



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 4TH JUNE, 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

AGENDA

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

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30th April 2008 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 29th April 2008 (Pages 7 - 12)
5. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 20th May 2008 (to follow)
6. To receive the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 29th May 2008 (to follow)
7. Car Park Excess Charge Rate (Pages 13 - 16)
8. Artrix Operating Trust - Service Level Agreement (Pages 17 - 36)
9. Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site (Pages 37 - 58)
10. Capital Programme Increase - Play Area Briar Close (Pages 59 - 62)
11. Improvement Plan Exception Report (March 2008) (Pages 63 - 76)
12. Sub National Review of Economic Development and Regeneration (Pages

77 - 158)

13. Customer Panel 2 Survey Results (Pages 159 - 220)
14. 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

19th May 2008

Agenda Item 3

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 30TH APRIL 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillors Mrs. C. M. McDonald and P. M. McDonald

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mr. H. Bennett, Mr. M.
Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin, Mr. D. Hammond, Ms. J. Pickering,
Ms. J. Pitman, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. A. Haslam and Ms. D. Parker-Jones

171/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A.
Griffiths and Councillor R. D. Smith.

172/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

173/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 2nd April 2008 were
submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved and adopted as a correct record.

174/07 SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD

The minutes of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 1st April 2008 were
submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

175/07 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

The minutes of the Performance Management Board held on 22nd April 2008
were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting be noted and the
recommendation approved.

176/07 **MOTION - CAR PARK FINES**

The Cabinet received the following motion submitted by Councillor Mrs. C. M. McDonald:

"Residents who overstay on Bromsgrove District Council's car parks have the opportunity of a reduced fine of ten pound if it is paid within one working day. Then the thirty and sixty pound fine then kicks in."

Councillor Mrs. McDonald stated that she felt the Council was hostile and unfriendly towards motorists in its approach with parking fines and that the fines currently in place were extortionate. She added that the system made motorists into criminals and that there might be good reason why motorists were late in returning to their vehicles, meaning they should be given the opportunity of putting things right before the £30 and £60 fines kicked in.

Councillor Mrs. Sherrey, as relevant Portfolio Holder, stated that, in practice, there was often a short period of grace for motorists as it took time for the wardens to monitor vehicles and that a reduced fines system had previously been in place in 2006, which motorists had apparently taken advantage of.

RESOLVED that officers prepare a report on the proposal contained within the motion for consideration at the next meeting of the Cabinet.

177/07 **CELEBRATORY AND SPONSORSHIP GROUP**

Consideration was given to a report which updated the Cabinet on the work and background of the Celebratory Sponsorship Group.

Councillor Webb presented the report and advised that a great deal of work had been undertaken by the Group to date, with progress having been made towards achieving the planned £80,000 of sponsorship (which would also consist of gifts in kind, for example, lights for the Christmas illuminations). The legal and other implications of the draft policy on Sponsorship and Advertising on Roundabouts had still to be investigated and would be detailed in a final report to the next meeting of the Cabinet. It was noted that sponsorship would be beneficial to both local businesses and residents, with Ward Members to be consulted on proposed signage/works to ensure these were appropriate to the location in question.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report and progress towards development of a sponsorship policy be noted; and
- (b) that officers be tasked to further scope the legal and other implications and produce a final report for submission to the next meeting of the Cabinet.

178/07 **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2008/11**

The Cabinet considered the Council's revised Corporate Procurement Strategy 2008/11. Mr. Alex Haslam, the Council's Procurement Advisor, was present and provided Members with a background to the Strategy.

The Strategy defined the role of procurement in the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives and set out the key policies and activities relating to procurement. The Council was committed to procure best value for money supplies, services and construction works and would continually review and develop the Strategy to assist in meeting this objective. Mr. Haslam advised that the first tranche of procurement training for suppliers had taken place at the Council the previous week, which had been well attended and proved to be very successful.

RESOLVED that the Corporate Procurement Strategy 2008/11 at Appendix 1 to the report be approved.

179/07 **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL LABOUR MARKET ASSESSMENT**

Consideration was given to the Local Labour Market (Area) Assessment and Analysis for the Council, which had been carried out by the Centre for Local Policy Studies at Edge Hill University.

The labour market assessment report provided an analysis of labour market performance in Bromsgrove and was a required element within Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. The study would also support progress against the Council's wider Inclusive Equalities Scheme and equality and diversity objectives and provided valuable information which could be used to influence policy development and service delivery. It was important for the Council to work within the context of this when delivering services to the communities that it served and in its wider role as policy developer and preferred employer.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the draft Local Labour Market Assessment at Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (b) that this document be submitted to the Local Strategic Partnership as an evidential tool; and
- (c) that use of this document as baseline material that would influence service delivery and service specific outcomes moving forward be endorsed.

180/07 **NEIGHBOURHOOD AREA COMMITTEE EVALUATION**

The Cabinet considered a report of Patrick Clark Consulting which provided an evaluation of the two neighbourhood area committee (NACs) pilots and proposed a way forward for year 2.

The Leader of the Council advised that there was now a need to formalise the operating procedures for the NACs, including setting core objectives and terms of reference for all NAC pilots. A further pilot was proposed for Hagley and Rural area, the specific geographics of which had yet to be determined and would be subject to consultation with the appropriate bodies. A stakeholder event to consider the longer term approach to NACs, was supported and the Leader stressed the importance of consulting with residents to ascertain local priorities and highlighted issues surrounding the future resourcing of the NACs, particularly senior officer and administrative support.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive to prepare a set of core objectives and terms of reference for all Neighbourhood Area Committee (NAC) pilots, the emphasis of which should be:
 - (i) to enable the NACs to operate tactically between the strategic role of the Bromsgrove Partnership and individual partner agencies but not duplicate the efforts of either, nor the operational and local role of PACT and other community fora; and
 - (ii) to ensure the primacy of elected members of all tiers of local government;
- (b) that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive to undertake an appropriate consultation exercise (to include consultation with Hagley Parish Council, the County Association of Local Councils and the County Council) with a view to rolling out a further pilot NAC for Hagley and Rural area;
- (c) that following such a consultation exercise, authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader, to establish a further pilot NAC in Hagley if it is considered appropriate to do so;
- (d) that funding for NACs be agreed as follows:
 - (i) £15,000 for the Alvechurch NAC for the year 2008-9;
 - (ii) £15,000 for the Rubery NAC for the year 2008-9; and
 - (iii) £4,000 for the Hagley NAC for the year 2008-9;and that authority be delegated to the Assistant Chief Executive to make payments from those funds on receipt of a request from the relevant NAC;
- (e) that a stakeholder event be held in order to consider the approach to NACs beyond 2008-9;
- (f) that the Assistant Chief Executive assists all NACs to develop a simple, cost effective form of consulting residents on priorities in order to shape Area Plans; and
- (g) that each NAC receives senior level officer support and administrative support which will be resourced from the funding identified in recommendation (d) above, subject to a further review by the Corporate Management Team of the level of senior officer and administrative support required as NACs are further expanded across the District.

181/07 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (FEBRUARY 2008)**

Consideration was given to the updated Improvement Plan Exception Report for February 2008, together with the corrective action being taken.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report and the corrective action being taken be noted; and
- (b) that it be noted that of the 138 actions highlighted within the Plan for February 2008, 88.4% of the Plan was on target (green), 7.3% was one month behind (amber) and 1.4% was over a month behind (red). 2.9% of actions had been rescheduled or suspended with approval.

The meeting closed at 6.45 p.m.

Chairman

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Agenda Item 4

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD

TUESDAY, 29TH APRIL 2008 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), J. T. Duddy (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker, B. Lewis F.CMI (during Minute Nos. 107/07 to 113/07), D. L. Pardoe and C. B. Taylor

Observers: Councillor Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP and Councillor P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. M. Hanwell, Mrs. S. Sellers and Ms. D. McCarthy

107/07 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor R. J. Deeming.

108/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were made.

109/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 1st April 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting be approved as a correct record.

110/07 SCRUTINY PROPOSALS

(As Mr. Bateman, a representative from the Older People's Forum, was present specifically to hear the outcome of agenda item number 8, Scrutiny Proposals, it was agreed that this would be considered as the first main item.)

Members of the Scrutiny Steering Board discussed two scrutiny requests. The first scrutiny request had been submitted by Mr. Bateman which related to the removal of the concessionary parking passes for the over 60's.

The Board welcomed public interest in scrutiny, however, there was some concern as to whether or not sufficient reliable data was available to carry out an in-depth scrutiny at the present time. It was, therefore, suggested by the Vice-Chairman that as the decision to remove concessionary parking passes for the over 60's had only been implemented in March 2008, the Board could wait until there was 6 months worth of data and request that an officer report be submitted to the Board for further consideration when the necessary

evidence was available to scrutinise. There was also a concern that this did not link to the Council's priorities.

However, an alternative view was that a Task Group needed to be established straight away and this was discussed at length. Members were also reminded at this point that the topic "Older People" was already on the work programme which might include car parking as part of its scrutiny investigation. It was also stated that an alternative option was for the Board itself to scrutinise the subject matter rather than a Task Group carrying out an in-depth scrutiny.

The second scrutiny request was from the Chairman of the Board, which had originally been a motion for the Council Meeting on 23rd April 2008 but had been referred to the Board by the Monitoring Officer in accordance with the Council's Constitution. The second scrutiny request related to establishing a Senior Citizens' Task Group to review the quality of service to older people given by Bromsgrove District Council. It was pointed out that this topic was virtually identical to the subject "Older People" which was already on the work programme. Councillor Mrs. Bunker stated that Focus Groups were to be established, one rural and one urban, to find out what older people themselves believed should be scrutinised.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that a Car Parking Task Group be established to look at the removal of the concessionary parking passes for the over 60's and specifically the justifications for the decision, as stated in Mr. Bateman's scrutiny request; and
- (b) that the second scrutiny request, relating to establishing a Senior Citizens Task Group, be deferred until the next meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board.

111/07 **CABINET RESPONSE TO THE REFUSE AND RECYCLING SCRUTINY REPORT**

Consideration was given to the Cabinet's Response to the Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Report which included extra suggestions made by the Cabinet regarding additional work in relation to value for money of the service, together with more general suggestions relating to future scrutiny reports.

It was noted that the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Recycling, Councillor Mrs. Sherrey, was not in attendance to present the response and in particular, answer questions to clarify what the Cabinet was suggesting in relation to future scrutiny reports.

Members of the Scrutiny Steering Board were satisfied with the Cabinet's Response to the Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Report and understood the Cabinet's proposal for the Scrutiny Steering Board to request the Task Group to undertake further work to include a value for money analysis of the service. However, there was a concern by the Board that Member Training on Value for Money was required before this particular scrutiny investigation took place to ensure a thorough scrutiny. It was stated that, following the suggestion at a previous Scrutiny Steering Board Meeting for Value for Money training to be

provided, it had since been agreed by the Modern Councillor Steering Group that it would be incorporated within the Member Training Programme to be held during the first quarter of 2008/09.

There was also a concern over the Refuse and Recycling Task Group's terms of reference for the additional work and it was suggested by officers that detailed terms of reference with specific outcomes should be compiled to prevent any confusion on what was expected. It was further suggested that this could be compiled by the Task Group itself for the Board to consider and agree at a later date.

The final point discussed in relation to the additional scrutiny work for the Refuse and Recycling Task Group was that sufficient time would need to be given to enable the scrutiny work to be completed.

In relation to the general recommendations, the Board believed that ensuring scrutiny recommendations were prioritised as being low, medium or high in future scrutiny reports to indicate to officers the order in which any approved recommendations should be implemented was a good suggestion. However, there was some confusion in relation to the final two suggestions in the report which the Board felt clarification from the relevant Portfolio Holder would have been helpful.

There was a lengthy discussion in relation to the final suggestion which asked the Board to consider opportunity costs when agreeing recommendations. The majority of the Board believed that all recommendations would have an opportunity cost and although it was understood that officer time would be required to implement approved recommendations, it was felt that the financial implications stated in Scrutiny Report referred to direct costs which affected the budget.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the response from the Cabinet relating to the Refuse and Recycling Scrutiny Report be noted;
- (b) that the Refuse and Recycling Task Group be given approximately 10 weeks to complete its work from the date of its first meeting;
- (c) that suggestions on the way forward for this Task Group, including the preparation of specific terms of reference and the need for Value for Money training, be discussed and agreed at the next meeting of the Board;
- (d) that, in future, the scrutiny recommendations contained within scrutiny reports be prioritised as being low, medium or high priority so to indicate to the Cabinet and officers the order in which the recommendations (if approved) would need to be implemented;
- (e) that the third suggestion (listed as 18 in the Cabinet Response) relating to (i) making clear which scrutiny recommendations involved officer actions which were already being undertaken and the Task Group would like to see continued; and (ii) issues which were considered by the Task Group but which did not form part of the final recommendations be made clear in a separate section of the report, should not be implemented; and

- (f) that the fourth suggestion (listed as 19 in the Cabinet Response) relating to taking account of opportunity costs (e.g. officer time) of certain recommendations within future scrutiny reports should not be implemented due to the reasons discussed by the Board.

112/07 **MOBILE HOME LICENSING**

At the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board, Members had requested a report on why a decision on Mobile Home Licensing (which had been included on the Forward Plan) had been delayed. The Board had also felt it was necessary to invite the relevant Portfolio Holder and therefore, Councillor Whittaker was present for this item.

Consideration was given to the report which outlined the background and the reasons for the delay. It was explained that the delay was due to: (a) recruitment difficulties within the department which meant the necessary site inspections could not be carried out; and (b) the revised Model Standard Conditions for Mobile Homes which had only been issued in April 2008.

The Board was informed that it was anticipated that all mobile home sites would be inspected by the summer 2008 and the revised model standards were in the process of being analysed. Questions, particularly in relation to recruitment issues, were answered by both Councillor Whittaker and Mr. Street, (Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects).

The Board raised a particular concern as to whether residents would be made homeless if a landlord, who wished to have residents removed from a site, decided not to conform to the standard conditions and instead face enforcement. It was believed that it was likely there would be an appeal process for residents but Mr. Street stated he would investigate what the consequences would be and inform the Board at a later date. There was also a discussion on planning permission, fees and contractual arrangements.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the report be noted; and
(b) that the Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects inform the Members of the Board what the consequences would be if enforcement action was taken against a landlord who did not conform to the standard conditions because it was their wish to have residents removed from a site.

113/07 **ICT SPATIAL PROJECT**

As agreed at the previous meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board, a presentation on the Spatial Project was given by Ms. Poole (Head of E-Government and Customer Services) and Mr. Hanwell (Spatial Project Manager) and was introduced by the relevant Portfolio Holder, Councillor Booth.

An information pack which had been made available to Members was a referred to during the presentation.

There was a lengthy discussion on this item and several questions were asked during and after the presentation. Questions posed related to: the decision taken to change suppliers (due to the poor performance of the original suppliers); the monitoring of the project by Members (specifically the Performance Management Board); the total cost of the project; and the savings to be made. It was felt by Members of the Board that the presentation had not covered Value for Money as requested.

Although it was understood that the cost for Phase 2 (FM2) of the Spatial Project was already included within the Capital Programme, due to the significant amount, it was questioned whether the decision to approve the second phase should be considered by the full Council.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

RECOMMENDED that the decision to approve Phase 2 (FM2) of the Spatial Project costing approximately £2M be taken by the full Council rather than the Cabinet.

114/07 **NEW SCRUTINY TASK GROUP**

Consideration was given to the membership and terms of reference of the combined Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group.

It was explained within the report that from the nine Members who had expressed an interest to serve on the newly amalgamated Task Group, three Members had indicated they would be equally happy to withdraw their membership form to allow others to remain on the Task Group.

A discussion ensued relating to the Task Group membership, particularly in relation to one Member, Councillor S. Shannon. There was a concern raised that this particular Member did not view the scrutiny process in a positive light and therefore it was questioned by the appointed Task Group Chairman whether or not he should serve on the Scrutiny Task Group. The Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board disagreed with this view and informed the Board that no other Labour Group Members would attend any meetings of this Task Group.

The scrutiny exercise scoping checklist which included the terms of reference was also discussed. It was confirmed that the witnesses suggested on the scoping checklist to give evidence was not an exhaustive list and the Task Group could add to it during the scrutiny exercise.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group comprise of the following seven Members: Councillors K. Taylor (Chairman), Mrs. M. Bunker, Mrs. H. Jones, Mrs. C. McDonald, P. McDonald, Mrs. C. J. Spencer and C. J. Tidmarsh (with the understanding that Councillors Mrs. C. McDonald and P. McDonald would not attend any meetings of the Task Group);

- (b) that the Scrutiny Exercise Scoping Checklist which includes the terms of reference be agreed; and
- (c) that the Task Group be given 4 months to complete its scrutiny investigation.

115/07 **JOINT COUNTYWIDE SCRUTINY ON FLOODING**

A verbal update on the progress of the Joint Countywide Scrutiny on Flooding was given by the Chairman. Members were informed that meetings had taken place on 7th and 28th April 2008 and at the last meeting representatives from the County Landowners Association and National Farmers' Union (NFU) had been in attendance.

RESOLVED that the verbal update from the Chairman of the Scrutiny Steering Board be noted.

116/07 **RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Board considered the recommendation tracker report which listed all Cabinet approved Scrutiny recommendations and the actions taken to implement them.

RESOLVED that the recommendation tracker be noted.

117/07 **CABINET'S FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Cabinet's Forward Plan which contained the key decisions scheduled to be made over the next few months.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet's Forward Plan be noted.

118/07 **WORK PROGRAMME**

Members considered the work programme for the Scrutiny Steering Board which included details of a recent scrutiny review meeting.

There was a discussion on whether or not further scrutiny relating to the ICT Spatial Project was required.

RESOLVED

- (a) that no further scrutiny be undertaken in relation to the ICT Spatial Project and therefore be removed from the work programme; and
- (b) that the work programme be noted and updated, as appropriate, to reflect decisions made at this meeting, including (a) above.

The meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Chairman

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4 JUNE 2008

CAR PARK EXCESS CHARGE RATE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr June Griffiths
Responsible Head of Service	Mike Bell
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The original notice of motion specified that residents who overstay on Bromsgrove District Council's car parks have the opportunity of a reduced fine of ten pounds if it is paid within one working day. Then the thirty and sixty pound fine kicks in.
- 1.2 This report looks at the likely costs and effects of introducing the scheme.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That consideration of the notice of motion is incorporated into the debate about the Civil Parking Enforcement and other parking reports being presented to Cabinet in July

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council had for some years applied an excess charge rate of £30 which was reduced to £10 if the customer paid within seven days. On 1st May 2006 this amount was increased to £60 reduced to £30 if paid within 14 days. From 1st April 2008 the excess charge was further increased to £70 reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days.
- 3.2 The reason that officers introduced the higher rate was because the £10 rate was no longer a deterrent effect. A number of drivers had commented that they did not consider the £10 to put them off. There were cases of drivers parking all day in a short stay car park without payment because they were confident that if they were caught that £10 was a reasonable amount to pay.
- 3.3 The number of excess charges issued since the higher rate of excess charge has currently fallen to approximately 50% of the rate issued in 2004 / 2005. Therefore the increased charge has had the necessary deterrent effect and increased compliance on the car parks. A reintroduction of the £10 rate will almost certainly increase the number of fines issued and further increase the level of confrontation between Council staff and customers.

- 3.4 The Council currently deals with perceptions of overzealousness by applying periods of observation. Officers will generally observe a vehicle with no ticket for 5 minutes, whilst they will normally observe an expired ticket for at least an additional 10 minutes following the expiry of the ticket. Therefore a ticket which runs out at 13:40 would not receive an excess charge notice until at least 13:50. Officers believe that this common sense approach should address most of the common problems felt by drivers. When the excess charge rate was £10, no observation period was used for expired tickets.
- 3.5 The Council does not currently have dedicated software to deal with the issuing of parking fines and officers would struggle to cope with the increase in the number of fines issued.
- 3.6 Stationery, signage, and the parking Order would all require changing prior to the adoption of the new rate.
- 3.7 Should the Council decide to adopt Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE), the £10 rate would have to be withdrawn as it is not covered by the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 3.8 Given the amount of work involved in going back to the £10 fine including the following:
- It would have to be withdrawn upon the adoption of CPE,
 - Officers would struggle to cope with the increased number of fines.
 - The number of fines issued would almost certainly increase dramatically
 - There would be a decrease in revenue.
 - There would be a one-off cost of introducing the scheme,

Officers believe that it would be sensible to consider these issues as part of the Civil Parking Enforcement and other parking reports due to be presented to Cabinet in July.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The likely costs of the introduction of the scheme are detailed below.

Reordering stationery:	-£	1,000
Reordering signage:	-£	3,000
Reordering machine inserts	-£	500
Changing the Order:	-£	3,000
Loss of pay and display revenue:	-£	39,000
Loss of excess charge revenue:	-£	25,000
Estimated total cost of scheme:	-£	71,500

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The making and amendment of car parks orders is regulated the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 The item does not link to any of the Council's objectives or priorities..

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 No issues.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The number of drivers risking a parking fine will increase and therefore the number who receive a fine will also increase. This will lead to an increased number of drivers feeling aggrieved and unhappy with the Council.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Implications Increased confrontation between Council officers and customers would lead to increased turnover of staff.
Governance/Performance Management None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 The measure would lead to an increase in the number of fines and therefore an increase in the level of confrontation and therefore an increase in the possibility of violence taking place.
Policy None.
Environmental

None.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	No
Executive Director - Services	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	No
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	No
Head of Organisational Development & HR	No
Corporate Procurement Team	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards.

14. APPENDICES

None.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

CONTACT OFFICER

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4 JUNE 2008

ARTRIX OPERATING TRUST - SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA)

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Head of Street Scene and Community

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report highlights the contents of the proposed SLA between Bromsgrove District Council and the Artrix Operating Trust for the provision of services at the arts centre.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet are recommended to:
- 2.1.1 Agree to the contents of the proposed SLA, the outturn measures and monitoring arrangements included within the document.
 - 2.1.2 Request Officer with the Street Scene & Community Services department to implement the agreement and action accordingly.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will aware that the Council annually funds the Artrix Art Centre for the provision of community service up to £120,000 per annum.
- 3.2 The Artrix centre was established through a partnership between The Council and North East Worcestershire College to provide a combined arts and performing arts facility.
- 3.3 Although the Artrix opened in 2005 and the funding arrangement had been agreed with the Council's Cabinet, no formal Service Level Agreement or funding arrangements have been entered into. This has created a situation where the delivery of community programmes at the centre have been developed and managed directly by the Artrix Operational Trust Staff and have not been shaped based on the Council's Values, Vision, Objectives or Priorities.
- 3.4 The proposed SLA is designed to address the above implications, imbed best practice operating systems/procedures into the on site delivery and to establish a performance frame work where by the expected out comes of our funding can be reviewed and revised as and when required.

- 3.5 Further more the proposal will ensure that the Council can demonstrate VFM and effective use of resources in terms of its on going financial support.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial implications contained with in this report over and above those commitments made by the Executive Cabinet on the 22nd June 2005.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications contained with in this report over and above those commitments made by the Executive Cabinet on the 22nd June 2005.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 This report formalises the Council relationship with the Artrix's Operating Trust and will drive improvements in it's performance to contribute to the Council Objectives of C02, Improvement & C03, Sense of Community & Well Being, by enhancing the delivery of service on site, ensuring service provision is based on robust user/non user feedback, and implementing a performance management framework to measure success against BDC's agreed outcomes.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

- *Failure to secure agreement for proposed SLA with the Artrix Operating Trust*
- *Failure of the Trust to meet the objectives of BDC as established in the SLA.*

- 7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- *Failure to secure agreement for proposed SLA with the Artrix Operating Trust:*

Officers have drawn up the proposal in conjunction with colleagues at the Artrix to ensure that there is an agreement in place, and for both sides to buy into the principles of the agreement.

BDC Officers will if required attend Artrix Operating Trust board meeting to cover the contents of the agreement, explain where required the reason why these issues must be resolved and provide information on the Objectives & Priorities of the Council and how this partnership can deliver the agenda.

- *Failure of the Trust to meet the objectives of BDC as established in the SLA.*

These issues are built into the SLA and management systems proposed to control any under performance. We will also have the ability to renegotiate the SLA at set periods and the ongoing monitoring aspects will be included in the services risk register.

- 7.3 Currently the risk identified in the first & second bullet point in 7.1 is not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the Street Scene and Community Services risk register when it is produced for 2008/09.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 There are no direct customer implications for BDC however the proposed SLA will drive the improvements as covered in section 6 of this report.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 N/A.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The proposed SLA will impact on the Council VFM agenda as highlighted with in the report and the attached SLA. Main areas of improvement are:

- Implementation of a formal funding arrangement and the ability to reclaim surplus funding at the end of each financial year.
- Establishment of out comes measure for funding provision and performance management system.
- Creation of an agreed repairs and maintenance fund to protect future delivery on site and the long term viability of the facility.
- Explicit review dates with regard to future requirements and funding decisions in order to meet the requirements of BDC's MTFP.
- Ability in future years to benchmark services through performance data collated with in the SLA.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

None
Environmental None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Proposed Artrix's SLA

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Cabinet Papers – 29th Jan 2003, 27th October 2004 & 22nd June 2005
- Bromsgrove Arts Centre trust Report & Financial Statement 31st March 2007

CONTACT OFFICERS

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Service Level Agreement for the Artrix by Bromsgrove District Council

1. Context

The Artrix was opened to the community in April 2005. Bromsgrove District Council has provided annual funding of up to £120,000 to the Artrix in the absence of any formal funding agreement or service level agreement.

The inception of the Artrix arts centre was originally a respond to the arts community of Bromsgrove district wish to have a dedicated professional arts venue.

Bromsgrove District Council's arts strategy (2004 – 2009) identifies as a main strategic aim 'to develop new facilities for the arts and increase the use of facilities for the arts by the community'.

The Artrix was established through a partnership between Bromsgrove District Council and North East Worcestershire College (NEW College) to provide a combined arts centre for the community and a performing arts education facility. The building of the Artrix was funded by Bromsgrove District Council and the land it was built upon was provided by NEW College.

The Artrix is managed by an Operating Trust, responsible for the efficient and effective management of the arts centre and comprises of 5 Bromsgrove District Council Councillor representatives, 5 NEW College representatives and 5 representatives from the community. A Holding Trust is responsible for retaining the building property and comprises of representatives from Bromsgrove District Council, NEW College and the community.

During the period from the Artrix opening in April 2005 to the present time there has been no formal funding agreement or service level agreement between Bromsgrove District Council and the Operating Trust to direct formally the work of the Artrix and to provide a clear purpose to the organisation by identifying agreed targets and establishing agreed measurable outcomes.

Bromsgrove District Council's vision is 'Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services'.

The council's values are – Leadership, Partnerships, Customer First and Equality.

The council has four objectives – Regeneration, Improvement, Sense of Community and Well Being and Environment.

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to delivering excellent services to all its customers and needs to ensure that the relationship between the council and the Artrix is formulated to contribute to the council's vision and values, delivers an excellent service to its customers, represents value for money to its customers and contributes to the council's goal of attaining excellent corporate performance assessment status.

Bromsgrove District Council now expects a formal agreement to be established with the Artrix regarding the funding arrangement and the services provided to their customers and on behalf of the local authority.

Therefore the service level agreement has been established to manage the funding arrangement, sets out the expectations and defines the relationship between Bromsgrove District Council and the Artrix.

2. The Service Level Agreement Overview

This agreement represents a Service Level Agreement (SLA) between Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and the Artrix for the provision of services meeting the requirements of the annual cash flow subsidy arrangement.

This SLA remains valid from 1.4.08 – 31.3.2011, or until superseded by a revised SLA mutually agreed between BDC and the Artrix.

Following the completion of this SLA it is the intention of Bromsgrove District Council to enter into two further SLA's with the Artrix.

Each SLA will be for a period of two years and will subsequently commence in April 2011 and 2013.

The SLA for April 2013 to March 2015 will include a two year notice period of the change of the annual cash flow subsidy arrangement.

This SLA outlines the minimum service standards that the Artrix will implement specifically to meet the expectations of BDC and does not supersede current practices, processes and procedures that the Artrix has developed and adopted.

3. Goals and Objectives

The purpose of this SLA is to ensure that the proper commitment, understanding and processes are in place to provide the delivery of a consistent, effective and efficient service to the 'residents of Bromsgrove district, the wider community and BDC' (the customer) by the Artrix.

The goal of this SLA is to obtain mutual agreement between BDC and the Artrix for service provision to the customer.

The objectives of this SLA are to –

- Provide clear reference to service ownership, accountability, roles and responsibilities.

- Present clear, concise and measurable description of service provision to the customer.
- Match perceptions of expected service provision with actual service support and delivery.
- Operate a framework of consultation aimed at delivering continuous service improvements to the customer.

4. Stakeholders

The following service provider and funding organisation will be used as the basis of the agreement and represent the primary stakeholders associated with this SLA:-

Service Provider: The Artrix

Funding Organisation: Bromsgrove District Council

The following stakeholders are responsible for the deployment, monitoring and ongoing support of this SLA:-

Artrix Director 01527 572739

Arts Development and Special Events Officer 01527 881381

5. Service Environment

The following provides detail on the service environment supported by the SLA:-

- the Artrix will open to the community across the calendar year (Monday – Saturday, 10am - 10pm and Sunday, 10am – 4pm), providing an exciting and varied quality programme that is responsive to customer taste, is cultural diverse and develops new audiences through innovative or / and challenging work.
- the Artrix will proactively support, work with and seek the views of the local arts forum and its membership for Bromsgrove district – Bromsgrove Arts Alive!
- the Artrix will proactively develop a strategic programme of community and education outreach work and sustainable partnership arrangements across the district, county and region.
- the Artrix will engender an environment that places the customer at the heart of the organisations ethos and seeks to provide access and opportunity to everyone.
- the Artrix will ensure that Bromsgrove District Council is promoted at all times as the main sponsor of the Artrix organisation.
- the Artrix will deliver a marketing strategy that will raise the profile of the organisation in the district, county and region.
- the Artrix will deliver a strategy that will raise the public satisfaction of the organisation.

