 which we will use as benchmark information for the Evaluation Report. Evidence so far includes:

- the production of a digital heritage gazetteer of High Street/Worcester Road with historic and contemporary photographs of every property, description of its history and details of ownership
- a survey of High Street businesses
- a survey of local contractors
- a large town centre public consultation exhibition and survey
- surveys and meetings with the Worcester Association of Service Users and Bromsgrove Disability Action group
- Surveys and attendance at the following events: - National Maintenance Week (November 2011)
- meetings with landowners, tenants and students
- commissioning condition surveys, valuations and concept scheme designs etc

During the five years of the THI Scheme we will undertake further Perception and User Satisfaction Surveys on an annual basis with the groups listed above including High Street businesses and the general public.

We will also collect data on:

- the number of activities/courses we run, the number of people attending, user satisfaction and equality monitoring data
- perception surveys and equality monitoring data of all people involved in the scheme or consulted e.g. partners, specialists, volunteers, trainees, participants, businesses and the general public through either activity based research, postal surveys, telephone surveys, on-street surveys, interviews, focus groups etc
- the meetings held by the Project Officer broken down into various categories e.g. management, meetings with owners/tenants, schools, events etc
- footfall figures
- vacancy rates of buildings in High Street and the types of retailers
- monthly sales index figures

We will collect data, in terms of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area, on:

- the number of enforcement cases investigated
- the number of enforcement breaches
- the number of successful enforcement cases
- the number of owners contacted whose building in the Conservation Area, both statutorily listed or of positive merit, is considered to be 'at risk' in order to discuss ways in which the safe upkeep and future preservation of those buildings may be safeguarded.

The achievements of the THI scheme will be monitored to assess how the percentage approvals, starts on site and completions correspond with the outline targets. In addition, data on performance indicators will be collected for all projects to build up a detailed picture of the progress of the THI scheme. An annual report on

progress will be prepared by the THI Project Officer setting out the following information under the headings of:

1. Approvals during previous year
2. Implementation started on site during previous year
3. Completion of projects during previous year
 - a) Number
 - b) Floor space of buildings (sq ft)
 - c) Facades with heritage features (no.)
 - d) Vacant floor space brought back into use (sq ft)
 - residential (habitable rooms)
 - commercial (sq ft)
 - e) Financial summary identifying
 - costs including construction/fees/interest/other
 - the expected change in values and development profit
 - leverage of private sector expenditure
 - f) % of total Common Fund approved
 - g) % of total HLF THI funds approved
 - h) Assessment of progress on Priority + Projects
 - i) Project benefits
 - identified use of converted floor space
 - net new jobs expected to be created
 - jobs expected to be safeguarded
 - people benefiting from project
 - heritage outputs
 - j) Before and after photographs (for each implemented project)

This performance monitoring information will be collected throughout the life of the individual projects. Regular one-to-one meetings will be held between the THI Project Officer and the Strategic Planning Manager to ensure that the scheme is running to programme and that outputs are achieved. Action will be taken, when necessary, to rectify any shortfalls during the project and we will be able to review what is working

well. This monitoring information will be reported regularly to the Project Team, the THI Partnership Steering Group and the HLF on a quarterly and annual basis to ensure that the programme and associated activities are on track and achieving what they are meant to. This information will then inform the Evaluation Report and provide a summary of lessons learnt.

Long-term impact monitoring will be carried out to assess the benefits of the THI scheme. Continuing physical improvements of historic buildings after the completion of the THI scheme can be monitored from applications for planning and listed building permissions.

We will provide all this evaluation feedback, taking into account the HLF guidelines, in the form of:

- an evaluation report that compiles the quantitative and qualitative evidence to tell the story of the project comparing the aspirations with the reality, assessing the strengths and weaknesses and the lessons that can be learnt from the process we adopted
- an evaluation questionnaire provided by HLF

The evaluation will be shared with partnership organisations, agencies, businesses and individuals as appropriate. This will include:

- publication of the Evaluation Report online at: www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/bromsgrovethi
- report to the THI Partnership Board and Executive Committee of the Borough Council
- attending and speaking at relevant conferences
- producing papers and articles for national, regional and local conferences, professional and technical journals etc
- briefing papers to national agencies, politicians etc
- reporting to all the organisations who were consulted over the life of the project

We will ensure the lessons learnt from our experience in terms of what worked well, what didn't and why, will not be lost. We also want to ensure that others in Bromsgrove and its environs are able to learn from the project, and take advantage of the heritage skills developed by local contractors, to conserve other historic buildings within the towns and villages of the District.



BROMSGROVE TOWN DRAFT CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

JANUARY 2012



BROMSGROVE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONTENTS

Part 1 Conservation Area Appraisal

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Planning Policy Context
- 3.0 Summary of Special Interest
- 4.0 Assessment of Special Interest
 - 4.1 Location and Setting
 - 4.2 Historic Development and Archaeology
 - 4.3 Architectural quality and built form
 - 4.3.1 Plan Form
 - 4.3.2 Views
 - 4.3.3 Prevailing and Former Uses
 - 4.3.4 Overall Character
 - 4.3.5 Zone 1: The High Street
 - 4.3.6 Zone 2: The Strand
 - 4.3.7 Zone 3: Worcester Road
 - 4.3.8 Zone 4: New Road/Chapel Lane
 - 4.3.9 Building Materials
 - 4.3.10 Important Trees and Green Spaces
- 5.0 Negative and Neutral Areas
- 6.0 Summary of Issues

Part 2 Management Proposals

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2. Planning Policy Context
- 3.1 Special Interest
- 3.2 Challenges and Opportunities
- 4.0 Management Proposals
 - 4.1 Introduction
 - 4.2 The Public Realm
 - 4.3 Shop Fronts and Signage
 - 4.4 Historic Market Site
 - 4.5 Modern Infill
 - 4.6 Historic Buildings in Poor Condition
 - 4.7 Loss of Historic Detailing
 - 4.8 Traffic Management
 - 4.9 Historic Rear Areas
 - 4.10 Spadesbourne Brook
- 5.0 Community Engagement and Training
- 6.0 Putting the Plan into Practice: Resources, Monitoring and Review
- 7.0 Conclusions



CONTENTS CONTINUED

Appendices

Appendix 1 List of Properties in the Conservation Area

Appendix 2 List of Listed Buildings in the Conservation Area

Appendix 3 Relevant Local Plan Policies

Appendix 4 Glossary

List of Maps

Map 1 Proposed Revised Boundary of the Conservation Area

Map 2 Positive, neutral and negative buildings

This is a consultation draft of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area Character Appraisal. Comments are welcome and should be sent to the Strategic Planning Team, Bromsgrove District Council, Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA.

Email conservation@bromsgrove.gov.uk or telephone 01527 881326



PART 1 CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

1.0 INTRODUCTION



- 1.1 The purpose of a Conservation Area Character Appraisal is to identify the factors and features which make an area special, based on an in-depth assessment of an area's buildings, spaces, evolution and sense of place. This is the first step in developing a management plan for the continued preservation and enhancement of a Conservation Area. An appraisal evaluates the positive, neutral and negative features of the area and suggests opportunities for improvement. It is not unusual for the boundary of a Conservation Area to fluctuate over time as the area evolves, and an assessment of the current and potential boundaries is normally part of the appraisal process.
- 1.2 The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area was originally designated by Worcestershire County Council in 1968 containing "Area A High Street" and "Area B St John's". The boundary was extended in 1983 and again in 1989 to include the Spadesbourne Brook, the Strand, Crown Close, 9-15 New Road, 64-78 Worcester Road and Hanover Street. At some point the use of Areas A and B ceased and the area is formally designated as one complete Conservation Area.
- 1.3 An appraisal of the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area was carried out in July 2009 in accordance with the guidance given by English Heritage in their 'Guidance on Conservation Area Appraisals' publication. As a result the boundaries of the Conservation were reconsidered and revised. The area around St John's Church was removed from the Conservation Area and a new St John's Conservation Area created. The area from Hanover Street to Bromsgrove School was removed because this area has a limited relationship with the rest of the Town Centre and all valuable historic buildings are already listed.

- 1.4 A further appraisal was carried out in December 2011 in light of the Application for Townscape Heritage Initiative funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund. The appraisal has been carried out in accordance with the most recent guidance from English Heritage 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area, Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2011). Although produced by the Council, local societies and residents will be encouraged to contribute to and comment on the draft document. This will result in a well rounded assessment of the area incorporating local knowledge, perceptions and suggestions.
- 1.5 The draft appraisal will be made available on the Council's website, in the local library, at the Customer Service Centre in the Dolphin Centre and the Council House to ensure that it reaches a wide audience. There will also be a small exhibition in the main foyer of the local library to explain the purpose of the document and collect local comments.
- 1.6 Map 2 identifies positive, neutral and negative buildings within the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area. This is not an exclusive list and omission of any particular building should not be taken as an indication that it has no value. Positive buildings make a notable contribution to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and are usually good examples of historic buildings with only minor alterations or additions. Neutral buildings make a limited contribution and are generally the much altered historic buildings, but may provide opportunities for enhancement. Negative buildings are those properties which detract from the character and appearance of the conservation area, where replacement with a new building would be encouraged, subject to compliance with other planning policies.





Aerial view of Bromsgrove Town Centre

© Crown Copyright. All rights reserved Bromsgrove District Council 100023519. 2012

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.1 A Conservation Area is defined in the 1967 Civic Amenities Act as “an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance”. It is not the purpose of a Conservation Area to prevent development, but to manage change in a positive and proactive way that benefits current and future generations.
- 2.2 Conservation Area status means that a special form of Planning Permission called Conservation Area Consent is required for the total or substantial demolition of any building over 115m³ in size, the demolition of a boundary wall over 1m in height next to the highway or 2m elsewhere and the removal of any agricultural building constructed before 1914. There is a general presumption against the loss of buildings which make a positive contribution to the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. Additional controls are also placed over trees within the area, meaning that an owner must submit a formal notification of works to the Council six weeks before starting work.

2.3 The primary legislation governing Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas is the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990. This legislation includes certain statutory duties which the Council as Local Planning Authority must uphold. S69(1) of the Act requires Local Planning Authorities to designate any areas which they consider to be of special architectural or historic interest as Conservation Areas, and under s69(2) to review such designations from time to time. The Council has a further duty under s71(1) to formulate and prepare proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas from time to time.

2.4 When assessing applications for development within designated Conservation Areas, the Local Planning Authority must pay special regard to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of the Conservation Areas under s72(1) of the Act. This does not mean that development will necessarily be opposed, only that this should not be detrimental to the special interest of the wider Conservation Area. Specific guidance relating to development within Conservation Areas can be found within PPS5, 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and the English Heritage Guidance Document PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide.

2.5 The Bromsgrove District Local Plan adopted in 2004 contains a series of specific policies relating to the historic environment (see Appendix 3). These policies help guide the Local Planning Authority when assessing planning applications, to ensure that new developments and alterations preserve or enhance the character or appearance of the Conservation Area. The Council is also in the process of producing an Area Action Plan (AAP) for the town centre which sets out the Council objectives for housing, employment, transport, retail etc over the next 15-20 years. The Conservation Area Character Appraisal will form a key part of the evidence supporting the AAP.



Manchester House, High Street



Manchester House, High Street

3.0 DEFINITION OF SPECIAL INTEREST



83-95 High Street



Slug and Lettuce, High Street



58-66 High Street

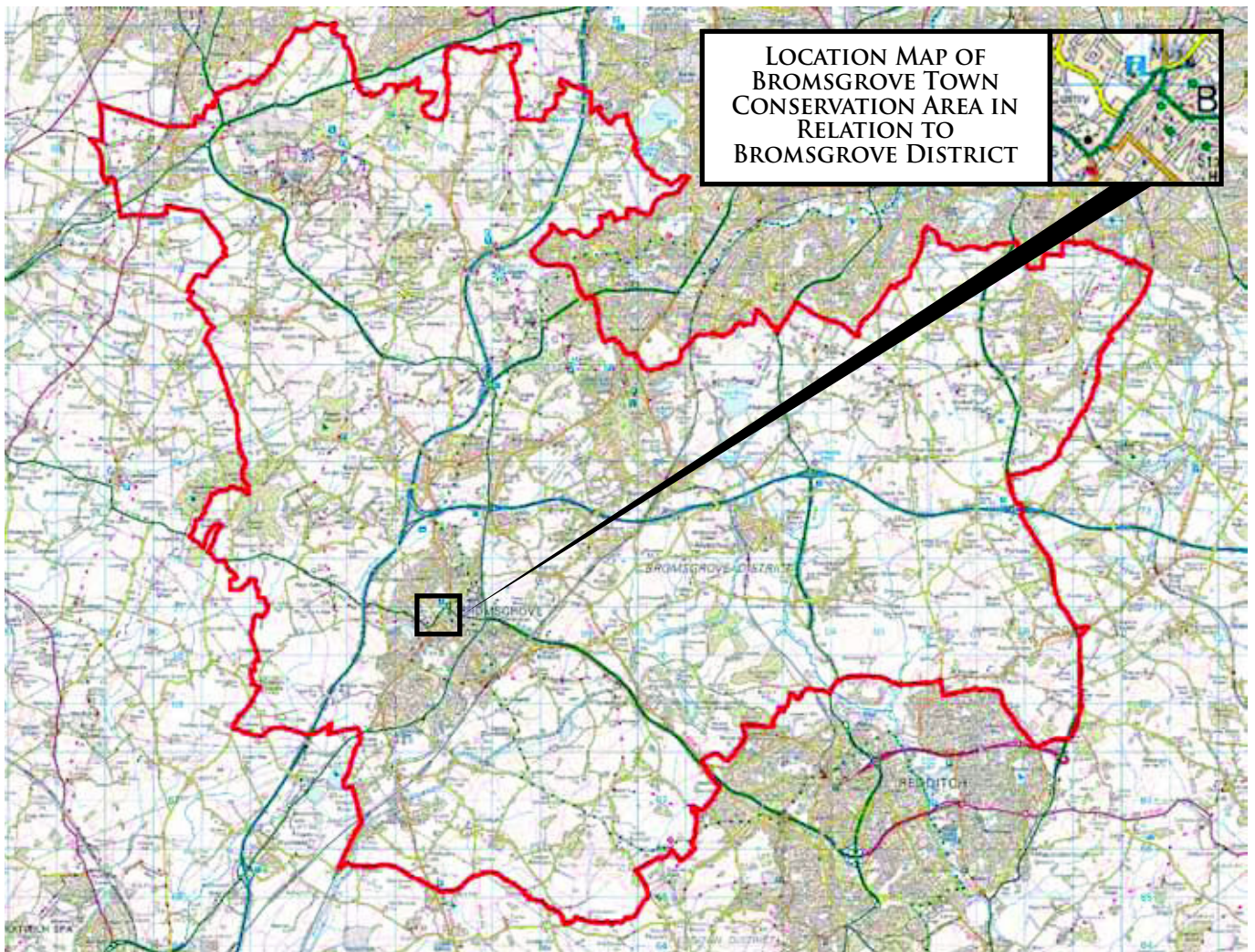
- 3.1 The special interest of a Conservation Area is defined by more than its appearance and includes the atmosphere, texture, sense of place and setting as well as more obvious qualities such as groups of historic buildings. Notable buildings and the spaces between buildings set an overall context for an area, but a designated Conservation Area should be more than just a collection of attractive buildings
- 3.2 The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area contains an assortment of notable historic buildings dating from predominantly the 18th and 19th centuries but with some earlier surviving timber framed buildings. A range of architectural styles is represented from English vernacular, to restrained Georgian and more elaborate Victorian Gothic buildings. This variety of elevational treatments and styles demonstrate high quality construction and craftsmanship, giving a rich texture to the town centre, and are tangible reminders of the town's past prosperity. The medieval street pattern, based upon the older Roman Road between Droitwich and Wall, the original market place and the remains of some burgage plots have all survived.
- 3.3 The narrowness of the historic building plots, varied rooflines and the overall height of the buildings give an overall impression of vertical emphasis, and a strong sense of enclosure. The more modern developments unfortunately detract from this being generally set back from the established building line, sometimes a storey lower and include detailing which gives a horizontal rather than vertical emphasis. These infill sites do at least give opportunities for redevelopment in the future without requiring the loss of more historic buildings.