- the Artrix will seek to establish the eligibility of the organisation gaining regularly funded organisational status from Arts Council England West Midlands in 2011.
- the Artrix will seek to maintain the current revenue funding agreement with Worcestershire County Council and maximise all opportunities to access external revenue funding sources.
- the Artrix will manage efficiently and effectively the ongoing maintenance of the facility and the replacement of equipment and procurement of new equipment and adhere to statutory health and safety law and best practice governing the facility and its use by the public.

6. Periodic Review

This SLA is valid from the effective date of the 1.4.2008 and is valid until 31.3.2011.

This SLA should be formally reviewed by the primary stakeholders at a minimum twice per fiscal year, in the absence of either review the SLA will remain in effect.

The Arts Development and Special Events Officer and the Artrix Director are responsible for facilitating regular reviews of this SLA (6 per year).

Contents of this document may be amended or / and altered as required providing mutual agreement is obtained from the primary stakeholders and communicated to all effected parties.

The primary stakeholders are required to communicate any significant changes pertaining to the proceeding annual delivery of the SLA by the 31st January of each year.

The Arts Development and Special Events Officer and the Artrix Director will incorporate all subsequent revisions of the SLA and will make any revised SLA available to the primary stakeholders.

7. Service Agreement

The following detailed minimum service standards are the responsibility of the Artrix in the ongoing delivery of this SLA.

a) Service Scope

The following services are covered by this agreement:-

- to maximise community participation
- to deliver a locally tailored, cultural diverse and innovative or /and challenging directly promoted programme

- to maximise engagement with and usage by the Bromsgrove Arts Alive! Membership and forum
- to deliver a strategic community and education outreach programme
- to develop sustainable strategic partnerships
- to deliver a strategy that places the customer's needs at the heart of the organisations ethos
- to deliver equal access and opportunity to everyone
- to maximise the promotion of Bromsgrove District Council as the main sponsor of the Artrix organisation
- to deliver a marketing strategy that will raise the profile of the Artrix
- to deliver a strategy to raise the public satisfaction of the organisation
- to seek to gain regularly funded organisational status from Arts Council England West Midlands in 2011
- to seek to maintain the revenue funding from Worcestershire County Council and maximise external funding opportunities
- to manage efficiently and effectively the ongoing maintenance of the facility and the replacement of equipment and procurement of new equipment and adhere to statutory health and safety law and best practice governing the facility and its use by the public

b) Funding Organisation Requirements

Bromsgrove District Council as the funding organisation responsibilities to support this SLA include:-

- payment of the annual cash flow subsidy arrangement as 4 advance instalments per fiscal year. BDC reserves the right to request of the Artrix quarterly summary financial statements
- that BDC will request from the Artrix any under spend of the annual cash flow subsidy arrangement from the previous financial year 28 days from the production of the previous financial year's statement of accounts, accepting the Artrix will operate as excellent business practice an annual sinking fund (repairs and maintenance) of up to £12,000 per annum and a 3 year rolling budgeted capital facility maintenance and equipment replacement and procurement programme

- two formal reviews of the agreement by the primary stakeholders per fiscal year, the first review meeting to take place in July each year and focus on a review of the Annual Report and the second review meeting to take place in October each year and to include a 6 month (April – September) retrospective report to be produced by the Artrix
- six target lead meetings of the agreement per year between the Arts Development and Special Events Officer and the Artrix Director
- reasonable availability to council officers when resolving a related incident or request
- communication of any significant changes to the council vision or / and objectives

c) Artrix Requirements

Artrix as the funded organisation responsibilities to support this SLA include:-

- provision of service scope as described in 7.a
- two formal reviews of the agreement by the primary stakeholders per fiscal year, the first review meeting to take place in July each year and to focus on a review of the Annual Report and the second review meeting to take place in October each year and to include a 6 month (April – September) retrospective written report
- six target lead meetings of the agreement per year between the Artrix Director and the Arts Development and Special Events Officer
- production per fiscal year of an Annual Report and Statement of Accounts by the 15th July
- the Artrix will make available to BDC any under spend of the annual cash flow subsidy arrangement from the previous financial year 28 days from the production of the previous financial year's statement of accounts, accepting the Artrix will operate as excellent business practice an annual sinking fund (repairs and maintenance) of up to £12,000 per annum and a 3 year rolling budgeted capital facility maintenance and equipment replacement and procurement programme
- reasonable availability to Artrix personnel when resolving a related incident or request
- communication of any significant changes to the Artrix vision or / and objectives

d) Artrix Service Assumptions

The following assumptions are made regarding the Artrix organisation to deliver this SLA:-

- the organisational staff structure, roles and capacity will remain mainly unchanged
- that current practices, processes and procedures that the Artrix operates outside of this agreement do not adversely impact on the delivery of this SLA
- that the organisation will only make major decisions concerning the operation of the facility outside of the SLA that reflect the vision and values of BDC
- the organisation would seek formal permission from BDC to undertake any activity that could potentially impact adversely on the reputation of BDC

8. Service Management

The effective delivery of the service scope is a result of maintaining consistent levels of measuring identified targets, delivering identified targets, the monitoring and reporting of the agreement.

a) Service Scope Targets

The following identifies measurable targets that are specific to the service scope.

Target 1: To maximise community participation

Requirements:

- to increase audience attendance by 2% each year
- to open to the public a minimum of 300 days per year (not including NEW College education timetabled provision)

Measures:

- to provide an annual breakdown by art form of the total community usage, including the community and education outreach work
- to record annually the actual number of days the Artrix is open to the public (not including NEW College education timetabled provision)

The target, requirements and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 2: To deliver a locally tailored, cultural diverse and innovative or / and challenging programme

Requirements:

- to provide a quality and inclusive programme including cinema, comedy, dance, exhibitions, music, theatre and workshops each year

- to development new audiences through innovative or / and challenging programming, with an emphasis on young people and ‘non user groups’ and through evidence based research
- to ensure that the Artrix artistic policy enables the delivery of a locally tailored, cultural diverse and innovative or / and challenging programme
- to engender a programme that contributes to the economic vitality and sustainability of the local economy

Measures:

- to provide an annual percentage breakdown by art form of the entire programme delivered, including the community and education outreach work
- to facilitate an annual user questionnaire to review the content, quality and innovation of the programme
- to facilitate an annual non user questionnaire to inform future programming and marketing opportunities
- to facilitate an annual focus group with young people to inform future programming and marketing opportunities
- to produce annually as a percentage the usable space programmed
- to produce annually by art form as a percentage the actual numbers attending (up take) compared against the maximum number of places available of all workshops delivered by the Artrix organisation

The target, requirements and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 3: To maximise engagement with and usage by Bromsgrove Arts Alive! Arts Forum and membership

Requirements:

- to maintain membership of Bromsgrove Arts Alive! Arts forum and attend quarterly meetings
- to formally seek the views and recommendations of the arts forum and it’s membership as the major user group of the Artrix
- to make available to the arts forum membership 30 days per year (not including NEW College education timetabled provision)
- to make available free the Artrix for the arts forum annual showcase or a similar annual event and 4 quarterly meetings per annum

Measures:

- to record annually the actual number of days the Artrix is made available to the arts forum membership (not including NEW College education timetabled provision)
- to provide annually evidence of the Artrix seeking the views of and implementing the recommendations of the arts forum and it’s membership, where compatible with the Artrix business model and SLA

The target, requirements and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 4: To deliver a strategic community and education outreach programme

Requirement:

- to produce, deliver and monitor a 3 year strategy outlining the organisations community and education outreach programme with an emphasis on 'non user groups' and young people, supported by the Arts Development Service, BDC

Measures:

- to annually produce a plan detailing the organisations community and education outreach delivery programme
- to annually report on the delivery and evidence the success of the community and education outreach plan
- to deliver 5 community projects, aimed at community participation, in the first year of the SLA with an increase of one community project per year of the SLA, with an emphasis on 'non user groups' and young people

The target, requirement and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 5: To develop sustainable strategic partnerships

Requirement:

- to produce, deliver and monitor a 3 year strategy outlining the organisations commitment to developing sustainable strategic partnerships, supported by the Arts Development Service, BDC

Measures:

- to annually produce a plan detailing the organisations objectives to developing sustainable strategic partnerships
- to annually report on the delivery of the plan and evidence the success of developing sustainable strategic partnerships

The target, requirement and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 6: To deliver a strategy that places the customer's needs at the heart of the organisations ethos

Requirement:

- to produce, deliver and monitor a customer focussed strategy in line with Bromsgrove District Council's 'Customer First' strategy, supported by the Customer First team, BDC

Measures:

- to annually produce a customer focussed plan aimed at delivering improvements to the customer and their experience of the Artrix

- to annually report on the delivery of and evidence the success of the customer focussed plan
- to facilitate an annual user questionnaire focussed on customer care and the customer experience

The target, requirement and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 7: To deliver equal access and opportunity to everyone

Requirements:

- for the organisation to become an active member of the Equalities and Diversity Forum, informing organisational professional development, best practice and policy development
- for Artrix personnel to receive equalities and diversity training, to record the details of the training and provide this information to the Equalities and Diversity team, BDC
- to support a programme of cultural events each year reflecting local or / and national celebration and mood
- to collate equality and diversity data monitoring information regarding audience attendance / community participation to inform future programming to provide equal access and opportunity to everyone

Measures:

- to provide 3 monthly equality and diversity data monitoring information on audience attendance / community participation, including community and education outreach work (gender, age, disability and ethnicity) to Bromsgrove District Council 4 times per year – June, September, December and March
- to annually support, through programming, 4 local or / and national celebrated cultural events throughout the calendar year, in consultation with the Equalities and Diversity Forum
- to annually report on the equalities and diversity training Artrix personnel have received
- to annually report on organisational professional and policy development relating to equalities and diversity
- to evidence each year all new programming delivered in response to the analysis of any gaps in provision identified in the equality and diversity data monitoring information

The target, requirements and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 8: To maximise the promotion of Bromsgrove District Council as the main sponsor of the Artrix organisation

Requirements:

- to promote the sponsorship of the Artrix organisation by BDC on all promotional material, literature and media campaigns produced by the organisation
- to adhere to BDC corporate style guide detailing the application of the council's branding, supported by the Customer First team, BDC

Measures:

- to produce each April an annual schedule detailing the promotional material, literature and media campaigns the organisation will undertake to promote its sponsorship by BDC
- to produce each year the actual schedule of promotional materials, literature and media campaigns the organisation undertook to promote its sponsorship by BDC

The target, requirements and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 9: To deliver a marketing and consultation strategy that will raise the profile of and public satisfaction of the Artrix

Requirement:

- to produce, deliver and monitor a 3 year marketing and consultation strategy outlining the organisations commitment to raising the profile of and public satisfaction of the Artrix, supported by the Customer First team, BDC

Measures:

- to facilitate an annual user satisfaction survey and produce an annual user satisfaction percentage rating of the Artrix
- to produce annually a record of the total number of complaints, with an analysis of the complaints and the actions that were carried out to improve service delivery to the customer
- to produce an annual improvement plan in response to formal feedback from BDC customer panels and public consultation, and the user satisfaction survey, relating to the services received from the organisation
- to attend annually 6 community events across the calendar year managed by Bromsgrove District Council, supported by the Arts Development Service, BDC
- to produce each April an annual marketing schedule designed specifically to raise the profile of the Artrix
- to evidence annually the success of the marketing schedule specifically designed to raise the profile of the Artrix

The target, requirement and measures will be reviewed annually

Target 10: To seek to gain regularly funded organisational (RFO) status from the Arts Council England West Midlands in 2011

Requirement:

- to establish regular contact with Arts Council England West Midlands to further the business case of the organisation gaining RFO status in 2011

Measure:

- to annually hold a formal meeting with Arts Council England West Midlands to further the business case of the Artrix gaining RFO status in 2011 and to provide evidence of the out comes of the meeting

The target, requirement and measure will be reviewed annually

Target 11: To seek to maintain the current funding arrangement with Worcestershire County Council and maximise opportunities to receive external funding

Requirement:

- to maintain the funding agreement with Worcestershire County Council and seek new external funding opportunities to assist with the delivery of the SLA and the professional development of the Artrix

Measure:

- to identify within the Annual Report all external funding applied for and actually received (which funding organisation, for how much and for what purpose)

The target, requirement and measure will be reviewed annually

Target 12: To manage efficiently and effectively the ongoing maintenance of the facility, the replacement of equipment and the procurement of new equipment and adhere to statutory health and safety law and best practice governing the facility and its use by the public

Requirements:

- to produce, deliver and monitor a 3 year facility maintenance and equipment replacement and procurement plan, to include a rolling 3 year budgeted capital facility maintenance, equipment replacement and procurement programme

- to produce, deliver and monitor a 3 year plan outlining the organisations commitment to delivering the statutory health and safety law and best practice governing the facility and its use by the public, to include a rolling documented programme of risk assessments, safe working instruction procedures and operational procedures and to identify new health and safety issues requiring action

Measures:

- to produce an annual plan detailing the facility maintenance, equipment replacement and equipment procurement with an assigned capital budget
- to produce an annual health and safety plan detailing the rolling programme of risk assessments, safe working instruction procedures and operational procedures that need completing and to identify new health and safety issues requiring action
- to annual record all first aid incidents and accidents by competent personnel
- to annual prepare a health and safety report relating to the building, its operation and its use by the public, incorporating facility maintenance, equipment replacement and equipment procurement

The target, requirements and measures will be reviewed annually

b) Service Scope / SLA Monitoring and Reporting

The following identifies the monitoring and reporting specific to the service scope and SLA.

- two formal documented reviews per fiscal year by the primary stakeholders, the first meeting to take place in July each year and to focus on a review of the Annual Report and the second review meeting to take place in October each year and to include a 6 month (April – September) retrospective written report to be produced by the Artrix
- six target lead reviews per year by the Arts Development and Special Events Officer and Artrix Director
- Artrix Annual Report, to include declaring any under spend from the annual cash flow subsidy from BDC to be repaid to BDC 28 days from the production of the previous financial year's statement of accounts, accepting the Artrix will as excellent business practice operate an annual sinking fund (repairs and maintenance) of up to £12,000 and a 3 year rolling budgeted capital facility maintenance and equipment replacement and procurement programme. To include within the Annual Report a section pertaining to the outputs of the measures identified in targets 1 – 12 of the SLA.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4 JUNE 2008

HOUNDSFIELD LANE CARAVAN SITE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond
Key Decision - Yes	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Faced with the challenge of addressing management, maintenance and refurbishment issues, and with the objective of securing the future provision and continuation of site facilities for Gypsies and Travellers in the District, the report provides members with alternative options for the future management and ownership of the Council owned Gypsy and Travellers site at Houndsfield Lane, Wythall.
- 1.2 The report sets out the small amount of additional site provision that is identified for this district over the next 5 years, in the recent Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment. Options are provided within the report for the Council to consider that would enable existing site facilities to be improved and extended through application for Government grant and by exploring the possibilities for alternative ownership and management arrangements that could be put in place.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the options set out at section 10 of the report.
- 2.2 Officers be authorised to further investigate options 3 and 4 and report back to the Executive Cabinet on the potential terms that could be negotiated for the transfer of the Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site to an alternative organisation.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Houndsfield Lane Caravan site is situated in the Wythall area of the district adjacent to the boundary with Solihull. The site which provides caravan / mobile home site facilities for use by the Gypsy and Traveller community consists of eighteen pitches for permanent residential occupation and seven pitches for occupation by persons in transit.

- 3.2 The local authority has been owned the site since 1964 when it provided 6 pitches. In the early 1980's government grant was acquired and the site was extensively extended and modernised to provide 12 concrete hard standings and utility blocks on each pitch consisting of a small kitchen, bathroom and storage area. At the same time the transit pitches were provided with the basic provision of electricity points and water supply.
- 3.3 In 1994, with the aid of additional government grant the site was further extended with the addition of 6 additional permanent pitches now providing a total of 18 permanent pitches.
- 3.4 Electricity is sub metered to residents by means of card meters with cards being purchased from an officer. Water is also sub metered and a weekly water charge is due in addition to the weekly pitch rent. There is a small office on site which houses all the electricity meters for the site.
- 3.5 Prior to Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, the site was managed by the Housing Section of the Council's Treasurer's Department. From the early 1980's, the site was managed by a full time residential warden. In June 2000 the Housing Committee approved a Treasurers report that recommended removing the requirement for the site warden to be resident and amalgamating the post with the Homelessness Hostel Warden's post and from then on the site was managed by an off site officer who visited daily.
- 3.6 BDC is the only District Council in Worcestershire that has retained ownership of a Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Site; all other sites are owned and managed by the County Council.
- 3.7 The Government currently has grant available to help fund the provision of additional Gypsy and Traveller residential pitches (100%) and to assist in the refurbishment of existing sites to current day standards (50% – 75%). The application process for grant assistance is extremely onerous and requires a high degree of technical ability.

4.0 **MANAGEMENT ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH CONTINUING OWNERSHIP BY THE COUNCIL**

- 4.1 When the Council transferred its housing stock to BDHT in 2004, the site remained in the ownership of the Council and the management was outsourced to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust under a service level agreement as there was no longer the infrastructure e.g. repairs, rents and tenant management services to enable it to be managed effectively 'in house'.
- 4.2 Whilst BDHT continues to provide a site management service to the Council, it is recognised that the visiting warden arrangements are

under resourced and at times of difficulty, require back up from the Council's Strategic Housing Staff. BDHT have expressed a desire to withdraw from providing the management service to the Council as it is not cost effective for them and is incompatible with their housing management role.

- 4.3 The low level of management and supervision of the site leaves the Council at risk of not being suitably equipped to manage anti social behaviour, licensee / occupancy management issues and unauthorised entry onto the site. Low level management means that it is difficult to prove whether dilapidation to the site is caused by unlawful damage by residents or has occurred through natural usage. Potentially a situation of unlawful entry onto and occupation of the site could lead to the site becoming unmanageable and existing residents put at risk.

5. MAINTANANCE ISSUES ASSOCIATED WITH CONTINUING OWNERSHIP BY THE COUNCIL

- 5.1 Under the Council's Housing Capital Programme, the utility blocks have recently benefited from PVC door and window replacement. Otherwise there has been little capital investment other than response repairs and repair of amenity units at change of occupation.
- 5.2 Many amenity units still have the original concrete floor, painted concrete block walls and no heating. Others have been extensively improved by the residents themselves
- 5.3 With regard to the condition and facilities on each individual pitch, current recommended standards require higher levels of insulation, better space standards and more modern facilities to be provided within amenity blocks. Direct metering of electricity supply is considered more appropriate than the sub metered arrangements currently in place.
- 5.4 With regard to the communal areas and the overall site itself, there is considerable improvement work ideally requiring upgrading of the perimeter fencing and relaying of the concrete hard standings.
- 5.5 There has been little demand for use of the 7 transit pitches which are therefore a resource that could be converted into use as permanent pitches if upgraded and amenity units provided. National guidance now identifies that permanent and transit patches are incompatible and are best not provided in the same location.

6. DEMAND AND SUPPLY ISSUES RELATING TO THE PROVISION OF SITES FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS IN THE DISTRICT

- 6.1 A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has just been completed having been commissioned by the South Housing Market

Area Partnership. The work is designed to meet the requirements of the Department for Communities and Local Government for each Housing Authority to undertake a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment in accordance with the 2004 Housing Act, Planning Circular 1/2006, and the accompanying Good Practice Guidance.

6.2 The objective of the Assessment was to:

Establish the current numbers, cultural background, location, tenure and family composition of the existing Gypsy and Traveller population.

Estimate their unmet accommodation housing needs, both immediate and over a 5 year timescale, in terms of additional number of pitches required for each category and location of site.

Identify, where possible, aspirations and perceptions, in relation to alternative types of site, the range and quality of facilities, access to services and questions of security, harassment, health and disability.

6.3 This Assessment has concluded that across the South Housing Market Area (Worcestershire, Stratford and Warwick) there is a potential need for 289 additional pitches across the 8 districts. 22 of these are for Travelling Show people, and the rest for Gypsies and Travellers.

6.4 In the draft report, the recommendation for Bromsgrove is that there is no need to identify additional residential sites in Bromsgrove District, but that consideration should be given to the redundant Transit pitches on the Houndsfield Lane Site being used to help meet residential need from the wider area. The report also identified that it is also possible that some of the provision for Emergency Stopping Places described for Redditch Borough might be appropriately located in the part of Bromsgrove District which borders Redditch. This would provide both districts with a shared facility for dealing with future unauthorised encampments.

6.5 The draft report therefore identifies that in the short term (1-2 yrs) the requirement for additional pitches is nil, but in the longer term (2-5yrs) the requirement is for an additional 5 pitches.

7. OPTIONS FOR ADDRESSING THE REFURBISHMENT AND STANDARDS ISSUES ON THE SITE

7.1 **The Capital Cost of carrying out minimum refurbishment to address thermal insulation, internal and electrical improvements and repair of perimeter fencing could be considered as a short term solution.**

Officers have carried out some preliminary enquiries to establish the extent of the capital cost of carrying out the bare minimum of improvements needed.

This option would be to carry out a partial refurbishment of the amenity blocks for each pitch and carry out minimal fencing repairs. This work would include improvements as follows:

- Upgrade of electrical installations in amenity blocks to current day standards including extra sockets & energy efficiency lighting
- Altro non slip flooring to entire amenity units
- Dry lining to provide better insulation
- Refitting kitchen & bathroom following work
- Total Estimated cost of works is £4,262.50 per unit a total of £76,725

- Minimal repair works to perimeter fencing – £10,000

Total Cost of minimal works = £86,725

The cost of carrying out this minimum standard of upgrade is mainly cosmetic, only making the amenity units more habitable and does not address other issues such as major upgrade of perimeter fencing and drainage works and therefore would not be of a sufficient standard to access government grant assistance.

This option:

- Would not extend the number of units on the site to meet current identified need
- Would only provide a short term improvement and thus require future investment
- Would not qualify for government grant assistance.

Accordingly this option is considered to be poor value for money in the longer term.

7.2 The estimated capital cost of bringing the site up to Government recommended standard.

Estimates have been provided by a firm of consultants who have worked with Worcestershire County Council upon site refurbishment and who have successfully applied for government grant for this type of work. The figures are generous estimates based on the worst case scenario and one site visit. The estimated cost therefore allows for a number of currently unknown factors including drainage and hard standing replacement that may prove to be unnecessary.

The cost of refurbishing the existing 18 permanent pitches is estimated to be in the region of £750,000. The cost being made up as follows

External works £199,000. This includes

- £25,000 for the site compound & decanting of client whilst units are refurbished, temporary power & drainage etc.
- £10,000 Road repairs & speed humps
- £80,000 Perimeter site fencing
- £45,000 New drainage to connect units to mains drainage

Services £120,000 This includes

- £50,000 to renew electrics
- £25,000 to connect individual amenity blocks to mains electricity
- £20,000 improve foul & storm drainage
- £20,000 Heating to units

Amenity Block Refurbishment £210,000 This includes

- £200,000 Refurbishment to include new kitchens bathrooms removal of internal walls etc
- £10,000 landlord Office

Preliminaries, contingencies Fees and Costs - £213,800

A full breakdown of estimated costs costs is attached Appendix 1

This option:

- Would bring the site up to Government recommended standards.
- Improve the manageability of the site.
- Provide a longer term solutions to dilapidation
- Potentially qualify for up to 75% government grant.

Accordingly this option is considered to be better value for money.

8. OPTION TO ADDRESS THE SHORTFALL IN PERMANENT RESIDENTIAL SITE PROVISION FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLERS IN THE DISTRICT

- 8.1 The recommendations of the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment set out in 6.1 of the report above indicate that whilst the current requirement to provide additional residential pitches in the Bromsgrove District is nil, in the longer term (2 – 5 years) there is a

requirement for 5 additional units. In the shorter term the report identifies the potential for the under utilised transit pitches at Houndsfield lane to be converted to provide residential pitches to help meet the wider need.

8.2 The cost of providing an additional five new permanent pitches with amenity units on the existing and underused transit area of the site is as follows:

Estimated to be in the region of £430,000 including site clearance, drainage, landscaping, roadways and CCTV security. This is a very generous estimate provided by consultants based upon the provision of six additional new units. It is recommended that only five additional units be included in the scheme.

A full breakdown of costs (based upon provision of 6 units) is set out within Appendix 1.

This option:

- Would address the recommendations set out in the draft Gypsy and Traveller accommodation Assessment to provide additional pitches over 5 years.
- Make best use of the sites potential.
- Populate an area of the transit part of the site that is under used and subject to misuse and vandalism.
- Achieve a total size of site (23 units) that is within the scale generally favoured by tenants.
- Potentially qualify for 100% Government Grant.

9. THE ABILITY OF THE COUNCIL TO FINANCE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF MANAGEMENT, SUPERVISION AND REPAIR OF THE SITE.

9.1 So far, this report has identified four key issues that require consideration:

- Management issues
- Maintenance issues
- Refurbishment and Standards Issues
- Issues relating to the ability to address the small shortfall in permanent residential site provision for Gypsy and Travellers in the District.

9.2 This section of the report now examines the ability of the Council to address these four key issues (in reverse order) before the next section

of the report considers the alternative options for the future ownership and management of the site.

- 9.3 **The ability to address the shortfall in permanent residential site provision in the district** – is limited by land availability and the lack of capital funding available to purchase additional land for the purpose. Economy of scale in terms of management costs, the under utilisation of the transit pitches on the existing site and its established use for Gypsy and Traveller occupation indicate the proposed conversion to five permanent residential pitches to be a viable proposal.

The capital cost of conversion (estimated to be in the region of £430,000) would be prohibitive to the Council unless Government Grant was sought as part of a larger Refurbishment / Extension Scheme.

- 9.4 **The ability of the Council to finance the refurbishment and improve standards of the site** – is limited by the Council's decreasing balance of capital funding available to fund major renovation work. Whilst there is an approved budget of £110,000 in the 2008/09 capital programme and a carry forward of unspent capital budget of £20,000, it is not considered best value for money to apply these funds to a short term minimum improvement scheme for the site as set out at section 7.1 of this report. The minimum improvement approach would not attract Government grant, would not provide a long term solution and therefore the Council would face a future call on its limited capital funds.

To do nothing is not a viable option as this would lead to tenant dissatisfaction, reduced demand and possibly create voids, dilapidation and declining respect for the site which in turn would lead to increasing management and repair problems.

The most attractive solution would be to carry out a full scale site improvement scheme (that would include the creation of five new permanent residential pitches) that would potentially attract 75% Government Grant.

- 9.5 **The ability to meet maintenance requirements** – is limited by the revenue that is available for the Council to fund repair works.

In 2006/7 the site made a surplus of £8,464 and in 2007/8 the projected outturn is for a surplus of £10,624 (subject to deduction of some drainage and change of tenancy works commissioned and awaiting submission of invoice).

The surplus is only achieved by the unrealistically low level of management that is employed on the scheme (SLA cost paid to BDHT is £14,272pa). Furthermore the turn over in site occupancy over recent years has been low and therefore change of tenancy costs (repairs to

amenity block and clearance of pitch) has also been unrealistically low thus giving a false picture.

An increasing inability to keep the site well maintained could lead to a spiralling decline in the site's popularity, increasing tenant turn over, increase in misuse and damage to facilities and increasing dilapidation. The small surplus on the site accounts could soon develop into a significant deficit. Annual repair costs may however be reduced if the large scale site refurbishment scheme is employed.

- 9.6 **The ability to adequately address the management issues** - is again, as set out in 9.5 above, restricted by the limited revenue budget to provide adequate management and supervision of the site. Section 4 of this report sets out the risks associated with the currently low level of site management and supervision that could lead to increasing management issues. Ideally, a higher level of 'on site' supervision should be provided, which may only become cost effective if the site is enlarged.

Again the small surplus on the site accounts is disguised by abnormally low management costs of employing only a visiting warden service. If BDHT withdraw the service in the future the Council would possibly be faced with difficulty in finding an alternative management provider and significantly inflated management costs.

10. **MANAGEMENT AND OWNERSHIP OPTIONS FOR THE COUNCIL TO CONSIDER**

- 10.1 Based upon the recommendations set out in the draft Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment, it is reasonable to assume that Members would wish for the site to remain a facility for use by the Gypsy and Traveller community and be extended to meet the identified shortfall of 5 permanent pitches in the District over the next five years. Accordingly, it is considered that the under utilised transit area of the existing site would be the best option for conversion to meet the shortfall of 5 additional permanent residential pitches. The generously estimated cost of this work is £430,000 for which 100% Government grant could be applied for.
- 10.2 The potential availability of Government grant towards 75% of the cost of major refurbishment works to the existing site would make a large scale upgrading of the site a favourable option over a short term minimal works which would only provide a quick fix.
- 10.3 Because the Council no longer has the capacity and expertise, 'in house' project management of a large scale extension and refurbishment scheme would require the assistance of an alternative organisation.