4.0 ASSESSMENT OF SPECIAL INTEREST

4.1 Location and Setting

The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area is located in the centre of the town, which itself lies in the South West of the District of Bromsgrove, approximately 15 miles South West of Birmingham and 15 miles North East of Worcester.

The Spadesbourne Brook defines the boundary to the West of the Conservation area (although the more recently realigned Market Street is now the more obvious boundary) and the predominately 20th Century Windsor Street is the boundary to the East. The medieval street pattern, including burgage plots and the Market Place (where the High Street is noticeably wider) are still visible. The High Street follows the main south west/ north east Roman Road between Droitwich and Wall.



This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorized reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Bromsgrove District Council 100023519. 2012

The town centre lies in the valley of the Spadesbourne Brook, with the ground rising to St John's in the south west and up Station Road and Stratford Road to the south east and north east. The immediate surrounding area to the Conservation Area is largely built up, leaving the conservation totally ingrained within the larger market town. To the south west is the St John's Conservation Area, centred around the Church of St John, which sits on top of a hill overlooking the centre of Bromsgrove, and can also be seen several miles away as well as from the Town Centre Conservation Area. The two conservation areas are separated by Market Street which forms a 'bypass' around the town centre. The buildings along its north side provide a contrast to these of both conservation areas being large detached units and include the Grade II listed St Johns Nursing Home, a large Asda supermarket, the recently constructed St John's Health Centre, in a dominant modern style and the Grade II listed, Wrenian Baroque, Parkside School. The area immediately around St John's Church and stretching down to Market Street is predominately green, comprising the grounds to the St John's Nursing Home, which was originally constructed as the vicarage to the church. To the rear of the Church is the cemetery. Beyond the church to the south west, further along the Kidderminster Road is Sanders Park. To the south east of the Town Centre Conservation Area, is the largely Victorian residential area off New Road and the main Bromsgrove School Campus. To the north east is the Victorian/interwar residential area off the Stratford Road and Birmingham Road.



4.2 Historic Development and Archaeology

The main axis of the town is the Roman Road between Droitwich and Wall, which probably formed part of an older saltway from Droitwich. Bromsgrove was probably the site of an Anglo Saxon Minster. A 'reeve' (an official elected annually by the serfs to supervise lands for a lord) and a 'beadle' (a parish constable of the Anglican Church often charged with duties of charity) are recorded as being employed in 1086 which indicates that Bromsgrove was an important Royal manor. The town of Bromsgrove developed in the second half of the 12th Century, with the right to have a weekly market being granted in 1200. The town would seem to have been very prosperous at this time, however this prosperity diminished shortly afterwards.



Historic maps taken from Council archives

In 1533 records show that Bromsgrove had an established trade in narrow cloth and friezes, and as early as the 16th century clothing manufacture was Bromsgrove's chief industry. This industry was due in part to the large number of mills sited in Bromsgrove and supplied by water streaming off the Lickey Hills. The linen and cloth industries thrived into the 18th century, alongside, from the 17th century, the manufacture of nails, which later became the predominant industry. Bromsgrove continued to flourish in the 19th century, with nail production and button making being the main industries. The Birmingham and Gloucester Railway Company's line from Cheltenham to Gloucester opened in 1840, and later that year the completion of the Lickey Incline Plane allowed the town to be connected to Birmingham by rail.

The High Street and immediate vicinity clearly exhibit a number of medieval elements. The churchyard lies immediately to the West of the town on an area of raised ground overlooking the main road. This area may have been the site of an earlier Anglo Saxon Church, but the earliest remnants in the existing Church date from the 12th century. The street system in and around the High Street is very clearly medieval, consisting of the main South West /North East route between Worcester and Birmingham which is the High Street itself. From this road two roads go off to the West (Kidderminster Road and Stourbridge Road) and one to the East (Stratford Road). These roads are probably of medieval date along with Hanover Street and St John Street, which lead to the Church. The 1839 tithe map shows many small lanes leading from the High Street to the backs of burgage plots, many of which are medieval in origin, with narrow frontages to the High Street. It also indicates that the High Street, Worcester Road and The Strand were almost completely developed by 1840. In addition it would appear from the tithe map that the infilling of medieval burgage plots behind the main street frontage with courts and yards was also well underway, however there would appear to be fewer lanes leading through to the rear of the High Street, but small accessways by the time of the first Ordnance Survey in 1883. Both maps show that beyond the High Street was predominately rural and agricultural. New Road was cut through in 1865 and significant development can be seen in the 1883 Ordnance Survey Map.

The weekly market, originally granted in 1200, was likely to have been held in the wider part of the High Street, a common feature of medieval high streets. The street market was re-established in 2008 following the closure of the Market Hall, but is largely located towards The Strand end of the High Street with occasional specialist farmers' and continental markets.





Street Market, High Street



St. John's Church from Worcester Street



Rear of High Street

4.3 Architectural Quality and Built Form

4.3.1 Plan Form

The High Street, Worcester Road and The Strand follows the main south west/north east route between Worcester and Birmingham, which was originally part of the Roman Road between Wall and Droitwich, resulting in Bromsgrove having a linear plan form. This is particularly noticeable in area photographs and early maps. The remaining street pattern has a medieval influence, with the much wider market place at the south eastern end of the High Street and still evidence of the narrow burgage plots to the rear of the High Street and The Strand mainly on the west side. Later development on the eastern side of the High Street has largely obliterated the remains of the burgage plots. At intermittent intervals, particularly on the west side of the High Street are some of the original alleyways of varying width leading to the rear of High Street buildings, a reference back to the burgage plots, and rear courts of buildings used as workshops etc.

4.3.2 Views

The elongated pattern of development within the town centre means that it is not possible to view the Conservation Area in its entirety from any one point. Key views can be identified however within each character zone, and from outside the Conservation Area boundary through to the main retail areas (see Map 2). Views of the Grade I listed St John's Church are also possible from gaps between the buildings on Worcester Road and from the Market Place. Unfortunately, the poorly landscaped area on Mill Lane detracts from views through to the Spadesbourne Brook. The view from High Street to Market Place has been spoiled by the loss of the old Town Hall in the 1930s and its replacement with a bulky modern office building.

4.3.3 Prevailing and Former Uses

The original medieval burgage plots resulted in a number of narrow units, with significant ancillary accommodation to the rear, some now in unconnected uses. The rear workshops were originally part of the nailmaking industry in Bromsgrove. The upper floors of some buildings (particularly at the Southern end of the High Street) are relatively grand indicating that they were originally constructed as houses for wealthy merchants. Unfortunately many of the ground floors have been altered extensively and often unsympathetically to accommodate modern retail uses.

The buildings within the Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area are now predominately in retail use with a mixture of A1, A2, A3, A4 and A5 uses - traditional retail, financial institutions and some pubs and cafes. Some upper floors are in ancillary use, office space and storage; many others are vacant which has led to some condition and maintenance problems. Worcester Road is very much a secondary street to the High Street, with smaller local retail units.

4.3.4 Overall Character

Many of the buildings in the Conservation area, particularly in the High Street are of extremely good quality in terms of architecture, although this is rarely evident at ground floor level, but can be observed from looking at the upper floors. Several historic styles and periods are represented, the oldest buildings are 16th Century, mainly timber framed. There are also a number of timber framed buildings that were refronted at a later date but the evidence of the structure remains internally or to the rear. There are a numerous good examples of later periods of architecture, Georgian, Victorian and Edwardian. There are also a significant number of vernacular buildings characterised by being two or three storey, the upper storey comprising an attic space with a dormer window. In excess of 50 buildings are listed (see map?) and an equally significant number of unlisted buildings can be described as making a positive contribution to the streetscape.

Although the area has an overall character as a complete Conservation Area, four main character zones can be identified.

Zone 1 contains the primary shopping area along the High Street. Zone 2 is centred on The Strand, which is physically separated from the rest of the Conservation Area by the busy junction at Stratford Road. Zone 3 stretches along Worcester Road from the junction with Market Place and has a tighter building line with narrower building plots than along High Street. (Zones 1 and 3 do blur together on the Eastern side of the High Street). Finally Zone 4 are the two small areas to the East of Windsor Street on Chapel Street and New Road.



Some examples of key buildings are identified in the assessment of each character zone and also in Map 2 attached as an appendix. It should be made clear that this is not a definitive list and as trends in conservation change some buildings which are now identified as having a neutral or negative impact could be more valued in the future. The identification of specific buildings in this document will not prejudice the determination of an application for Conservation Area Consent or redevelopment by the Local Planning Authority.

4.3.5 Zone 1: The High Street

The High street comprises the main area in the Conservation Area. It includes the former Market Place of the town at the junction of St John's and the High Street, where the road is notably wider. Although the market has recently moved back to the High Street it is currently held at the other end of the High Street around the junction with Mill Street. The High Street is the principal retail street with shops, cafes, restaurants, banks and pubs and pedestrians. The High Street is almost completely pedestrianised with vehicular traffic passing only along the stretch between New Road to the junction with St John Street and Worcester Road. Delivery vehicles still have access to the High Street. Buildings date from as early as the 16th century, although the majority are 18th and 19th century, with a significant number of 20th century buildings.

The linear street is lined with individual buildings which sit tight against each other at the back of the former pavement. The building line is only broken by the modern development on the east side of the High street, probably to achieve a road widening scheme prior to the pedestrianisation scheme. The only breaks in the buildings occur where Church Street and New Road meet the High Street and Mill Street cuts across it. There are a few pedestrian exits from the street to rear parking areas and rear buildings. At intermittent intervals, particularly on the west side of the High Street are alleyways of varying widths leading to the rear of buildings, a reference back to the burgage plots and courts of buildings to the rear used as workshops. Properties are mainly three storeys in height, with a few two storey with attic space and on the west side a significant number of two storey buildings, although generally they are 20th century buildings. They are however of various scales and designs which has created a lively street scene.



West side of High Street, South End



82-102 High Street



View of High Street from South

Buildings range largely in date from the 18th to the 20th century with a handful of older buildings, and are now all in commercial use. The older buildings, particularly those at the south end of the High Street were probably originally constructed as merchants houses, with ground floors being later converted into shop units and upper floors being converted into ancillary uses, sometimes offices or residential. A significant number of upper floors are vacant. Other buildings were quite possibly constructed as shops with living accommodation above. The 20th century units are obviously purpose built.

Many of the High Street buildings are of extremely good architectural quality and several historic styles and periods are represented. Many of the 18th century buildings and early 19th century are large in size indicating status, particularly at the southern end of the High Street. They are typically more than four bays wide, some as wide as six bays, and over three storeys in height, one being a full four storeys. Although they have all lost their original ground floors frontages, their large first floor windows reflect high internal floor to ceiling heights. The principal elevations of most of the 18th and many of the early 19th century buildings reflect classical architectural influences of the period with symmetry and verticality in the elevations including sash windows, stone quoins and keystones, as well as some stone capped parapets and cornice detailing. One building has impressive stone pilasters to its upper three floors. The Victorian buildings are less grand but many are three storeys in height and several are two or three bays wide. They often have more simple detailing such as stone cills, rubbed brick lintels, but there is some polychromatic brick work and timber detailing to gables. The oldest buildings date from the 16th Century and are timber framed, some of which have been re-fronted at a later date - but evidence of the earlier structure remains internally or to the rear. There are also a significant number of vernacular style buildings characterised by being two or three stories high, the upper storey comprising an attic space with a dormer window.

There are a number of 20th century buildings which have been integrated into the street scene with varying degrees of success. Most are two or three stories in height, with sometimes the third floor added in the roof space in a vernacular style.



23-29 High Street



91-93 High Street



134-136 High Street



To the rear of the High Street spaces and buildings are ill defined. There is evidence of the original burgage plots in places, but backland development over a number of years has destroyed many plots, and where major redevelopment has occurred on the High Street several plots have been completely lost. This has resulted in the west side of Windsor Street and parts of the east side of Market Street lacking any real character as they primarily comprise service entries to High Street buildings. However to the rear of the west side of the High Street (east side of Market Street) some plots have retained historic workshops and other ancillary buildings which have been converted to new uses, although others are unused. These features are evidence of Bromsgrove's history and development and are part of its special interest and character, although in most cases they have little or no relationship with the High Street frontages.



A significant number of buildings on the High Street are listed. The unlisted buildings are generally from the 19th and 20th centuries. The older unlisted buildings reflect their context in terms of their size and form, retaining most of their architectural features. Most of them make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area. The quality of the 20th century buildings is more variable. With some an attempt has been made to fit into the street scene particularly in terms of height, verticality of upper floors windows and materials. Some, notably the 1950s buildings at 62 - 68 High Street, although different are of a distinctive architectural period, with sufficient detailing to add interest to the street scene. Some of the 20th century buildings can therefore be described as having a neutral impact on the character of the conservation area. Other modern units, particularly the development around Mill Lane and the buildings at the north east end of the High Street do not make a contribution to the character of the High Street but detract from it.



Slug and Lettuce, High Street

Due to the High Street now being the main commercial street in Bromsgrove, most shop fronts and signage have been replaced, many with little thought for the architecture of the individual buildings, or their historical context, and clearly detract from the architectural quality of the street scene.

Zone 1: High Street Key Buildings

The High Street character zone contains a high number of notable listed and unlisted historic buildings. 126-130 High Street (Grade II listed) was built in 1851 in blue brick with pale buff diaper pattern brickwork, tiled roof and stone mullioned windows. The timber bargeboards have both trefoil and quatrefoils patterns, and add significant interest to the upper level of the building. 120 High Street (Grade II listed) is an 18th century building in the Georgian style with a low pitched pediment, moulded cornice and camber headed dormers. The ground floor has unfortunately been compromised by the addition of a modern shop front which is not in keeping with the character of the building

The Lloyds TSB Bank at 112 High Street (Grade II listed) dates from the early 19th century and is in a Regency style with classical stone portico and Doric columns. This building forms a key group with No's 104-112 High Street including the timber framed 16th century building at No's 108-110 High Street. This was constructed in 1533 and is the oldest building in the Conservation Area, although it has some later 19th century alterations including the shop fronts. This building was once the Unicorn Inn and the horn details can still be seen on the gables now adorned by Victorian bargeboards

Opposite the bank is a fine collection of 18th and 19th century buildings which have significant group value as well as being individually Grade II listed. The Red Lion PH at No.77 includes what was once the Roper Nail Warehouse to the rear, which originally formed part of a historic courtyard bordered by nail workers' cottages.

The timber framed former Hop Pole Inn on New Road (Grade II listed) was originally built in the High Street in 1572 but was later dismantled and relocated to this site in 1865. The upper floors retain the original framing with central jettied gable and carved bargeboards, but various features were added upon its reconstruction including the Gothic style porch and the chimneys.

The Golden Cross, 20 High Street (unlisted) was originally a 19th century coaching inn, but was substantially rebuilt in 1932. The brass menu holders on the front elevation were designed by the Bromsgrove Guild.

1 High Street (Grade II listed) dates from the early 17th century, as evident in its fine timber framing with fleur-de-lis motifs, but has been altered throughout the 19th and 20th centuries. The shop front is particularly unsympathetic and the building's new position adjacent to a major road junction has seriously compromised its setting.



108-112 High Street



Hop Pole, New Road



The Golden Cross, High Street



1 High Street

4.3.6 Zone 2: The Strand Architectural Character



The Strand



2 Stourbridge Road

Historically The Strand was a continuation of The High Street, and this is obvious when looking at the aerial photographs and maps. Some of the listed buildings still have a 'High Street' address. Unlike the majority of the High Street, The Strand is open to vehicular traffic and forms part of the main route through Bromsgrove for traffic coming down the Stourbridge and Birmingham Roads and heading towards the Stratford Road. This has not only cut The Strand off from the High Street, but crossing from one side to the other is also difficult. The road layout has undermined the group value significantly although the retention of the island containing the Grade II listed building, adds some coherence and connection between the two sides of the Strand. The small public space created in front of 2 Stourbridge Road with the reinstated 'Sanders Horse Trough' is underused because of the lack of pedestrian links and unattractive position in the centre of a busy road.

Like the High Street the buildings sit tightly against each other at the back of pavement. There is a small gap between 12 and 16/18 where Cupitts The Jewellers is set back, just beyond this road splits with The Strand continuing north east towards the Birmingham Road, although there is no vehicular access to this road, and the Stourbridge Road running off to the North. This leaves 2 Stourbridge Road, a large two storey building terminating The Strand on the east side before the junction with Market Street/Stourbridge Road/Birmingham Road. There is also access to the side of the Queens head Pub leading to the buildings at the rear.

Properties in The Strand comprise a mix of predominately 18th and 19th Century buildings all in commercial use, although unlike the High Street there are some offices uses in addition to the retail units and the public house. Upper floors to the retail units are a mix of ancillary uses or vacant.

The buildings in The Strand comprise an eclectic mix of largely historic buildings. The buildings on the north west side of the street are predominately small scale, two storey properties, beneath steeply pitched tiled roofs, in a vernacular style. The Queens Head provides a contrast being a larger scaled building, three storeys with a later two storey side extension. It is more similar in scale and height to the buildings opposite, although they still exhibit a vernacular style. Further along The Strand towards the Birmingham Road the buildings comprises more simple early 19th century properties, culminating in a larger 18th century building in a vernacular style. This character zone terminates the Conservation Area boundary and is notable in views through and into the wider Conservation Area, contributing to its setting. The varied roofline and use of dormer windows adds interest to this group of notable historic buildings, many of which retain their original timber sliding sash windows.

To the rear of the north west of The Strand there is some evidence of the original burgage plots and a number of ancillary buildings remain or have been rebuilt to a similar scale. The age of the older buildings on this stretch is more apparent from the rear, where timber framing is visible. The general setting is not enhanced by a large surface car park situated between the rear yards and Market Street. To the northeast side the rear plots are less visible but would appear to contain ancillary buildings and extensions of various ages.

The 18th century buildings in the Strand are all listed, as well as the Victorian Queens Head Public House. Most of the unlisted buildings make a positive contribution to the character of the conservation area, being of a similar scale and style.

The commercial location of The Strand has resulted in a proliferation of signage, particularly on the corner of Stratford Road and a balance needs to be sought to adequately advertise retail business on the edge of the Town Centre with preserving the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Zone 2: The Strand Key Buildings

The Queens Head PH is Grade II listed and dates from the early 19th century with a later extension to left hand side. The central stone door case with pediment and carved woman's head are interesting features at ground floor level with recessed 16 pane sliding sashes above with rather heavy rusticated lintels. The row of buildings next to the Queens Head (beyond the 1970s pastiche infills) at No. 25-27 The Strand are also Grade II listed, and were once timber framed but have been now re-fronted in red brick. Remnants of the timber frame have been found at the former Mitre Inn, a 19th century cider house which has now been converted to offices.



The Queens Head, The Strand



2 Stourbridge Road



The Strand



28 Birmingham Road and the Museum



The Strand

2 Stourbridge Road, in an island in the centre of the Strand, is now the offices of Thomas Horton but was originally built in 1701 as a gentleman's residence known as Cock Hall. In 1723 the building became the town's first workhouse and then a tannery - possibly the reason why this part of the town was once known as Rotten Row. The horse trough in front of the building was recently reinstated to its original position, after several years in Sanders Park.

On the other side of The Strand is a range of listed and unlisted historic buildings dating from the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries, unfortunately let down by the blank frontage to No's 22-24 and poor quality signage to the retail units. The Grade II listed building at No's 6 to 12 The Strand dates from the 18th century with added Victorian dormers and surviving timber sliding sash windows. The adjacent building at No's 2 to 4 The Strand (now the Strand Centre) is a 20th century mock classical building, which wraps around the corner into Stratford Road terminating views out of the High Street.

Further past The Strand facing onto Birmingham Road is the former Town Museum and the Grade II listed building at No. 28 which is now a doctor's surgery. The Museum closed in 2009 and a new use for the building has yet to be found. This area was looked at for removal from the Conservation Area boundary, but discounted as there is still a historic connection with The Strand.



Horse Trough in front of 2 Stourbridge Road

4.3.7 Zone 3: Worcester Road Architectural Character

Worcester Road is a continuation of the High Street running south west from the High Street after Market Street /St John Street. There is vehicular access to the street but only one way from Market Place to Hanover Street.

The street is lined with individual buildings which generally sit tight against each other at the back of the pavement. The building line is broken by George Road and then by the Dog and Partridge, half way along the street, which is set back from the building line, with an adjacent gap created by the access to the pub's rear car park. The gaps created allow views across to St John's Church to the south west as well as the Marker Hall site, immediately to the rear of Worcester Road. On the east side of Worcester Road the buildings again follow the back of pavement building line which is only broken by a modern development of shop units adjacent to Station Road which step back and the car showroom on the other corner, which has been excluded from the conservation area.

The properties on Worcester Road comprise a mix of largely 18th and 19th century buildings, with some modern retail and office buildings, which have attempted to reflect the scale and design of their neighbours. The buildings along Worcester Road are now almost entirely in commercial retail use at ground floor level, with a mix of ancillary storage, office and residential use above. It is likely that the buildings at the southern end of Worcester Road were originally constructed as residential but ground floors have gradually been converted to retail use.

The majority of the buildings on Worcester Road are 19th century, three storeys in height and one bay wide. Although simple in appearance they all exhibit some level of detailing including stone cills and decorative lintels. The narrow form of the buildings and the sense of verticality is enhanced by narrow sash windows to first and second floors, many of which have survived. The east side of Worcester Road has a significant number of two storey buildings, some more vernacular in appearance with dormer windows to attics and overall comprises more of an eclectic mix, which has produced a more varied appearance.



West side of Worcester Road



Corner of St. John's and Worcester Road



28-40 Worcester Road



41-47 Worcester Road

This side of the road does noticeably increase in height to three storeys as it approaches the High Street, and the scale of the buildings also increase to two or three bays in width. Also located on this side of the road are the 'Lurve' Nightclub with an art deco frontage and the Hyundai garage, a new car showroom. Both buildings being considerably larger in foot print and scale than their neighbours. In addition on the corner of Worcester Road and St John's Street is a poor quality 1950's building, highly visible given the prominent location where the High Street is at its widest, and where it turns the corner into St John's Street.

As with the High Street, spaces to the rear are ill defined. Some of the ancillary buildings which were once an important feature of Bromsgrove remain, but their original use is not apparent, and many are now in a poor state of repair. To the east side there has been some modern development which would appear to sit on the footprint of older buildings. The presence of the remains of these older buildings are evidence of Bromsgrove's history and development and are therefore part of the special interest and character of the conservation area.

Six buildings on Worcester Road are listed, all 18th century, located on the east side. The unlisted buildings are predominately Victorian, and particularly on the west side of the street are of a similar scale and style. Many have retained their period details, although a number of windows have been lost, and therefore most of them make a positive or neutral impact on the character of the High Street.

Worcester Road is very much a tertiary retail street and like the High Street and The Strand most of the shop fronts and signage has been replaced with little thought for the impact on the overall street scene, and they clearly detract from the quality of the High Street.

Zone 3: Worcester Road Key Buildings

There are only a few listed buildings in this part of the Conservation Area, interspersed with attractive unlisted historic buildings and some more neutral additions.

No.7 Worcester Road is Grade II* listed and forms a notable group with 3 and 5 Worcester Road which are Grade II listed. No.5 is now known as Kembrey House and converted to offices. The building dates from the late 18th century and has interesting curved windowheads with fluted keystones and a pedimented doorpiece with Doric columns to the ground floor.

The group of unlisted buildings at No's 4 to 16 Worcester Road are mostly three storeys with a variety of architectural detailing at upper levels. Unfortunately the character of some of these buildings has been undermined by the poor quality shopfronts below, but they do retain sufficient architectural interest above ground floor to be worthy of retention.

No's 33, 35 and 37 Worcester Road are Grade II listed and date from the 18th century. The fine timber shopfronts date from the early 20th century and add interest to the wider streetscene. Consent has recently been granted to link No's 33 and 35 into one restaurant unit, preserving the external appearance of two individual units whilst bringing the building back into economic use.

The larger terrace of unlisted buildings towards the end of the Conservation Area have been harmed by the introduction of PVC windows to the upper floors and a series of inappropriate modern shopfronts and poor quality signage. A few original sash windows remain, window openings have not been altered and other period details still exist. They therefore currently make a contribution, albeit limited, to the Conservation Area.



5 and 7 Worcester Road



33, 35 and 37 Worcester Road



6 Worcester Road



New Road from the West



Chapel Street

4.3.8 Zone 4: New Road/Chapel Street

The two small areas around New Road and Chapel Street were considered for removal from the Conservation Area boundary in the 2009 review of the Conservation Area. This was discounted as they do contain some interesting historic buildings. The area beyond Tudor House on New Road includes two detached Victorian villas which retain their original sliding sash windows. These properties could potentially be at risk of demolition if the conservation area protection was removed. On Chapel Street can be found two Grade II listed buildings – the Congregational Chapel and associated Sunday school plus an unlisted terrace 19th century terrace unfortunately undermined by the addition of PVC windows. The Congregational Church dates from 1833 and is in the Greek Revival style with a stuccoed façade and large arched windows. The former Sunday School (now the United Reform Church Hall) was built in 1852 and is a single storey, red brick building with blue brick dressings and tall arched windows similar in style to the church windows. No15 Chapel Street retains plaster work designed by the Bromsgrove Guild on the ground floor.

4.3.9 Building Materials

Much of the character of Bromsgrove comes from the variety of the building materials used, especially in the detailing. The earliest buildings typically use materials that were available locally while the materials used in later buildings reflect the increasing availability of materials from further afield and changing architectural fashion. Although the buildings are essentially constructed from the same materials, there is much variation in the detailing to the buildings using other materials to provide interesting variations in the elevations as a whole. The retention of these traditional materials is important to the character and appearance of the conservation area.

Walls

The predominant walling material in the conservation area is red brick. However to the rear of the High Street one finds buildings and the remains of boundary walls constructed in the local red/buff sandstone. There are a few timber frame buildings, and timber framed rear elevations with either wattle and daub, and brick infill panels. In addition some brick buildings have been painted and white stucco and render has also been used in a few cases.



Roofs

Roof coverings are predominately plain clay tiles of a red/brown hue. The tiles are largely machine made probably from the 19th century, with some examples of surviving earlier handmade tiles. There are a few examples of slate. Some of the more modern buildings have concrete tiles in a similar colour to the clay tiles.

Windows

Window frames are generally timber. Some buildings have frames that are flush with the external brickwork, typical in early Georgian architecture. There are also examples of vernacular buildings with dormer windows in the attic space, as at 89 to 93 High Street.

Shop fronts

A few historic timber shop fronts remain some with their original traditional roller blinds. The majority of shopfronts however are of a modern design constructed in either timber or aluminium.

Road Surfaces

Road surfaces are tarmac and pavements are a mix of block paving, concrete paviors and tarmac. Kerb stones are predominately concrete, but some natural stone kerbs have survived in The Strand. The alleyways and rear access ways are predominately of block paving, although some original blue bricks survive.

Local Detailing

A large number of buildings have decorative detailing in stone including keystones, quoins and window detailing, notably on the high status buildings at the Market Place end of the High Street, but even the later Victorian buildings have stone cills and lintels to break up their elevations. There are some examples of decorative brickwork, notably the Slug and Lettuce PH which is constructed in blue brick with light brick polychromatic detailing (unusual for the area). The Lloyds Bank in the High Street makes use of sandstone but only in detailing, it is predominately red brick. There are also a number of buildings to the rear of the High Street constructed in sandstone. Archaeological studies would seem to indicate that these buildings were more numerous, originally they were houses and workshops.



42 Worcester Road





4.3.10 Important Trees and Green Spaces

The Conservation Area only has one significant green space around the Bus Station area and the adjacent section running along Crown Close/Market Street to the Market Place junction. Whilst this area is of considerable amenity value relative to the built environment of the rest of the town centre, the effect is reduced considerably at times due to the close proximity of the busy traffic running along Market Street and the considerable noise and dust that results.

The Spadesbourne Brook runs along the whole length of the Conservation Area from the rear of properties on The Strand down to Hanover Street in the South-East. The larger part of the brook course has been heavily canalised and culverted with several sections disappearing completely. Despite this, the brook still retains considerable value for biodiversity and provides an essential wildlife corridor through the town centre for a number of species including Brown Trout and Water Voles, both of which have been recorded where the course passes through the Bus Station site.



Only about 10% of the channel within the Conservation Area is naturalised and of both wildlife and amenity value. 30% of the course is hidden within closed culverts beneath roads & buildings and 60% in steep sided canal sections providing little opportunity for wildlife habitat other than that 'passing through'. Within this, the naturalized area at the Bus Station site provides an important 'stepping stone' for wildlife using the corridor but this 1km section still forms fairly hostile territory for most species. Naturalisation of additional sections of the brook course would greatly improve this situation and increase the biodiversity value both locally and for wildlife habitats further up and down the brook. In particular, aiding and allowing Water Vole colonies to intermix can be a vital factor in their survival.

Three other areas within the Conservation Area boundary are notable for their amenity value as a result of their possession of both some tree cover together with seating areas. These are the area adjacent to Strand House and Cupitts Jewellers, a small area on the corner of Market Place and Market Street, and the High Street itself. At the two sites at The Strand and the Market Place, the presence of large mature trees provides a contrast with the built environment and a shading and cooling effect on hot summer days. The trees also contribute significantly to improved local air quality. The amenity of all three sites suffers considerably however, from traffic noise & dust as a result of their close proximity to major roads through the town centre.

Along the High Street itself, a number of trees have been planted over the last 30 years as part of past improvements. Although nearly 50% of those trees originally planted have been lost and not replaced, those that remain contribute to the amenity of the area by providing shading and improved air quality in summer, a medium for Christmas lights in winter, and visual amenity all year round. The current trees do cause a few problems, however, such as the obscuring of site lines for both amenity value and CCTV purposes, maintenance and issues of encroachment close to nearby buildings, and the effects of roots on paving and surfacing. For the most part, these problems are the consequence of poor planning, design and tree species selection in previous years which has resulted in incompatible positioning of trees, CCTV cameras and other street furniture. Unsuitable positioning and surfacing around trees has directly led to trees damaging paving and also tree loss. All of these problems can be reduced or avoided by correct selection, siting & design of new replacement trees.



5.0 CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Bromsgrove is fortunate in having retained a significant number of its historic buildings, even though this is not immediately apparent at ground floor level. There are, however, features that compromise or detract from its character and appearance. These include:

The Public Realm

The existing poor quality public realm affects both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and detracts from its historic setting. At present there is a mix of brick pavoirs and concrete paving slabs throughout the Conservation Area and some oddly random strips of buff concrete paving. There is no obvious pattern or delineation between 'pavement' and 'road space', and a lack of maintenance has resulted in a rather shabby appearance. Vehicles still use the High Street for deliveries which has resulted in a proliferation of protective barriers and bollards, to the detriment of the wider street scene.