- 10.4 The identified management and maintenance issues set out earlier in the report may only be addressed by alternative ownership and management arrangements being put in place. There appears to be developing four main options that are available for the Council to consider of which only two have the potential to overcome these issues.
- 10.5 Members are therefore asked to consider the four options that are set out below that may be more appropriate in enabling the Council to address both the ongoing management and maintenance difficulties of running the site and the need to further improve and extend the facilities to meet the identified need for 5 more permanent pitches in the district.
- 10.6 Options 1 and 2 continue with the ownership of the site remaining with the Council and both carry a risk of the site revenue budget falling into deficit.
- 10.7 Options 3 offers the opportunity of the site being transferred into County Council ownership, but would require this first Council bringing the site up to current day standards before transfer would take place, a task that the Council does not have the staff resources to project manage 'in house'.
- 10.8 Option 4 is possibly a more attractive solution. RSL involvement and interest in the sector of housing for Gypsy and Travellers is limited. However, Rooftop Housing (a Worcestershire RSL) has undertaken a substantial amount of research into the needs of this client group and has opened up dialogue with the GOWM who are eager for RSLs to play a more active role in the provision of services to the travelling community. Rooftop has expressed an interest in acquiring the site and is prepared to consider a number of ways in which this could take place including the possibility of managing the grant application for and project managing site upgrade and extension. Rooftop are currently in negotiation with Wychavon DC to second a specialist officer to build on their current activities and to expand Rooftop's range of services to the travelling community.

OPTION 1. - NO ACTION – BDC CONTINUING WITH OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE SITE.

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No immediate cost to the Council • Continued receipt of income currently generating small surplus. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term the site will deteriorate necessitating even larger sums of Capital to maintain. • Depreciation of an asset • Risk being challenged in the courts for disrepair. • Does not comply with Council

	<p>equality & diversity policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BDHT may terminate the SLA. Unlikely to find another RSL or organisation to manage the site. • Increasing cost of management by alternative organisation. • Potential for spiralling repair costs. • Continuing low level of management and supervision may lead to tenant dissatisfaction, reducing occupancy, higher turn over of tenants and increasing risk of ASB and unauthorised occupation. • Risk that Government Refurbishment grant funding will not be available in the future • Risk of revenue budget falling into deficit.
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OPTION 2 - FULLY REFURBISH AND EXTEND SITE TO MODERN DAY STANDARD, ACCESSING GOVERNMENT GRANT – BDC RETAINING OWNERSHIP

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued receipt of income from the site • Increased income from creation of new pitches. • Full scale refurbishment would reduce long term maintenance costs • Extension of site meets identified needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional units would necessitate higher level of management. • BDHT may withdraw from management service. Difficulty in finding another management provider - higher management costs • No longer 'in house' capacity or expertise at BDC to project manage refurbishment/ extension scheme. • Employment of outside consultants to project manage improvement work expensive. e.g. 10% of scheme cost. • Would require capital funds to meet the requirement for 25% match funding for refurbishment works • Risk of revenue budget falling into deficit

OPTION 3 - FULLY REFURBISH AND EXTEND SITE TO MODERN DAY STANDARD, ACCESSING GOVERNMENT GRANT AND TRANSFER OVER TO COUNTY COUNCIL TO RUN IN LINE WITH ALL OTHER SITES IN THE COUNTY

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No longer any risk to BDC of site falling into revenue account deficit • Increased capacity from the new pitches on the transit site would assist in meeting housing need for this client group • Agreement could be made for site provision in perpetuity • County would make better use of provision by maintaining waiting list from across Worcestershire thus reducing risk of voids. • County has appropriate expertise to manage site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Council do not have the capacity to run this project & would only consider transfer if the project was completed by BDC before transfer. • No longer 'in house' capacity or expertise at BDC to project manage refurbishment/ extension scheme. • Employment of outside consultants to project manage improvement work expensive. e.g. 10% of scheme cost. • Would require capital funds to meet the requirement for 25% funding for refurbishment works • No capital receipt from County as only willing to consider taking site over at nil cost to them on basis of it being fully refurbished.

OPTION 4 - TRANSFER THE SITE TO AN RSL WHO WOULD CARRY OUT THE IMPROVEMENT AND EXTENSION WORK THEMSELVES ACCESSING GOVERNMENT GRANT

Advantages	Disadvantages
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibility for management of site would transfer to RSL • No longer any risk to BDC of site falling into revenue account deficit • Increased capacity from the new pitches on the transit site would assist in meeting housing need for this client group • Agreement could be made for site provision in perpetuity • RSL would make better use of provision by maintaining a waiting list from across Worcestershire thus reducing risk of voids. • RSL would have appropriate expertise to manage site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loss of current small surplus income to BDC • Possible loss of control of who can access the site but this could be covered by the transfer document requiring provision in perpetuity.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSL would use their own resources to prepare bid to Government • Reduced costs for financing the project as there is potential for an RSL to consider providing the Council with a capital receipt for the site or funding or part funding the 25% match funding required to access the Government grant. 	
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11. CONSULTATION

11.1 A Customer Satisfaction Survey of residents of the Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site was carried in November 2007. Within the survey, occupants views were sought upon their preferred use for the under utilised transit pitches on the site and given four options. The following results were received in respect of occupants first choice of alternative use:

Social Housing	9.1%
Adapted bungalows for older travellers	9.1%
New permanent residential pitches	54.5%
Transit use	18.2%

11.2 Previous consultation upon the future needs of site occupants carried out 3 years ago indicated a desire amongst older gypsy and traveller occupants to be able to remain on the site in their later years. Accordingly it is considered that upgrading of existing and provision of new pitches and amenity units would be designed to be more accessible for older persons and residents with a disablement.

12. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

12.1 The revenue and capital financial implications for the Council in continuing to own the site are set out in section 9 of the report.

12.2 The estimated costs of the minimal works option is £86,725 which would not qualify for Government grant.

12.3 The estimated cost of the full refurbishment of the existing site is £750,000 that would potentially qualify for up to 75% Government Grant.

12.3 The estimated cost of providing an additional 5 permanent residential plots on the site is £ 430,000 that would potentially qualify for up to 100% Government grant.

- 12.4 The financial implications for the Council would be the need to find match funding for any Government Grant that may be received towards a full refurbishment scheme.
- 12.5 100% grant is available for new provision, including new sites, additional pitches on existing sites, and bringing closed sites back into use. 50% is available for refurbishment. However, where schemes provide additional pitches on a site – for example by extending it – as well as refurbishing that site, 75% grant will be available for the refurbishment element of the scheme.
- 12.6 Accordingly the best response to a bid for funding would be that the Council received 100% grant on the new site provision and 75% for the refurbishment of the existing site.
- 12.7 Therefore match funding would be required for 25% of the refurbishment costs which on current estimates of £750,000 would equate to £187,500.
- 12.8 There is currently an approved 2008/9 Capital Budget of £110,000 and a carry forward 2007/8 budget of £20,000 for works on the Gypsy and Traveller site which could be reserved towards the potential match funding required to fully refurbish and extend the site under options 2, 3 and 4. This would leave a potential shortfall of £57,500 un budgeted capital

13. CONCLUDING REMARKS

- 13.1 Members are asked to consider the options set out at section 10 of the report. The recommendation is that officers be authorised to further investigate options 3 and 4 and report back to the Executive Cabinet on the potential terms that could be negotiated for the transfer of the Houndsfield Lane Caravan Site to an alternative organisation.

14. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 14.1 From 2008, The Housing Regeneration Act 2008 removes the exemption of local authority sites being licensed which is likely to have implications for the future standards that will be required for local authority owned sites.
- 14.2 In the event of a transfer taking place the Council would impose a covenant requiring the site owner to continue to provide accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community unless the Council gave its permission for the site to be used or sold for an alternative use. In circumstances where the Council would give its permission for the site to be sold or used for alternative purposes, then a clause would be included in the conveyance allowing the Council to

claw back funding from the land owner representing an appropriate proportion of the open market value at the time.

15. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 15.1 CO1 Regeneration – Housing
CO2 Improvement – Customer Service

16. RISK MANAGEMENT

- Loss of outside organisation to manage Houndsfield Lane Site.
- Budget deficit due to repair and management issues.
- Unlawful occupation and anti social behaviour.

- 16.1 Currently the risks identified in the bullet points above are not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the 2008 revision of the risk register.

17. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 17.1 It is not considered appropriate for any additional customer consultation to be carried out at this stage for the purposes of the report. However in the event of alternative management and ownership options being pursued, then site residents would be consulted.

18. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 18.1 The report relates to the provision of housing and services to a minority group. Failure to address the needs of this group and to maintain or improve standards may be in breach of the Council's Equality & Diversity policy.
- 18.2 It is important in the event of the site being transferred, that the Council should impose a covenant or other legal undertaking by the new owner that the site would continue to provide accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community.

20. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 20.1 The report addresses value for money issues in considering options for the refurbishment of the site within section 7 of the report.

21. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues Yes – but report only asks for approval to further investigate options for alternative management and ownership.
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Future management and standards of site impact upon ability to reduce crime and disorder.
Policy Non at present
Environmental Condition and standard of site impact upon environment.

22. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes

23. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards specifically Hollywood and Majors Green within which the Hounsfield Lane site is situated.

24. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Budget costings for Refurbishment of 18 Amenity Units and Budget costings for provision of additional permanent residential pitches.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Draft Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment.

CONTACT OFFICER

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**BUDGET COSTINGS FOR
REFURBISHMENT OF 18 UNITS**

ITEM	COST £
<u>EXTERNAL WORKS</u>	
Formation of compounds suitable for phased decanting of residents including temporary drainage and power connections and accommodation.	25,000
Temporary storage and skips	3,000
Contractors compound	2,000
Road repairs including speed humps, etc.	10,000
Concrete surfaces to plots replacing lawned areas including improved drainage	25,000
Site fencing	80,000
New mobile drainage connection and service ducts	45,000
Site signage	1,000
CCTV security camera system	8,000
<u>SERVICES</u>	
Renewal of mains electrical supplies to site and individual units (by EON) N.B. No site lighting included.	50,000
Builders work for new electrics including trenching, etc.	25,000
Drainage – provisional sum for CCTV surveys and repairs (extent currently unknown)	20,000
Mechanical services – heating & water to units – 18No. - & new site water supply	20,000
Builders work for new mechanical services	5,000
	319,000
c/f	

<u>AMENITY BLOCKS – 18NO.</u>	b/f	319,000
Refurbishment to include new kitchen and bathroom fittings, wall and floor finishes, windows and doors, insulation, removal of shared internal service cupboard, external repairs and drainage connections, redecoration based on approx £11,100 per unit.		200,000
Landlords unit		10,000
		<hr/>
		529,000
 <u>GENERALLY</u>		
Preliminaries – say 20%		105,800
		<hr/>
		634,800
Plus contingencies say		40,000
		<hr/>
		674,800 + VAT
 FEES AND OTHER COSTS		
CMD Compliance & statutory		14,000
Project Management say 8%		54,000
		<hr/>
		742,800
 TOTAL – say		750,000 excl VAT
		<hr/>

**BUDGET COSTINGS FOR NEW BUILD UNITS
6 NO. SEMI DETACHED**

Site Clearance & preparation	20,000
Drains and services (electrics & water)	30,000
Hard landscaping, based on 12m x 12m (assuming existing renewal)	48,000
Site fencing	30,000
New units – 6No. 6 x £25,000	150,000
Roadway	30,000
Mobile unit drain and power connections	15,000
CCTV security	5,000
	328,000
Preliminaries – say 20%	65,600
	393,600
Contingencies say	30,000
	423,600
FEES, ETC.	
CDM compliance & statutory	8,500
	432,100
Project Management fees @8% say	35,000
	467,100
Say	470,000 + VAT

See over for assumptions:

N.B.

These costs assume the following;

1. Suitable ground conditions for traditional foundations.
2. Suitable connection for drainage supplies.
3. Statutory approvals.
4. Economies of scale for 6 units
5. No site lighting to roadway, etc.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4 JUNE 2008

CAPITAL PROGRAMME INCREASE – BRIAR CLOSE PLAY AREA

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Roger Hollingworth
Responsible Head of Service	Street Scene and Community

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report requests members to agree to an increase in the Council's capital programme in relation to the above play area refurbishment.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Agree to the increase of the capital programme by £28,000 in respect of the play area refurbishment/enhancement.
- 2.1.2 Request the Council to amend its capital programme for 2008/09 accordingly.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As part of the 2004 development of the McAlpine/Westbury site at Lickey End (Hamilton Gardens) a number of small play areas and open spaces were created with in agreed lay out and an off site contribution provided to develop a play area and recreation ground near by.
- 3.2 As part of the original 106 agreement there was no provision for the adoption of the land and/or play areas by the Council. As such the inspection & maintenance of these areas has remained the responsibility of the developers.
- 3.3 Subsequently the developers have requested that the Council adopt the open space and play areas. However due to the poor condition of the inspection/maintenance arrangements this offer was original declined as it was not appropriate to do so.
- 3.4 Following a number of site visits between both parties to discuss these issues an agreed work programme was developed to bring the standard of provision to an acceptable standard. The work programme also included discussion around the quality of the play provision and the level of

commuted sum required to under take the works required for the foreseeable future.

- 3.5 The Executive Director for Partnerships & Projects has lead on these discussions and has finalised the arrangements mentioned in 3.4 accordingly. As part of the agreement the Developer has agreed to make a contribution of £28,000 toward the replacement/enhancement of the play provision on site. However due to the nature of these discussion this project was not included with the forward capital programme as initially it was BDC's intention to request the developer to carry out these work.
- 3.6 However based on discussion with the developer and their proposed play area provision it was agreed it would be beneficial if the Council assumed responsibility for the design & build of this project.
- 3.7 This approach does though create a risk for the Council as the payment will be draw down immediately upon the adoption of the site taking place. In order to ensure that any health & safety risk is minimised, as soon as adoption takes place we need to commence work on site as the play provision does not conform to best practice principles. In order to do so this project is required to be built into the capital programme in advance of receipt of the monies.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The additional expenditure incurred by this project will be met from the contribution agreed with the developers as part of the adoption of the open space.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no outstanding legal implications contained with in this report.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The play area improvements will contribute to the Sense of community and Well Being objective by enhancing the current level of provision provided to residents.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The main risks associated with this project has been outlined in section 3.7 and relates to the timing of the works to coincide with the adoption process.
- 7.2 These risks are being managed by ensuring that the funding that is required to carry out this work is agreed in advance and the funding drawn down prior to the completion of the works.

7.3 Currently the risk identified in the in 7.1 is not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the Culture & Community risk register as part of the effective and efficient delivery of project section.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no Customer Implications contained with in this report, other than those highlighted in the Corporate Objectives section.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no Equality & Diversity implications contained with in this report.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Value for Money implications of this report are covered in section 3.6 and relate to using BDC’s framework contract for play provision to achieve a higher quality provision on site than the developer would be able to realise.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

Procurement Issues – This project is covered by the play provision framework contract.
Personnel Implications - None
Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - None
Policy - None
Environmental - None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	<u>Yes</u>

Executive Director (Services)	<u>No</u>
Assistant Chief Executive	<u>No</u>
Head of Service	<u>Yes</u>
Head of Financial Services	<u>Yes</u>
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	<u>Yes</u>
Head of Organisational Development & HR	<u>No</u>
Corporate Procurement Team	<u>No</u>

13. WARDS AFFECTED

Norton

14. APPENDICES

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

4 JUNE 2008

CABINET

IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT [MARCH 2008]

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Webb Portfolio Holder for Customer Care and Service
Responsible Officer	Hugh Bennett Assistant Chief Executive

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To ask Cabinet to consider the attached updated Improvement Plan Exception Report for March 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers and approves the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report, and the corrective action being taken.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that for the 135 actions highlighted for March within the plan 86.7 percent of the Improvement Plan is on target [green], 7.4 percent is one month behind [amber] and 1.5 percent is over one month behind [red]. 4.4 percent of actions have been rescheduled [or suspended] with approval.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 July 2007 Cabinet approved the Improvement Plan 2007/08. The Improvement Plan is directly linked to the 10 corporate priorities and 12 enablers identified in the Council Plan 2007/2010.
- 3.2 At July 2007 Cabinet Members approved the inclusion of an additional number of actions from the then Improvement Director. The Improvement Plan is designed to push the Council through to a rating of Fair during 2008.

4. PROGRESS IN MARCH 2008






- 4.1 Overall performance as at the end of March 2008 is as follows: -

February 2008

March 2008

RED	2	1.4%	RED	2	1.5%
AMBER	10	7.3%	AMBER	10	7.4%
GREEN	122	88.4%	GREEN	117	86.7%
REPROGRAMMED	4	2.9%	REPROGRAMMED	6	4.4%

Where: -

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

- 4.2 In addition to the above detail, out of the total of 135 actions for the month, 5 actions have also been deleted, suspended or the timescales have been substantially revised. This amounts to 3.7 percent of the original actions scheduled for this month. These actions are: Longbridge (examination of final plan) (2.5); 3 Charter Marks (5.2.5); Satisfaction with Artrix (8.2.2); Member Standards (16.2.5); Single Status (20.2.6).
- 4.3 An Exception Report detailing corrective actions being undertaken for red and amber tasks is attached at **Appendix 1**

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No financial implications.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 No Legal Implications.

7. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 7.1 The Improvement Plan relates to all of the Council's four objectives and 10 priorities as per the 2007/2010 Council Plan.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

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

10. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Please see section 3 of the Improvement Plan

11. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 See section 11 of the Improvement Plan

12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

13. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

14. WARDS AFFECTED

14.1 All wards

15. APPENDICES

15.1 Appendix 1 Improvement Plan Exception Report March 2008

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

16.1 The full Improvement Plan for March will be e-mailed to all Members of the Cabinet and can be found at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk under meetings Minutes and Agendas where there is a direct link to the Improvement Plan.

CONTACT OFFICER

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CP3: Housing																	
Ref	March 2008 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date
3.2.4	Implement contractor procurement framework for DFGs				Specification now agreed and pre-contract questionnaire being formulated for advertisement.										AC	Feb-08	Jun-08
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
3.2	Modernised Strategic Housing Service																
3.2.4	Implement contractor procurement framework for Disabled Facilities Grants	AC													Work progressing slowly. Timescale extended until June.		

CP4: Customer Service																	
Ref	March 2008 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date
4.3.5	Prepare and undertake satisfaction survey within the Forum				The Conference Event was very focussed on workshops and time was not available to undertake the survey work: this has been postponed until June										CF	Mar-08	Jun-08
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
4.3	Annual Satisfaction of Equalities Forum																
4.3.5	Prepare and undertake satisfaction survey within the Forum	CF													It has been agreed that this will be undertaken as part of the June meeting.		

FP1: Value for Money																		
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date	
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action			
11.1.3	Quarterly report to PMB to assess the effectiveness of the alternative methods of service delivery e.g.- transfer to leisure trust, payroll service provision (NB formerly entitled 'Monitor provision through client reviews')															JP	Dec-07	July-08
11.1	Realisation of cashable savings by alternative methods of service delivery																	
11.1.3	Quarterly report to PMB to assess the effectiveness of the alternative methods of service delivery e.g.- transfer to leisure trust, payroll service provision	JP															Further delayed until July – August 2008	

FP1: Value for Money																	
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
11.3.5	Identify services for detailed benchmarking & cost analysis to be undertaken.		New accountancy manager commenced work in March 08 to drive this work forward. Report to be prepared & presented to CMT.												JP	Aug-07	Mar-09
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
11.3	Improvements in Use of Resources scoring in relation to VFM																
11.3.5	Identify services for detailed benchmarking & cost analysis to be undertaken.	JP														Detailed analysis undertaken on audit commission profiles.	

FP2: Financial Management																	
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
12.1.1	Implementation of the POP project to account for commitments & accruals on the Agresso system.		New Accountancy Service Manager started in March 08 to continue project management of POP.												JP	July-07	Mar-09
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
12.1	Improved Financial Management by budget holders																
12.1.1	Implementation of the POP project to account for commitments & accruals on the Agresso system.	JP														Upgrades have been tested and implemented. Roll out to Customer Service Centre and Revenues and Benefits section took place in Jan 08.	

FP2: Financial Management																	
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
12.1.3	Train all managers to use web access for Agresso reporting.		New Accountancy Service Manager commenced in March 08 and is preparing the revised roll out plan for POP.												JP	Sept-07	June-08
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
12.1	Improved Financial Management by budget holders																
12.1.3	Train all managers to use web access for Agresso reporting.	JP														Delayed due to focus on implementation of POP as linked with web access. New upgrades have been implemented.	

PR2: Improved Governance																	
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
16.4.2	Identify peer mentors for the Leader (and Cabinet Members) and the Leader of the Opposition.		Mentors have been identified. Mentoring was due to start in September, but actually commenced in January. Cabinet workshop in April.												CF	Oct-07	Apr-08
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
16.4	Improve Member Capacity																
16.4.2	Identify peer mentors for the Leader (and Cabinet Members) and the Leader of the Opposition.	CF														Delayed until April.	

PR2: Improved Governance																			
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action														Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action				
16.4.6	Review roles and responsibilities for Leader, Leader of Opposition and Cabinet Members.		Dependent on the Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act.														CF	Jan-07	Autumn-08
16.4	Improve Member Capacity																		
16.4.6	Review roles and responsibilities for Leader, Leader of Opposition and Cabinet Members.	CF														It has been agreed that although the constitution review will go some way to identifying the existing roles and responsibilities, whole scale change will not occur until the consequence of the Local Government and Public involvement in Health Act is known.			

HR&OD2: Modernisation																		
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action													Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action			
20.2.4	Terms and Conditions Negotiations (including Pay Protection).		In light of advice contained within the quality assurance report, the "In principles" offers are not felt to be vulnerable to change. All original proposals will therefore stand as planned.													JP	Feb-08	April-08
20.2	Single Status																	
20.2.4	Terms and Conditions Negotiations (including Pay Protection).	JP														Consequence of delay arising from the suspension of the ballot = financial cost of April 08 increments and cost of living pay award to be retrospectively applied.		

HR&OD2: Modernisation																	
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
20.2.6	Ballot of staff														JP	Jan-08	Aug-08
20.2	Single Status																
20.2.6	Ballot of staff	JP															The ballot was temporarily suspended due to issues of concern having been raised about the evaluation process by Unison National.

HR&OD2: Modernisation																	
Ref	March 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
20.3.1	Review, develop, consult, train and Implement on all HR policies and procedures as detailed in the People Strategy.		HR policy review programme has slowed down as a result of other organisational priorities (e.g. HR implications of the budget) and case management. This will be picked up again in the new Business Planning year.												JP	Dec-07	May-08
20.3	Policy Development																
20.3.1	Review, develop, consult, train and Implement on all HR policies and procedures as detailed in the People Strategy.	JP														Health and Safety policies have been subject to review during this period and updated accordingly. HR policy review programme has slowed down as a result of other organisational priorities (e.g. HR implications of the budget) and case management. This will be picked up again in the new Business Planning year.	

HR&OD2: Modernisation																		
Ref	March 2008 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date	
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action			
20.4.3	Evaluate Manager Induction															JP	Aug-07	May-08
20.4.	Management Development Strategy																	
20.4.3	Evaluate Manager Induction	JP/HP															Further reprogrammed to March from original reprogrammed date of November. This will now be delayed once again due to the unforeseen prolonged absence of the Learning and OD Manager.	

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4 JUNE 2008

SUB NATIONAL REVIEW OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Kevin Dicks, Chief Executive
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report seeks members views on the Government's consultation paper "Prosperous Places: Taking Forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration".

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that members endorse the responses to the consultation document as outlined at 4.2

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In July 2007 the Government published the recommendations of the Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration. This sought to provide the framework to enable central and local government and other partners to work together to help maximise prosperity in all parts of England and tackle social deprivation and inequality.
- 3.2 The consultation paper "Prosperous Places: Taking Forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration" published on 31st March 2008, details the implementation of those recommendations.
- 3.3 The consultation paper (attached at Appendix 1) invites views on the governments detailed proposals for implementing SNR and has a response date of 20th June 2008. Legislation is expected in the next parliamentary session, beginning in November 2008.
- 3.4 The consultation sets out and seeks views on the proposals contained in the SNR for putting in place reforms that would:
- Streamline the regional tier, introducing integrated strategies and giving the Regional Development Agencies (RDA's) lead responsibility for Regional Planning;

- Strengthen the local authority role in economic development, including a new statutory duty to assess local economic conditions: and
- Support collaboration by local authorities across economic areas.

3.5 It is intended that the integrated strategies will replace the regional economic strategies and regional spatial strategies. The strategies should set out, for each region, a vision of how and where sustainable economic growth should be delivered.

3.6 It is suggested, within the consultation paper, that a Regional Forum of Leaders (RFL) is created to represent all local authorities in the region. The role of the RFL will be to sign off the integrated strategy and to hold the RDA and its partners to account. The RFL for the West Midlands has already been created with Paul Middleborough (Leader, Wychavon District Council) representing the Worcestershire Districts. Roger Hollingworth (Leader, Bromsgrove District Council) acts as deputy to Paul. Councillor Dr George Lord (Leader, Worcestershire County Council) also sits on the RFL.

4. RESPONDING TO THE CONSULTATION

4.1 It is suggested that given the Councillor Paul Middleborough represents the Worcestershire Districts that a collective response to the consultation should be submitted by Worcestershire.

4.2 The consultation questions and the suggested responses are as follows:

Chapter 3 Stronger Partnerships for Regional Growth

Q1. How should RDA's satisfy themselves that sufficient capacity exists for programme management and delivery at local or sub regional level?

Response: We do not see a role for RDA's assessing local authority capacity. A new performance framework has been developed for local authorities and it should be through the new Comprehensive Area Assessments that capacity should be addressed.

Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships have recently drawn up strategies in each region and will be assessing the nature of existing economic development capacity and the need to build capacity in the future. We believe that efforts to build local authority capacity should be led by the local government sector itself.

Q2. Do you agree that local authorities should determine how they set up a local authority leaders' forum for their region, and that the Government should only intervene if the required criteria are not met or it failed to operate effectively? If not what would you propose instead?

Response: Agree with the proposals.

Q3. Are the proposed regional accountability and scrutiny proposals proportionate and workable?

Response: Yes however we are concerned that the proposals as they currently stand take away some of the democratic accountability of the current arrangements and this needs to be addressed.

We are also concerned that the consultation paper explicitly states that the accountability of RDAs to the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform “is the principal way” that RDAs will be held to account. We think that accountability to the elected councils in the region should be as important, given that RDAs will take responsibility for regional planning, which affects the property rights of individuals and businesses and determines the future character of places.

Chapter 4 Integrating regional strategies to promote growth

Q4. Do you agree that the regional strategy needs to cover the elements listed at paragraph 4.13? Are there other matters that should be included in the regional strategy to help in the delivery of key outcomes?

Response: Agree to the suggested elements.

Q5. Do you agree with the way in which we propose to simplify the preparation of the regional strategy, as illustrated in the figure (on page 35) in particular allowing flexibility for regions to determine detailed processes? If not what other steps might we take?

Response: Agree to the process as long as it takes account of the democratically elected members.

Q6. Do you think the streamlined process would lead to any significant changes in the costs and benefits to the community and other impacts?

Response: We believe the proposed process would increase costs and there are concerns as to how these would be funded. It is also felt that this would take away the democratic mandate that local authority members have.

Chapter 5 Strengthening sub regional economies – the role of local authorities

Q7. Which of the options for the local authority economic assessment duty (or any other proposals) is the most appropriate?

Response: Option 2 is the preferred option as it gives most flexibility but is still within an overall framework.

Q8. What additional information or support do local authorities consider valuable for the purposes of preparing assessments?

Response: Can't identify anything else.

Q9. How should lead local authorities engage partners, including district councils, in the preparation of the assessment?

Response: District Councils are a key partner in this moving forward. It is suggested that a formal partnership be set up whereby all partners are involved but that District and County Councils take the lead.

Q10. Which partner bodies should be consulted in the preparation of the assessment?

Response: Those suggested in paragraph 5.20 and any that are identified locally as being of sufficient importance.

Q11. Should any duty apply in London and, if so, which of the proposed models is most appropriate?

Response: No comment.

Q12. Do you agree that there is value in creating statutory arrangements for sub-regional collaboration on economic development issues beyond MAA's? What form might any arrangements take?

Response: Agree that some statutory arrangements should be created but these need to allow flexibility to enable the challenging agenda to be addressed. No specific views on what form the arrangements should take.

Q13. What activities would you like a sub-regional partnership to be able to carry out and what are the constraints on them doing this under the current legislation?

Response: Agree to those at 5.37

Q14. How would a sub-regional economic development authority fit into the local authority framework?

Response: See answer to Q1. It should be aligned with the LAA and the specific indicators of Local Authorities under the new performance framework.

Q15. Should there be a duty to co-operate at sub-regional level where a statutory partnership exists? To whom should this apply?

Response: Yes – it should apply to all partners.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None directly to this authority.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 None directly to this authority.

7. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

7.1 None directly to this authority.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

8.1 There are no direct risks to this authority.

9. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None.

10. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None.

11. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 None.

12. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues
None
Personnel Implications
These will need to be considered in more depth once final proposals are produced.
Governance/Performance Management
None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998
None
Policy
These will need to be considered in more depth once final proposals are produced.
Environmental
None

13. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	Yes
Executive Director - Services	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	N/A
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	No

14. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards

15. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Prosperous Places - Taking forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration

16. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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BERR | Department for Business
Enterprise & Regulatory Reform

Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of Sub National Economic Development and Regeneration

31 March 2008

PROSPEROUS PLACES: *TAKING FORWARD THE REVIEW OF SUB-NATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION*

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Chapter 4 – Integrating Regional Strategies to Promote Growth

Chapter 5 – Strengthening Sub-regional Economies – the Local Authority Role

Appendix 1 – Impact Assessment for Local Authority Economic Assessment
Duty

MINISTERIAL FOREWORD

The powerful forces of globalisation which are shaping our economy, society and culture present us with huge opportunities as a nation. Over the past eleven years, this Government has made global change our ally, predicting its opportunities, and ensuring that our people have the skills to meet the challenges.

By embracing change, we have seen eleven years of economic growth, falling unemployment, stable interest rates, and the revitalisation of our great cities. By cutting the costs of economic failure - welfare bills and unemployment benefit - this Government has been able to invest in schools, universities, training, science, and technology, as well as public services such as the NHS, transport and the police. And by putting the skills and ingenuity of the British people at the heart of our approach, we have benefited millions of British families with higher living standards and more rewarding work.