The existing street furniture appears to be randomly located, with street signage, bins, seating and trees obscuring some of the possible views through the Conservation Area. Most of this was installed in 1995 and has been poorly maintained adding to the run down appearance of what should be an attractive retail area.

In general the public spaces within the Conservation Area have a tired feel that detracts from the appearance of the historic buildings.

Shop fronts and signage

The majority of the modern shop fronts bear little relationship to the historic building above, and they also lack consistency in terms of style, proportions, materials and colour schemes. Most of the shop signage is also equally poor with over large fascia signs, excessive signage, the use of plastic and lighting. All of which detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.



High Street



High Street



2-4 High Street

Historic Market Site

The market hall has now been demolished and the site is currently being used as a surface car park. Although outside the Conservation Area, as it is immediately adjacent to it, it obviously impacts on the setting of the Conservation Area.

The redevelopment of this site requires to be carefully considered, as it could set the tone for high quality contemporary design which complements the wider historic context of Bromsgrove.



Historic Market Site

Modern Infill

Several sites in the conservation area have been subject to redevelopment during more recent times. Notwithstanding the loss of older buildings many of the modern buildings erected exhibit design characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area. The purpose of highlighting these buildings is not necessarily to aim at their redevelopment, although in the long term such discussions would be welcomed, but to prevent them becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations. These buildings will not be regarded by the Council as a guide or precedent for future development proposals



99-115 High Street

Historic buildings in a poor condition

Under investment in building repair and maintenance of some buildings on the High Street and Worcester Road detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area and results in the long-term risk of loss of historic building fabric. Currently only one building, 20- 22 High Street, can be described as being a 'Building at Risk'. However the vacant upper floors of a number of others are also giving cause for concern.

Loss of Historic Detailing

A number of properties, particularly on Worcester Road, have had replacement windows in uPVC or aluminium. Window replacements with new ones of a different design, detail, materials or finish, erodes local building detail, which is an essential part of the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area.

Traffic Management

The traffic management measures in The Strand have had a significant impact on this part of the Conservation Area. The layout of the road system connecting Stourbridge Road/ Birmingham Road and Stratford Road has created a visual and physical intrusion in the Conservation Area, severing the two sides of The Strand, and The Strand from the High Street. Overall this section of the Conservation Area is unfriendly to pedestrians. It has fragmented these historic spaces, undermining their architectural and historic integrity and the visual quality of the historic environment as well as detracting from the setting of the historic buildings.



Rear of High Street



Rear of High Street

Rear Historic Areas

A number of historic buildings to the rear of buildings on the High Street and Worcester Road still exist, and some have been refurbished and gained new uses. Many are underused or vacant, and are generally in a poor condition but are highly visible from Market Street. The presence of these buildings, are evidence of the town's history and development and are part of its character and interest. In their current state they therefore detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

Spadesbourne Brook

The Spadesbourne Brook is a neglected feature of the Conservation Area. Although some sections are culverted, there are significant stretches which are visible, and the brook still provides an essential wildlife corridor through the town centre. A number of the visible sections are heavily overgrown and in their current state do not contribute to the character of the conservation Area.

Neutral Areas

There are some parts of the Conservation Area which, in their present form, neither enhance nor detract from its character or appearance, these areas are indicated on Map 2. Generally they comprise the modern developments which have respected the character of the conservation area in terms of their scale and form, or the historic buildings which have lost some of the historic detail, this is particularly true of some of the buildings on Worcester Road.

6.0 SUMMARY OF ISSUES

The appraisal has highlighted the following problems and pressures in the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area

- The Public realm
- Shop front and signage
- Market Hall Site
- Modern infill
- Historic buildings in poor condition
- Loss of historic detailing
- Traffic Management
- Rear historic areas
- Spadesbourne Brook

The Management Plan in the next section considers how these might be addressed to ensure the continuing preservation and enhancement of the character and appearance of the conservation area.

PART 2 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

1.1.1 The purpose of this Management Plan is to provide a clear strategy for the management of Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area in a way that will protect and enhance its character and appearance. It should be read in conjunction with the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area Appraisal (January 2012) in which the character and special interest of the Conservation Area was identified, along with the features and other issues that currently compromise or detract from its character and appearance.

1.1.2 Section 71 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires Local Planning Authorities to draw up and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. The Management plan is intended to provide guidance to those involved in dealing with development and change not only within the Conservation area but also in respect of its setting. The Plan sets out policies to maintain and reinforce the character of the Conservation Area, and also to guide and manage change and in particular to respond to the negative features and threats to the character which have been defined in the appraisal. It also outlines the resources required for implementation and provides for monitoring and review. The Management Plan has been prepared in accordance with national policy contained in PPS5 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and follows the most recent guidance from English Heritage 'Understanding Place: Conservation Area, Designation, Appraisal and Management' (2011).

1.1.3 The Management Plan is an update to the draft proposals prepared in November 2009. It has been updated to take account of the Council's bid for Townscape heritage Initiative funding to secure the regeneration of Bromsgrove Town Centre.





1.2 Public Consultation

Public Consultation will take place between 2nd February and 15th March.

1.3 Status of the Management plan

The Management Plan will be used as a technical document to provide guidance for owners and businesses in the conservation Area. It will inform and guide the development control process and policy formation and assist with the implementation of the Townscape Heritage Initiative scheme in the Town Centre. It is intended that following a period of public consultation it will be formally adopted as a material planning consideration by Bromsgrove District Council.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 The Management Plan lies within a framework of local and national planning policy for the historic environment. General planning policies and proposals for the control of development and use of land within Bromsgrove Town Centre can be found in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan (Adopted in January 2004), The Draft Bromsgrove Core Strategy and the Bromsgrove Town Centre Draft Area Action Plan.

2.2 The key objectives in the Bromsgrove District Local Plan in respect of the preservation and enhancement of the character or appearance of the conservation area are; S35A, Development in Conservation Areas; S36, Design of Development in Conservation Areas; S37, Demolition in Conservation Areas; S38, Protection of Buildings of Merit; S41, Listed Buildings in Shopping Areas; S42, Shopfronts in Conservation Areas; S43, Traffic Calming Schemes; S45, Improvements to Conservation Areas and S47, Advertisement Control. Copies of the Local Plan are available on the Council's website at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk or from the Council House in Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove, B60 1AA.



2.3 Key Policies in the Draft Bromsgrove Town Centre Action Plan (published in January 2011) include;

- Upgrading the public realm and Primary Shopping Zone to a high quality including resurfacing and refurbishing the High Street.
- Preserving and enhancing the Conservation Area's character and appearance.
- Wherever viable renovating, refurbishing, rejuvenating or redecorating the Town Centre's historic buildings.
- Utilising the natural assets in the Town Centre to provide enhanced green and open spaces including the Spadesbourne Brook and Recreation Ground.
- Ensure a safe environment for all and a town Centre enjoyable for everyone.

The key policies are contained in TC5, Urban Design and Conservation.

2.4.1 In 2004 Bromsgrove District Council adopted SPG 2, Shop fronts and Advertisement Design Guide. In respect of the Conservation Area the aim of the guidance is to encourage shopfront design and advertisements which preserve and enhance the character and significance of the Conservation Area. This document is to be revised and updated shortly.

2.4.2 The Council is committed to plan led development and the plan making process, it has produced draft plans for both the whole district in the form of the draft Core Strategy and also a more detailed Town Centre Area Action plan. Both of these plans are progressing towards the advanced stages of production, it is hoped once the current reforms of the plan making system are published both plans can be progressed quickly to the final stages and formal adoption.

2.5 This policy framework, along with national policy guidance contained in PPS5, 'Planning for the Historic Environment' and the English Heritage Guidance Document PPS5 Planning for the Historic Environment: Historic Environment Planning Practice Guide will be used to further the preservation and enhancement of the character of the Conservation Area.



3.0 SUMMARY OF SPECIAL INTEREST, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES



3.1 Special Interest

The Bromsgrove Town Conservation Area contains an assortment of notable historic buildings dating from predominantly the 18th and 19th centuries but with some earlier surviving timber framed buildings.

A range of architectural styles is represented from English vernacular, to restrained Georgian and more elaborate Victorian Gothic buildings. This variety of elevational treatments and styles demonstrate high quality construction and craftsmanship, giving a rich texture to the town centre, and are tangible reminders of the town's past prosperity.

The medieval street pattern, based upon the older Roman Road between Droitwich and Wall, the original market place and the remains of some burgage plots have all survived.

The narrowness of the historic building plots, varied rooflines and the overall height of the buildings give an overall impression of vertical emphasis, and a strong sense of enclosure.

3.2 Challenges and Opportunities

3.2.1 The appraisal has highlighted the following problems and pressures in the Bromsgrove Town Centre Conservation Area

- The Public realm
- Shop front and signage
- Historic Market Site
- Modern infill
- Historic buildings in poor condition
- Loss of historic detailing
- Traffic Management
- Rear historic areas
- Spadesbourne Brook



4.0 MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

4.1 Introduction

The following strategies have been identified as ways in which to protect and enhance the character and significance of the Conservation Area, by addressing the negative features identified above.

The policies are in accordance with national policy guidance and local policies, and follow on from the Conservation Area Appraisal.

4.2.1 Public Realm

- The existing poor quality public realm affects both the character and appearance of the Conservation Area and detracts from its historic setting. At present there is a mix of brick pavers and concrete paving slabs throughout the Conservation Area and some oddly random strips of buff concrete paving. There is no obvious pattern or delineation between 'pavement' and 'road space', and a lack of maintenance has resulted in a rather shabby appearance. Vehicles still use the High Street for deliveries which has resulted in a proliferation of protective barriers and bollards, to the detriment of the wider street scene.
- The existing street furniture appears to be randomly located, with street signage, bins, seating and trees obscuring some of the possible views through the Conservation Area. Most of this was installed in 1995 and has been poorly maintained adding to the run down appearance of what should be an attractive retail area.
- In general the public spaces within the Conservation Area have a tired feel that detracts from the appearance of the historic buildings.



High Street



High Street

4.2.2 Proposed Action

- Work with other departments at Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council to implement a new public realm scheme. This will involve renewing the surface materials including the introduction of a more cohesive design, a new street lighting scheme, including more appropriately designed lamp posts, improved and more thoughtful illumination of some areas, the removal of redundant signage and CCTV poles, and the integration of new signage and other street furniture.
- Ensure that new signage, street furniture and surfacing materials contribute positively to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- These actions are in accordance with S35A a) and b) of the Bromsgrove District Council Local Plan and TC5.2 of the Draft Area Action Plan.



120 High Street

4.3.1 Shop fronts and Signage

- The majority of the modern shop fronts bear little relationship to the historic building above, and they also lack consistency in terms of style, proportions, materials and colour schemes. Most of the shop signage is also equally poor with over large fascia signs, excessive signage, the use of plastic and lighting. All of which detracts from the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

4.3.2 Proposed Action

- Seek improvements to or replacement of shop fronts and signage where opportunities arise through development proposals.
- New proposals will be assessed against local and national policies in respect of listed buildings and conservation areas, and SPG 2, Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide 2004, until the revised Shopfront Design Guidance is produced.
- Address unauthorised alterations to shop fronts through enforcement action where appropriate in accordance with Enforcement Policies.
- These actions are in accordance with S.41 and S.42 of the Bromsgrove Local Plan (2004) and TC5.8 of the Draft Area Action Plan (2011)



48-50 High Street

4.4.1 Historic Market Site

- The market hall has now been demolished and the site is currently being used as a surface car park. Although outside the Conservation Area, as it is immediately adjacent to it, it obviously impacts on the setting of the Conservation Area.

4.4.2 Proposed action

- Pay particular attention to siting, scale and design of any new development proposals that come forward for this site in accordance with local and national policies in respect of conservation areas, to ensure that any new scheme enhances the setting of the Conservation Area.
- This action is in accordance with S.35 A (b) of the Bromsgrove Local Plan and TC5.2, TC5.3, TC5.4, TC5.5 and TC 5.6 of the Draft Area Action Plan (2011).



Historic Market Site

4.5.1 Modern Infill

- Several sites in the conservation area have been subject to redevelopment during more recent times. Notwithstanding the loss of older buildings many of the modern buildings erected exhibit design characteristics that are quite different to the established characteristics of the area. The purpose of highlighting these buildings is not necessarily to aim at their redevelopment, although in the long term such discussions would be welcomed, but to prevent them becoming too dominant through future additions or alterations. These buildings will not be regarded by the Council as a guide or precedent for future development proposals



118 High Street

4.5.2 Proposed Action

- Seek improvements to buildings where opportunities arise through development/redevelopment proposals particularly at key sites including Mill Lane and 138 to 140 High Street.
- New proposals will be assessed in accordance with local and national policies in respect of conservation areas, to ensure that any new scheme achieves better integration into the historic environment and enhances the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.
- This action is in accordance with S.35 A (b) of the Bromsgrove Local Plan and TC5.2, TC5.3, TC 5.4, TC 5.5 and TC 5.6 of the Draft Area Action Plan (2011).



115 High Street



22-29 High Street



89 High Street



42 Worcester Road

4.6.1 Historic buildings in a poor condition

- Under investment in building repair and maintenance of some buildings on the High Street and Worcester Road detracts from the appearance of the Conservation Area and results in the long-term risk of loss of historic building fabric.
- Currently only one building, 20- 22 High Street, can be described as being a 'Building at Risk'. However the vacant upper floors of a number of others are also giving cause for concern.

4.6.2 Proposed Action

- Seek retention of historic fabric where opportunities arise through development proposals.
- Identify Buildings at Risk and develop a strategy for their repair, including the potential use of Section 215, Urgent Works Notices and Repairs Notices to improve the condition of some of the most at risk properties in the Conservation Area.
- Investigate initiatives to make use of the upper floors such as 'Living above the shop', in conjunction with the Housing Section at Bromsgrove District Council, or a local housing association.
- Produce guidance on the maintenance of historic buildings for property owners.
- This action is in accordance with S. 38 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and TC 5.2 of the Draft Area Action Plan (2011).

4.7.1 Loss of Historic Detailing

- A number of properties, particularly on Worcester Road, have had replacement windows in uPVC or aluminium.
- Window replacements with new ones of a different design, detail, materials or finish, erodes local building detail, which is an essential part of the distinctive character and appearance of the conservation area.

4.7.2 Proposed Action

- Address unauthorised alterations to buildings through enforcement action where appropriate, in accordance with our enforcement policy.
- Undertake a photographic survey of all the properties in the Conservation Area. This will provide a record of the condition and appearance of each property, which would be useful in any future enforcement situations.
- We will consider the need for an Article 4 Direction to bring any permitted development works under planning control, to ensure that the special qualities of unlisted buildings of local significance are protected.
- This action is in accordance with S. 38 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and TC 5.2 of the Draft area Action Plan (2011).

4.8.1 Traffic Management

- The traffic management measures in The Strand have had a significant impact on this part of the Conservation Area.
- The layout of the road system connecting Stourbridge Road/Birmingham Road and Stratford Road has created a visual and physical intrusion in the Conservation Area, severing the two sides of The Strand, and The Strand from the High Street.
- Overall this section of the Conservation Area is unfriendly to pedestrians. It has fragmented these historic spaces, undermining their architectural and historic integrity and the visual quality of the historic environment as well as detracting from the setting of the historic buildings.



52-60 Worcester Road



The Strand



Rear of the High Street

4.8.2 Proposed Action

- Work with other departments at Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council to devise a traffic scheme which will give more priority to pedestrians. Improvements to the pavement widths, parking layout, road markings and surface materials would soften the appearance and enhance the setting of the surrounding historic buildings.
- This action is in accordance with S. 38 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and TC 5.2 of the Draft Area Action Plan (2011).