But our Government also recognises that in a fast-changing world, our economy must continue to be strong so we can weather future turbulence. This means that no area of the country should be excluded from rising prosperity, no child should be allowed to squander their talents, and no-one capable of work should be denied the chance to get on. For our country to continue to prosper, we must unlock the talents of every citizen, community, city and region of the UK. And we must make sure the principles of sustainable development - encouraging change that lasts, that local people feel part of, and that respects the natural environment - remain at the heart of our plans for Britain's future.

For this to happen, we must ensure that our policy-making and governance is robust enough to create the right platform for our wealth-creating companies and entrepreneurs. We need a system of national, regional, sub-regional and local government which allows British business to invest, innovate and make profits, and at the same time creates opportunities for all. Tackling disadvantage remains a core objective for this government, but in the new economy this will be important as much for reasons of national prosperity as for individual fulfilment.

The review of sub-national economic development and regeneration, published in July 2007, set out a vision for reform.

For central Government, it proposed a clearer set of objectives and responsibilities to support better coordination at all levels.

For the regional development agencies, it outlined a continuing focus on delivering for business; but it also proposed a more strategic role, working closely with the private sector, local authorities, both individually and collectively, with public agencies and social partners to prepare and implement a single overarching strategy for the region's sustainable future.

For local government, it built on the devolutionary changes in the Local Government White Paper and proposed a stronger focus on sustainable economic development and regeneration, a renewed partnership with other agencies, and an increased emphasis on the importance of local authorities working together across boundaries to boost sub-regional economies.

In the months since the review was published, there has been real progress in turning parts of our vision into reality. Economic development is an important part of the new local government performance framework, with indicators on housing, transport, skills and worklessness included in the National Indicator Set.

The three-year spending settlement has confirmed the resources for regional development agencies to deliver their part of the agenda.

A new Working Neighbourhoods Fund, worth £1.5bn over the next three years, will target support to places dogged by long-term worklessness.

The ground breaking Climate Change Bill has made clear that leaders at all levels, from the individual to the national and all points between, have a role to play in ensuring Britain's success as a green and growing nation.

Discussions are underway for the first multi-area agreements (MAAs), in which local authorities are preparing to pool resources and expertise to help boost the local economy by addressing complex issues such as transport and housing through more stretching outcome targets, in return for greater flexibilities from Government.

These are already helping to lay the foundations for reform that will unleash the economic potential of every part of the country, but in order to implement the review in full there are still important elements to be decided.

These include the proposed duty on local authorities to assess the economic conditions of their local area, a statutory framework to support sub-regional partnerships, and the process for drawing up sustainable integrated regional strategies. We have been discussing with stakeholders how best to take these proposals forward.

With this document, we are consulting on how we will deliver key parts of the package. We are seeking your views on how our aims can best be achieved, within the context of:

- making it easier for businesses and entrepreneurs to create jobs and wealth, and to unlock the talents of the British people. Global economic challenges will not respect our administrative boundaries so the public sector must adapt to work better for business so that business can play its essential role in creating wealth;
- implementing reforms in a way that ensures we achieve growth that is environmentally sustainable and makes the transition to a low-carbon economy; and

- ensuring that people have a real and meaningful say over the places where they live and about which they care deeply, with effective opportunities to influence regional planning.

Your participation will be central to achieving this, and we look forward to hearing your views.

Hazel Blears MP, Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government

John Hutton MP, Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2007 the Government published the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration (SNR). This provides the framework that will enable central and local government and other partners to work together to help maximise prosperity in all parts of England and tackle social deprivation and inequality.

The reforms set out in the SNR will enable regional, sub-regional and local partners to tailor solutions to their specific problems, making best use of available talent and opportunities. They will help to ensure that decisions are taken at the right level to be effective and that decision makers have the right tools at their disposal. The reforms will help places to provide an economic environment that enables business to adapt to and create new technologies and opportunities. They will contribute to growth, jobs and wealth in a low carbon economy and reduce the disparities between the regions.

This consultation sets out and seeks views on the proposals contained in the SNR for putting in place reforms that would:

- streamline the regional tier, introducing integrated strategies and giving the regional development agencies (RDAs) lead responsibility for regional planning;
- strengthen the local authority role in economic development, including a new statutory duty to assess local economic conditions; and
- support collaboration by local authorities across economic areas.

While this consultation will be of particular interest to those agencies and authorities directly affected by the proposed changes to structures and working relationships, the impact of the changes will be much further reaching. The private sector, in particular, may find less of direct relevance in the content of this consultation but the consequences of the changes will be positive for business.

Stronger partnerships for regional growth

The SNR elevates the importance of both business-led RDAs and democratically mandated local authorities to achieve improved economic outcomes. It demands a strong and deep partnership to be built to ensure complementary regional and local economic, housing, planning, transport and low carbon priorities. It will also be vital for the RDAs to provide the strategic economic leadership to ensure that the business, social and environmental partners in each region can engage and participate effectively. Different arrangements could be developed, within a consistent set of principles, reflecting the different circumstances in each region.

Having considered responses to this consultation on how it should be achieved, the Government will bring forward legislation that will give RDAs responsibility for regional planning alongside regional sustainable economic growth, within a new regional strategy. This wider strategic role will mean significant change to

what RDAs do, how they operate and how they work with local authorities in their region.

RDAs will continue to be business-led so that they are best placed to drive growth in the regions, building on their existing purposes, including their contribution to the achievement of sustainable development. In making future appointments, the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR) will work in close consultation with Communities and Local Government (CLG) to ensure that the skills and experience of those appointed to RDA boards reflect their new responsibilities. Similarly, the RDAs will need to take account of their changed role in recruiting and developing staff.

As the SNR made clear, economic development should be carried out at the most appropriate level. RDAs will become more strategic bodies in line with devolved decision-making principles. RDAs will continue to deliver and manage services that are best implemented at the regional level, working with a range of delivery agents and working closely with the private sector. Those services include business support, co-ordinating inward investment, support for innovation and responding to economic shocks. They already work closely with local authorities and sub-regional partnerships and, as they take on their more strategic role, will delegate funding, where appropriate, to those best placed to deliver economic improvements provided they have the capacity to undertake this activity. RDAs can provide support to help build capacity and chapter 5 sets out other mechanisms for increasing capacity. The Government's expectation is that, as capacity increases, RDAs will delegate an increasing amount of their funding to those best placed to deliver economic improvements (local authorities, sub-regions and other delivery bodies), within the framework of the regional strategy.

The RDA will lead the development of the regional strategy and its implementation, working with local authorities and other interests in the region, including business. The Government proposes that a forum of local authority leaders, representing all local authorities in the region, would sign off the draft strategy and help to hold the RDA and its regional delivery partners to account. The Government believes that local authorities themselves should decide the most effective structure for a leaders' forum and we expect that this will differ between regions. But any forum should be a streamlined and manageable body and be representative of local government across the region. The Government would intervene if local authorities in a region were unable to reach a consensus on a forum that met these criteria or if it failed to operate effectively.

Under the SNR reforms, regional assemblies will not continue in their current form. Assemblies, which are responsible for regional planning, include representatives from a broad cross-section of stakeholders. The new arrangements will place a premium on effective stakeholder engagement and management, on which the Government expects the RDAs to lead.

Proposals set out in both the SNR and the Governance of Britain Green Paper will change how regional bodies are held to account at the national level. RDAs will remain accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State for

Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. In the future, BERR's performance management of RDAs will focus increasingly on how well they are performing in their new strategic role.

The Governance of Britain Green Paper stated that regional scrutiny could be achieved through the establishment of nine regional Parliamentary committees. The House of Commons Modernisation Committee has begun an inquiry into regional accountability and this will be a key component of the Government's drive for improved accountability.

The SNR proposals will involve significant changes to the regional structures and roles of delivery partners. The Government expects RDAs to work with local authorities in each region to develop a change management programme which addresses the changes needed to institutions, relationships and processes.

Transition

In the period prior to the introduction of the regional strategy, it will be important to ensure that momentum is maintained - in particular, towards the goal set out in the Housing Green Paper of delivering 3 million new homes by 2020. The Government is committed to completing the current round of regional spatial strategies, with further reviews where necessary to re-examine planned housing provision. This work will be led by the regional assemblies.

In advance of legislation, we expect the regional assembly and RDA to begin preparations for the introduction of the regional strategy. To assist in handling this transition, the Government has amended the current Planning Bill to empower regional assemblies to delegate any of their planning functions to the RDAs, and allow RDAs to assist the regional assemblies in carrying out their functions related to the regional spatial strategy (RSS), where both agree.

The SNR confirmed the Government's commitment to a new, expanded round of regional funding allocations. The Government will issue guidance in the summer of 2008, asking regions to advise on priorities within the amounts set out in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review by early 2009.

Integrating regional strategies to promote regional growth

The new, integrated, regional strategies will replace and build on the strong foundations laid by the regional economic strategies (RES) and regional spatial strategies. The strategies should set out, for each region, a vision of how and where sustainable economic growth would be delivered. They should steer the activities, plans and investment decisions of the RDA, local authorities and other regional partners and be underpinned by the principles of sustainable development.

The Government intends that the process for developing the regional strategy should be robust, transparent, open and efficient. Effective consultation and engagement with stakeholders, business and citizens in each region will be essential. In order to achieve this, greater clarity will be provided on national priority expectations at the beginning of the process. The evidence base used

to develop the strategy will be strengthened. Simplifying both the number and complexity of processes will make it easier for stakeholders to engage and shorten the time it takes to agree a new strategy. Independent examination, which is a critical part of regional spatial planning, will continue as a means of engaging stakeholders and testing the evidence on contentious issues.

The RDA will lead the development of the strategy and be responsible for agreeing the draft with the local authority leaders' forum. The Secretaries of State for CLG and BERR will approve the strategy on behalf of Government. If regional partners fail to agree a draft strategy, the RDA would submit the draft to Ministers noting points of disagreement.

To encourage a greater focus on delivery, it is important that partners agree how they will contribute to meeting the strategy's objectives. The Government is considering whether it should require a delivery plan setting out actions and investment priorities, and the nature of accountability arrangements for such a plan.

In London, the Mayor will continue to be responsible for preparing a suite of strategies for London, including its spatial development plan (the London Plan) and transport and economic development strategies.

Strengthening sub-regional economies – the role of local authorities

Local authorities need to play a stronger role in delivering economic development in their area, building on their power to promote well-being. This document consults on the creation of a focused statutory economic assessment duty for upper tier and unitary local authorities. The results of this assessment would contribute to the analytical underpinning of sustainable community strategies, local development frameworks, local and multi-area agreement targets and the regional strategy.

The assessment would provide an improved shared economic evidence base, enhancing local authority capability and capacity on economic development issues and ensuring more effective prioritisation of economic development and regeneration interventions. It would also help local authorities to contribute to the development of the regional strategy.

Although London has unique governance arrangements, the Government is keen for London boroughs to also promote the conditions for economic success in their area. The document also consults on how best to take forward any duty within London.

The first assessments would be undertaken to inform local strategies and local area agreement (LAA) targets for 2011/12, and to contribute to the development of the first regional strategy. The new duty is likely to result in additional costs to local authorities, which will be assessed and met in line with the Government's new burdens principles.

Collaboration across sub-regions

The SNR set out the advantages of economic development decision-making at a sub-regional level. The Government is introducing multi-area agreements (MAAs) to enable local authorities to improve economic prosperity by working across administrative boundaries. There may be advantages in strengthening the statutory basis for sub-regional collaboration between authorities, including more visible leadership.

The Government is committed to legislate to allow development of formal legal status for collaborative arrangements, subject to feedback from this consultation. Any new arrangements should adhere to four fundamental principles – they should: not be based on collaboration between elected members of existing local authorities; not include any additional council tax precept; not impose additional net costs on local authorities; and they should provide transparent accountability for residents. The Government believes that the focus for new sub-regional arrangements should be economic development. However, the Government is prepared to consider a wider range of functions and does not wish to be prescriptive about these nor the functional economic areas that might be covered, believing that interested partners should develop proposals to reflect their local priorities and circumstances.

Consultation

This consultation will run until 20 June 2008.

Impact assessment

An impact assessment has been developed on the local authority economic assessment duty. You are invited to comment on this analysis.

CHAPTER 1 - RESPONDING TO CONSULTATION

Consultation process

1.1 This consultation will run until 20 June 2008. We want to hear views from all interested parties including RDAs, local authorities, business, non-governmental organisations, any other organisation or public body and members of the public.

1.2 During the consultation period we will be keen to engage directly with regional interests and other key stakeholders. We will be holding a series of regional stakeholder events with the respective Government Offices so that we can hear stakeholders' views first-hand. Dates and venues will be publicised on the CLG and the BERR websites shortly.

1.3 A summary of responses to this consultation will be published within 3 months of its closing date on the CLG and BERR websites.

How to respond

1.4 CLG and BERR invite comments on the proposals set out in this consultative document.

1.5 When responding please state whether you are responding as an individual or representing the views of an organisation, making it clear how the views of the members were assembled.

1.6 Responses to this consultation, along with any supporting evidence, must be received by 20 June. You are invited to submit your comments and responses to the following e-consultation address:

<http://www.bmgresearch.co.uk/SNR-Consultation>

This website will give you access to the full consultation document and provide an easy and convenient format for you to submit your response.

Alternatively you can email your response to:

snrpostbox@BERR.gsi.gov.uk

Or in writing to:

Sub National Review
Bay 1116
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
1 Victoria Street
London
SW1H 0ET

Consultation criteria

1.7 The Government has adopted a code of practice on consultations. The criteria below apply to all UK national public consultations consisting of a document in electronic or printed form:

1. Consult widely throughout the process, allowing a minimum of 12 weeks for written consultation at least once during the development of the policy.
2. Be clear about what your proposals are, who may be affected, what questions are being asked and the timescale for responses.
3. Ensure that your consultation is clear, concise and widely accessible.
4. Give feedback regarding the responses received and how the consultation process influenced the policy.
5. Monitor your department's effectiveness at consultation, including through the use of a designated consultation co-ordinator.
6. Ensure your consultation follows better regulation best practice, including carrying out an impact assessment if appropriate.

The code does not have legal force but is regarded as binding on UK departments and their agencies unless Ministers conclude that exceptional circumstances require a departure from it.

The full code may be viewed at: <http://www.berr.gov.uk/files/file44364.pdf>

Confidentiality and data protection

1.8 Information provided in response to this consultation, including personal information, may be subject to publication or disclosure in accordance with access to information regimes (these are primarily the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) and the Data Protection Act 1998 (DPA)).

1.9 If you want information that you provide to be treated as confidential, please be aware that, under the FOIA, there is a statutory Code of Practice with which public authorities must comply. This deals, amongst other things, with obligations of confidence.

1.10 In view of this it would be helpful if you could explain to us why you regard the information you have provided as confidential. If we receive a request for disclosure of information we will take full account of your explanation but we cannot give an assurance that confidentiality can be maintained in all circumstances. An automatic confidentiality disclaimer generated by your IT system will not, in itself, be regarded as binding on the Department.

1.11 The Government will process your personal data in accordance with the DPA and, in the majority of circumstances, this will mean that personal data will not be disclosed to third parties.

Additional Copies

1.12 You may make copies of this document without seeking permission. Further printed copies of the consultation document or copies of the response form can be obtained from:

BERR Publications Order Line
ADMAIL 528
London SW1W 8YT

Tel: 0845 015 0010
Fax: 0845 015 0020
<http://www.berr.gov.uk/publications>

1.13 Or you can visit BERR's website at (<http://www.berr.gov.uk/regional/sub-national-review/page40430.html>) and download a copy of the consultation document.

Comments or complaints

1.14 If you have any comments or complaints about the way this consultation has been conducted, please send them to:

Vanessa Singhateh
Consultation Co-ordinator
Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform
Better Regulation Team
1 Victoria Street
London SW1H 0ET

Impact Assessment

1.15 An impact assessment has been developed on the approach to the local authority economic assessment duty (see Appendix 1).

1.16 You are invited to comment on the analysis, and/or provide further evidence to demonstrate potential costs or benefits of the proposals set out in this consultation document.

Consultation Questions

We invite your views on the range of proposals contained in this consultation document. We particularly welcome your views on the following questions.

Chapter 3 – Stronger partnerships for regional growth

- Q1. How should RDAs satisfy themselves that sufficient capacity exists for programme management and delivery at local or sub-regional level?**
- Q2. Do you agree that local authorities should determine how they set up a local authority leaders' forum for their region, and that the Government should only intervene if the required criteria are not met or if it failed to operate effectively? If not, what would you propose instead?**
- Q3. Are the proposed regional accountability and scrutiny proposals proportionate and workable?**

Chapter 4 – Integrating regional strategies to promote growth

- Q4. Do you agree that the regional strategy needs to cover the elements listed at paragraph 4.13? Are there other matters that should be included in the regional strategy to help in the delivery of key outcomes?**
- Q5. Do you agree with the way in which we propose to simplify the preparation of the regional strategy, as illustrated in the figure (on page 35), in particular allowing flexibility for regions to determine detailed processes? If not what other steps might we take?**
- Q6. Do you think that the streamlined process would lead to any significant changes in the costs and benefits to the community and other impacts?**

Chapter 5 – Strengthening sub-regional economies – the role of local authorities

- Q7. Which of the options for the local authority economic assessment duty (or any other proposals) is most appropriate?**
- Q8. What additional information or support do local authorities consider valuable for the purpose of preparing assessments?**
- Q9. How should lead local authorities engage partners, including district councils, in the preparation of the assessment?**
- Q10. Which partner bodies should be consulted in the preparation of the assessment?**

- Q11. Should any duty apply in London and, if so, which of the proposed models is most appropriate?**
- Q12. Do you agree that there is value in creating statutory arrangements for sub-regional collaboration on economic development issues beyond MAAs? What form might any new arrangements take?**
- Q13. What activities would you like a sub-regional partnership to be able to carry out and what are the constraints on them doing this under the current legislation?**
- Q14. How would a sub-regional economic development authority fit into the local authority performance framework?**
- Q15. Should there be a duty to co-operate at sub-regional level where a statutory partnership exists? To whom should this apply?**

CHAPTER 2 – SECURING PROSPERITY IN A CHANGING ECONOMY

This chapter sets out the context and the key principles that underpin the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration.

2.1. The Government's central economic objective is to achieve high and stable rates of economic growth and employment. Productivity growth is the key determinant of long-run growth, and together with employment growth, leads to higher prosperity. Productivity growth is especially important for securing prosperity in light of a number of new challenges and opportunities, including globalisation and climate and technological change. The review of sub-national economic development and regeneration (which has become known as the SNR) has a clear aim – to put in place a robust delivery framework to promote productivity growth at every spatial level, which will help to improve opportunities and secure the prosperity of citizens and businesses in all parts of England in a changing world.

2.2. *The UK economy: analysis of long term performance and strategic challenges*¹ showed how the macroeconomic framework and flexibility of the UK's product, labour and capital markets have been key to building competitiveness and resilience. Flexible markets have also allowed the economy to adapt to longer-term structural changes over the past ten years. In this period, we have seen how this has translated in to a new economic dynamism around the regions, sub-regions and localities in the UK. As a result, progress has been made towards meeting the Government's regional economic performance public service agreement (PSA) to improve the trend rate of growth in every region, and to narrow the persistent gap in growth rates between regions. However, long-established gaps remain in employment, skills and enterprise rates between the top performing regions and the bottom performing regions, with inequalities persisting within as well as between regions.

2.3. To make further progress on promoting sustainable growth², every spatial level must be able to respond effectively to the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation, rapid technological change, and the need to tackle climate change and carbon emissions. And promoting growth will require progress on the five drivers that underlie productivity – skills, competition, investment, enterprise and innovation – and employment. The evidence base underpinning the SNR recognised that economic activity takes place at different spatial levels: national, regional, sub-regional and local. The challenge for central and local government is to organise itself to facilitate better outcomes at the most appropriate level through more focussed decision-making in competitive, dynamic localities, sub-regions and regions. The SNR is a vehicle for reforming public institutions to enable them to achieve sustainable economic growth, development and regeneration at every spatial level through better

¹ HMT, March 2008

² 'Sustainable growth' here and throughout refers to economic growth that can be sustained and is within environmental limits, but also enhances the environment and social welfare, and avoids greater extremes in future economic cycles.

alignment of economic and spatial planning, within a sustainable development framework. Implementing the reforms in the SNR will support every region, sub-region and locality to respond to the challenges and opportunity presented by globalisation, technological and climate change, and to increase its competitiveness.

2.4. Different places and sub-regions, with their differing economies and needs, will be able to respond in a flexible way as:

- decisions will be taken in the right place and at the right level to be effective;
- decision makers will have a clearer remit and the right tools to increase growth in the region; and
- interventions will be timely and effective.

2.5. The SNR places a strong emphasis on devolved decision-making to the most appropriate level as a means to improve economic development outcomes. This means strengthening the connection between citizens and the decisions being made to help achieve prosperity and quality of life in the areas where they live and work. Within the framework of national policy and the overall regional strategy, the reforms will enable regions, sub-regions and local areas to develop and implement solutions at the level where decisions can best be taken.

2.6. The SNR is part of a wider programme of reform, including:

- Local Government White Paper and Local Government and Public Health Act 2007
- Planning White Paper and Bill
- Housing and Regeneration Bill
- Climate Change Bill
- Energy White Paper
- Science and Innovation White Paper
- Governance of Britain Green Paper
- Enterprise Strategy
- New public service agreements
- Business Support Simplification Programme – ‘Simple Support, Better Business: Business Support in 2010’

2.7. Together these will lead to better decision-making, better integration of economic, social and environmental goals, better value for money from public resources and more efficient delivery, thereby helping businesses and economies to flourish.

2.8. There has already been significant progress towards implementing the SNR and associated reforms. In November 2007, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced the establishment of the £1.5 billion Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF), which will be paid to the eligible local authorities as part of their non-ring fenced area-based grant. The WNF will support councils and communities in developing local solutions for tackling worklessness in the most deprived neighbourhoods. As part of the Pre-Budget Report, the Treasury published a White Paper on business rate supplements, which will be an important tool for local authorities in shaping their economic future. The Government is also working with a number of sub-regions that are developing multi-area agreements that reflect the need to consider economic development and regeneration at the geographical level at which many markets operate.

2.9. The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills are taking forward reforms to the funding for education of 14-19 year olds. Local authorities, often acting in partnership at the sub-regional level, will play a stronger role in developing strategy and the allocation of funding. The two Departments will be consulting on their plans shortly.

2.10. This document builds on the reforms that are already underway. It sets out and seeks views on the proposals contained in the SNR for putting in place a number of structural reforms that aim to:

- streamline the regional tier and introduce single integrated regional strategies, with the RDA designated as the regional planning body;
- strengthen the local authority role in economic development, including a new statutory duty to assess local economic conditions; and
- support collaboration by local authorities across economic areas.

London

2.11. Many of the SNR proposals discussed in this document are not relevant to London. This reflects the capital's unique governance arrangements and, in particular, the establishment in 2000 of the Greater London Authority - comprising a directly elected executive Mayor for London and an elected Assembly - to provide strategic leadership for the city.

2.12. The Mayor will continue to be responsible for preparing a suite of strategies for London, including its spatial development plan (the London Plan), Transport and Economic Development Strategies, and for oversight of the London Development Agency. The Government has also recently strengthened the Mayor's powers and responsibilities through the Greater London Authority Act 2007, especially in relation to planning, housing, and tackling climate

change; and the London Assembly has a gained greater scrutiny powers over the Mayor, including confirmation hearings in relation to key Mayoral appointments.

2.13. Some of the SNR reforms may, nevertheless, be applicable to London and this consultation document seeks views, in particular, on the application to London of the duty on local authorities to undertake assessments of their local economic conditions (see paragraphs 5.21 and 5.22).

CHAPTER 3 – STRONGER PARTNERSHIPS FOR REGIONAL GROWTH

This chapter sets out and consults on the new arrangements for decision-making at regional level. In particular:

- how RDAs will change to take on a wider, more strategic role including responsibility for regional planning;
- how local government might organise itself to act collectively at the regional level;
- the importance of engaging with stakeholders including businesses and local communities; and
- accountability and scrutiny.

It also provides further information about the next round of regional funding allocations.

3.1 The SNR set out a number of proposals for new arrangements for decision-making and delivery at regional level:

- subject to legislative change, RDAs will have responsibility for regional planning – a function currently carried out by regional assemblies;
- RDAs will have a new executive responsibility for developing a single integrated regional strategy working closely with local authorities and others;
- local authorities acting collectively at the regional level will have responsibility for signing off the draft regional strategy; and
- there will be new arrangements to ensure accountability at the regional level and for scrutiny of the regional strategy and its implementation.

RDAs evolving to take on new responsibilities

3.2 The RDAs will need to undergo significant change in both what they do and how they operate. They will become more strategic in their leadership of the sustainable economic growth agenda in the regions, with a more programme-based, rather than project-based approach, to the management of the RDA single programme budget (the single pot). This will facilitate a greater role for sub-regions and local authorities in economic development as appropriate. RDAs will continue to manage the single pot to fund economic development and regeneration priorities in their region.

3.3 The RDAs will lead on the development of the regional strategy, ensuring economic development and spatial planning are closely aligned. As the body responsible for regional planning, the RDA will be required to play a significant role in relation to how economic, social and environmental issues are balanced through the planning system. They will also need to engage effectively with a wider group of stakeholders and the public and build on their solid relationships with sub-regional partnerships and with local government.

3.4 Contributing to the achievement of sustainable development is already a core principle of existing RDA legislation, and of legislation on regional planning. We intend that this should remain the case under the new arrangements.

3.5 RDAs will continue to be business-led, recognising the strategy's focus on delivering sustainable economic growth in the regions and the RDAs' strategic investment role in promoting economic development. Continued business engagement, through strong RDA boards, is crucial if public and private sector investment is to be properly aligned and private investment leveraged, to focus on the right solutions. In making future appointments, the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform will work closely with the Communities Secretary to ensure that the skills and experience of those appointed to RDA boards reflect their important new responsibilities in regional planning, along with their existing responsibilities. In practice this means that, in addition to strong business experience, RDA boards will need members with experience in working with regional and local partners and stakeholders. RDAs will also need to reflect the changes to their role in the training and development of board members and staff.

3.6 Appointments to the Board will continue to be subject to the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments (OCPA) code of practice. Ministers make the appointment based on recommendations from recruitment panels overseen by an independent assessor appointed by OCPA and taking advice from the Regional Minister.

Delegation of RDA funding

3.7 A key principle of the SNR is to ensure that decisions are made at the right spatial level, by devolving powers and responsibilities in line with economic outcomes. The business-led RDAs will become increasingly strategic through their lead role on the regional strategy and will, as now, want to commission partners to deliver outcomes agreed in the strategy. RDAs will delegate their single pot funding where appropriate, for spending on promoting economic growth and regeneration on a programme, rather than project, basis, to those best placed to deliver economic growth outcomes. Local authorities will play an increasing role in this delivery, with a proposed legal duty to assess their economies and the ability to act with neighbouring local authorities to tackle common problems. Local authorities will be closely involved in preparing the

strategy, which a regional forum of local authority leaders will sign-off on behalf of all local authorities in the region.

3.8 The RDAs will need to agree with local authorities and key regional partners the balance of relevant investment from their single pot between different policy areas. They should identify investment activities and policy interventions best delivered sub-regionally or locally. RDAs will then commission delivery from partners and delegate, where appropriate, associated decision-making and funding to local authorities and sub-regions for investment in line with the regional strategy.

3.9 Each RDA will still deliver directly those services that are best implemented at a regional level, such as inward investment, support for innovation and responding to economic shocks. They will manage the delivery of other services, such as business support, where they will be responsible for ensuring non-proliferation of new products as part of the Government's Business Support Simplification Programme (BSSP). As now, delivery partners may be businesses, universities and other partnership bodies.

3.10 The RDA will need to ensure that capacity exists at local authority or sub-regional partnership level to undertake the delegated activities. It will consider whether it can provide support to build capacity as necessary. As capacity increases, an increasing amount of funding will be delegated to local authorities to deliver outcomes in those areas of intervention where they are best placed to deal. There will also be policy areas and associated programmes on which the RDAs will need to task other agencies or partnerships to deliver economic improvements.

3.11 In order to ensure the flexibility that local authorities will require in managing delegated programmes, legislation is required to amend the RDA Act. Where funding is delegated, the RDA will need to be satisfied that there is a clear rationale for the proposed spending and that expected outcomes are clearly identified for the delegated funds. Delegation will therefore need to be set within the appropriate financial and value for money frameworks. We are exploring whether a memorandum of understanding between the RDAs and local authorities could underpin delegation, by outlining accountability arrangements and providing assurance to Parliament that the funding was spent appropriately and represented value for money.

3.12 In the interim, the Government has made it clear that RDAs should explore, within the current legislative constraints, how greater flexibility can be given to local authorities to meet agreed outcomes, whilst ensuring that appropriate accountability and value for money requirements are in place.

Q1. How should RDAs satisfy themselves that sufficient capacity exists for programme management and delivery at local or sub-regional level?

Strengthening local government at regional level

3.13 Under the SNR's proposals, regional assemblies will cease to be the regional planning body and this responsibility will be transferred to RDAs. Local authorities will work with the RDA to develop and agree the draft strategy and its delivery. The aim is for the RDA and local authorities to achieve co-ownership of the vision for each region and its delivery. Local authorities will also have a role in holding to account the RDA and its regional delivery partners.

3.14 In order that local authorities can carry out these roles efficiently and effectively, the SNR suggested the establishment of a local authority leaders' forum in each region. Local authorities in many of the regions are already exploring how they can establish such forums.