Rear of the High Street

4.9.1 Rear Historic Areas

- A number of historic buildings to the rear of buildings on the High Street and Worcester Road still exist, and some have been refurbished and gained new uses. Many are underused or vacant, and are generally in a poor condition but are highly visible from Market Street.
- The presence of these buildings, are evidence of the town's history and development and are part of its character and interest. In their current state they therefore detract from the character of the Conservation Area.

4.9.2 Proposed Action

- Investigate the possibility of carrying out some historical research into these buildings and identify ways they could be repaired and brought back into use.
- This action is in accordance with S. 38 of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and TC 5.2 and TC 5.3 of the Draft Area Action Plan (2011).



Spadesbourne Brook

4.10.1 Spadesbourne Brook

- The Spadesbourne Brook is a neglected feature of the Conservation Area.
- Although some sections are culverted, there are significant stretches which are visible, and the brook still provides an essential wildlife corridor through the town centre.
- A number of the visible sections are heavily overgrown and in their current state do not contribute to the character of the conservation Area.

4.10.2 Proposed Action

- The Bromsgrove District Council are committed through the Area Action Plan to the naturalisation of Spadesbourne Brook. Work on this is ongoing.
- This action is in accordance with S. 35 A a) of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and TC 6.1 of the Draft Area Action Plan.

5.0 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND TRAINING

5.1 Community Engagement

Bromsgrove District Council will undertake a number of initiatives during the life of the plan to ensure stakeholders and the community are engaged in decisions affecting their community.

The Conservation area Appraisal and Management Plan will be reviewed every four years to ensure that it is up to date in respect of current issues, including any changes in national and local policies. The consultation on the plan will include a public meeting and exhibition, following engagement with key stakeholders at the time of the review.

Bromsgrove District Council will ensure that all planning applications are available online to allow for ease of access to information, allowing community engagement.

Bromsgrove District Council has designated an elected member, Mr Kit Taylor, as a Heritage Champion. These champions are supported by the Commission for Architecture and Built Environment (CABE) and English Heritage. They will receive the relevant free training and ensure that design and heritage issues are considered in all areas of the Council's business.

5.2 Bromsgrove District Council is committed to widening local knowledge and heritage skills.

- When appropriate, and subject to resources, the Council will develop, with stakeholders and the local community, a Heritage Training and Education Plan. Many activities would establish a legacy of materials for future use.
- Bromsgrove District Council will take advantage of the free training provided for its planning staff through the Historic Environment Local Management Initiative (HELM)
- Bromsgrove District Council will improve the awareness of heritage issues through the annual Heritage Open Days Programme, held in September each year.





6.0 PUTTING THE PLAN INTO PRACTICE: RESOURCES, MONITORING AND REVIEW

6.1 Resources

A large amount of expenditure will be required for some of the proposals put forward and Bromsgrove District Council will continue to pursue various opportunities for funding including through the Heritage Lottery Fund, or possibly through planning obligations. Some proposals may be secured through discussions with property owners.

6.2 Monitoring

The monitoring of the condition of the Conservation Area over the lifetime of the Management Plan and beyond will be essential to establishing the success of the plan. The following are proposed;

- The Council will work actively with building owners and occupiers in pre planning application discussions to achieve the best design solutions.
- The Council will carry out a photographic Survey of all the buildings in the Conservation Area to aid monitoring, and in particular to aid enforcement action.
- The Council will ensure that appropriate enforcement action is taken, to preserve the character of the Conservation Area. Defined timescales will be pursued.
- The Council will produce an Annual Monitoring Report to include the statistics on the number of enforcement cases investigated, number of enforcement breaches and number of successful enforcement cases in the Town Centre Conservation Area.



6.3 Review

Subject to available resources, the conservation Area will be reviewed on a four yearly basis and the Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan will be updated where necessary.



7.0 CONCLUSIONS

The successful management of the Conservation Area will depend not only on the commitment of the local planning authority, but also other stakeholders especially those who work and live in the area.

General advice on all matters related to the historic environment, including Conservation areas and listed buildings can be obtained from the Conservation Officer at Bromsgrove District Council.

APPENDIX 1

List of properties within the revised Conservation Area Boundary

Davenal House Surgery, 28 Birmingham Road
Former Bromsgrove Museum, Birmingham Road
St. James Court, The Strand
1-27 The Strand (odds)
2-26 The Strand (evens)
Strand House, 2 Stourbridge Road
18-22 Market Street (evens)
1-135 High Street (odds)
2-140 High Street (evens)
2-12 Mill Lane
1-6 Chapel Street
1-15 Church Street (odds)
4-12 Church Street (evens)
1,2,4,5,6 New Road
Cleggs Entry (to rear of 15 High Street)
2-6 Market Place
1 George Street
1-55 Worcester Road (odds)
2-60 Worcester Road (evens)

APPENDIX 2

Listed buildings within the revised Conservation Area Boundary

1 High Street (Grade II)
2 & 4 High Street (Grade II)
7 High Street (Grade II)
9/9a High Street (Grade II)
14 High Street (Grade II)
16 High Street (Grade II)
18 High Street (Grade II)
22 High Street (Grade II)
24 High Street (Grade II)
25 High Street (Grade II)
27 High Street (Grade II)
29 High Street (Grade II)
31 High Street (Grade II)
33 High Street (Grade II)
46 High Street (Grade II)
47 High Street (Grade II)
48 High Street (Grade II)
49 High Street (Grade II)
50 High Street (Grade II)
52 High Street (Grade II)
67 High Street (Grade II)
69 High Street (Grade II)
71 High Street (Grade II)
73 High Street (Grade II)
75 High Street (Grade II)
87a High Street (Grade II)
89 High Street (Grade II)
89a High Street (Grade II)
91 & 93 High Street (Grade II)
95 High Street (Grade II)
104 & 104a, 106 High Street (Grade II)
108 & 110 High Street (Grade II)
112 High Street (Grade II)
120 – 122 High Street (Grade II)
126 – 130 High Street (Grade II)
26 The Strand (Grade II)
The Queen's Head, 1 The Strand (Grade II)
6 to 12 The Strand (Grade II) is listed as 146-148 High Street
21 & 23 The Strand (Grade II)
25 & 27 The Strand (Grade II)
Strand House 68 & 70 The Strand (Grade II)
3 Worcester Road (Grade II)
5 Worcester Road (Grade II)
7 Worcester Road (Grade II*)
33, 35 & 37 Worcester Road (Grade II)

APPENDIX 3

Bromsgrove District Local Plan - adopted January 2004

- S20 Main Shopping Location
- S23 Shopfront Enhancement
- S24 Retention of Traditional Shopfronts
- S24A Original Features on Shopfronts
- S25 New Shopfronts
- S26 Shopfront Fascias
- S27 Standards of Fascia Design
- S27A Projecting Signs
- S27B Design and Materials within Conservation Areas
- S35A Development in Conservation Areas
- S36 Design of development within Conservation Areas
- S37 Demolition in Conservation Areas
- S39 Alterations to Listed Buildings
- S39a Demolition of Listed Buildings
- S41 Listed Buildings in Shopping Areas
- S42 Shopfronts in Conservation Areas
- S43 Traffic Calming Schemes
- S44 Reinstatement of Features in Conservation Areas
- S45 Improvements to Conservation Areas
- S46 Areas of Special Advertisement Control
- S47 Advertisement Control
- C17 Retention of existing trees
- C19 Tree Preservation Orders
- C36 Preservation of Archaeological Resources
- C37 Excavation around Archaeological Remains
- C38 Development Criteria for Archaeological Sites
- C39 Site access for Archaeologists
- E4 Extension to existing Commercial Uses
- E9 Criteria for New Employment Development
- E10 Retail or Recreational Uses on Employment Land
- RAT4 Retention of Open Space
- RAT33 Visitor Facilities
- ES2 Restrictions on Development where Risk of Flooding
- ES11 Energy Efficiency in Buildings

Appendix 3 continued

Worcestershire County Structure Plan

CTC.5 Trees and Woodlands

CTC.6 Green Open Spaces and Corridors

CTC.8 Flood Risk and Surface Water Drainage

CTC.17 Archaeological Sites of Regional or Local Importance

CTC.18 Enhancement and Management of Archaeological Sites

CTC.19 Areas and Features of Historic and Architectural Significance

CTC.20 Conservation Areas

CTC.21 Reuse and Conversion of Buildings

D26 Office Development

D31 Retail Hierarchy

D43 Crime Prevention and Community Safety

APPENDIX 4

Glossary

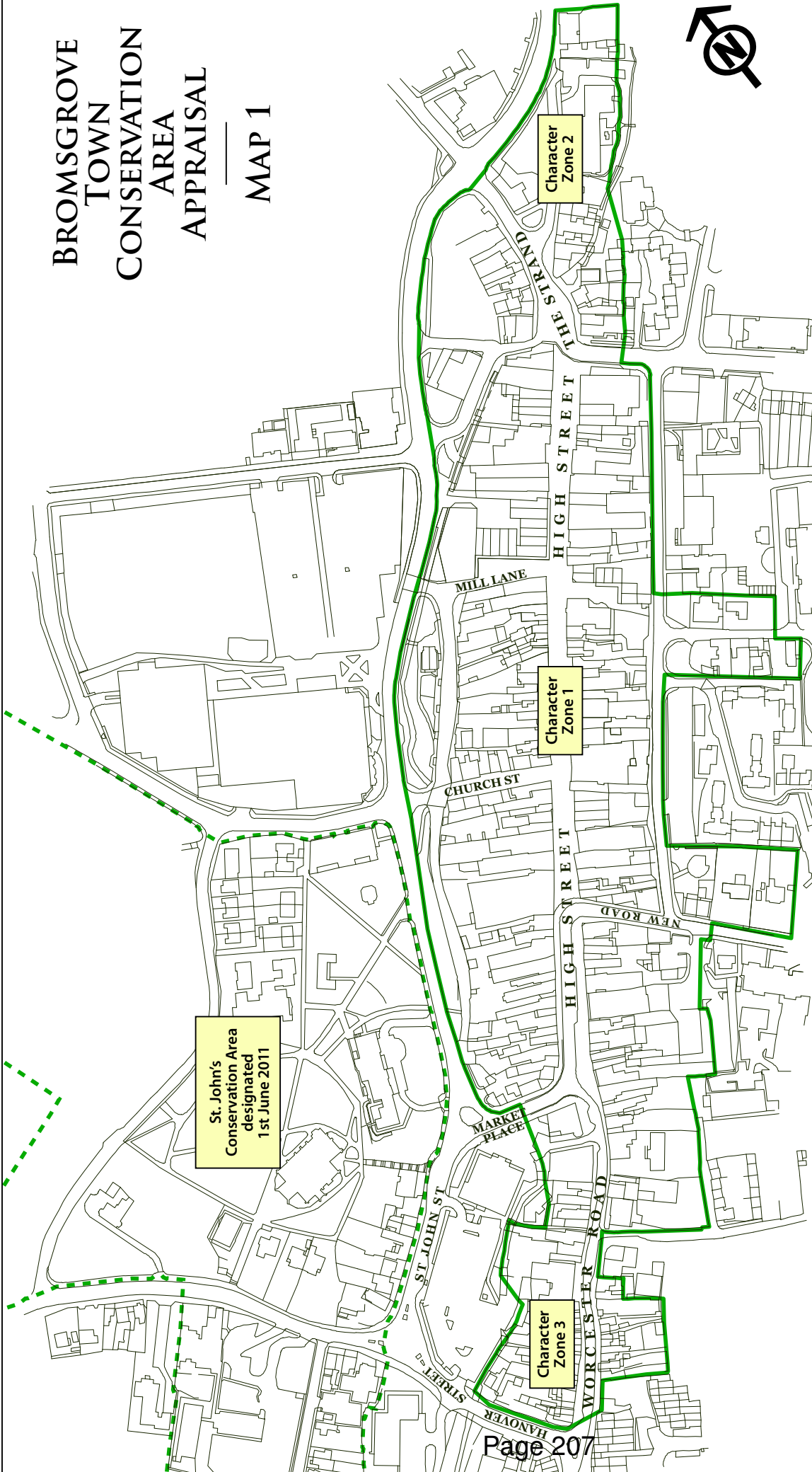
Listed Building	A building of special architectural or historic interest included on a national register. English Heritage is responsible for adding new entries to the statutory list.
Conservation Area	An area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which, it is desirable to preserve or enhance. Local authorities are responsible for designating new Conservation Areas.
Bargeboards	An angled decorative timber board at eaves level (see Slug and Lettuce, 126-130 High Street)
Burgage plot	A medieval term describing a long strip of land, with the narrowest section facing the street
Camber headed	A slightly curved window head
Canalized	Contained with artificial man-made sides
Classical	An architectural style from ancient Rome and Greece, revived in the Georgian period. Detailing is simple and refined with columns, moulded doorcases and sash windows. (see Davenal House, 28 Birmingham Road)
Cornice	Projecting moulding often found at eaves level, or as part of a pediment
Culvert	A man-made channel beneath a road or building
Diaper pattern	Repetitive decorative arrangement of bricks, often in diamond shapes or squares.
Doorcase	A moulded case or frame lining a doorway
Doric columns	The plainest of the three types of columns found in classical architecture, with simple vertical flutes and an unornamented capital. (The three types are Doric, Ionic and Corinthian)
Dormer	A window projecting from the roof (see 33-37 Worcester Road)
Edwardian	Dates from 1901-1910
Fleur-de-lis	A stylised lily with three pointed leaves (see 1 High Street)
Georgian	Dates from 1714-1830
Gothic	An architectural style from 12th to 16th centuries but revived in the late Victorian period. Typical details include elaborate tracery, heavily mullioned windows and pointed arches.
Jettied gable	Projecting upper storey overhanging the lower floors, often a feature of timber framed buildings (see former Hop Pole Inn, New Road)
Keystones	A wedge shaped block found at the centre of an arch (see 120 High Street)

Glossary continued

Medieval	Dates from 950-1547
Mullioned windows	Vertical posts separating the sections of a window, usually in stone or timber
Naturalize	Make more natural
Pediment	Low pitched moulded triangle often found over doorways or windows and at roof level. (see Strand Centre, 14-18 The Strand)
Polychromatic brickwork	A feature of Victorian Gothic architecture, using a variety of alternating colours of brickwork
Portico	A feature of classical architecture, moulded projecting hood on supporting columns to form an open sided porch (see Lloyds TSB Bank, 112 High Street)
Quatrefoil	A tracery detail in the shape of a flower with four lobes separated by cusps. A trefoil has three lobes.
Quoins	Angular often slightly raised stones added to the corner of a building (see 18 High Street)
Regency	Dates from 1810-1820
Rusticated	Roughened texture added to stonework with sunken joints (see The Queens Head PH, The Strand)
Stucco	An external plaster finish, often finely textured
Tannery	A building where animal skin and hide is tanned
Victorian	Dates from 1837-1901
Wattle and daub	Sticks and twigs interwoven to form a panel packed with plaster and then limewashed. Commonly found in timber framed or thatched buildings.