3.15 The Government believes that local authorities themselves should decide the most effective structure for a leaders' forum to suit the needs of their region. It is the Government's view, however, that any forum should be:

- streamlined, manageable and able to make strategic, long-term decisions and engage effectively with the RDA;
- representative of local government across the region, for example, in terms of representation of key sub-regions and upper and lower tier authorities; and
- comprised of local authority leaders and have sufficient authority to sign off the draft strategy on behalf of all local authorities in the region.

3.16 The Government would only intervene in the formation of the forum if the local authorities in a region were unable to reach consensus on a forum that met the criteria set out in paragraph 3.15 or if it failed to operate effectively.

3.17 The forum's principal role would be to take strategic decisions and agree priorities on behalf of all local authorities in each region in the development and implementation of the regional strategy. This would involve establishing working protocols with the RDA on the process for developing the strategy.

Q2. Do you agree that local authorities should determine how they set up a local authority leaders' forum for their region, and that the Government should only intervene if the required criteria are not met or if it failed to operate effectively? If not, what would you propose instead?

Accountability and scrutiny

3.18 Both the SNR and the proposals contained in the Governance of Britain Green Paper will change how regional bodies are held to account. Some of the arrangements build on existing procedures and others will be new. It is important that the new and existing accountability and scrutiny mechanisms complement each other and are proportionate.

3.19 RDAs will remain accountable to Parliament through the Secretary of State for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, working within a robust performance framework. This focuses on a number of areas:

- audits of the RDAs' accounts and financial management systems carried out annually by the National Audit Office;
- monitoring RDA performance through independent appraisals, corporate plan reviews and financial monitoring; and
- evaluation framework measuring RDA performance in delivering their strategic objectives.

This performance framework is the principal way in which the RDA is subject to external scrutiny and held to account.

3.20 In the future, performance management of RDAs will focus increasingly on how well they are performing their new strategic role. BERR will assess how effectively the RDAs are performing their functions, including leading the development of the regional strategy. Local authorities, in addition to their new role in contributing to the development and implementation of the regional strategy, have existing scrutiny powers which can be applied to RDAs and other government agencies at local level, as well as to their own executive members. With the abolition of regional assemblies, local authorities should develop new arrangements for exercising their scrutiny powers at regional level through the leaders' forum.

Q3. Are the proposed regional accountability and scrutiny proposals proportionate and workable?

3.21 In June 2007 the Prime Minister appointed Ministers for the English regions and published the Governance of Britain Green Paper, which proposed that enhanced Parliamentary scrutiny of the regional tier could be achieved through the establishment of nine regional Parliamentary committees. The introduction of regional committees is ultimately a matter for the House of Commons itself and the House Modernisation Committee has begun an inquiry into regional accountability. The outcome of this will be a key component of the Government's drive for improved public accountability.

Engaging with social, economic and environmental stakeholders

3.22 The new arrangements for the regional strategy place a premium on effective stakeholder engagement and management, on which the RDAs will lead. Currently, although composition varies, all regional assemblies include representatives drawn from business, the Trades Union Congress, the voluntary sector, environmental and faith groups and regional culture and health bodies. In addition, a wider range of stakeholders are currently involved through a variety of working arrangements. For example, each region has set up a regional skills partnership and a science and industry council, while most regions also have a sustainable development champion body.

3.23 We look to each RDA to devise working arrangements which best suit the needs of their region, so that they are most effective in drawing upon the expertise of stakeholders for sound decision-making and outcomes and effectively link the contribution of different spatial levels. The process for the development of regional strategies will include existing requirements in relation to consultation and testing of evidence. The new arrangements will need to be capable of formulating regional priorities in respect of housing, transport, skills, business support³ and other matters to create the conditions for business and communities to flourish.

Change management programmes

3.24 The SNR proposals will involve significant changes to regional structures and institutions. However, all regions are different, face different challenges and need to develop solutions that meet their needs. There is no single blueprint for what changes are required or how to implement them. We expect RDAs to work with local authority partners in each region to develop a change management programme which addresses the changes needed to institutions, relationships and processes. We expect this programme to establish, among other things, how:

- local authorities would organise themselves to act collectively at regional level;
- RDAs would adapt to address their new role; and
- RDAs and local authorities in their region would work with each other and engage with stakeholders.

³ RDAs have been asked to establish regional business support boards which will have a role in ensuring that the business support elements of the regional strategy are in line with the BSSP framework.

Securing a managed transition to new arrangements

3.25 In the period prior to the introduction of the regional strategy, it will be important to ensure that momentum is not lost. In particular, progress towards the goal set out in the Housing Green Paper⁴ of delivering 3 million homes by 2020 - including at least 180,000 affordable homes and the development of eco-towns and additional New Growth Points – will need to be maintained. We are committed to completing the current round of regional spatial strategies, with further partial reviews where necessary, by 2011 to pave the way for 240,000 new homes a year by 2016. Establishing a close partnership between the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), the regional assemblies and RDAs will be key to maintaining this delivery focus.

3.26 As the designated regional planning body in all regions outside London, the regional assembly will be expected to undertake the work on the RSS reviews. This will be informed by Government guidance on housing numbers based on advice from the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit which provides independent advice on affordability. Regional spatial strategies will continue to be in force as the regional tier of the statutory development plan, until replaced by single regional strategies under the new process.

3.27 Once the current round of regional economic strategy reviews is completed, RDAs will not be expected to undertake any further strategy reviews until the new arrangements are in place. Prior to the development of the new regional strategies, RDAs will be expected to use the 3-yearly corporate planning round to set out how they will contribute to delivery of the regional growth objective.

3.28 In advance of new legislation we expect the regional assembly and RDA to begin preparations for the introduction of the regional strategy within their current statutory responsibilities including continued work to develop a shared evidence base and shared approach to monitoring and implementation. The commitment to further RSS revisions, as necessary, to meet the Government's housing ambitions offers scope for joint working which could be the beginnings of the new strategy. The approach taken will need to be determined on a region by region basis. Where there is a need for an RSS revision, the aim should be to complete it by 2011. However, some regions are aiming to integrate existing regional strategies as early as 2010 by bringing together the RES and RSS ahead of time.

3.29 To assist them in handling the transition, the Government has made provision in the current Planning Bill to empower regional assemblies to

3. Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable, Communities and Local Government, July 2007

delegate any of their planning functions under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 to the RDAs, and allow RDAs to assist the regional assemblies in carrying out any of their functions related to the RSS, where both agree. These provisions will not allow the RDAs to become the regional planning body. Further legislation will be required to allow full transfer of responsibilities.

Regional Funding Allocations

3.30 In 2005 the Government launched the first regional funding allocations (RFA) exercise. The purpose was to enable regional partners to agree realistic, joined-up strategic advice on priorities within agreed levels of central Government expenditure – giving them a say in how money allocated to their region was spent, and helping provide businesses with a stable investment framework.

3.31 The 2005-06 RFA exercise, which included transport, housing and economic development budgets, was very well received by regional stakeholders - and the SNR confirmed the Government's commitment to a second, expanded round of RFA advice. The Government intends this second round will be launched in the summer and include the following additional funding streams:

- further transport streams to enable regions to provide wider advice on priorities for supporting regional and local transport⁵;
- European Regional Development Fund (ERDF)⁶; and
- housing and regeneration delivery in the “growth areas” and the Thames Gateway, and other regeneration programmes due to be transferred to the Homes and Communities Agency.

By asking regions to advise on how these funding streams should be aligned and prioritised, RFA advice will support the development of the regional strategy and ensure it translates into regional investment priorities.

3.32 The Government will issue guidance in the summer of 2008 setting out amounts allocated in the 2007 comprehensive spending review for the period 2008-11 to the above new and existing streams. The guidance will outline the

⁵ This will need to take into account the outcome of current discussions on (1) the implications of acceptance of the Nichols Review and Eddington Study recommendations, with regard to the need to understand that commitment to schemes prior to the construction phase ‘is necessarily a very conditional commitment’, and the need as evidence emerges to have the flexibility to ‘follow the numbers’ to ‘ensure spending is focused on the best policies’ (2) the outcome of current discussions on enabling regions to advise on priorities for distributing block grants of c.£1.3 billion a year for integrated transport and maintenance; and (3) the outcome of current discussions on enhancing their opportunities to advise on future rail investment, taking account of how much is already committed to 2014/15 and how much benefits more than one region.

⁶ European Union ring-fencing of ERDF money.

constraints affecting certain budgets⁷, including Ministers' ultimate accountability to Parliament. Subject to these, the Government will seek regions' advice by early

2009 on:

- their strategic priorities within the amounts set out; and
- how money might be moved between funding streams to help achieve them.

3.33 Funding provided by the Learning and Skills Council to support adult skills development will continue to be allocated as now, to support the national skills strategy and PSA targets. But the Government recognises that skills and training are essential components of economic development at regional and local level, and need to be well integrated with the other factors that drive productivity growth. We want to build on the progress that has been made in recent years between the Learning and Skills Council, the regional development agencies, local authorities and other regional and local partners in agreeing shared priorities through regional skills partnerships and the emerging sub-regional employment and skills boards. Within the RFA framework, we therefore look to the LSC, RDAs, local authorities and other partners to develop an agreed view on the skills and training priorities that will best support delivery of regional and local economic development, within the overall framework of the national skills strategy and PSA targets. Where appropriate, that should include considering how different funding streams can be aligned to ensure skills priorities best complement wider economic goals. Those priorities should form part of the advice that RFA partners put to Government.

3.34 A formal Ministerial response in summer 2009 will explain how the advice from regions will inform Departmental spending programmes and will enable regions to develop their first regional strategies and delivery plans based on agreed spending plans from within the funding covered by RFA..

⁷ Existing delivery plans such as the Thames Gateway and the difficulty of disaggregating cross-regional spend.

CHAPTER 4 – INTEGRATING REGIONAL STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE GROWTH

This chapter invites comments on proposals for:

- integrating the regional economic strategy, the regional spatial strategy and other regional strategies into a single long-term strategy; and
- a new process for developing the regional strategy.

4.1 Chapter 3 set out proposals for how RDA and local authorities could best organise themselves to fulfil their new functions. The regional tier will be strengthened by integrating existing regional strategies into a single regional strategy, setting out a high level vision over the next 15-20 years that reflects the region's distinctive geography and economy and creates the conditions for innovation and enterprise to flourish.

4.2 The new regional strategy is designed to ensure closer alignment between economic and spatial planning to support sustainable economic growth. It will build on the strong foundations laid by the existing regional economic strategies and regional spatial strategies. We expect other regional strategies, such as sustainable development frameworks, regional cultural strategies and the regional housing and transport strategies, to be integrated into the new strategies. This will provide the opportunity to take a strategic overview of the region's activity to drive forward economic development and regeneration, taking account of economic geography.

4.3 The regional strategy will steer the activities, plans and investment decisions of the RDA, local authorities and other regional partners to ensure sustainable economic growth, development and regeneration. It should set out which places and sectors should be priorities for investment. It should also influence the policies, plans and investment decisions of central government departments and public agencies (including the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency, Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, the Technology Strategy Board and Natural England) and give clarity and incentives to the private sector to invest in a region. Combined with future regional funding allocation rounds and the regional economic performance PSA, the strategy will result in a stronger alignment between national and regional spending plans. Given this, businesses in the region will want to engage actively with the RDA and other partners in helping to develop the strategy. The regional strategies will be based on evidence and work done by local, sub-regional and regional partners.

4.4 The Government is intending to bring forward legislation that would create a statutory requirement for each region to have a regional strategy. The regional strategy would also be part of the statutory development plan which is the framework against which local planning authorities determine planning applications for individual development proposals.

4.5 The strategies should be succinct documents setting out the region's vision for how and where sustainable economic growth would be delivered, focusing on the relationships between the regional economy and the key drivers of growth (competition, enterprise, innovation, skills, investment and employment), the environment and regeneration. The strategies will contribute to the achievement of sustainable development in the UK and will be underpinned by sustainable development principles. Taking this integrated approach to agreeing social, economic and environmental priorities in each of the regions will help create the conditions for the economy, business and communities to flourish and the environment to be protected.

The Government's priority outcomes

4.6 The Government will work closely with the RDAs and local authorities in developing and implementing the regional strategies to ensure alignment between national and regional policies. Regions will be expected to reflect national policy in drawing up the regional strategy, and will also want to remain alert to emerging Government policies and their likely impact e.g. new policies to mitigate the effects of climate change. This will include planning policy statements and forthcoming national policy statements on infrastructure. Other national frameworks such as the Business Support Simplification Programme, or national aspirations on employment and skills levels, would also provide relevant policy directions.

4.7 Current PSAs where the contribution from the regional strategy is likely to be particularly relevant to delivery include: regional economic performance; housing; transport; natural environment and climate change. The Government believes regional strategies will make a crucial contribution to its regional economic performance and housing aims and there will be clear objectives for the strategies on these aims.

Regional Economic Performance: 'Improve the economic performance of all English regions and reduce the gap in economic growth rates between regions.'

4.8 Each region will set a regional economic growth objective to focus attention on how best to raise growth and increase prosperity. The economic growth objective for each region will be to raise its sustainable trend rate of growth in comparison with the previous economic cycle. Regional strategies should set out the key economic policy areas and priorities to achieve the

objective for their regions, taking account of constraints on carbon emissions, such as those proposed in the Climate Change Bill.

Housing: “Increase long-term housing supply and affordability”

4.9 As stated in the Housing Green Paper, we will issue formal guidance on the ranges of housing provision required over a 15 to 20 year time period. This guidance will be based on the independent advice of the National Housing and Planning Advisory Unit (NHPAU). We will expect the RDAs and local authorities to test these ranges through the preparation of the regional strategy so that both they and central Government are fully informed when taking final decisions about the appropriate levels and types of housing provision.

4.10 In order to achieve this, we expect the development of the regional strategy to be a transparent, collaborative and evidence-driven process of exploring the potential scale and locations for housing growth. The housing elements of the regional strategy need to start from the local authority assessment of the housing opportunities and needs in their area, and where possible, to be based on the collaborative work done between local authorities within a sub-region to assess the locations and opportunities for growth. We expect the RDA to work in partnership with local authorities through the leaders’ forum to draw on their knowledge of the local potential for housing growth, and ensure local authorities have ownership of the housing distribution set out in the regional strategy.

4.11 The Government will, however, be looking for the regions to develop strategies which, while meeting these objectives, do so in a way which secures an integrated approach, without prejudicing other Government priorities. For example, the Stern Review highlighted the strong economic case for taking action on climate change as well as the opportunities that arise from decoupling growth from greenhouse gas emissions. In setting out the long-term vision for sustainable economic growth and housing supply – alongside key strategic transport and other infrastructure – it will be vital that regional strategies ensure this is done in ways that support the move to a low carbon economy, delivers the objectives set out in the Climate Change and Energy Bills, and is in line with the recently issued Planning Policy Statement on Climate Change.

What should the regional strategy contain?

4.12 The strategy should be founded on a robust evidence base, informed and shaped by regional and local partners. The aim would be to ensure that strategies from different levels are complementary and mutually reinforcing and that there is an iterative dialogue between local authorities and the RDAs and other stakeholders.

4.13 Each region will need to determine its priorities to achieve sustainable economic growth and development over the period of the plan. In terms of policies and spatial priorities we propose that every regional strategy should cover:

- an overview of the key regional challenges over the plan period;
- how economic growth can best be delivered having regard to employment and the key drivers of productivity as well as regeneration;
- a distribution of housing supply figures as well as targets for affordable housing and achieving quality homes for all, including vulnerable and socially excluded people;
- how the region would manage the risks and opportunities of unavoidable climate change, achieving development in a way which is consistent with national targets for cutting carbon emissions;
- those areas within the region identified as priorities for regeneration investment and intervention; and
- strategic requirements and provision for transport, waste, water, minerals, energy and environmental infrastructure, insofar as these are not already specified in national policy.

Q4. Do you agree that the regional strategy needs to cover the elements listed at paragraph 4.13? Are there other matters that should be included in the regional strategy to help in the delivery of key outcomes?

Level of Detail

4.14 Regions will need to achieve a balance between a strategy which is high level but also sufficiently specific to enable effective delivery. The strategy should not generally be site-specific, but might use spatial concepts such as 'corridors' or broad locations such as a settlement.

4.15 The regional strategy will set out the distribution of housing numbers, to meet the Government's ambition of delivering three million new homes by 2020. The Government wishes to encourage local authorities to work across administrative boundaries to agree housing requirements at a strategic level and consistent with their regional growth objective and transport plans. The regional strategy may set housing requirements for a housing market area or sub-region, where local authorities commit to developing joint core strategies and to cover that sub-region. In other cases allocations will need to be made at local planning authority level.

4.16 The Government also supports strengthened cross-regional co-operation where this reflects economic geography or existing policy initiatives such as the Milton Keynes and South Midlands growth area, the Thames Gateway growth area and the Northern Way. Adjacent regions will therefore be encouraged to prepare strategies that ensure a strong and more coherent framework for these cross-regional initiatives.

Principles for developing the regional strategy

4.17 The process for developing the strategy should provide flexibility for regions to devise for themselves the most effective working arrangements. At the same time, the process will need to meet high standards for example in relation to stakeholder and community engagement, testing of evidence and sustainability appraisal. Regional and local partners will share a commitment to the strategy and its delivery. The strategy will need to be clear, well managed and enable meaningful engagement with regional stakeholders including local communities.

4.18 Although RDAs will have executive responsibility for developing the strategy, all local authorities must be involved collectively through the leaders' forum and, where necessary, individually, in the full life-cycle of the strategy. We expect the regional tier and local government to work together to ensure that the strategy reflects a coherent story about the region's objectives and mechanisms for delivery, based on a clear evidence base.

4.19 The new process will need to meet certain principles:

- **effective engagement with stakeholders and the public.** Engagement in developing the strategy will be critical to ensuring that it effectively integrates competing demands and to ensuring that it commands support across the region;
- **a robust evidence base.** Strong evidence is fundamental to sound strategy-making. Regions should build upon emerging regional good practice and take into account the results of local economic assessments as well as other relevant evidence;
- **effective sustainability appraisal, including scoping of issues and appraisal of options.** RDAs and local authorities should consider economic, social and environmental impacts by combining assessments required under EU and UK legislation with a sustainability appraisal. In particular, we expect that regional strategies will be subject to strategic environmental assessment. This will involve scoping the issues, appraising options, consulting stakeholders and reporting on how the results of appraisal have informed decision-making;
- **the strategy should be independently tested in public.** 'Examinations in public', which are currently carried out for regional

spatial strategies, provide a model for this at regional level. These are structured debates facilitated by an independent panel and focusing on those issues which are particularly contested. Subjecting the strategy to testing with an independent report acts as a critical safeguard that the wide range of potential interests has been properly considered in a transparent manner; and

- **sign-off** at regional level involving both the RDA and local authority leaders' forum. The RDA will then submit the agreed draft to Ministers for approval.

A new process for developing the regional strategy

4.20 In order to meet these principles, the process for developing single regional strategies will need to be clear, open and transparent. It also needs to be efficient, both to ensure that regional strategies can be put in place and updated in a timely way, and to ensure that regional partners and stakeholders can engage effectively. For these reasons:

- central Government would provide greater clarity on national priority expectations at the beginning of the process, for example through the new national policy statements on infrastructure, advice on regional economic growth objectives and guidance on regional ranges of housing supply requirements;
- the new system would give regions flexibility to determine the detailed working arrangements for preparing the strategy and implementation plan, subject to these meeting the core principles set out above. This means RDAs and local authorities could build on those arrangements that work best in their region, including arrangements at sub-regional level, and could set these out with timings in an agreed project plan at the start;
- the economic assessments undertaken by local authorities under the new duty, if introduced, would be an input to the improved regional evidence base;
- Government would work with RDAs, local authorities and stakeholders to develop a single national core sustainability framework against which all regional strategies can be appraised; and
- 'examination in public' or 'independent testing' would be embedded as a means for engaging stakeholders on contentious issues during the drafting process instead of leaving it as an additional process reporting separately to central Government.

4.21 A more detailed explanation of the proposed process is set out in the figure on page 35. With good process management, a full regional strategy review could potentially be achieved within 24 months. Depending on the issues, a partial review may be possible within 18 months.

Independent testing of the strategy with stakeholders

4.22 Various regions have already found innovative ways of engaging with a wide range of stakeholders, including local communities, in regional strategy-making. Stakeholder engagement needs to be meaningful and to contribute to building consensus around the regional strategy. Independent testing is, however, particularly important in building confidence in regional strategies and allowing full scrutiny by stakeholders.

4.23 The Government envisages that, under these proposals, an independent panel would be appointed early in the process. Once the RDA, working with the leaders' forum, had identified the issues to be tested and possible options, the panel would facilitate sessions, covering specific topics or sub-regions. These discussions would engage stakeholders in appraising the options, test the evidence base and narrow down the contentious issues. On the basis of the information gathered by the panel, the RDA and leaders' forum would identify a preferred set of priorities and actions. At this stage the panel would hold a final session focussing on unresolved issues and report back to the RDA and leaders forum.

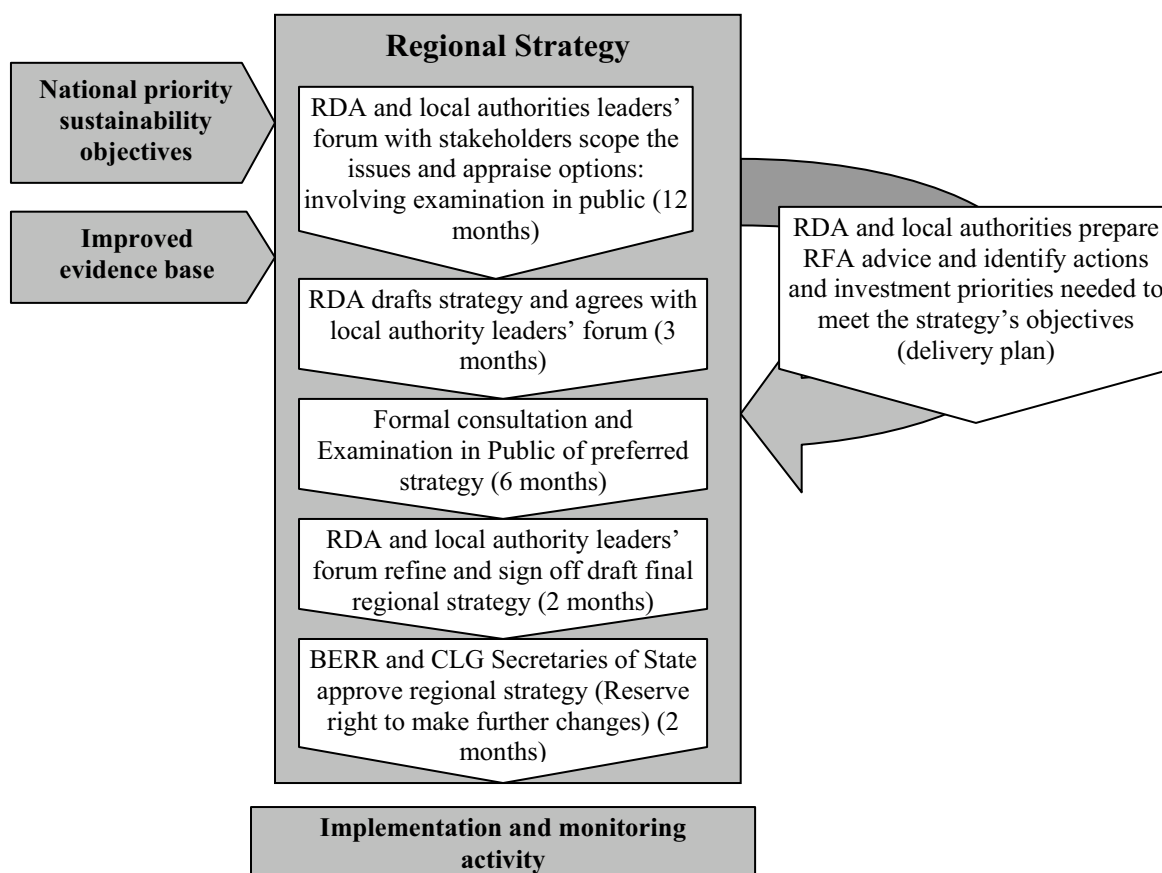
Sign off and approval

4.24 The Government proposes that the strategy is signed off by local authorities and Ministers. A two step process is proposed. The RDA will lead the development of the strategy, taking account of the work of local authorities in the area, and will be responsible for agreeing a draft with the leaders' forum, who will sign off the draft strategy on behalf of all individual local authorities. Following this, the RDA would submit the strategy to BERR and CLG Ministers for approval.

4.25 The Government expects RDAs and all local authorities to co-operate in the development and implementation of the regional strategy and to agree the draft strategy before submitting to Ministers. If the regional partners fail to agree on the draft regional strategy, the RDA should submit the draft strategy to Ministers noting points of disagreement. Ministers would then take this evidence and that of the independent panel into account in reaching a decision on the final content before deciding whether to approve the strategy.

4.26 The figure below illustrates the proposed process for developing and testing the new regional strategy.

Figure: new integrated streamlined process



Q5 Do you agree with the way in which we propose to simplify the preparation of the regional strategy, as illustrated in the figure, in particular allowing flexibility for regions to determine detailed processes? If not what other steps might we take?

Q6. Do you think that the streamlined process would lead to any significant changes in the costs and benefits to the community and other impacts?

Delivery plan

4.27 To encourage a greater focus on delivery, it is important that partners agree how they will contribute to meeting the strategy's objectives. The Government is considering whether it should require a delivery plan setting out actions and investment priorities, and the nature of accountability arrangements for such a plan.

Review of the strategy

4.28 The timing of RSS and RES reviews and publication is flexible. We wish to retain this flexibility and leave it to regions to decide when to review their regional strategy (perhaps every five years). However, Ministers would be able to require a refresh or review of a regional strategy to reflect significant changes to national priorities. Any changes to a regional strategy would need to be submitted to the Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform and Communities and Local Government Secretaries of State for approval. Any delivery plan setting out action and investment priorities might be reviewed more frequently, perhaps every 2-3 years.

5 – STRENGTHENING SUB-REGIONAL ECONOMIES – THE ROLE OF LOCAL AUTHORITIES

This chapter invites comments on:

- the aim, rationale and form of a proposed local authority economic assessment duty – including options for consultation, extending the duty to London, capacity, assessment, timetable and costs; and
- sub-regional co-operation, including MAAs; statutory arrangements for sub-regional collaboration on economic development issues; and integrated transport authorities.

5.1 The Local Government White Paper⁸ provided the blueprint for a new approach to delivery at the local and regional level. Progress across the range of policy areas covered by the White Paper has been rapid. Highlights include:

- *The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007*, which provides a legislative framework on which many of the proposals in the White Paper are based, received Royal Assent in October 2007;
- the announcement, as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review, of a single set of national priorities for local authorities working alone or in partnership, to be measured through a single set of 198 national performance indicators;
- a small number of agreed priorities for areas between central government and local government and its partners through the negotiation of new Local Area Agreements (LAAs);
- a new approach to assessment and inspection through the Comprehensive Area Assessment;
- a National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy to build capacity and capability within the system; and
- a concordat between central and local government establishing, for the first time, an agreement on the rights and responsibilities of local government, including its responsibilities to provide effective leadership of the local area and to empower local communities.

5.2 The SNR built on this by providing the framework for local authorities and RDAs to work more closely on economic development and regeneration. Interventions should take place at the most appropriate level, be aligned, avoid duplication and contribute to sustainable economic growth – both in individual places and across the region. The RDA will lead on development of the regional strategy informed by local authorities' contribution to the evidence base and local authorities will work with partners to deliver parts of the strategy at sub-

⁸ Strong and Prosperous Communities – the Local Government White Paper, Communities and Local Government, October 2006

regional and local levels. Local authorities will continue to promote economic development as they do now – for example through LAAs – but in a way that promotes sub-regional collaboration where appropriate and in line with the regional strategy. In the future, MAAs will provide an important lever for achieving this.

5.3 If this collaborative approach is to be effective, it will be important for activities at different levels to be built on a robust, shared evidence base. The SNR proposed that improved knowledge about the economic conditions of every place – including both opportunities and challenges – should inform both activity at local and sub-regional levels, and the development of regional strategies.

LOCAL AUTHORITY ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT DUTY

5.4 The SNR included a commitment to consult on the creation of a focused statutory economic assessment duty for local authorities. Such a duty would:

- require upper tier and unitary local authorities (“lead authorities”) - in consultation with other key partners, including district authorities and RDAs, to carry out an assessment of the economic conditions of their local area; and
- result in an assessment that would contribute to the analytical underpinning of strategies and targets at local, sub-regional and regional levels.

Aim and rationale

5.5 Following research commissioned by Communities and Local Government⁹ the Government believes that a new duty would add value to existing arrangements and practice through:

- an improved evidence base to inform the Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Development Framework and LAA;
- improved understanding of how economic development can support regeneration priorities in the area;
- analysis of the ways in which local areas fit into wider sub-regional and regional functional markets, recognising that economic markets and market failures rarely reflect administrative boundaries ;
- better understanding of how local authorities and their partners through their wider policies (e.g. on schools, health, crime etc.) influence sustainable economic development; and
- development of a shared evidence base that supports sub-regional economic development activity (through MAAs or other sub-

⁹ Review of Economic Assessment and Strategy Activity at the Local and Sub-Regional Level, Middlesex University Business School, February 2008

regional structures) and support local authorities' dialogue with RDAs on the development of the regional strategy.

5.6 In turn, this improved and agreed evidence base could lead to:

- enhanced local authority capability and capacity on economic development issues, with greater understanding of the conditions required for business to flourish;
- more effective prioritisation of economic and regeneration interventions;
- clarity of roles leading to greater delegation of resources from national government and RDAs to local authorities;
- improved local authority engagement with private sector partners; and
- a stronger, higher quality local authority input to the iterative dialogue, led by the RDA, on the development of the regional strategy.

5.7 The assessment may be produced jointly by two or more lead authorities in a single functional economic area or sub-region, for example by all authorities participating in an MAA.

Proposed legislative form

5.8 The new duty would build on local authorities' existing power at section 2 of the Local Government Act 2000 for local authorities to do anything they consider likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of their area. This power would remain unchanged. Similarly, both the duty on authorities under section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 to prepare a Sustainable Community Strategy, and the duty on county and local planning authorities to keep under review matters expected to affect the development of their area, or the planning of its development, under sections 13 and 14 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 would remain. However, an economic assessment duty would complement and strengthen the economic element of this activity, including through a broader, sub-regional approach.

5.9 The Government is currently consulting on a new Planning Policy Statement (PPS4) on planning for sustainable economic development. This sets out how planning bodies should, in the wider context of delivering sustainable development, plan positively for sustainable economic growth and respond to the challenges of the global economy, in their planning policies and decisions. The economic assessment duty and PPS4 will be mutually reinforcing and will improve the capacity and quality of local economic development. Additionally, the economic assessment duty would contribute a sub-regional analysis.

Options

5.10 Three options are set out in paragraphs 5.11 to 5.18 below.

Option 1

5.11 Primary legislation would be introduced, the effect of which would be to place a duty on lead authorities to assess the economic conditions of their local areas. There would also be a duty on lead authorities to consult certain named partners (see Responsibility for carrying out the assessment section below) – and others whom they consider to be appropriate - in the preparation of any assessment. Lead authorities would have a power to require information from named partners (including lower-tier authorities), who would also be under a duty to respond to consultation within a specified period of time. RDAs would be required to have regard to assessments in the preparation of regional strategies.

5.12 The lead authority would be required to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State as to the preparation of the assessments. This guidance would describe the manner in which assessments might be conducted. The guidance would set out clearly:

- the purpose of an assessment of economic conditions;
- how they might be undertaken;
- who could undertake the assessment on behalf of local authorities;
- questions the assessment should look to answer, including in support of the regional strategy; and
- the data sets available that would support successful completion of any assessment.

5.13 The purpose of any guidance would be to support effective assessments while remaining light-touch. The guidance would be consistent with the commitments, made in the Local Government White Paper and the Central Local Concordat, to keep guidance to a minimum. It could also signpost other relevant government policies, for example the need for local authority business support to comply with the Business Support Simplification Framework. Any such guidance could be included as part of the final statutory guidance, *Creating strong, safe and prosperous communities* (which covers, amongst other things, Sustainable Community Strategies and Local Area Agreements).

5.14 This option would be similar in approach to section 116 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which includes at section 116 a provision for a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Health and Social Care.

Option 2

5.15 As for option 1, there will be a requirement on authorities to assess the economic conditions of their local areas. There would be no requirement on

authorities to have regard to guidance issued by Secretary of State. However, the legislation would set out some priority areas that would need to be covered by the assessment such as:

- the level of employment in the area;
- transport;
- procurement of goods and services; and
- land and property markets.

5.16 While no statutory guidance would be issued under this option, non-statutory guidance could be issued by the Secretary of State to assist local authorities in preparing their assessments in accordance with the requirements set out on the face of any Act. Any such guidance could also suggest that other areas that local authorities might wish to cover in an assessment. In addition, local government partners may decide to issue documentation such as good practice examples of effective assessments, advice on capacity building and links to the location of valuable data sets.

Option 3

5.17 No new duty would be introduced. Local authorities would continue to use their current statutory powers and duties to play a stronger economic development role.

5.18 The Government believes this option fails to enhance economic development and regeneration interventions, but recognises the importance of consulting on a 'no change' option.

Q7. Which of these options (or any other proposals) is most appropriate?

Q8. What additional information or support do local authorities consider valuable for the purpose of preparing assessments?

Responsibility for carrying out the assessment

5.19 The SNR proposed that, in two tier authorities, the upper tier - either on their own or jointly with other authorities - would carry out the required assessment of economic conditions in consultation with other key partners. This is because functional economic areas are likely to be sub-regional and it therefore makes greater sense to place the duty on the upper tier authority. However, the Government recognises that economic development expertise and capacity - particularly in relation to planning functions - also exists at district level and is committed to ensuring that, where the duty applies principally to upper-tier authorities in two-tier areas, the lower tier should be fully involved. The Government would expect the assessment data gathered to be made available widely across local government, the RDAs and other regional partners.

5.20 In the preparation of any assessment, lead authorities would be required to consult certain named bodies and would be able to consult others whom they consider to be appropriate. Those whom lead authorities would need to consult would include appropriate delivery partners, for example, the Environment Agency, the Highways Agency, the Homes and Communities Agency, Integrated Transport Authorities, Jobcentre Plus, the Learning and Skills Council, Natural England, and the Regional Development Agencies. We would strongly encourage them to consult additional bodies and organisations including businesses and business organisations. There would be a duty on named partners (including lower-tier authorities) to respond to any consultation within a given period of time.

Q9. How should lead authorities engage partners, including district councils, in the preparation of the assessment?

Q10. Which partner bodies should be consulted in the preparation of the assessment?

London

5.21 The capital has a unique set of governance arrangements: the Greater London Authority (GLA) – through a directly elected Mayor of London – provides strategic leadership and is responsible for preparing a suite of strategies for London, including a spatial development plan (the London Plan), transport strategy and economic development strategy, while the 32 London Boroughs and City of London provide local services.

5.22 The Government is keen for London boroughs – like other local authorities nationally – to promote the conditions for economic success in their area, and a statutory requirement on individual boroughs to undertake an assessment of their local economic circumstances could further help to strengthen the economic evidence base for their Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks and LAAs. But given London's governance arrangements and the nature of its economy, this could lead to individual assessments which fail to reflect the wider trends affecting the capital's economy and analysis underpinning the Mayor's city-wide strategies. Accordingly, three options for taking forward any duty within London have been identified:

- a duty only on London boroughs to undertake an assessment of their local area, with a statutory requirement to consult the GLA. Boroughs could discharge this duty individually or jointly with each other;
- a duty on boroughs and GLA to undertake joint local assessments. It would be for the borough and GLA to decide the best way of discharging this duty but it could be on a pan-London or sub-regional basis; and
- No duty on boroughs.

Q11. Should any duty apply in London and, if so, which of the proposed models is most appropriate?

Capacity and assessment

5.23 Lack of capacity to carry out the assessment effectively among some local authorities is an issue that has been raised by a number of stakeholders since publication of the SNR. The Government will work with the Local Government Association and the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) to assess capacity and develop strategy for overcoming any shortfall that is identified. This – and subsequent capacity building programmes – will be supported through the National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy.

5.24 If adopted, the Government will not monitor lead authorities' assessments of the economic conditions of their areas. The Government expects that assessments would improve local authorities' knowledge and ability to strengthen performance against the local government performance framework's economic indicators. The Audit Commission has indicated that inspectorates would take account of the effectiveness of local economic assessments as part of the evidence base of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). This would also make it possible to identify whether there were further capacity issues to address.

Timetable and frequency

5.25 The Government would expect to enact the duty as part of legislation to take forward SNR proposals at the earliest available opportunity. Subject to legislation – and following any necessary capacity building - local authorities could be asked to undertake their first assessments in 2010-11 in time to contribute to local strategies and LAA targets for 2011-12 (which will similarly be informed by the regional strategy). Reviews of assessments might then take place annually with new assessments at least every third year.

Costs

5.26 The Government expects that the new duty will incur additional costs to local authorities. The Government will fund any reasonable costs following a new burden assessment. A partial impact assessment is attached at appendix 1.

COLLABORATION ACROSS SUB-REGIONS

5.27 Functioning economic markets are unlikely to follow local authority boundaries, so collaboration between local authorities, for example across city-regions, can be an important means of delivering better economic outcomes. The SNR set out the advantages of economic development decision-making at the sub-regional level. There are a number of examples of effective sub-regional working in England (e.g. Tees Valley) and the Government wishes to support these and encourage stronger sub-regional leadership and collaboration in other places.

Multi-Area Agreements

5.28 The Government has set out the case, through the Local Government White Paper and the SNR for Multi-Area Agreements (MAAs) to complement LAAs and enable local authorities to move further and faster towards improved economic prosperity by working across administrative boundaries. Guidance on MAAs was issued in November 2007 as part of the Communities and Local Government publication, *Development of LAA Framework: Operational Guidance 2008*. This guidance sets out the rationale for MAAs and the principles that govern their development. The Government is currently negotiating with over a dozen sub-regions looking to agree the first MAAs by June 2008.

Integrated Transport Authorities

5.29 The Local Transport Bill - which was published on 8 November – empowers local authorities to review existing governance arrangements in their area for planning and delivering transport services and, where they consider that these could be improved, to bring forward proposals for change. This allows flexibility for different areas to propose different arrangements according to the specific needs of their area. In particular, it allows for changes to transport governance in the former Metropolitan counties, including to the strategic roles of Passenger Transport Authorities (PTAs), which are renamed by the Bill as Integrated Transport Authorities (ITAs) to reflect their new expanded responsibility for transport planning across the whole Metropolitan area. In carrying out their reviews areas will, among other things, need to consider the relationship between the revised arrangements they propose and the changes at regional level which will flow from the SNR. In turn, revised regional architecture will need to take account of changes in sub-regional transport arrangements.

Alternative approaches to planning sub-national transport infrastructure

5.30 In his 2006 report, Sir Rod Eddington highlighted the importance of transport to economic performance. Strong transport networks link people to jobs, deliver products to markets and support trade.

5.31 The 2007 Planning White Paper responded to one of Sir Rod's key findings: that improvements to transport infrastructure can only be delivered effectively through a fresh approach to planning. It also acknowledged a new potential role for local authorities as decision makers in relation to local transport infrastructure. The Planning Bill currently before Parliament is already paving the way for improvements to the system for planning nationally significant transport and other infrastructure.

5.32 At present, the Secretary of State for Transport acts as the consenting authority for a range of sub-national transport projects, including trams; local highways and guided busways. The Planning Bill does not seek to change this. The existing approach allows the Secretary of State to consider a scheme in its

entirety and act as an impartial decision-making body. However, it could also be seen as reducing a local authority's ability to act as a "place shaper" and creating distance between people and the planning of their local transport infrastructure.

5.33 The Government will consider the case for devolving some or all of these consenting powers to alternative bodies at the regional, sub-regional or local level and has already begun informal consultation with a range of stakeholders. This might involve local authorities, Integrated Transport Authorities and the Greater London Authority.

5.34 No decisions have yet been taken about whether these powers could be devolved, or if so, to which authorities. The Department for Transport will consult on this later this year.

Statutory arrangements for sub-regional collaboration on economic development issues

5.35 The SNR recognised that some sub-regions may wish to go beyond MAAs and other existing mechanisms for sub-regional collaboration. Some sub-regions have already established joint committees to strengthen partnership working. However, there may be advantages in strengthening the statutory basis for sub-regional collaboration where there is demand from local authorities and it is appropriate to do so.

5.36 The Government proposes to work with interested local authorities towards establishing statutory sub-regional arrangements for economic development activity going beyond transport. This would enhance the ability of authorities to drive forward improvements to support sustainable sub-regional growth, and enable funding and responsibility to be devolved or delegated directly to the sub-region, rather than to individual local authorities or to one local authority acting as the accountable body for a sub-regional partnership. Such arrangements would also bind in local authorities to long-term decision-making.

5.37 The Government would like to know what type of projects would be facilitated by giving a sub-regional partnership powers to carry out activities of this kind and what is preventing them from being carried out under the current legislation. These might be new duties, or potentially delegations of existing powers from the collaborating authorities. The bulk of these would be expected to have strong links to economic development, for example:

- delivering relevant parts of the regional strategy;
- preparing a joint local development framework, and/or taking certain planning decisions of a strategic nature;
- assuming the responsibilities of an integrated transport authority for planning and delivering sub-regional transport;

- co-operating on economic growth projects supported by business rate supplements (subject to legislation);
- implementing any business rate supplement (subject to legislation);
- making decisions in relation to higher education and skills funding (subject to legislation);
- investment for housing growth and renewal; and
- Local Authority Business Growth Incentive scheme.

5.38 The Government would not wish to unduly constrain the scope of a sub-regional partnership and would be prepared to consider a wider range of functions. Nevertheless, in circumstances where co-operation is proposed that extends significantly beyond economic development to cover a large part of local authorities' activities, councils may wish to consider whether an appropriate way forward, perhaps using the processes under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, might be to merge, or to propose some well-targeted and clearly focused reorganisation.

5.39 Placing sub-regional economic development activity on a statutory basis would require primary legislation which would set the framework in which sub-regions would operate. The detailed arrangements for each sub-regional authority would be set out in secondary legislation. However, the Government anticipates that any sub-region that wanted to pursue this option would need to adhere to four fundamental principles:

- membership – collaboration would be on the basis of co-operation between elected members of existing local authorities. Where an ITA already existed the Government would normally expect the new sub-regional partnership to assume its responsibilities;
- funding – there would be no additional Council Tax precept. Funding for running costs would be provided by partner local authorities. Programme funding would come from those local authorities and other public and private sector contributors;
- costs – the new arrangements would be expected to be cost-neutral with additional costs covered by efficiency savings arising from joint working; and
- accountability – there must be a clear way in which the public can hold local councillors to account for the way the arrangements operate and how local taxpayers' money is being spent.

5.40 There are a number of factors which may help to facilitate effective sub-regional working. These could include ensuring that members are jointly responsible for delivering against their agreed sub-regional priorities or the ability to jointly hold assets and award contracts. Government is considering

different approaches, including building on the existing joint committee or joint board arrangements.

5.41 Under a joint committee, it may be possible to add certain specified powers and responsibilities beyond those of an ordinary joint committee. For example, it might have powers to hold money on a joint basis and be jointly and severally liable for any decisions made as to how to spend it. However, a joint committee would not have legal personality.

5.42 Building on a joint board model could provide a legal entity which is able to employ staff directly. It could own its own assets and award its own contracts, but would not have precepting powers.

5.43 The Government would also welcome views on the way in which statutory sub-regional collaboration would fit into the local government performance framework. One approach would be to have an MAA focussing on economic development issues with the participating authorities. A related issue is whether the duty to co-operate that currently applies to LAAs should be extended to MAAs with statutory sub-regional partnerships.

5.44 Subject to this consultation, the Government intends to legislate to allow development of formal legal status for sub-regional collaborative arrangements to support economic development. This is one of a range of options that are being considered as a means of strengthening sub-regional leadership.

Q12. Do you agree that there is value in creating statutory arrangements for sub-regional collaboration on economic development issues beyond MAAs? What form might any new arrangements take?

Q13. What activities would you like a sub-regional partnership to be able to carry out and what are the constraints on them doing this under the current legislation?

Q14. How would a sub-regional economic development authority fit into the local authority performance framework?

Q15. Should there be a duty to co-operate at sub-regional level where a statutory partnership exists? To whom should this apply?

Summary: Intervention & Options

Department /Agency: CLG	Title: Impact Assessment of Local Authority Economic Assessment Duty	
Stage: Consultation	Version: Draft	Date: 08/03/2008
Related Publications:		

Available to view or download at:

Contact for enquiries: Chris Megainey

Telephone: 020 7944 3137

What is the problem under consideration? Why is government intervention necessary?

Local government faces weak incentives to consider how their activities affect economic performance both locally and in neighbouring areas, due to: requirement to perform other statutory duties; limited financial gains from economic growth due to business tax centralisation; the costs of growth tending to be localised whilst benefits disperse across LA boundaries.

Economic activity does not respect administrative boundaries and it is important that local authorities and their partners understand how the local economy fits into the wider functional economy.

What are the policy objectives and the intended effects?

The objectives are to ensure local authorities and their partners develop a sound understanding of local economic conditions to inform existing local strategies and strengthen the economic role of local authorities.

A better understanding of how local economic activity links with the wider economy will lead to more effective economic development policy at sub-regional and regional levels.

What policy options have been considered? Please justify any preferred option.

The policy options are:

- (i) No change
- (ii) Local authorities to prepare assessment, with regard to guidance set out by the Secretary of State.
- (iii) Local authorities to prepare assessment, no requirement on authorities to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

When will the policy be reviewed to establish the actual costs and benefits and the achievement of the desired effects? 2012

Ministerial Sign-off For SELECT STAGE Impact Assessments:

I have read the Impact Assessment and I am satisfied that, given the available evidence, it represents a reasonable view of the likely costs, benefits and impact of the leading options.

Signed by the responsible Minister:

.....Date:

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: (ii)

Description: Local authorities to prepare assessment, with regard to guidance set out by the Secretary of State

COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Full assessment (every 3 years): Additional cost to local authorities: £7m (£6.2m excluding London) Cost to partner bodies: £2.5m (£1.9m excluding London) Annual update. Cost to local authorities, £1.1m (£0.9m excluding London)
	One-off (Transition)	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off)		
	£ 3.9m		Total Cost (PV) £ 30.1m
Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'			

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Monetised benefits stem from savings from more co-ordinated economic development services by local authorities and partners. Monetary benefits may be recycled into providing more services and hence result in further improvements in economic outcomes.
	One-off	Yrs	
	£ 0		
	Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off)		
	£ 7.9m		Total Benefit (PV) £ 52.4m
Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' There are likely to be benefits from improved employment outcomes, which are likely to be largest amongst those currently workless. There are also likely to be improvements in productivity.			

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks Key assumptions: the duty will help local authorities identify savings from opportunities for joint working duplication, and superior targeting of policies; there will be shared working amongst local authorities, particularly in urban areas; there will be no additional data costs; not all the cost will be additional. See evidence base for more detail.

Price Base Year 2011-12	Time Period Years 9	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £ -14.5m to 57.5m	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £ 22.3m
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	England only			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	2011-12			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	through inspectorates			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	Yes/No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£ 0			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Are any of these organisations exempt?	No	No	N/A	N/A

Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices)		(Increase - Decrease)	
Increase of £	Decrease of £	Net Impact	£ 0

Key: Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices (Net) Present Value

Summary: Analysis & Evidence

Policy Option: (iii)	Description: Local Authorities to prepare assessment, no requirement for authorities to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State
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COSTS	ANNUAL COSTS		Description and scale of key monetised costs by 'main affected groups' Full assessment (every 3 years): Additional cost to local authorities: £7m (£6.2m excluding London) Cost to partner bodies: £2.5m (£1.9m excluding London) Annual update. Cost to local authorities, £1.1m (£0.9m excluding London)	
	One-off (Transition)	Yrs		
	£			
	Average Annual Cost (excluding one-off)			
	£ 3.9m		Total Cost (PV)	£ 30.1m
Other key non-monetised costs by 'main affected groups'				

BENEFITS	ANNUAL BENEFITS		Description and scale of key monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' Monetised benefits stem from savings from more co-ordinated economic development services by local authorities and partners. Monetary benefits may be recycled into providing more services and hence result in further improvements in economic outcomes.	
	One-off	Yrs		
	£			
	Average Annual Benefit (excluding one-off)			
	£ 7.9m		Total Benefit (PV)	£ 52.4m
Other key non-monetised benefits by 'main affected groups' There are likely to be benefits from improved employment outcomes, which are likely to be largest amongst those currently workless. There are also likely to be improvements in productivity.				

Key Assumptions/Sensitivities/Risks Key assumptions: the duty will help local authorities identify savings from opportunities for joint working duplication, and superior targeting of policies; there will be shared working amongst local authorities, particularly in urban areas; there will be no additional data costs; not all the cost will be additional. See evidence base for more detail.

Price Base Year 2011-12	Time Period Years 9	Net Benefit Range (NPV) £ -14.5m to 57.5m	NET BENEFIT (NPV Best estimate) £ 22.3m
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What is the geographic coverage of the policy/option?	England only			
On what date will the policy be implemented?	2011-12			
Which organisation(s) will enforce the policy?	Audit Commission			
What is the total annual cost of enforcement for these organisations?	£ 0			
Does enforcement comply with Hampton principles?	Yes			
Will implementation go beyond minimum EU requirements?	Yes/No			
What is the value of the proposed offsetting measure per year?	£ n/a			
What is the value of changes in greenhouse gas emissions?	£ 0			
Will the proposal have a significant impact on competition?	No			
Annual cost (£-£) per organisation (excluding one-off)	Micro	Small	Medium	Large
Are any of these organisations exempt?	No	No	N/A	N/A

Impact on Admin Burdens Baseline (2005 Prices)		(Increase - Decrease)	
Increase of	£ 0	Decrease of	£
		Net Impact	£ 0

Key: Annual costs and benefits: Constant Prices (Net) Present Value

Evidence Base (for summary sheets)

[Use this space (with a recommended maximum of 30 pages) to set out the evidence, analysis and detailed narrative from which you have generated your policy options or proposal. Ensure that the information is organised in such a way as to explain clearly the summary information on the preceding pages of this form.]

Background and Overview

1. The *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration* ('SNR') sets out an enhanced role for local authorities in promoting economic development and regeneration. As part of this package, the SNR included a commitment to consult on the creation of a focused statutory economic assessment duty for local authorities¹⁰. Such a duty would:
 - require upper tier and unitary local authorities ("lead authorities") - in consultation with other key partners, including district authorities - to carry out an assessment of the economic conditions of their local area; and
 - result in an assessment that would form part of the analytical underpinning of Sustainable Community Strategies, Local Development Frameworks, Local and Multi-Area Agreement targets and the integrated Regional Strategy
2. Drawing on research commissioned by Communities and Local Government¹¹ the Government believes that a new duty would add value to existing arrangements and practice through:
 - improved evidence base to inform Sustainable Community Strategy, Local Development Framework and Local Area Agreement
 - improved understanding of how economic development can support regeneration priorities in the area
 - analysis of the ways in which local areas fit into wider sub-regional and regional functional markets, recognising that economic markets and market failures rarely reflect administrative boundaries
 - better understanding of how local authorities and their partners through their wider policies (e.g. on schools, health, crime etc.) influence sustainable economic development
 - development of a shared evidence base that supports sub-regional economic development activity (through MAAs or other sub-regional structures) and support local authorities' dialogue with RDAs on the development of the regional strategy.
3. In turn, this improved and agreed evidence base could lead to:
 - enhanced local authority capability and capacity on economic development issues, with greater understanding of the conditions required for business to flourish
 - more effective prioritisation of economic and regeneration interventions
 - clarity of the roles leading to greater delegation of greater resources from national government and RDAs to local authorities
 - improved local authority engagement with private sector partners

¹⁰ Para 6.13, *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration*, HM Treasury, BERR, CLG, July 2007

¹¹ *Review of Economic Assessment and Strategy Activity at the Local and Sub-Regional Level*, Syrett, S. February 2008

- a stronger, higher quality local authority input to the iterative dialogue, led by the RDA, on the development of the regional strategy
4. The assessment may be produced jointly by two or more lead authorities in a single functional economic area or sub-region, for example by all authorities participating in an MAA.

Policy Options

5. Three options have been set out in the consultation paper. They are:
- Option 1, no new duty (“do nothing”);
 - Option 2, an assessment, with guidance;
 - Option 3, Assessment without guidance.
6. The consultation paper also sets out three options for how the duty will operate in London:
- i. Duty on the boroughs;
 - ii. Joint Duty on the GLA and the boroughs;
 - iii. No Duty in London.
7. For the purposes of this Impact Assessment, it is assumed that the costs and benefits of options (i) and (ii) will be the same.

Option 1

8. Option 1 would require no change to existing practice, which research shows is highly variable between authorities. Some local authorities already play a strong role in economic development, based on assessments of the economic circumstances of their local area. All local authorities are required to set out sustainable community strategies which set the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area¹². Sustainable Community Strategies should contain the following elements:
- The **long-term vision based firmly on local needs**. This will be underpinned by a shared evidence base informed by community aspirations.
 - **Key priorities for the local area**, based upon this vision which may realistically be achieved in the medium term – these will inform the strategy’s delivery agreement – the LAA.
9. Therefore, option 1 is the baseline against which the benefits of options 1 and 2 are compared.

Option 2

10. Under option 2, a duty would be placed on lead authorities to assess the economic conditions of their local areas. There would also be a duty on lead authorities to consult certain named partners – and others whom they consider to be appropriate - in the preparation of any assessment. Lead authorities would have a power to require information from named partners (including lower-tier authorities), who would be under a duty to respond to consultation [within a given

¹² *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities Statutory Guidance: Draft for Consultation*, HM Government, 2007

period of time]. The lead authority would be required to have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State as to the preparation of the assessments. This guidance could describe the manner in which assessments might be conducted. The guidance would set out clearly:

- the purpose of an assessment of economic conditions;
- how they might be undertaken;
- who could undertake the assessment on behalf of local authorities;
- questions the assessment should look to answer, including in support of the regional strategy; and
- the data sets available that would support successful completion of any assessment.

11. Providing guidance should help ensure that local assessments are more effective at addressing deficiencies in existing practice. For instance, guidance will help authorities to understand how they can analyse the ways in which local economic activity interacts with the wider economy, and hence should make it easier to build sub-regional co-operation.

Option 3

12. As for option 2, primary legislation would be introduced to place a duty on upper tier and unitary local authorities to assess the economic conditions of their local areas. There would be no requirement on authorities to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State. However, the legislation would set out some priority areas that would be need to be covered by the assessment.

13. The costs and benefits of options 2 and 3 are likely to be very similar. The list of priority areas would provide much less information to local authorities hence could reduce the benefits of undertaking an assessment. It would also be much more difficult to alter the priority areas set out in option 3, than to revise the guidance, as this would require primary legislation.

An economic rationale

14. The economic rationale for a local economic assessment is two-fold: firstly, because public provision of local economic information will be a form of *public good*, and secondly that the assessment will *improve the effectiveness of public services* that are already provided by local government and their key economic development partners.

15. A publicly available assessment of the local economy will help public bodies, private and third sector organisations to understand the way in which places impact on firms' productivity, and what barriers may be holding back economic growth. It will also help inform local government and others about what public infrastructure will be required to cope with, or catalyse, changes in an area's economy. By ensuring that existing strategies are firmly grounded in evidence, the duty will help reduce uncertainty about future public sector activity, thus benefiting the investment decisions of the private sector. Publicly available assessments and strategies are non-excludable and non-rivalrous, so can be regarded as a form of public good provision.

16. A good economic assessment should influence the public services delivered by the local authority and its partners, so that they more effectively address relevant market failures and tackle disadvantage.
17. Incentives for local authorities to support economic development can be undermined because economic activity does not respect administrative boundaries¹³. Policies with a positive net benefit at FEA level may not have a positive net benefit at LA level. For example, the costs of housing growth can be localised while the benefits are more dispersed through commuting flows. A good economic assessment can help local authorities and their partners understand how the local economy fits into the wider functional economy.
18. Incentives can also be negatively affected by the requirement to perform other statutory duties not relating to economic performance and the limited financial gains from economic growth due to the operation of the local government finance system.

Benefits

Option 1

19. There will be no additional benefits from option 1, as it represents existing practice. Under this option, it is likely that some authorities would undertake economic assessments of their area and the evidence gathered would be utilised in the formation of local strategies. However, as outlined below, research suggests that evidence on local economic activity is not systematically collected, analysed or utilised. The role of local authorities in promoting economic development would be less effective.

Option 2

20. The duty will not impact on outcomes directly, but indirectly, through affecting local government processes. The logic chain connecting improvements in local authority analysis and understanding to improved outcomes (higher productivity and employment) is set out below, with a diagrammatical representation in figure 5 (see appendix).
21. This logic chain can be better understood by setting out the key components of a good economic assessment:
 - Better understanding of the local economy;
 - Better understanding of existing policy;
 - Development of a shared understanding with partner bodies, including the private sector
22. An economic assessment will require local authorities to bring together data, evidence – and the expertise of economic development partners - to develop a sound understanding of the economic activity of the residents and firms located in the local area. Although many authorities already undertake some assessment of

¹³ This is further explored in: *CLG Economic Paper 2: Why Place Matters and Implications for the Role of Central, Regional and Local Government*, CLG, March 2008

the economy, these vary in scope and quality, and are often limited in extent¹⁴. Furthermore, research suggests that local strategies are not always underpinned by evidence.

23. For example, the consultation on the future of LSPs (published in December 2005), drew on findings from the evaluation of community strategies and reported that¹⁵:

“many community strategies contain little analysis or evidence to back up proposed actions. They tend to rely largely on community aspirations and make few references to available baseline data that should inform priorities for action.”

24. Subsequent research has reported that less than 60% of respondents to a survey of local authorities believed that their community strategy had been influenced by local statistical data to a significant extent¹⁶.

25. An assessment undertaken under the duty would also be expected to include, as a key principle of the assessment, some analysis of how the local economy interacts with the wider economy. Local authorities need to understand how their activities impact on economic activity in their area, and because successful economic development is a partnership, they should also understand how the actions of the key economic development activities in their area impact on the economy. This will require local authorities to work with their key economic development partners to map the extent and form of existing activity.

26. Developing a sound understanding of the economic conditions within the context of the wider functional economy cannot be achieved by the collection of statistical data alone, and requires analysis and interpretation, drawing on information and knowledge held by key economic development partners, including the private sector. This should help local authorities, and their partners to develop a better understanding of the needs of the private sector, and the ways in which they can work better together.

27. Developing and producing an assessment with these components should influence the way in which local government and their partners decide on their local priorities, strategies, and the way in which they work together. This in turn should have a positive effect on outcomes, in the way described below. *Further evidence on the impact of an assessment on economic outcomes will be collected through case-studies and as part of the consultation.*

Improved outputs

¹⁴ *Review of Economic Assessment and Strategy Activity at the Local and Sub-Regional Level*, Syrett, S., February 2008

¹⁵ *Local Strategic Partnerships: Shaping their future. A consultation paper*. ODPM, 2005.