BROMSGROVE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

MAP 1



St. John's Conservation Area designated 1st June 2011

Character Zone 2

Character Zone 1

Character Zone 3

KEY

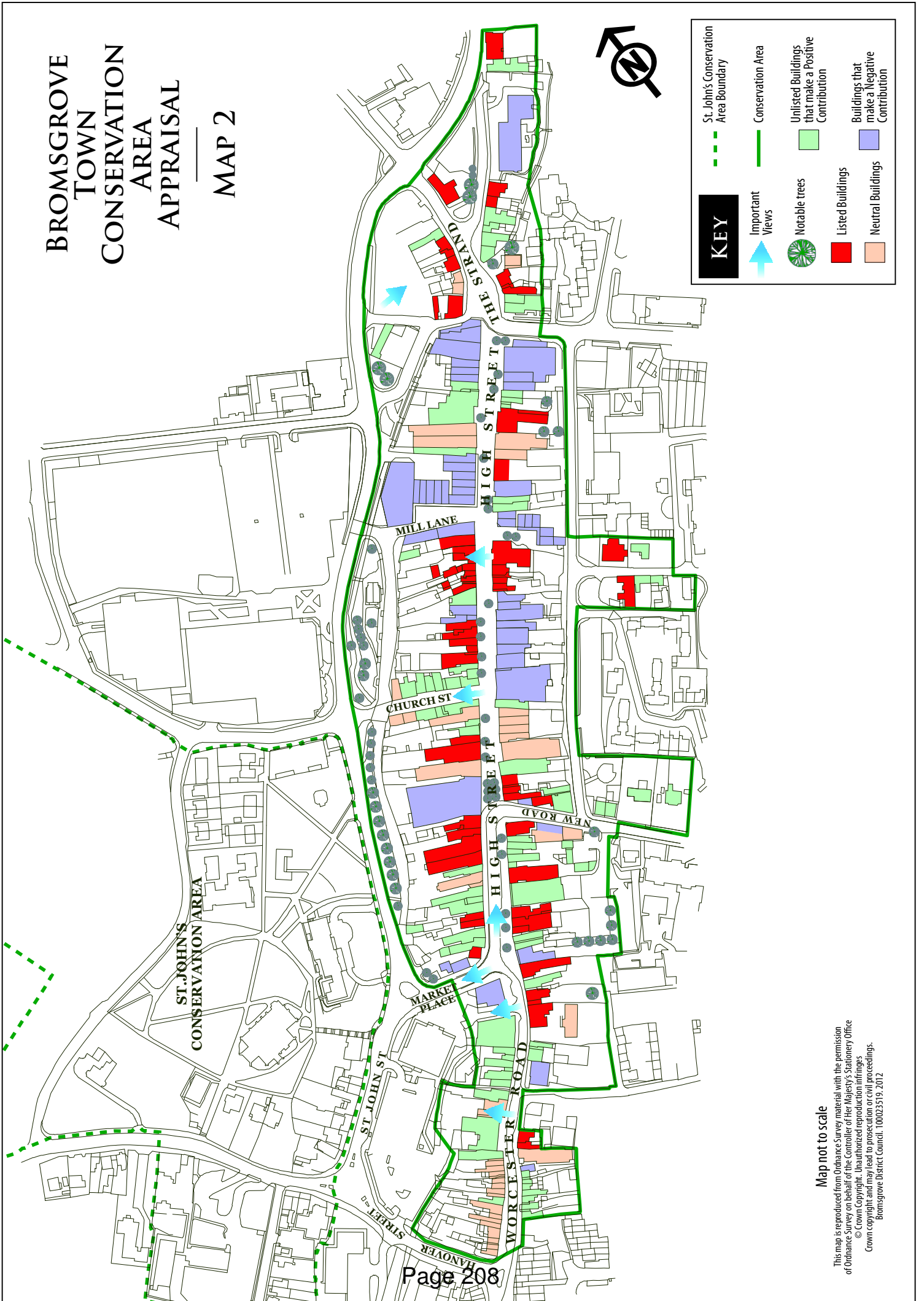
- St. John's Conservation Area Boundary
- Conservation Area

Map not to scale

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office
 © Crown Copyright. Unauthorized reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
 Bromsgrove District Council, 10002319, 2012

BROMSGROVE TOWN CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

MAP 2



KEY

- St. John's Conservation Area Boundary
- Conservation Area
- Important Views
- Notable trees
- Listed Buildings
- Neutral Buildings
- Unlisted Buildings that make a Positive Contribution
- Buildings that make a Negative Contribution

Map not to scale

This map is reproduced from Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. Bromsgrove District Council: 100023519: 2012



**This appraisal can be provided in large print, Braille,
on audio CD or tape, or on computer disc.**

"Need help with English?" Contact Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove 01527 881288

'Potrzebujesz pomocy z angielskim?' Skontaktuj się z Worcestershire HUB,
Bromsgrove, tel.: 01527 881288

"İngilizce için yardıma ihtiyacınız var mı?" 01527 881288 numarayı arayıp
Worcestershire HUB, Bromsgrove ile irtibata geçin

"ইংরাজির জন্য সাহায্য চাই ?" 01527 881288 নম্বরে উস্টাশায়ার হাব [HUB] ব্রমসগ্রভ [Bromsgrove]-এ
টেলিফোন করুন

"ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਮੱਦਦ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ ਹੋ?" ਵੁਰਸੈਸਟਰਸ਼ਾਇਰ ਹੱਬ [HUB] ਨੂੰ ਬਰੋਮਸਗਰੋ [Bromsgrove] ਵਿਖੇ
01527 881288 'ਤੇ ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ ਕਰੋ

"انگریزی میں مدد چاہتے ہیں؟" ورسیسٹر شائر ہب [HUB]، برومزگرو [Bromsgrove] میں 01527 881288
پر رابطہ کریں



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT
COUNCIL**

HEAD OF
PLANNING AND REGENERATION
THE COUNCIL HOUSE,
BROMSGROVE

Page 209
BROMSGROVE B60 1AA

This page is intentionally left blank



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT POLICY**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to outline the Council's approach to tackling poor housing conditions particularly within the private sector. This work is primarily undertaken by the Private Sector Housing Team within the Strategic Housing Section of Community Services. Work to improve housing conditions is mainly undertaken through our advisory and partnership role with landlords, the Landlord Forum, with owner occupiers, empty home owners and businesses.

Our primary aim of this policy is to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation by providing an effective, equitable, practical and consistent service. Bromsgrove District Council considers that fair and proportionate enforcement is essential in protecting the health, safety and economic interests of all those concerned. The Enforcement Policy therefore provides advice and guidance to officers, businesses, owners, landlords and tenants on the range of options that are available to achieve this.

The Council recognises the important role that the private rented sector has to play in reducing the burden on social housing by providing good quality accommodation to meet the housing need of the District. The majority of landlords maintain their properties to a good standard but there are some who neglect their responsibilities and have properties that are in a substandard condition.

Similarly the majority of home owners act responsibly in maintaining their properties. However, there are small numbers of owners who give little consideration to the condition of their home, the safety of the occupiers or the quality of the surrounding environment.

The primary role of the Private Sector Housing Team is to provide advice and support to those seeking compliance, but at the same time tackle those who choose not to comply by using proportionate action. In some circumstances it is necessary to take appropriate formal action to resolve disrepair issues which may include utilising powers to improve, repair, close or demolish dwellings that are not fit for purpose. The detail on how and when action may be taken is outlined within the body of this policy.

2. Background

In 2009 the Council carried out a stock condition survey across all housing tenures. The findings from these surveys highlighted that approximately 11662 (36%)

dwellings failed the Decent Homes Standard, with 7630 (24%) failing as a result of a Category 1 Hazard being present. It was determined that 2476 (8%) of the housing stock was considered to be in serious disrepair.

From this stock condition survey, a number of actions were identified which were outlined in more detail in the Council's Private Sector Housing Strategy 2009-2014. The overriding private sector housing priority is *'Improving the Quality and Availability of Private Sector Housing.'*

This enforcement policy will contribute to the Council addressing a broad range of issues such as preventing homelessness, tackling fuel poverty, reducing empty homes and contributing to Community Plans. Tackling poor housing conditions also supports the work of many other organisations including social care, health organisations and the Police.

3. General Enforcement Policy and Principles

The Local Authority must comply with any statutory requirement placed upon it and align its procedures with best practice. Enforcement in the context of this policy is not limited to formal enforcement action such as serving notices or prosecution, but includes the provision of advice.

All investigations into alleged breaches of legislation will follow best professional practice and the requirements of: -

- The Human Rights Act 1998
- Enforcement Concordat
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000
- The Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 – Codes of Practice
- The Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996
- The Code for Crown Prosecution
- Enforcement Guidance issued under section 9 of the Housing Act 2004

Particular regard must be made to the following 7 principles specified in the Statutory Code of Practice for Regulators made under Section 23 of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006: -

- **Economic Progress** - The Private Sector Housing service will only intervene when there is a risk to the health and safety of occupants, neighbours or visitors to a property. It is widely recognised that the supply of good quality, affordable privately rented accommodation is essential in meeting the local housing needs and promoting economic activity. Private landlords in the area range from those with large portfolios to those with one or two properties.
- **Risk Assessment** – The Service will use risk assessment to concentrate resources in the areas that need them most and on the properties in the worst condition. For example, the results of the most recent Stock Condition Surveys will be used to identify areas or types of accommodation in the District to pro-actively target action accordingly.

Following the receipt of a service request or complaint about poor housing conditions, an initial risk assessment will be carried out. Any follow up advice or action will be dependant upon the outcome of the initial assessment.

- **Advice and Guidance** – The Service will provide information that will distinguish between statutory requirements and advice or guidance. General advice will be made readily available on the Council's website. This will ensure landlords, agents, home owners and others understand their regulatory obligations. The information provided will be in clear, concise and accessible language, using a range of appropriate formats and media.

The Service welcomes enquiries from home owners and landlords about complying with minimum standards and ensuring homes are safe and warm on the basis that this will not directly trigger any enforcement action.

- **Inspections and other visits** – No inspection will take place without a reason. Inspections and other visits will take place in response to a reasonable complaint, a request for service, where poor conditions have been brought to our attention or as part of a risk-based and targeted programme.

Unless the visit is intended solely for advice purposes, the landlord or his or her agent will be contacted and will be given the opportunity to accompany the investigating officer during the visit. Following an inspection, positive feedback will be provided wherever possible to encourage and reinforce good practices.

- **Compliance and Enforcement Actions** – The Service will seek to identify landlords, agents, property owners or businesses that persistently breach the regulations. Proportionate and meaningful action will be taken. The service will facilitate compliance through a positive and proactive approach therefore reducing the need for reactive enforcement action.
- **Accountability** - The Service will be accountable for the decisions that it makes. Officers will provide a courteous, prompt and efficient service and will identify themselves by name and position. A contact point, telephone number and email address will also be provided. Applications for licences e.g. HMO or Caravan Site will be dealt with efficiently and promptly, and services will be effectively coordinated to minimise unnecessary overlap and time delays.

Information relating to the appeal mechanisms e.g. Residential Property Tribunal and the Council's corporate complaints procedure will be provided. The complaints procedure will be followed for any complaints received about the Service or the application of this Enforcement Policy.

4. Shared Enforcement

The range of enforcement matters dealt with by the Council in this policy area is such that there may well be occasions when there is a need to work with other agencies, for example the Fire Authority, by carrying out joint inspections. Where a

fire hazard is identified, the Council will consult with Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority on works required in accordance with the jointly agreed consultation policy.

In determining the most appropriate form of investigation and enforcement action, officers will have regard, so far as they are aware, to any potential or existing action of other Council services or outside agencies. Where matters are identified by, or reported to our officers that are the enforcement responsibility of another Council service or outside agency, persons involved will, so far as is reasonably practicable, be informed that the matter will be referred to the appropriate service or agency.

Where enforcement action is being taken by another Council service or outside agency, we will provide all reasonable assistance including the production of witness statements and collection and sharing of evidence etc. subject to any legal constraints and the meeting of any reasonable expenses.

5. Authority to investigate or enforce

The Housing Act 2004 and associated secondary legislation sets out the duties and powers that the Council has in relation to regulating property standards in its capacity as Local Housing Authority. Powers are also contained in the Housing Act 1985 as amended and other legislation, such as the Environmental Protection Act (this list is not exhaustive).

This policy deals with housing enforcement in all residential dwellings, Houses in Multiple occupation, empty dwellings, mobile home sites and unauthorised encampments.

The Council has the power of entry to properties at any reasonable time to carry out its duties under Section 239 of the Housing Act 2004. A notice is not required where entry is to ascertain whether an offence has been committed. If admission is refused, premises are unoccupied or prior warning of entry is likely to defeat the purpose of the entry then a warrant may be granted by a Justice of the Peace upon written application. A warrant under this section includes power to enter by force, if necessary.

The Council also has power under Section 235 of the Housing Act 2004 to require documentation to be produced in connection with exercising its function and investigations as to whether any offence has been committed under Parts 1-4 of the Housing Act 2004.

The Council also has powers under Section 237 of the Housing Act 2004 to use the information obtained above and Housing Benefit and Council Tax information obtained by the authority to carry out its functions in relation to these parts of the Act.

Inspections

The Housing Act 2004 introduced the **Housing Health & Safety Rating System (HHSRS)**. It is a calculation of the effect of 29 possible hazards on the health of

occupiers and any visitors. The legislation provides a range of actions to address these hazards.

The process of a HHSRS is two stage, the inspection and the subsequent calculations. HHSRS calculation provides a combined score for each hazard identified, however it does not provide a single score for the dwelling as a whole.

The scoring of any hazard combines the likelihood of an occurrence taking place (within 12 months) and then the range of probable harm outcomes that may arise from that occurrence. A numerical value is then provided which is then converted into bands (from A to J).

Bands A to C (ratings of 1,000 points and over) are considered to be the most severe and are known as **Category 1 hazards**. The Council has a **duty** to take appropriate action in response to a Category 1 hazard. When a Category 1 hazard is identified, the Council must decide which of the available enforcement options is the most appropriate course of action. These are explained in more detail within Section 5.

Bands D to J, are less severe (rating less than 1,000 points) and known as **Category 2 hazards**. This process is repeated for each of the hazards present within the dwelling. The Council has a **power** to take action in response to Category 2 hazards. If the Council decides to take action for category 2 hazards, it will consider taking action in the following circumstances: -

- Where a Category 2 hazard falls within Band D or E and there is one or more Category 1 hazards
- Where the cases involves a vulnerable person that would benefit from having Category 2 hazards addressed
- Cases in which a premises suffers from multiple Category 2 hazards, which when considered together, create a more serious situation,
- Where a Stock Condition Survey highlights specific local hazards relating to that type of dwelling.
- Any other exceptional case determined by the Head of Community Services

The assessment is not based upon the risk to the actual occupant but upon the group most vulnerable to that particular risk. Once scored, any action that is then considered will take into account the affect of that risk upon the actual occupant.

6. Enforcement Options

This policy is built around a process of escalation; therefore we will only prosecute in serious circumstances such as a deliberate, negligent or persistent breach of legal obligations. The following levels of enforcement actions are available: -

Stage 1 – Informal Action

- **Prevention:** -We believe that the first step in enforcement is prevention, through raising awareness and promoting good practice. Methods of achieving this include the provision of advice and information at the earliest opportunity.

Bromsgrove District Council holds regular Landlords' Forum and develops landlord newsletters, which have been well received. These have been a critical way for us to advise landlords of their rights and responsibilities as well as for the Council to obtain an insight into the housing market and landlords views, so that our services can be tailored to the changing needs.

The offer of discretionary financial assistance (in certain circumstances) can also assist in avoiding enforcement action, details of which can be found within the Council's Housing Assistance Policy.

- **Advice and Guidance:** -Where appropriate we will seek to resolve situations without issuing formal notices or taking legal action. This will be used to reinforce advice and guidance where minor defects have been discovered but it not considered appropriate to take formal action. Examples of such may be where the consequences of non-compliance do not impose a significant risk to health and safety of the occupants or visitors, or where there is confidence that informal action will achieve compliance.