¹⁶ Page 5, *Formative evaluation of Community Strategies. The use of evidence in Community Strategies*, CLG, 2006

Local government services more sensitive to economic development

28. As outlined above, local authority services are not always sensitive to their effect on economic development. Improving the understanding of how the local economy operates should help local government to ensure that their strategies and interventions are based on robust evidence and are more sensitive to the distinct needs of the firms and residents located in their area.
29. Local government delivers a number of services that contribute towards economic development, including land use planning (though this is primarily undertaken at the lower-tier level), housing, education, amenities and leisure, environmental health and regulation, licensing and permitting, street and road management, which all impact on attracting and developing a skilled workforce and productive firms.
30. For example, the economic assessment may reveal that high land prices and a shortage of land for commercial premises is a key factor constraining the growth of local firms. Evidence suggests that premises are overwhelmingly the most important reason for firm relocation¹⁷, and that tight land use planning policies can restrict economic growth¹⁸. Local authorities may use this evidence to further investigate where land for commercial development can be appropriately supplied.
31. Local authorities also play a role in delivering education and skills to their residents, which can help equip them with the skills to access work. If the assessment leads local authorities to provide skills training that are more relevant to available jobs, this could lead to higher employment and productivity through improved job matching. As part of an assessment that considers local economic activity within the context of the wider economy, authorities should also consider the skills that will be required by employers that are outside the local area but within easy reach of local residents.
32. A third instance where local government services impact on productivity and employment is their role in providing street and road management. The impact of transport on productivity has been set out in the Eddington Review¹⁹. Economic assessments may help to identify areas where local provision of public transport, or other forms of improved access could enhance employment outcomes.

Identifying duplication of economic development activities and opportunities for better co-ordination

33. Economic development is influenced by a wide range of bodies, and different agencies may operate similar interventions in the same location. The Audit Commission have highlighted a “widespread pattern of fragmentation and

¹⁷ *Territorial Competition: some lessons for policy*, Cheshire, P. and Gordon, I., *The Annals of Regional Science*, **32**, 3, 321-46, . 1998.

¹⁸ *Barker Review of Land Use Planning*, Barker, K, 2006

¹⁹ *Transport's role in sustaining UK's Productivity and Competitiveness: The Case for Action*, Eddington, R., 2006

duplication”²⁰ The assessment may help to identify opportunities for greater co-ordination and integration between different activities already undertaken by local government, and by their partners.

34. In its simplest form, this might take the form of signposting, so that, for example, agencies promoting entrepreneurship amongst disadvantaged groups are able to co-ordinate better with agencies that focus on tackling worklessness. This can help deliver better employment and productivity outcomes for the same resource. In some cases, better co-ordination, or even shared delivery may enable bodies to provide the same services at reduced cost.
35. A good assessment will take into account the links between local economic activity and the wider economy. This should reveal more opportunities for working across local authority boundaries, and could identify further scope for gains from co-operation and co-ordination. For example, policies to tackle worklessness in one authority might consider the job opportunities that exist beyond local boundaries. There may also be potential for economies of scale from shared delivery between neighbouring authorities.
36. Strategic co-ordination of the activities of different bodies and agencies can be an important way of promoting economic development, but in some areas there is a confusing array of overlapping partnerships. For example, the Audit Commission identified one local authority which was involved in 21 regeneration partnerships²¹. Ensuring clarity of roles between agencies and partnerships, and helping to build a common analysis of the opportunities and challenges facing the local economy could enable the economic development process to work better.

Identification of groups and areas facing particular economic disadvantage

37. Even in the most economically successful places, there are large variations in economic performance between neighbourhoods.²² A good local economic assessment can highlight pockets of deprivation and provide information on why these areas suffer from disadvantage. This could help local authorities and their partners to better focus their policies to tackle the root causes of disadvantage and benefit the most disadvantaged in society.

Identifying opportunities to co-operate across functional economic areas

38. An assessment that helps local authorities understand the way that local economic activity links with the wider economy may enable cross-boundary working where appropriate. As outlined above, the positive payoffs from local economic development can disperse into adjacent areas, so a policy with a net benefit at sub-regional level, may have a negative pay off at LA level and hence not be implemented. For example, the costs of housing growth can be concentrated in local areas, whereas the wider benefits, from employment growth, can disperse.

²⁰ Page 22, *A Life's Work. Local authorities, economic development and economic regeneration*, Audit Commission, 1999.

²¹ *A Life's Work. Local authorities, economic development and economic regeneration*, Audit Commission, 1999

²² *Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration*, HM Treasury, CLG, BERR 2007

39. Therefore, co-operation between local authorities across the wider area in which key economic markets operates increases the economic role they can play and can support economic growth. There is some evidence that effective governance over the functional economic area can have a positive effect on economic growth. Unpublished work by Cheshire and Magrini has suggested a positive relationship between the degree of coincidence of government and economic boundaries in EU (including British) cities and cities' economic growth performance over the 1979-1994 period.²³
40. A better evidence base at local level will help co-ordination at sub-regional level, and will also assist local areas in identifying their priorities for the regional plan. Regions will also be able to draw on local evidence to produce their strategies.

A better baseline for policy evaluation and appraisal

41. A better baseline of economic conditions and the economic policies operating can help lead to better appraisal of economic and regeneration policies. Economic development and regeneration involves an element of risk, of trying out innovative schemes to see if they work. However, evidence-based identification of problems and choice of interventions will help authorities to achieve better outcomes from the same resource. Having a clear rationale for activity is also a key element of best value.²⁴

Outcome benefits

Economic growth

42. Improving the way that local government's services support and promote economic development can impact on economic growth through increases in employment and productivity. The role of local authorities in economic development can support employment, and four of the five productivity drivers²⁵ – skills, investment, innovation and enterprise – through their roles in planning, skills, transport and enterprise support.
43. Quantifying the potential extent of benefits is extremely difficult, as there is very limited empirical evidence on the drivers of sub-national economic growth or the impact of strategies. However, to get an idea of scale, if more supportive economic development activity by local government resulted in 10 additional jobs per upper-tier LA, and a productivity improvement of 0.01%, this amounts to economic gains of £12m and £97m respectively per annum²⁶. *Further*

²³ *European urban growth: throwing some economic light into the black box*, Cheshire and Magrini, paper presented at the Spatial Econometrics Workshop, Kiel Institute for World Economics, Kiel, April 8-9 2005.

²⁴ *Review of Economic Assessment and Strategy Activity at the Local and Sub-Regional Level*, Syrett, S. February 2008

²⁵ *Productivity in the UK 7: Securing Long-term prosperity*. HMT, November 2007

²⁶ Gains from employment calculated using data from page 62 of *Reducing dependency, increasing opportunity: options for the future of welfare to work*, Freud, D. 2007. This suggested economic benefits

investigation of the potential for economic gains from effective economic assessments will be carried out during the consultation period.

Social benefits

44. In addition to the economic benefits of enhanced economic performance, there is significant evidence that reducing worklessness has important non-monetary benefits, including improved physical and mental health, and well-being²⁷..

Cost savings

45. It is also difficult to estimate the potential benefits of better targeted spend, reducing duplication and enhancing co-operation. However, it seems reasonable to assume that the assessment could lead to a 1% reduction in the cost to upper-tier local authorities of delivering the economic development services they already provide. Based on data for 2006-07, this amounts to a saving of £7.9m per annum, or £6.3m excluding London boroughs.²⁸

46. These savings could be recycled into further economic development expenditure, other local government services, or reductions in local taxation. *Further investigation of the potential for cost savings will be undertaken during the consultation period.*

Present value

47. The present value shown in figure 1 is calculated on the basis of nine years, beginning in 2010-11 (when the duty first comes into effect). The first gains are assumed to be realised in 2011-12.

Figure 1. Present value of benefits

Scenario	Per annum (excluding London)	Present value (excluding London)
Economic benefits	Not monetised	n/a
Social benefits	Not monetised	n/a
Cost savings - low	£3.9m (£3.2m)	£26.2m (£21.1m)
Cost savings - central	£7.9m (£6.3m)	£52.4m (£42.1m)
Cost savings - high	£9.5m (£11.8m)	£78.6m (£63.2m)

Distribution of benefits

48. If the duty succeeds in improving economic development outcomes, it is likely that benefits will be largest amongst the following groups:

of £8100 from returning a person from JSA to work. Productivity gains calculated from English GVA figures for 2006, from ONS Regional GVA data.

²⁷ *Reducing dependency, increasing opportunity: options for the future of welfare to work*, Freud, D., DWP 2007

²⁸ Based on RO5 returns for England, 2006-07.

- a. Age: improvements in employment and earnings outcomes will largely affect those of working age;
- b. Ethnic group: better targeting will produce benefits for groups and areas suffering from economic disadvantage. These benefits should be larger amongst minority ethnic groups;

49. Further information on the potential information on different groups is presented in the equality impact assessments (see annex).

Option 3

50. The benefits of option 3 depend upon how local authorities choose to carry out an economic assessment in the absence of central government guidance. Given the way in which economic assessments are currently undertaken, it is likely that assessments will be less thorough, have less impact and provide less information on the functional economic area under option 3 than under option 2. This may in part be rectified if the local government associations choose to produce guidance of their own.

51. However, given the significant uncertainties in estimating benefits, separate calculations have not been undertaken for this option, and it is assumed that benefits will be of the same magnitude as for option 2 above.

Costs

Option 1

52. There will be no additional costs under option 1, as this assumes no change to existing practice.

Option 2

53. The estimate of the additional cost of option 2 covers the following topics:

- Staff and data costs;
- Possible cost savings from joint working;
- Involvement of lower-tier authorities;
- Involvement of partner organisations;
- Annual updates;
- Capacity;
- Existing expenditure by authorities;
- Net Present Value.

Staff and data costs

54. Although local authorities may choose to make use of data held by private companies (e.g. MOSAIC) or commission specific local surveys, there is enough data freely available to enable a good economic assessment to be undertaken. Therefore, it is assumed that this duty will not require additional spending on data, and so the additional burden will arise exclusively from additional staff costs, plus a provision for overheads.
55. Developing a robust assessment that provides authorities with a sound understanding of the economic conditions within the context of the wider functional economy, cannot be achieved by the collection of statistical data alone. It will require analysis and interpretation, drawing on information and knowledge held by key economic development partners, including the private sector. Local authorities will therefore need to devote resources to analysing and interpreting raw data, and to sharing and developing this information with partners.
56. Local authorities will also need to work with their partners to understand how they and their partners impact on economic activity in their area. The costs to partner organisations are estimated below.
57. Two sources of evidence were used to estimate the costs of carrying out an assessment: case studies of good practice and the cost estimates from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
58. Telephone interviews were undertaken with a number of economic development organisations, including some local authorities, who have undertaken economic assessments that have been identified as being of good quality.²⁹ The results of these case studies are summarised in the annex.
59. The case studies were used to obtain an indication of the staff structure and time devoted to compiling the assessment. This was then multiplied by an estimate of staff costs³⁰, which incorporates National Insurance contributions and pension costs. An additional 30% has also been added to account for overhead costs of 30%, in line with Cabinet Office guidance. The cost of engaging external consultants is also included, where they were used. The case studies indicate a cost range of £55,000 - £95,000 per local authority.
60. As outlined above, authorities will also need to devote resources to developing the assessment with key partners. If preparing, attending and responding to the comments from stakeholder meetings takes two days of a project manager's time and there are five meetings then this corresponds to approximately 70 hours over the lifetime of the project. Including overhead costs, this equates to approximately £6,000 per local authority.

²⁹ Good quality economic assessments and strategies were identified in the process of compiling: *Review of Economic Assessment and Strategy Activity at the Local and Sub-Regional Level*, Syrett, March 2008

³⁰ Hourly wages taken from *Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE)*, 2007 -2008

61. Therefore, the overall cost to upper-tier authorities of developing the assessment, in conjunction with partners, can be estimated as falling in the range: £60,000 - £100,000 per authority, at current (2007) prices.
62. A Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) is the means by which Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) and local authorities will describe the future health, care and well-being needs of local populations and the strategic direction of service delivery to meet those needs. Whilst the JSNA clearly covers different areas of policy to an economic assessment, it is similarly designed to answer a range of questions that will help PCTs and local authorities to develop their activities so it more closely meets the wants and needs of local people. This suggests it may be a reasonable benchmark for an economic assessment.
63. The costs of this assessment were estimated in the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill at £72,000 per assessment, including costs to local authorities. This falls in the lower-middle of the range outlined above, and supports a central estimate of £80,000 per economic assessment, at current prices.

Cost savings from joint working

64. We would expect some authorities to choose to work together on parts or all of an assessment, as this would help them to develop an understanding of how local economic activity interacts with the wider functional economy. There is also considerable potential for economies of scale, so that the cost of undertaking a joint assessment between three authorities is less than the combined cost of three separate assessments. Indeed, our case studies suggest that the costs involved in undertaking a sub-regional assessment were similar to those at a local level. However, it is important for all authorities to engage in the assessment to ensure that it informs their strategies, and some parts of the assessment, such as understanding existing policy and talking to local partners, will be less easily shared between authorities.
65. The costs of undertaking a joint assessment are likely to increase with the number of authorities involved. Our assumption here is that when an additional authority is involved in a joint assessment, the additional cost will be 50% of the cost of undertaking such an assessment on their own. Hence if an individual assessment cost £100,000, a joint assessment between two authorities would cost £150,000, between three would cost £200,000 and so on.
66. It is likely that those local authorities involved in city-regions and prospective MAAs will gain significant benefits from undertaking their economic assessments together and there are likely to be opportunities for joint working elsewhere. The central scenario assumes that all prospective MAAs and existing city-regions will undertake assessments together, which together would amount to 14 joint assessments covering 68 upper-tier local authorities. The central case will yield savings of 23% compared to all authorities undertaking an assessment on their own. Low and high scenarios assume savings of 13% and 33% respectively.

67. There is also likely to be considerable scope for joint working across London boroughs, building on the East and West London City Strategy Partnerships³¹. The central case assumes that there will be 5 joint assessments in London, with joint working savings calculated as for England overall. The central case will yield savings of 35% compared to all authorities undertaking an assessment on their own. Low and high scenarios assume savings of 25% and 45% respectively.

Costs to lower-tier authorities

68. Lower-tier authorities will also need to be involved in the development of economic assessments covering their areas, and the additional costs they incur also need to be included. If the staff resources required are equal to those required by upper-tier authorities in working with all their partners, this amounts to a cost of approximately £6,000 per authority. This equates to an overall cost for the 238 district councils of £1.4m at current prices.

Costs to partners

69. There will also be costs to partner bodies that are involved in developing the assessment, which must be included in an estimate of social costs. If the cost to each partner is approximately half of that incurred by local authorities in dealing with all partners, this amounts to an additional cost per authority of £15,000. This equates to £2.4m for England as a whole – or £1.9m if excluding London.

Annual updates

70. A full assessment would only be carried out every three years, to coincide with Local Area Agreements. However, there will be additional costs if the data contained in the assessment is to be updated on an annual basis. A specialist economic development consultancy would charge approximately £10,000 - £15,000 to provide baseline and trend analysis. In general, this is likely to constitute an upper estimate as many authorities would be able to undertake this updating in-house. Therefore a central estimate of £10,000 per assessment has been adopted, including adjustments for inflation, and the scope for savings from joint working are assumed to be the same as for full assessments.

Capacity

71. Some authorities may need to build up their capacity and knowledge in order to undertake an effective assessment in 2010-11. Although most authorities will undertake assessments in partnership, and some will rely on external consultants, all will require sufficient capacity and knowledge to understand the evidence produced and use it to develop and support local strategies. Each partnership will also require somebody with sufficient knowledge to commission any external research, but this is likely to exist amongst the partnership.

72. Therefore there is likely to be a need in some authorities for a deeper understanding of economic analysis. The National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy sets out that one of the future strategic priorities will be to “improve

³¹ East and West London are two of the 15 City Strategy partnerships that have been set up in 15 pathfinder areas to tackle worklessness in the UK’s most disadvantaged communities.

economic and neighbourhood renewal leadership capacity locally³². As a result, we do not expect there to be any additional cost in the years leading up to the economic assessment in 2010-11.

Enforcement

73. The Government does not propose to monitor lead authorities' assessments of the economic conditions of their areas. The Government expects that assessments would improve local authorities' knowledge and ability to strengthen performance against the local government performance framework's economic indicators. The Audit Commission has indicated that inspectorates would take account of effectiveness of local economic assessments as part of the evidence base of the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). We do not expect that this will lead to any additional costs.

Existing expenditure by local authorities

74. Most local authorities already undertake some assessment of their local economy, or will be able to draw upon assessments undertaken at the sub-regional level. They are also expected to have an understanding of their local economy in order to fulfil existing duties (annex, figure A1). However, the quality and content of existing duties is highly variable, and most would be unlikely to fulfil the expectations of this duty. If we assume that 50% of upper-tier authorities already undertake assessments, and that the quality of these assessments allows them to be produced at half the cost of the assessments outlined above, then current spending on economic assessments can be estimated at £3.2m in England overall, or £2.5m if London is excluded.

Summary of costs

75. The information above has been used to estimate low, central and high estimates of additional costs to local authorities in undertaking a full assessment in 2010-11 (figure 2). The central estimate is £11.0m, if the duty operates in London, and £9.2m if it does not.

Figure 2: Cost estimate for full assessment, including (and *excluding*) London

Scenario	Cost to upper-tier	Cost to lower tier	Cost to partner bodies	Existing cost	Total additional cost
Low	£5.8m (£4.7m)	£1.5m	£2.3m (£1.8m)	£3.2m (£2.5m)	£6.2m (£5.9m)
Central	£8.7m (£7.2m)	£1.5m	£2.3m (£1.8m)	£3.2m (£2.5m)	£9.4m (£8.4m)
High	£12.7m (£10.2m)	£1.5m	£2.3m (£1.8m)	£3.2m (£2.5m)	£13.1m (£11.3m)

76. In addition, the cost of an annual update, to take place for two years out of every three year cycle, will be in the range £0.8-1.0m (excluding London) and £1.0-1.3m (including London) per annum.

³² *National Improvement and Efficiency Strategy*, CLG, LGA, 2008

Present Value

77. The present value provides a comparable figure representing the future stream of costs, using a discount rate to reduce the weight placed on future costs. The present values calculated in figure 3 use a discount rate of 3.5% as set out in the Treasury Green Book. The present value is calculated using estimates of the cost of full assessments over nine years beginning in 2010-11. The estimates assume full assessments will be undertaken every three years (starting in 2010-11) and annual updates will be undertaken in the other two years of the three year cycle (starting in 2011-12).

Figure 3: Present value of future costs over 9 years

Scenario	Present value (excluding London)	Present value (including London)
Low	£26.3m	£28.8m
Central	£36.3m	£41.3m
High	£48.0m	£46.0m

Option 3

78. The costs of option 3 depend upon how local authorities choose to carry out an economic assessment in the absence of central government guidance. It is possible that assessments will be less thorough and hence be less costly; on the other hand, provision of central guidance may reduce costs by providing a framework for local assessments. Separate estimates of cost have not been made at this stage, and it is assumed that the costs of option 3 will be as for option 2.

Net Present Value

79. Figure 4 presents a range of value for the net present value (NPV), based on the monetised costs and benefits. It should be noted that these estimates include no assumptions about the impact of the duty on economic growth or employment rates. Improvement in these outcomes should be regarded as additional to the benefits included in the NPV calculation.

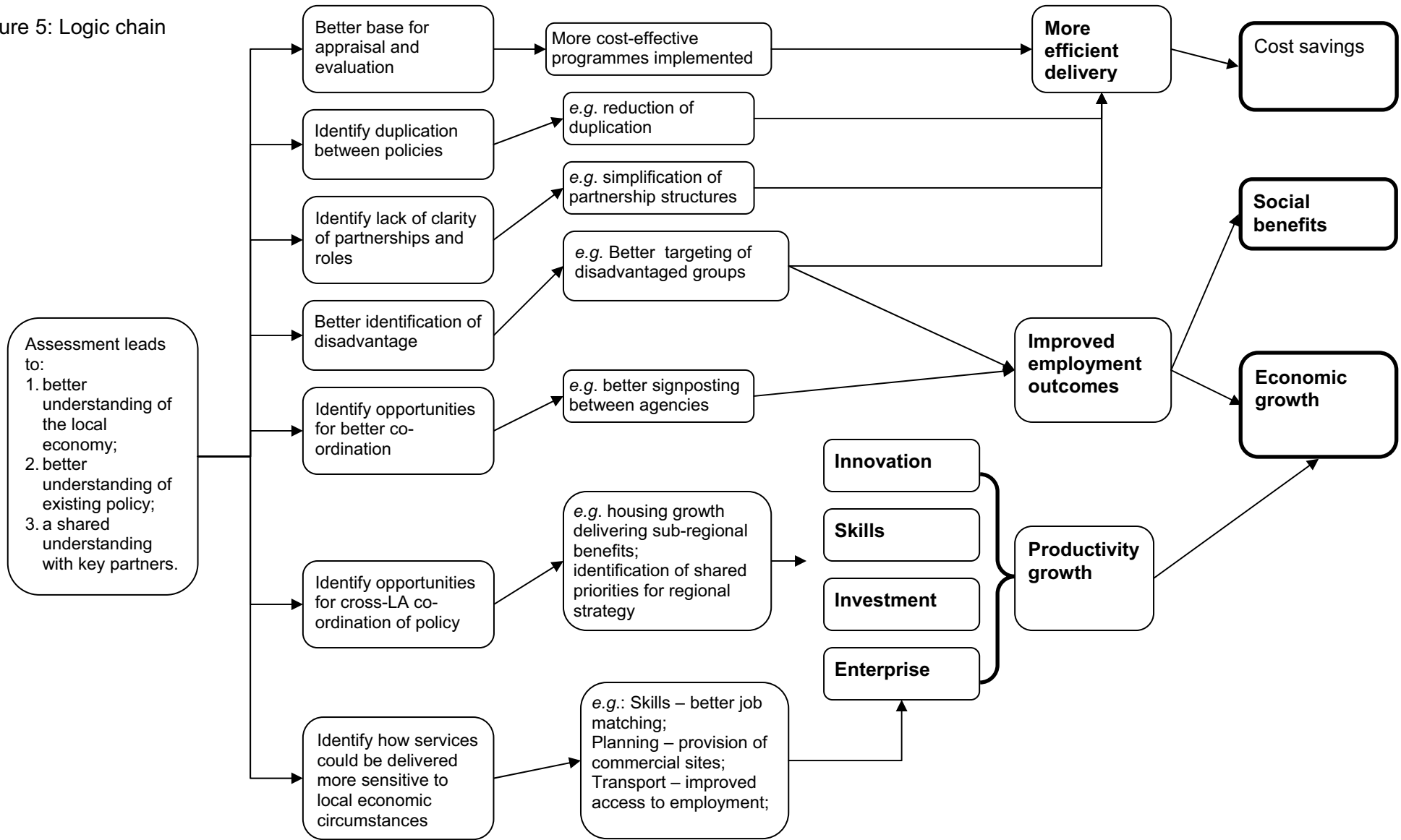
80. The high end of the NPV range is calculated as the high estimate of benefits less the low estimate of costs. Conversely, the low NPV estimate is the low estimate of benefits less the high estimate of costs. The central or best guess, NPV estimate is the central estimate of benefits less the central estimate of costs. This range will be refined as new evidence becomes available during the consultation.

Figure 4: Range of Net Present Value estimates

Scenario	NPV (excluding London)	NPV (including London)
Low	-£13.7m	-£14.5m
Central	£15.7m	£22.3m
High	£43.9m	£57.5m

Appendix

Figure 5: Logic chain



Annex: Case studies of economic assessments								
Organisation type	Timeframe		Staffing				Overhead costs (30%)	Total cost
	Collection and Collation of Data	Data Analysis	Staff Position	Staff Time (%)	Staff Pay	Staff Cost (collection and analysis of data)		
County Council	2 Mths	2 Mths	Project Manager	50%	63.38/hr	£17,746	£21,665	£93,883
			Principal Research Officer	50%	44.07/hr	£12,340		
			3 Research Officer	75%	33.44/hr	£42,132		
London Borough	3 Mths	2 Mths	Project Manager	20%	63.38/hr	£8,873	£13,514	£58,556
			Middle Manager	20%	44.07/hr	£6,169		
			3 External Consultants	NA	NA	£30,000		
City Regional Partnership	1.5 Mths	1.5 Mths	Project Manager	50%	63.38/hr	£13,310	£15,228	£65,990
			3 Support Officers	NA	33.44/hr	£14,044		
			5 Support Officers	NA	33.44/hr	£23,408		
County Economic Partnership	3 Mths	3 Mths	Project Manager	50%	63.38/hr	£26,620	£14,459	£62,657
			University Placement	50%	21.25/hr	£8,925		
			3 Data Consultants	NA	NA	£5,250		
			Input from other Team Members (8-10 people)	2.5%	44.07/hr	£7,404 - £9,255		

Specific Impact Tests: Checklist

Use the table below to demonstrate how broadly you have considered the potential impacts of your policy options.

Ensure that the results of any tests that impact on the cost-benefit analysis are contained within the main evidence base; other results may be annexed.

Type of testing undertaken	<i>Results in Evidence Base?</i>	<i>Results annexed?</i>
Competition Assessment	No	Yes
Small Firms Impact Test	No	Yes
Legal Aid	No	Yes
Sustainable Development	No	Yes
Carbon Assessment	No	Yes
Other Environment	No	Yes
Health Impact Assessment	No	Yes
Race Equality	No	Yes
Disability Equality	No	Yes
Gender Equality	No	Yes
Human Rights	No	Yes
Rural Proofing	No	Yes

Annexes

Specific Impact Tests

Competition Assessment

The duty will have a small pro-competitive effect by making it easier for firms to access market information. The public provision of information will reduce fixed costs incurred by new entrants, leading to greater competition.

The sector most affected by the duty is likely to be the private economic consultancy sector, as the requirement to undertake an assessment will increase the demand for services, amongst local authorities without the capacity to undertake the entire assessment internally. With 150 upper tier authorities in England, the demand for economic consultancy services could potentially increase rapidly nationwide, particularly if local authorities carry out an assessment at a particular time of year.

The provision of guidance under option (ii) should encourage competition amongst consultancy firms by reducing market barriers created through specialist knowledge. Local authorities adhere to best practice procurement rules which should ensure competition in the market for consultancy services.

Option (iii) allows greater flexibility in tailoring the assessment to reflect local economic priorities. Without a legal obligation to follow guidance, authorities may decide to focus on a specific area of the local economy, e.g. worklessness, enterprise levels etc. If this requires greater specialisation, this may slightly increase the barriers to entry and reduce the number of firms who can compete for the business.

Research conducted on current economic assessment and strategy activity found that there are a large number of local authorities already carrying out assessments of some sort, and in two out of the four case studies, external consultants had a large role in developing the assessment. This evidence suggests that an absence of guidance will not have a significant effect on the availability of consultancy services.

Small Firms

The duty will not affect business or small firms directly. The duty will not place any costs on businesses, but may provide some indirect benefits.

The economic assessment duty is expected to increase local authority awareness of local economic conditions and to encourage greater collaborative working across authority boundaries with regard to economic development. In this respect it is likely to have indirect benefits for local businesses, particularly small firms. Local authorities will

be better placed to directly tackle any local market failures and assist small firms whose activity transcends local authority boundaries.

By tackling local market failures (such as the lack of local public service provision e.g. Transport), barriers to entry for start-ups and small firms may be reduced.

The duty will not place any direct or indirect burden on local businesses. The duty will result in some additional costs to individual local authorities, which will be assessed and met in line with the Government's new burdens principles. It is not anticipated that this will lead to higher business rates.

Small firm consultation has not been carried out in the options development phase of this policy because it is not aimed at business and is not expected to place any additional costs or burdens on firms. However, this Impact Assessment is subject to public consultation and as a result we welcome views from small firms on the detail on the policy option adopted.

Legal Aid

There will be no impact on legal aid from the adoption of a duty on local authorities to commission an economic report on their local area.

Sustainable Development

This duty aims to improve the economic evidence base that local strategies are based on, including the Sustainable Community Strategy, which sets out the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area. These strategies should contribute to sustainable development in the UK³³, and as such should draw on environmental and social expertise, as well as the economic evidence base provided by an assessment.

Assessments should improve the quality of scientific evidence used to inform decisions.

Other Environment

This duty will not have any major impacts on other environmental considerations.

³³ *Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities. Statutory Guidance: Draft for Consultation*, HM Government, 2007

Carbon Assessment

The economic assessment should not lead to an increase in carbon emissions. Emission levels may change if authorities pursue different policies as a result of the assessment, for example if it leads to a change in policy regarding the building of new infrastructure or housing. These emissions should be included in project appraisals, and cost and benefits estimated on a case by case basis.

Health Impact

The proposal will not have a direct impact on health, although there may be beneficial effects on well-being from the formulation of strategies designed to tackle worklessness or poverty.

Race, Disability and Gender Impacts (Equality Impact Assessment)

81. The direct cost of the economic assessment itself will be fully-funded through increased LA resources, so will not lead to a diversion of expenditure from other services. However, the assessment could indirectly lead to increased spending on economic development activity by identifying areas where it could add value. This in turn would reduce the resources available for other LA activity. Alternatively, the duty might enable local authorities to identify economic development activity that is poorly targeted or ineffective, and thus free up resources. By encouraging economic growth, the duty could also lead to additional resources for local government services in the long-term. It is not obvious which of these alternatives is more likely. If funding is diverted from other services, the impact could disproportionately affect those who tend to benefit most from current LA service provision.