Information will be provided in a clear manner detailing any works that are required and over what timescale these should be completed. We will ensure that legal requirements are clearly distinguished from recommended works, where applicable. If a landlord or owner agrees to start work we shall wait before serving a notice unless the landlord or owner fails to carry out the works within a reasonable or agreed time.

- **Formal Letters:** - This course of action will be given prior to formal enforcement action taking place and will detail what works are required within the specified timescales. Follow-up visits will normally be made within an agreed time period to ensure the problems have been rectified. This may follow an informal letter where there remains some confidence that compliance may be achieved prior to resorting to formal enforcement.

Stage 2 – Formal Action

- **Formal notices:** -Where practicable, decisions to serve formal enforcement notices will be taken by the authorised officer in consultation with the Private Sector Housing Team Leader/Strategic Housing Manger. If it is necessary to serve a formal notice under the Housing Act 2004 a reasonable charge will be made to recover administrative and other expenses incurred. See section 9 detailing charges. The following formal notices are available to officers when dealing with substandard properties: -

- (a) **Hazard Awareness Notices:** -This is an informal notice that ensures the relevant person(s) are aware of the hazards that are present within the property, these Notices are often used where the landlord/owner is currently or proposing to undertake works. The service of this notice does not prohibit the Local Authority from taking additional action if works are not carried out.
- (b) **Improvement Notices:** - These specify the contraventions and detail the works or actions required within a specified timescale. These notices are essential when considering the improvement of a property. Where the Council determines that an Improvement Notice should be served in respect of a Category 1 Hazard (see section 5), it will require works to be undertaken to either remove the hazard entirely or reduce its effect.

If the Council determines that the hazard can only be reduced to a Category 2 hazard rather than it being removed, it will require works to be carried out as far as is reasonably practicable to reduce the likelihood of harm.

- (c) **Suspended Improvement Notices:** - The Local Authority has the power to consider serving a suspended Improvement Notice. The following is a list of situations in which it may be deemed appropriate to suspend such Notices: -
- The need to obtain planning permission (or other appropriate consent) that is required prior to repairs and/or improvements being undertaken
 - Works which cannot properly be undertaken whilst the premises is occupied and which a notice can be deferred until such time as the premises falls vacant or temporary alternative accommodation can be provided
 - Personal circumstances of occupants, for example, temporary ill-health, which suggests that works should be deferred.

When deciding whether it is appropriate to suspend an Improvement Notice the Council will have regard to:

- The level of risk presented by the hazard(s)
- The turnover of tenants at the property
- The response of the landlord or owner
- Any other relevant circumstances (e.g. whether the vulnerable age group is present)

Suspended Improvement Notices will be reviewed after a maximum of 12 months and then at regular intervals, but the suspension of a notice will not normally exceed 6 months.

- (d) **Prohibition Orders:** - These are required where there is a significant risk to the health and safety of the occupant. They can be used in respect of either Category 1 or Category 2 hazards for prohibiting all or part of a dwelling. This action is likely to be used if repairs and/or improvement are deemed inappropriate on grounds of practicality or excessive cost. An example of a Prohibition Order might include part or whole of a dwelling being prohibited as a result of inadequate escape in the event of a fire.

The Council has the power to suspend a Prohibition Order once it has been served and will consider this course of action where it is reasonable to do so. A Suspended Prohibition Order will be reviewed after a maximum of 12 months and then at regular intervals, but suspension will not normally exceed 6 months.

(e) **Emergency Remedial and Prohibition Action:** -There may be situations in which Emergency Remedial Action and Emergency Prohibition Orders are appropriate. However the Council must be satisfied of the following: -

- A Category 1 hazard exists,
- The hazard poses an imminent risk of serious harm to health or safety of the occupant, and that;
- Immediate action is necessary

If these conditions are met the Council may take appropriate emergency action. Situations in which emergency action may be appropriate include where there is a imminent risk of electrocution, fire, explosion or collapse. The costs incurred for carrying out emergency remedial action including administrative charges are recoverable from the recipient.

(f) **Demolition Orders:** -The Housing Act 2004 has retained the power to make Demolition Orders but has amended Section 265 of the Housing Act 1985 to align it with the HHSRS and enforcement provisions. Demolition Orders are considered as part of the enforcement process when dealing with a Category 1 hazard (where they are judged the appropriate course of action). In determining whether to issue a Demolition Order the Council will take account of Government guidance and will consider all the circumstances of the case.

(g) **Clearance Areas:** - The Council can declare an area to be a 'Clearance Area' if it is satisfied that each of the premises in that area is affected by one or more Category 1 hazards (or that they are dangerous or harmful to the health and safety of inhabitants.) In determining whether to declare a Clearance Area the Council will act only in accordance with Section 289 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended), have regard to the relevant Government guidance on Clearance Areas and all the circumstances of the case.

(h) **Statutory Nuisance Notices Served under the Environmental Protection Act 1990:** - It is anticipated that the vast majority of statutory nuisances will be eliminated using the enforcement provisions under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System. However, where this is not possible consideration will be given to the service and enforcement of Section 80 abatement notices

Stage 3 – Non-Compliance

We will always look to the relevant responsible person(s) to resolve matters of concern. However where a Formal Notice has been served and the specified works have not been carried out in compliance with the notice, the Council has a variety of actions it may take to deal with non-compliance these are as follows: -

- **Works in Default:** -This will be considered where it is in the interests of the health and safety of the occupants. The works in default will be carried out only after the service of a notice e.g. Improvement Notice. Any works undertaken will be recharged or placed as a land charge on the property.
- **Simple caution:** -This may be considered for less serious breaches of formal notices and statutory requirements. Under certain circumstances, a simple caution may be used as an alternative to prosecution and will usually be considered before making a decision to prosecute. The procedure adopted and the content of the caution will be in accordance with current LGR (Local Government Regulation) guidance and relevant Home Office Circular.

A caution is a serious matter and may be used to influence a decision as to whether or not to prosecute, should another offence be committed. Simple cautions remain on record for a period of 3 years. The decision whether to offer a formal caution will be made by the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Private Sector Housing Team Leader and Strategic Housing Manager.

Cautions are intended to:-

- Deal quickly and simply with certain, less serious offences;
- Avoid unnecessary appearance in criminal courts;
- Reduce the chance of offenders re-offending.

Before issuing a caution the following matters will be taken into account when deciding whether a caution is appropriate:-

- There must be evidence of sufficient guilt;
- The offender must understand the significance of the formal caution and admit the offence by signing a declaration.
- The seriousness of the offence. As a caution is not suitable for serious offences.

Where an individual chooses not to accept a formal caution the Council will automatically consider a prosecution. In instances where a caution is accepted the assessment of the premises will be reviewed and the inspection frequency may be increased as a result. The decision to issue a caution will be notified to all known interested bodies, including tenants, managers, freeholders, leaseholders and mortgagees.

- **Prosecution:** -The Council will use discretion in deciding whether to bring a prosecution and generally will only commence proceedings when it is considered to be in the public interest. Before deciding to prosecute there must be sufficient evidence for a realistic prospect of conviction, taking account of any defence that may be available. In certain circumstances prosecution without prior warning may take place. The officer will ensure that a decision to prosecute and the results of any legal proceedings will be notified to all known interested bodies, including tenants, managers, freeholders, leaseholders and mortgagees.

The decision to prosecute will be taken by the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Strategic Housing Manager with the support of the Council's Legal Officers.

7. Tenure

The HHSRS applies equally to all tenures, therefore all enforcement options are available to the Council regardless of whether the premise in question is owner-occupied, privately rented or Registered Providers (RP) property. The Council considers that owner-occupiers are usually in a position to take informed decisions regarding the maintenance of their property, and are therefore able to prioritise finances accordingly. Where applicable they can then apply for Local Authority assistance towards the works. However, tenants, and particularly non-RP tenants, are not usually able to do so. For this reason the Council judges that it is appropriate for its powers to be applied accordingly to each tenure: -

- **Owner-Occupiers:** -The Council anticipates that Hazard Awareness Notices will be issued frequently and considers this to be an appropriate course of action. However, the use of Improvement Notices, Prohibition Orders and their emergency equivalents will be considered in the following circumstances: -
 - Vulnerable elderly people who are judged not-capable of making informed decisions about their own welfare
 - Vulnerable individuals who require the intervention of the Council to ensure their welfare is best protected
 - Hazards that might reasonably affect persons other than the occupants
 - Serious risk of life-threatening harm such as electrocution or fire
 - Any other exceptional case determined by the Head of Community Services in consultation with the Strategic Housing Manager.

Unless the hazard is deemed to pose an imminent risk of serious harm, the Council will contact the owner to explain the nature of the hazard and confirm the action intending to be taken. The Council will take account of any proposals or representations made by, or on behalf of the owner. The Council will take into account the opinion of the relevant Welfare Authority when considering both the vulnerability and capability of such persons and therefore what action will be taken (where necessary).

- **Social Landlords**
Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs) exist to provide suitable and properly maintained accommodation for their tenants. They are managed by Boards (which typically include tenant representatives) their performance is also scrutinised by the Homes and Communities Agency and Tenant Services Authority. RPs normally employ staff to both manage and maintain their properties and will usually have written arrangements for reporting repairs or problems and will have set out the response times to achieve this.

The Council will not normally take formal action against an RP unless it is satisfied that the problem in question has been properly reported to the RP has

then failed to take appropriate action. If the Council determines that it is appropriate to take action it will then normally notify the RP that a complaint has been received and will seek the RP's comments and proposed action. Only in cases where it has been deemed that an unsatisfactory response has been received will the Council take further action and review what enforcement options are available in order to determine the most appropriate course of action.

- **Private Landlords**

The Council will have regard to the principles of the Enforcement Concordat and relevant guidance from the Residential Property Tribunal decisions. Action will be taken in accordance with Section 6, where the Council will primarily look at informal action. Formal action will be initiated immediately if a hazard in question is judged by the Council:

- To pose an imminent risk of serious harm to any person, or
- The landlord in question is known to have failed to comply with informal action on a previous occasion.

Where the informal approach is judged appropriate the Council will contact the landlord, in writing (or his/her relevant agent) to confirm their involvement and request a joint visit. Following the inspection the Council will confirm its findings from the site visit and specify what is required of the landlord to remedy the problem.

Unless the Council already holds the required information, a Requisition for Information Notice may also be served at this point in order to establish all relevant information e.g. ownership.

Landlords are expected to provide any agent acting for them with sufficient authority to act on their behalf. Failure of an agent to respond to communication from the Council or any failure to take appropriate action may be treated as a failure by the landlord.

The Council will proceed with **formal action** if: -

- No response from the landlord/agent or,
- The response is deemed inadequate or,
- Works that were agreed, have not been carried out

The Council will take whichever of the various available enforcement actions it judges to be the most appropriate in accordance with this Policy.

If the Council receives:

8. Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licensing

A HMO is a building or part of a building occupied by more than one household as their only or main residence, and there is some sharing or lack of basic amenities. This includes houses containing bedsits, hostels, and shared properties. A full definition is given under Section 254 and Schedule 14 Housing Act 2004.

HMOs of three or more storeys, with five or more occupant require a licence. HMOs owned by Registered Providers of Social Housing (RPs), the Police, Health Authorities and certain other organisations are exempt, as are certain compliant buildings properly converted into flats.

Licences will be granted where the property is deemed suitable for occupation as an HMO unless the following is fulfilled: -

- The property can be made suitable by the application of conditions,
- The management arrangements are satisfactory,
- The licensee and manager are fit and proper persons.

If the property is not assessed prior to the application, a member of the Private Sector Housing Team will normally visit within 12 months of the granting of an HMO licence. During this inspection a HHSRS assessment will be carried out and an assessment will be made to determine compliance with the license conditions and management standards.

- **Offences relating to Licensable HMOs**

- **Revocation** – This action may be taken for the offence of operating an HMO without a licence or for failing to satisfy the conditions of the licence without reasonable excuse.

Where an HMO requiring a licence is operating without a licence, or the licence has been revoked but the revocation is not yet in force the local authority has a duty to make an Interim Management Order (IMO). This may be followed by a Final Management Order (FMO) for a further five years. The Council may appoint a preferred partner to manage HMOs subject to management orders.

- **Rent Repayment Order** - Where a licence is required, and notice has not been received to notify the local authority the tenants or Council may make an application to the Residential Property Tribunal for a Rent Repayment Order. This requires the landlord to repay rent to the tenants for up to 12months.

Whilst local authorities are responsible for implementing mandatory licensing of HMOs and assessing the fire safety risks in all dwellings under the HHSRS, the Fire Authority also have responsibilities under the Fire Safety Order 2005 for fire safety in common (shared) parts of HMOs. An agreement has therefore been drawn up between the Council and the Fire Authority for joint working to secure fire safety in HMOs.

The HMO Management Regulations apply to all HMOs, whether or not they require a licence. These require HMOs to be kept in a reasonable state of repair, all installations and appliances (including those for fire safety) to be in good working order and the common parts to be kept clean and in a reasonable state of decoration. The HHSRS applies to all dwellings, to which the previously mentioned enforcement action must be followed. Where there are issues relating to overcrowding within a HMO, an Overcrowding Notice may be served where no

Interim Management Order or Final Management Order is in force on an un-licensable HMO.

9. Improvement Works for Empty Homes

In many cases the powers that can be used to require improvements to an empty home rest with other services within the Council and will be covered by the appropriate services enforcement policies. Any action taken under powers available to this service will be taken in accordance with the staged approach to enforcement detailed previously. The following table details the issues, main legislation that may be used to require improvements, and the action required of the owner. These powers are not restricted to empty homes, however the powers under Part 1 of the Housing Act 2004 to remedy hazards will often not be appropriate for empty homes, unless occupation seems likely.

Problem	Legislation	Enforcing body	Action Required
Dangerous or dilapidated buildings	Building Act 1984, section 77 and 78	Building Control Department	Requires the owner to make the property safe and/ or enables the Local Authority to take emergency action to make the property safe
Property in such a state as to be a nuisance (e.g. causing dampness in adjoining property) or prejudicial to health	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 79	Housing Strategy	Requires the owner to take steps to abate the nuisance
	Building Act 1984, section 76	Building Control Department	Enables the Local Authority to take emergency action to abate the nuisance
Unsecured property posing a risk of unauthorised entry or likely to suffer vandalism, arson or similar	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, section 29	Housing Strategy	Requires the owner to take steps to secure the property or allows the Local Authority to board it up in an emergency
	Building Act 1984, section 78	Regulatory Services	Allows the Local Authority to fence off the property
Blocked or defective drains or private sewers Blocked or defective drains or private sewers (continued)	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, section 35	Housing Strategy	Requires the owner to address obstructed private sewers
	Building Act 1984, section 59	Regulatory Services	Requires the owner to address blocked or defective drains

	Public Health Act 1961, section 17	Regulatory Services	Requires the owner to address defective drains or private sewers
Vermin either present or a risk of attracting vermin that may detrimentally affect peoples health	Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949, section 4	Regulatory Services	Requires the owner to take steps to clear the land of vermin and/or requires the owner to remove waste likely to attract vermin
	Environmental Protection Act 1990, section 79	Regulatory Services	
	Public Health Act 1936, section 83	Regulatory Services	
Unsightly land or property affecting the amenity of the area	Public Health Act 1961, section 34	Regulatory Services	Requires the owner to remove waste from the property
	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, section 215	Planning Department	Requires the owner to address unsightly land or external appearance of the property
	Building Act 1984, section 79	Regulatory Services	Requires the owner to address the property adversely affecting the amenity of the area through its disrepair

10. Empty Homes

In addition to the actions under the Housing Act 2004 there are other enforcement actions the Council may choose to take to help bring empty homes back into use.

There are three enforcement routes that may be used which are as follows: -

- Empty Dwelling Management Order
- Enforced sale, and
- Compulsory purchase

Any enforcement action aimed at bringing empty property back into use will only be used when repeated attempts to encourage the owner of an empty property to bring it back into use, have failed. When considering enforcement options for empty homes, each case will be assessed on its merits and will only be recommended for enforcement action where there are clear benefits to the neighbourhood or it could address a housing need.

- **Empty Dwelling Management Order (EDMO)**

Where a dwelling has been wholly unoccupied for a period of at least 6 months, the Council may apply to the Residential Property Tribunal for an interim EDMO where the following is satisfied: -

- There is no reasonable prospect that the dwelling will become occupied unless an interim EDMO is made, and
- The Council has made reasonable efforts to notify the proprietor of the dwelling and to ascertain what steps are being taken to occupy that dwelling.

The second stage of the process would be for the Council to seek a final EDMO provided that the relevant conditions have been met.

There are a number of situations where EDMO powers do not apply including for second homes, properties being sold or let, and properties going through probate.

It is important to note that the Council would only consider pursuing an EDMO in circumstances where every effort to work with the owner of the property to bring it back into occupation had proved to be unsuccessful. There would be significant financial implications for the Council and it is envisaged that circumstances where use of these powers would be suitable would arise only in very exceptional circumstances.

- **Enforced Sale**

The Law of Property Act 1925 gives Local Authorities the power to sell properties in order to recover a debt secured against that property. This power can be used where a debt has been incurred for example following works undertaken to an empty home in the owners default.

- **Compulsory Purchase**

The Housing Act 1985, Section 17 allows the Local Authority to acquire under-used or ineffectively used property for residential purposes if there is a general housing need in the area.

In addition section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended by section 99 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) allows Local Authorities to acquire land or buildings if acquisition will allow improvements or redevelopment to take place. Compulsory purchase will be used only as the enforcement route of last resort for returning empty homes to use.

11. Power to charge for Enforcement Action

The Local Authority has the power under Section 49 of the Housing Act 2004 to make a reasonable charge as a means of recovering certain administrative and other expenses incurred in serving an Improvement Notice, Hazard Awareness Notice, Prohibition Order, Emergency Prohibition, Demolition Order or taking Emergency Remedial Action.

When deciding whether to make a charge, Officers will need to consider the personal circumstances of the persons concerned and the degree of co-operation previously obtained. If a charge is made, the Council can recover a reasonable amount for expenses incurred in connection with time spent gaining entry, visiting and inspecting the premises along with the administration costs for producing such Notices and Orders. Costs incurred carrying out Work in Default or Remedial Action will be charged separately the sum of which will be recoverable through a local land charge.

The expenses are in connection with the inspection of the premises, the subsequent consideration of any action to be taken, and the service of notices or orders. When considering the most appropriate course of action to deal with hazards, if it is considered necessary to have to take formal action a standard charge will be made:-

Charges 2012/13:

Notice/Order	Amount
Hazard awareness Notice	£0
Improvement Notice	£200
Prohibition Order	£200
Emergency Remedial Action	£200
Emergency Prohibition Order	£200
Demolition Order	£200

The charge is based on the average time and cost spent on the chargeable elements but in certain cases it may be increased or reduced where there is a significant difference between the cost of the enforcement action and the average charge. In addition to the standard charge, reasonable expenses may include specialist support such as testing of electrical or gas installations. However, no charge will be made if informal action results in hazards being addressed to the satisfaction of the Council. The Head of Community Services has the discretion to waive or reduce the charge if there are exceptional or extenuating circumstances.

12. Risks

There are risks associated with undertaking enforcement action particularly in relation to the potentially spiralling costs of enforcement and undertaking works in default. There are also potential damages to the Council's reputation in the event of a successful appeal at the Residential Property Tribunal (RPT). The findings of the RPT are published nationally to assist all Local Authorities to provide learning experiences. There are also risks associated with not taking Enforcement action, in the event that we are aware of a Category 1 Hazard but chose not to pursue any enforcement action without justification.

13. Review

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis and, in any event, at least every two years.

14. Contact

Private Sector Housing Team
Strategic Housing Section
Community Services
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane,
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B61 8EE

01527 881288
privatesectorhousing@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

This page is intentionally left blank

LICENCE CONDITIONS: RESIDENTIAL CARAVAN SITES

(2008 Model Standards Version)

Schedule of Conditions attached to Site Licence. Ref: [BDC reference]

Granted to: [Site owner]

Address: [Site owner address]

on the [DATE]

in respect of a maximum of [Number] units on

land situate at: [Mobile Home Site]

IMPORTANT NOTE

The legislation contained within the Licence is current from the time of issue. It is however, the responsibility of the Licence holder to make themselves aware of any such amendments or changes to this legislation and ensure compliance. Clarification of such can be gained from contacting the Local Authority.

SITE BOUNDARIES

1(i) The boundaries of the site shall be clearly marked by a man made or natural feature.

1(ii) No caravan or combustible structure shall be positioned within 3-metre of the boundary of the site.

1(iii) A plan of the site shall be supplied to the local authority upon the application for a license and, thereafter whenever there is a material change to the boundaries or layout of the site, or at any other demand of the Local Authority.

1(iv) The plan supplied must show an accurately scaled layout of the site including all relevant structures, features and facilities on it and shall be of suitable quality.

DENSITY AND SPACE BETWEEN CARAVANS

2(i) Except in the case mentioned in sub paragraph (iii) and subject to paragraph (iv), every caravan must where practicable be spaced at a distance of no less than 6 metres (the separation distance) from any other caravan, which is occupied as a separate residence.

2(ii) No caravan shall be stationed within 2 meters of any road or communal car park within the site or more than 50 meters from such a road within the site.

2(iii) Where two adjacent caravans have retrospectively been fitted with cladding from Class O or better fire related materials to their facing walls, then the separation zone between them may be reduced to a minimum of 5.25 meters.

2(iv) In any case mentioned in subparagraph (i) or (iii):

2(a) A porch attached to the caravan may protrude 1 metre into the separation zone and must not exceed 2 meters in length and 1 meter in depth. The porch must not exceed the height of the

caravan and only one door may be permitted at the entrance of the home, either on the porch or on the home.

2(b) Eaves, drainpipes and bay windows may extend into the separation distance provided the total distance between the extremities of 2 facing caravans is not less than 5 metres, except where sub paragraph (iii) applied in which case the extension into the separation distance shall not exceed 4.5meters.

2(c) Any structure including steps, ramps etc. (excluding a garage or car port), which extends more than 1 meter in to the separation zone shall be of non-combustible construction. There should be a 4.5meter clear space between any such structure and any adjacent caravans.

2(d) A garage or car port may only be permitted within the separation distance if it is of non-combustible construction.

2(e) Windows in such structures within the separation distance shall not face towards the caravans on either side.

2(f) Fences and hedges, where allowed and forming the boundary between adjacent caravans should be a maximum of 1 meter high.

2(g) Private cars may be parked within the separation zone provided that they do not obstruct entrances to caravans or access around them and they are a minimum of 3 meters from an adjacent caravan.

2(v) The density of the caravans onsite shall be determined in accordance with relevant health and safety standards and fire risk assessments.

Transitional Arrangements

Existing caravans, ramps, steps, car ports, garages fences, hedges and other combustible structures which would otherwise contravene these conditions **may remain** (subject to officers risk assessment) until there is a change of ownership, the site substantially altered, rebuilt or removed from its present position. In this event these items or any of their replacement shall fully comply with the Model Standards conditions within a period of time agreed with the Local Authority.

When considering each of these items and whether to implement Transitional Arrangements a risk assessment will be undertaken by officers in order to ascertain the potential for this combustible item to increase the risk of fire spread between units.

ROADS, GATEWAYS AND FOOTPATHS

3(i) Roads shall be designed to provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and routes within the site for such vehicles must be kept clear of obstruction at all times.

3(ii) New roads shall be constructed and laid of suitable bitumen, macadam or concrete with a suitable compacted base.

3(iii) All roads shall have adequate surface water/storm water drainage.

3(iv) New two way roads shall not be less than 3.7 meters wide, or if they are designed for and used by one way traffic, no less than 3 meters wide.

3(v) One way systems shall be clearly signposted.

3(vi) Where existing two way roads are not of 3.7meters wide, passing places shall be provided where practical.

3(vii) Vehicular access and all gateways to the site must be a minimum of 3.1 meters wide and have a minimum height clearance of 3.7 meters.

3(viii) Gateways shall be a minimum of 3.1 metres wide and have a minimum height clearance of 3.7 metres. Footpaths shall not be less than 0.9 metres wide. Roads shall have no overhead cable less than 5.8 metres above the ground. Roads and footpaths shall be suitably lit between dusk and dawn. Emergency vehicle routes within the site shall be kept clear of obstruction at all times.

HARD STANDINGS

4(i) Every caravan shall stand on a concrete hard-standing which shall extend over the whole area occupied by the caravan placed upon it, and shall project a sufficient distance outwards from its entrance or entrances to enable occupants to enter and leave safely. The hard-standings must be constructed to the current industry code of practice, taking into account local conditions.

FIRE FIGHTING APPLIANCES

5(i) As determined under The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2006, these fire safety measures only apply to single unit sites, to which Bromsgrove District has four. Where there are sites with more than one unit, the License Holder must undertake a Fire Risk Assessment of the site and comply with all of his other obligations under this order. Fire Risk Assessments are regulated by the Fire Authority.

5(ii) Fire points shall be established so that no caravan or site building is more than 30 metres from a fire point. They shall be housed in a weatherproof structure, easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked "FIRE POINT".

5(iii) Where water standpipes are provided and there is a water supply of sufficient pressure and flow to project a jet of water approximately 5 metres from the nozzle. There shall also be a reel that complies with current British/European Standard, with a hose not less than 30 metres long, having a means of connection to a water standpipe (preferably a screw thread connection) with a water supply of sufficient pressure and terminating in a small hand control nozzle. Hoses shall be housed in a box painted red and marked "HOSE REEL". Access to the fire point should not be obstructed or obscured.

5(iv) Where hydrants are provided they must conform to the current British/European Standard. Access to hydrants shall not be obstructed or obscured.

5(v) Where standpipes are not provided or the water pressure or flow is not sufficient, each fire point must be provided with water extinguishers (2 x 9 litres) which comply with the relevant British/European Standard.

5(vi) A means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire shall be provided at each fire point.

5(vii) All alarm and fire fighting equipment must be installed, tested and maintained in working order by persons who are qualified in the particular type of work being undertaken and be available for inspection by, or on behalf of, the licensing authority or the Fire and Rescue Service. A record must be kept of all tests and any remedial action.

5(viii) All equipment susceptible to damage by frost shall be suitably protected.

5(ix) A clearly written and conspicuous notice shall be provided and maintained at each fire point to indicate the action to be taken in case of fire. This notice shall include the following: -

“On discovering a fire

- i. Ensure the caravan or site building involved is evacuated,
- ii. Raise the alarm,
- iii. Call the fire brigade (the nearest telephone is sited at...),
- iv. Attack the fire using the fire fighting equipment provided, if safe to do so.”

MAINTENANCE OF COMMON AREAS INCLUDING GRASS, VEGETATION AND TREES

6(i) Grass and vegetation should be cut and removed at frequent and regular intervals. Any such cuttings, litter or waste shall be removed from the vicinity of caravans.

6(ii) Every road, footpath and pavement shall be maintained in a good condition and kept in repair and clear of rubbish.

6(iii) Every part of the site to which the public have access (other than a road, footpath or pavement) shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition.

6(iv) Trees within the site shall (subject to the necessary consents) be maintained.

SUPPLY AND STORAGE OF GAS

7(i) Gas installations, supplies and storage shall meet statutory requirements, relevant Standards and Codes of Practice.

7(ii) Exposed gas bottles or cylinders must not be within the separation zone between adjoining units and must only be contained within the pitch they are serving.

7(iii) Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders must not be positioned or secured in such a way as to impede access or removal in the event of an emergency.

ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS

8(i) Sites shall be provided with an electrical network of adequate capacity to meet all reasonable demands of the caravans and other facilities and services within it.

8(ii) Work on electrical installations and appliances shall be carried out only by competent persons who are qualified in the particular type of works being undertaken, in accordance with relevant regulations.

8(iii) Any electrical installations on the site, which are not distributors works, but are a private network subject to regulation under relevant legislation, shall be designed, installed, tested, inspected and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the relevant legislation.

WATER SUPPLY

9(i) All new water supplies shall be provided in accordance with all current legislation, regulations and relevant British or European Standards.

9(ii) Each caravan shall have its own water supply. Sufficient in all respects to meet all reasonable demands of the caravans situated on them.

9(iii) All repairs and improvements to water supplies and installations shall be carried out to conform with current legislation and British or European Standards.

9(iv) Work on water supplies and installations shall be carried out only by persons who are qualified in the particular type of work being undertaken and in accordance with relevant regulations.

DRAINAGE, SANITATION AND WASHING FACILITIES

10(i) Satisfactory provision shall be made for foul drainage and waste water drainage, either by connection to a public sewer or sewage treatment works or by discharge to a properly constructed septic tank or cesspool approved by the Local Authority.

10(ii) All drainage and sanitation provisions shall be in accordance with all current legislation, regulations and British or European Standards.

10(iii) Surface water drainage shall be provided where appropriate to avoid standing pools of water.

10(iv) Work on drains and sewers should be carried out only by persons who are qualified in the particular type of work being undertaken and in accordance with relevant regulations.

DOMESTIC REFUSE, STORAGE AND DISPOSAL

11(i) Every caravan standing shall have an adequate number of suitable non-combustible refuse bins. Where communal refuse bins are also provided these shall be of similar construction and housed within a properly constructed bin store. All refuse disposal must be in accordance with all current legislation and regulations.

VEHICLE PARKING

12(i) Suitably surfaced parking spaces shall be provided to meet the requirements of the occupants and their visitors.

RECREATIONAL SPACE

13(i) On sites where it is practical to do so suitable space equivalent to one-tenth of the total area shall be allocated for recreational purposes, but may be omitted where there are suitable alternative publicly provided recreational facilities, which are readily accessible.

NOTICES

14(i) A suitable sign shall be prominently displayed at the site entrance indicating the name of the site.

15(ii) A copy of the site licence with its conditions shall be displayed prominently on the site with details of where full details can be viewed.

15(iii) A current plan of the site with roads and pitches marked on it shall be prominently displayed at the entrances to it.

15(iv) The following information shall be displayed in a prominent position on the site and updated regularly:-

(a) The notice shall also give the name and location/telephone number of the site licence holder, site owner(s)

- (b) The up to date name and telephone number of the site licence holders accredited representative for contact in the event of an emergency.
- (c) A copy of the first page of the most recent electrical installation certificate
- (d) A copy of the site owners certificate of public liability insurance
- (e) The location of the nearest public telephone
- (f) Notices about flood risk, warning notices shall be displayed giving advice about the operation of the flood warning system.

15(v) All notices shall be suitably protected from the weather and displayed where possible out of the direct rays of the sun, preferably in areas lit by artificial lighting.

FLOODING

16(i) The license holder must establish whether the site is at risk from flooding by referring to the Environment Agencies Flood Map.

16(ii) Where there is a risk from flooding the license holder must consult the Environment Agency for advice on likelihood of flooding, depths and velocities that might be expected, the availability of a warning service and to take appropriate measures.

MISCELLANEOUS

17(i) All caravans stationed on the site shall be maintained in good repair and in a sound and watertight condition to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority.

17(ii) The Site Operator shall ensure, through the site rules that no caravan stationed on the said land shall be used for sleeping accommodation by a greater number of persons at any one time, than the number, which can reasonably be regarded as having been designed to accommodate.

17(iii) Each caravan stationed on the said land must be numbered in a legible and conspicuous manner.