82. The economic development role of local authorities is often focussed on services to individuals and groups that are underserved by national 'one-size fits all' policies. Improvements to the evidence base that lead to more effective services should therefore tend to disproportionately benefit these groups. The assessment will also help local authorities to identify priorities for expenditure on regeneration and tackling disadvantage, which should lead to particularly positive effects for those in the most disadvantaged groups, and living in the most deprived areas.

83. The economic assessment should incorporate the expertise of key partners in economic development. Authorities will be legally required to consult some partners, but will be able to have discussions beyond this. There should not be an unequal consideration of the needs and views of particular groups, *but this will be tested through consultation.*

Human Rights

There will be no impact on human rights from the adoption of this duty.

Rural Proofing

The structure and operation of rural economies are just as diverse as their urban counterparts. Rural England extends from the remote uplands to coastal areas and incorporates thriving market towns and commuter belts that lie on the fringes of major conurbations. The role of the rural community in the sub-regional economy will therefore differ from area to area. Some communities will be self-contained, whereas others will be primarily commuter belts that provide a valuable labour resource to the city.

Some economic assessments may focus on urban than rural issues, because urban areas constitute a large proportion of local economic activity. However, analysis of the flow of people, goods and services between market towns and their hinterlands are an will be an important part of any assessment.

Rural areas do not conform to a set of criteria consistent with “Rural England” and are diverse in terms of their economic base and spatial characteristics. Good assessments will need to consider how challenges and opportunities diverge across the local area, and should recognise the interdependency of urban and “fringe” markets.

The challenges of analysing economic issues that are more common to rural areas may be more easily addressed through the provision of common guidance.

The inclusion of rural representatives, including through a duty to involve lower-tier authorities in the consultation process, should feed into a local strategy that takes into account the needs of the rural economy.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

4 JUNE 2008

CUSTOMER PANEL SURVEY (2) – QUALITY OF LIFE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Webb, Portfolio Holder for Customer Care and Service
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform members of Cabinet of the key findings of the second Customer Panel survey which took place in February-March 2008 (full report attached as Appendix 1)

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers the attached report and other appendices and notes the findings.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's first Customer Panel Survey was run in May 2007 and results reported to Cabinet in September 2007. This provided officers and Members with in-depth information about residents' opinions on the Council's priorities and levels of satisfaction with Council services. The satisfaction survey is due to be repeated in May 2008, with results to be forthcoming in July 2008.
- 3.2 The attached report (Appendix 1) details the findings of the second residents' survey, which has again been run by SNAP Surveys Ltd, with whom the Council has a contract. The emphasis of this second survey has been on residents' perceptions of their quality of life, and as such the survey was themed according to existing LAA blocks. Residents were asked questions covering the environment, affordable housing, Bromsgrove town centre, health and wellbeing, children and young people, community safety and community cohesion. DCLG plans to introduce a national Place Survey later in 2008 and this will cover similar themes.
- 3.3 The results of this survey, together with the results of the forthcoming satisfaction survey will be used by CMT and Cabinet at their Away Day on 11th July 2008 to review and the Council's corporate priorities and key deliverables. The results will also be used in the annual business planning

process and will be passed to the LSP Board to assist in their review of the Community Strategy. The new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework is heavily focussed on perception measures rather than the process/output measures of CPA. The reporting of results such as these are therefore becoming progressively more important as Councils and their partners place greater emphasis on the need to be 'intelligence-led' in their decision-making.

- 3.4 The quality of life survey was sent out to 1500 households across the district in February 2008. One reminder letter was sent and 704 responses were received in total representing a good response rate of 47%. The confidence interval was +/-3.69% which is a marked improvement on the last Customer Panel survey (6%).¹ The recipient households were selected randomly from the Council's own GIS database, addresses in which had been coded by ward into four geographical areas, and labelled for identification as Rural 1 & 2 and Urban 1 & 2 to provide an indication of perception in different parts of the district. A detailed breakdown of which wards were covered under each area is shown on pages 10-11 of Appendix 1.
- 3.5 Using the Council's own GIS data enabled the novel approach of breaking down responses geographically although it should be noted that the sample sizes for each area are not large enough to be considered statistically valid at ward level – rather, they should be seen as indicative. However, this approach has meant that for the first time the Council has been able to observe how views differ across the District and to gauge the extent to which it is viewed as Bromsgrove-centric. The use of GIS data has also eliminated the costs normally associated with purchasing an address database from the Post Office (Postal Address File) and it also allows the ability to plot response types onto a map of the district. This exercise has been undertaken by Worcestershire County Council for the BVPI Satisfaction survey results, and maps showing district breakdowns from the 2006 survey are attached as Appendix 3 as an example of what might be done in future.
- 3.6 The age range of survey respondents shows an ongoing difficulty in engaging with under 35s, although the perception amongst Council officers that the views of older residents are better represented in this type of consultation exercise are not borne out because 61% of respondents were aged 35-64.
- 3.7 The Council's current selection of objectives and priorities is supported by the results of the survey (Customer Service was not included as a topic in

¹ A confidence interval is used to indicate the reliability of an estimate by giving a margin of error around which one can be fairly sure the 'true' value for that area lies. A smaller confidence interval indicates more reliable results. In a survey such as this, where the results are based on a sample of the population, the confidence interval describes the uncertainty that arises from random differences between the sample and the population itself. The stated results for each question in the survey should therefore be considered as an estimate of the true or 'underlying' value, which will likely lie within the 3.69% on either side of the stated result.

the survey but will be in the satisfaction survey due to go out in May 2008). An extremely high proportion of respondents recycle their waste (95% for paper, 93% for plastic bottles, 86% for cardboard and 88% for tin cans) and there is a further desire to be able to recycle other waste streams – especially other types of plastic. Recycling promotion is seen by residents as the most important thing for the Council and its partners to concentrate on in order to combat climate change (49%), although there is room for the Council's partners to promote home insulation better to assist residents in reducing their own contribution to climate change. The results show that the age group the Council most needs to engage in recycling and home composting is the 18-35 year olds.

- 3.8 51% of respondents felt that more affordable housing should be built in the district, although a dichotomy emerged with only 30% wanting it to be built in their area. In terms of the type of housing desired, the most popular across all areas of the District was family homes, with 1 bedroom flats/houses being seen as least desirable, presumably due to the lack of flexibility in lifestyle this type would offer.
- 3.9 When asked about the improvements residents would like to see made in Bromsgrove town centre, the most popular choices were cheaper parking and a better retail offer. Road layout, cafes and street entertainment were seen as low priorities. In terms of transport across the District as a whole, only 23% of respondents used public transport, although 73% of all respondents were in favour of introducing a Community transport Service for disabled residents.
- 3.10 A range of questions were asked about cultural and leisure provision across the District. A key response for officers and Members to note is that 61% of respondents felt they didn't have enough information to make choices about leisure activities. Cost is also seen as a major factor in preventing residents from using leisure facilities and becoming more active. In terms of cultural activities, only 26% of respondents had been to the Artrix centre in the past year but the experience of the majority of these had been positive. A number of useful comments were made on what improvements respondents would like to see made to culture and leisure service delivery, and in terms of community safety the results also showed the need for Neighbourhood Wardens to be provided with greater powers/ or for their existing powers to be better publicised (51% said they felt they were no substitute for Police Officers and 50% felt their powers were limited).
- 3.11 Respondents confirmed the need for greater Council investment in activities for children and young people because whilst 62% of respondent felt threatened by young people in groups, 77% felt that they would 'cause less trouble' if there was more for them to do. It is interesting that despite the 62% figure above, 57% also felt young people were largely law abiding and well mannered. By the same token, 35% of respondents said young people receive unfair media coverage, yet 21% still felt the media influenced their view of children and young people. A consensus did seem to emerge in the

very high proportion of respondents (95%) feeling parents needed to take greater responsibility for their children. The subject remains a contentious one: it should be remembered that the voices of children and young people themselves are not represented as they were not consulted directly through this survey.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council's existing Customer Panel contract with SNAP Surveys Ltd includes the quality of life survey and satisfaction survey, and this has already been provided for in the 2008-09 budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The topics included in the survey relate to all the Council's objectives and priorities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

- Failure to engage with the community
- Lack of evidence to feed into CPA reinspection
- Failure to measure actions included in the Council Plan, Service Business Plan and Improvement Plan

- 7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Failure to engage with the community:

Risk Register: CCPP

Key Objective Ref No: 12

Key Objective: Deliver the Council's Consultation Strategy

- Lack of evidence to feed into CPA reinspection:

Risk Register: CCPP

Key Objective Ref No: 5

Key Objective: Drive delivery of the Improvement Plan, prepare the Council for its CPA re-inspection and prepare for CAA

- Failure to measure actions included in the Council Plan, Service Business Plan and Improvement Plan:

Risk Register: CCPP

Key Objective Ref No: 8
Key Objective: Council Plan

8. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Customers will be informed of the results of this consultation through the local media. Officers should note results relating to their service areas and use these to inform their own business planning processes. Members should be aware of the emphasis placed on customer consultation and evidence-based decision making in CPA and CAA guidance, and the need to engage participants in future consultation exercises. The results of this consultation will be used to inform and improve service delivery.

9. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 The survey was sent to randomly selected households so it is not possible to ensure the sample, and therefore the results, are exactly demographically representative of the population.

10. **VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

- 10.1 The contract with Snap Surveys Ltd to deliver Customer Panel Surveys was developed using procurement rules and procedures and has been overseen by the Procurement Manager. As budget provision already exists there are no other Value for Money implications

11. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues None
Personnel Implications None
Governance/Performance Management This report will also go to Leader's Group, PMB and Cabinet.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 None
Policy None
Environmental None

12. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	Yes

Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	Yes
Executive Director (Services)	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
Head of Service	Yes
Head of Financial Services	Yes
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	Yes
Head of Organisational Development & HR	Yes
Corporate Procurement Team	Yes

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Quality of Life Survey Report

Appendix 2 Worcestershire BVPI results map – what needs improving in your area?

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Customer Panel (1) Survey – report to Cabinet, 12th September 2007.

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Bromsgrove District Council

Quality of Life Survey

April 2008

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1 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

RESPONDENT PROFILE

Less than one in ten respondents (8%) were under the age of 35, 31% were aged 65 or over. Around six in ten (59%) respondents were female. Nearly all respondents (96%) classified themselves as White British.

Around one in five respondents (21%) had an illness, disability or infirmity that affects their ability to perform day to day tasks. The majority of the sample (61%) were from Urban 1, 15% were from Rural 1, 14% from Urban 2 and 9% from Rural 2.

Nearly half the sample (49%) owned their home outright, 39% owned their home with a mortgage and the rest of the sample rented their homes either from a housing association (8%) or privately (4%).

Over a third of the sample (35%) had lived in their current accommodation for over 21 years, and only 26% had lived in their current accommodation for less than 5 years.

Just over a quarter of the sample, (26%) had school aged children.

THE ENVIRONMENT

Respondents were given a list of areas that the Council and its partners could concentrate on to help reduce the impact that the area has on climate change. They were asked to pick up to three options. The top three priorities were to promote recycling (49%), promote locally grown food (40%) and ensure that new builds are more energy efficient (33%).

Residents were asked to what extent, if at all, their home was insulated. Nearly half the sample (49%) claimed that their home is fully insulated. All those who said that their home was not fully insulated were asked what the reason for that was. 39% said that home insulation was too expensive and 27% said that they had simply not got round to it.

In terms of recycling; 95% claim to normally recycle paper, 95% claim to normally recycle glass bottle and jars, 93% claim to normally recycle plastic bottles, 86% claim to normally recycle card, 88% claim to normally recycle tin cans, 60% claim to normally recycle textiles, 39% claim to normally recycle batteries.

When asked what materials they would most like to be able to recycle, just over a quarter (27%) said that they would most like to be able to recycle cling film and carrier bags, whilst a quarter (25%) said that they would like to be able to recycle yoghurt pots and margarine tubs. Only around one in ten respondents (9%) said that they would like to be able to recycle kitchen waste.

41% of the sample claimed to compost at home. Only 11% said that the reason they did not compost was that they did not have a garden and the main reason for not composting was that residents were worried about attracting pests and vermin (29%).

Around one in five (22%) said that they were simply not interested in composting and 27% gave other reasons.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Respondents were shown a list of different types of housing and were asked to say for each whether there was a high need, a medium need, a low need or no need: 47% said that there was a high need or a medium need for family homes, 34% said that there was a high need or a medium need for two bed flats, 27% said that there was a high need or a medium need for one bed flats/ apartments.

The next question asked whether or not respondents would be in favour of more affordable housing being built. Just over half the sample, (51%) were in favour of more affordable housing being built in the District (21% against). This is a significantly higher proportion than were in favour of affordable housing being built in their area (30% in favour and 50% against).

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE

Respondents were given a list of 14 possible improvements and were asked to choose the three that they felt were most important. The option chosen by the most respondents was cheaper car parking (46%), this was closely followed by 45% supporting the introduction of some big name shops and 35% saying that more independent shops are needed.

The areas that people were least likely to select as one of their three most important areas for improvement were street entertainment (2%), more cafes and coffee shops (4%), improved road layout (5%) and improvements to buildings (also 5%).

Around three quarters of the sample (74%) had not been to the Artrix in the last year, and of those that had been to the Artrix in the last year, 16% had only been once or twice. Those who had visited the Artrix were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the centre. They were generally positive, with most agreeing with the positive statements and disagreeing with the negative statements about the centre.

TRANSPORT

Over three quarters of the sample (77%) either rarely or never use public transport in the area. Only one in twenty respondents (5%) use it daily and around one in ten (12%) used it weekly.

Respondents were asked to rate the public transport in their area. Overall, 11% rated it as excellent or good, with 36% rating it as poor and 25% rating it as OK. 29% said that they did not know, which is not surprising given that 44% never used the service.

The Council and its partners are thinking of introducing a Community Transport Service for residents with disabilities. Residents were asked whether they would be in favour or

against such a scheme. Nearly three quarters (73%) claimed that they were in favour of the scheme.

The Council and its partners want to improve rail franchises to and from Bromsgrove to help encourage the use of trains. Respondents were shown a list of possible service improvements and were asked which one they thought would be most beneficial. Two of the options stood out as particularly attractive to the sample: Earlier trains to and from Birmingham Snow Hill (39% felt this would be the most beneficial option) and a direct service from Bromsgrove to London (36% felt this would be the most beneficial option).

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Respondents were asked how many portions of fruit and vegetables they ate yesterday. Over a quarter of the sample (28%) claimed that they ate the recommended 5 or more portions.

Around 9 in 10 respondents (87%) were non-smokers. Respondents aged over 75 were the least likely to smoke (98% did not smoke).

All those that ever smoke were asked what would help them to stop. The response was mixed, with 37% saying that there is nothing that the Council and its partners could to reduce the amount they smoke, and 22% saying that they did not know. However, around a quarter (24%) said that more support through their GP would help.

Respondents were asked how much physical activity they participate in. 20% described themselves as very active 42% described themselves as reasonably active; 30% claimed to be not very active and the remaining 8% admitted to being inactive

All respondents were asked what could be done to help them be more active, and were given a list of possibilities. 39% said that they would like cheaper entry fees to leisure centres, 35% thought there more should be done to promote the countryside, 31% felt that there should be more information about walks etc.

Respondents were asked what prevents them from participating more in sports/activities on offer in the District. The main factor was lack of time (39%). This was followed by cost (34%), and lack of choice (21%).

39% said that they have enough information to make choices about leisure activities, sessions and clubs on offer in the District and 61% said that they did not.

OLDER PEOPLE

The majority (61%) felt that the Council should be doing more to help older residents to live in their homes for longer. 35% felt that community transport services and concessionary fares would help improve the lives of older people. Benefits advice (27%) and good neighbours schemes and meals on wheels (also 27%) were also thought to be good initiatives.

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Respondents read a list of statements about children and young people and were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each. 95% agreed that parents should take more responsibility for their teenage children, 77% agreed that young people would cause less trouble if there was more for them to do, 62% felt threatened by young people hanging around on streets, 57% felt that young people are generally law abiding and well mannered, 35% agreed the young people get unfair media coverage, 35% felt that young people are unfairly blamed for issues that are out of their control, 21% agreed that their attitude towards young people is influenced by the media, 17% agreed that young people are always involved in antisocial behaviour.

57% said a lack of things for young people to do was one of the main problems facing young people, 56% said that alcohol was one of the main issues affecting children and young people problem and 49% said that a lack of strong role models was a problem.

Over half the sample (55%) said the Council and its partners should invest in youth clubs, 44% said Council and its partners should invest in sports coaching and events and 36% said Council and its partners should invest in community based activities for young people.

BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE

Residents were given a list of possible problems and were asked whether each was a very big problem, a fairly big problem, not a very big problem or not a problem at all. The main issues were speedy/noisy motorists (54% saying this was a very big or fairly big problem), followed by underage drinking (38%) and vandalism (29%).

Over half (53%) said that the media had no impact on their views of crime, but a third (33%) said it had some impact and almost one in ten (9%) said that the media influences their views on crime in their local area to a great extent.

5% said that crime and ASB has impacted their life a great deal, and a third (33%) said that it slightly impacted their life.

Opinions towards neighbourhood wardens were very mixed, with 51% saying that neighbourhood wardens are no substitute for police officers and 50% saying that their powers are limited, but 39% said that they act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

YOUR LOCAL AREA

Respondents were asked whether or not they thought their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Only a small proportion of the sample disagreed (7%) while 43% agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well together.

65% of residents said that they felt they belong in their local area, 8% said that they did not really feel as if they belong in their local area, and 2% said that they did not feel like they belong at all.

Respondents were asked which of a number of options they felt best described their local area. 64% said that there area is a nice place to live, 12% said that there is a sense of community in their area and 12% said they would recommend it to others.

2 INTRODUCTION

Bromsgrove District Council commissioned Snap SurveyShop to conduct a quality of life survey on their behalf. This report contains the research findings.

2.1 Methodology

A questionnaire was designed by the client and set up in Snap Software. The questionnaire was sent to a stratified random sample of 1,500 residents on 29th February 2008, a reminder was sent to all 986 non-respondents on 19th March 2008. A total of 704 surveys were returned. This is a response rate of 47% and gives a margin of error of +/-3.69% at the 95% level.

2.2 Sampling

The household database provided by the client contained a total of 37,936 records. Snap Surveys invited a stratified random sample of 1500 residents to take part in the survey; response rates for various sub-groups are shown below:

	Total number of addresses	Number surveyed	Number who responded	Response rate
URBAN 1	23,960	945	431	46%
URBAN 2	4,889	195	99	51%
RURAL 1	5,504	210	108	51%
RURAL 2	3,583	150	66	44%
TOTAL	37,936	1,500	704	47%

2.3 Analysis of results

Figures in this report are generally calculated as a proportion of respondents who answered each question. Percentages in a particular chart will not always add up to 100%. This may be due to rounding.

The report often reports on a combination of scores, for example the percentage of respondents who are satisfied with a given element. This involves adding together the number of people who were very satisfied and fairly satisfied and calculating the figure as a percentage of the number of respondents to that question. For this reason, the overall % satisfied score might be slightly different to the score obtained when adding together the % very satisfied and % fairly satisfied as displayed on the chart.

The data has been split in to four geographical subgroups, and these are mentioned throughout the report. The areas referred to are as follows:

Classification	Area
Rural 1	Hagley; Furlongs; Uffdown; Woodvale
Rural 2	Alvechurch; Tardebigge
Urban 1	Waseley; Beacon; Hillside; Catshill; Marlbrook; Linthurst; Norton; Sidemoor; St Johns; Whitford; Slideslow; Charford; Stoke Heath; Stoke Prior
Urban 2	Hollywood & Majors Green; Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath; Wythall South

2.4 Structure of this report

This report is split into the following sections:

- Respondent profile
- Environment
- Affordable Housing
- Bromsgrove Town Centre
- Transport
- Health & Wellbeing
- Older People
- Children and younger people
- Be safe and feel safe
- Your local area

3 RESIDENT PROFILE

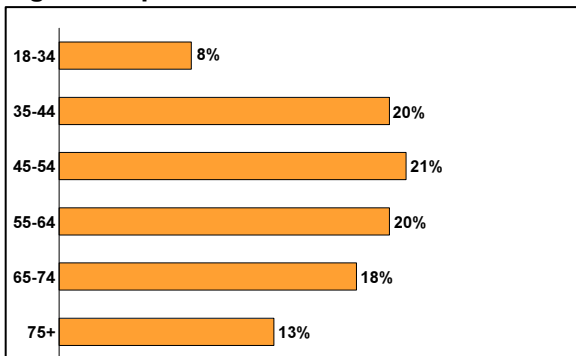
3.1 Introduction

This section of the report looks at the profile of respondents in terms of age group, gender, disability, length of time in current accommodation, home ownership and whether or not the respondents have children of school or college age. The data is useful background to the rest of the report as many of the questions reported on here are used for subgroup analysis at other stages in the report.

3.2 Gender and age profile

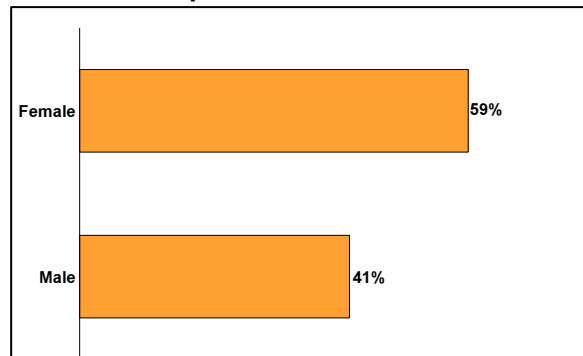
Less than one in ten respondents (8%) were under the age of 35. It is not uncommon for postal self-completion surveys to receive a low response from younger age groups, but it is important to remember the relatively old age profile when looking at the responses to the other questions. Around six in ten (59%) respondents were female.

Age of respondent



Base: All respondents (644)

Gender of respondent

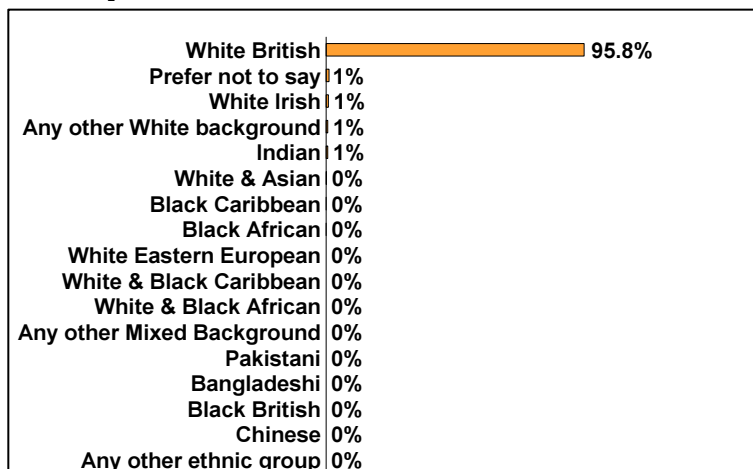


Base: All respondent (687)

3.3 Ethnicity

Nearly all respondents (96%) classified themselves as White British.

Ethnicity

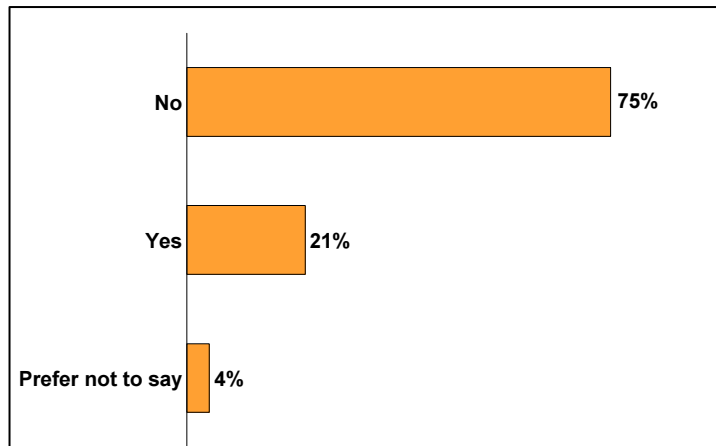


Base: All respondents (698)

3.4 Incidence illness/disability

Around one in five respondents (21%) had an illness, disability or infirmity that effects their ability to perform day to day tasks. The incidence of disability was higher among older age groups.

Do you have a disability?

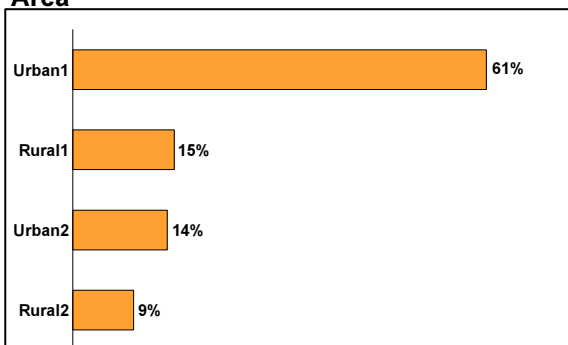


Base: All respondents (693)

3.5 Area and homeownership

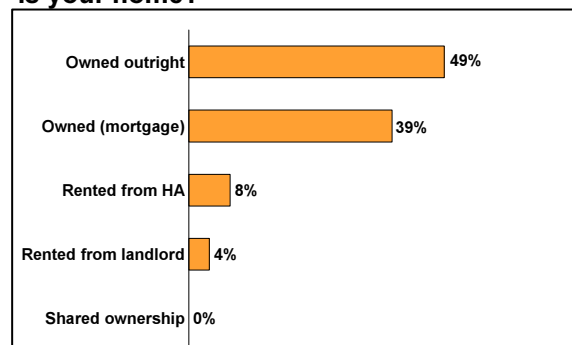
The majority of the sample (61%) were from Urban 1, 15% were from Rural 1, 14% from Urban 2 and 9% from Rural 2.

Area



Base: Total sample (704)

Is your home?



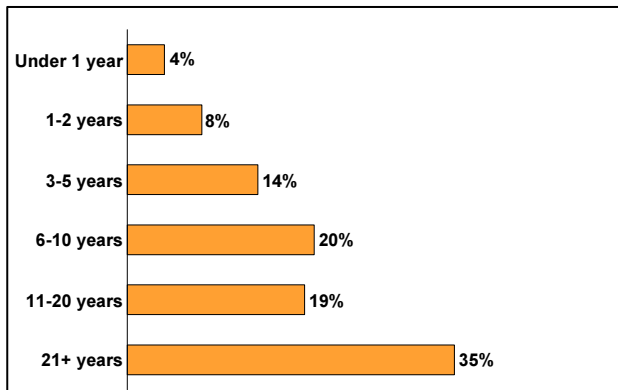
Base: All respondents (694)

Nearly half the sample (49%) owned their home outright, 39% owned their home with a mortgage and the rest of the sample rented their homes either from a housing association (8%) or privately (4%).

3.6 Length of time in accommodation & children

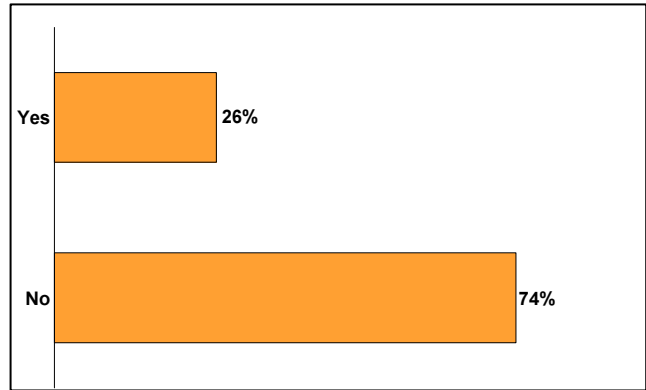
Over a third of the sample (35%) had lived in their current accommodation for over 21 years, and only 26% had lived in their current accommodation for less than 5 years. As we would expect, older respondents were more like to have lived in their accommodation for longer.

Length of time in current accommodation



Base: All respondents (697)

Do you have any school aged children?



Base: All respondents (688)

Just over a quarter of the sample, (26%) had school aged children.

4 ENVIRONMENT

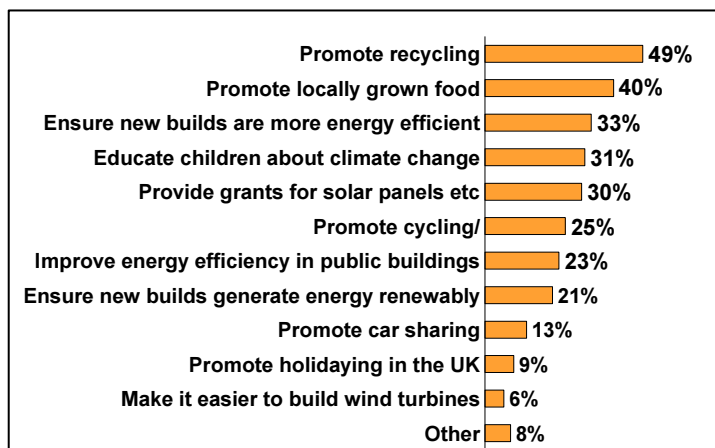
4.1 Introduction

The beginning of the questionnaire included a set of questions related to the environment. In particular it included a question asking residents what they felt the Council and its partners should be concentrating on and some questions about home insulation and recycling.

4.2 Climate Change

Respondents were given a list of areas that the Council and its partners could concentrate on to help reduce the impact that the area has on climate change. They were asked to pick up to three options.

What should organisations concentrate on to reduce the impact the community has on climate change?



Base: All respondents (677)

The top three priorities were to promote recycling (49%), promote locally grown food (40%) and ensure that new builds are more energy efficient (33%). The option that was selected by the smallest proportion of respondents was the controversial area of making it easier to build wind turbines (6%). There were few significant differences of note between subgroups.

The box below lists some of the other suggestions that were made. A full list is available in the appendix.

"All are important and ALL should be promoted where possible, to ask for three is irrelevant!"

"Be more open and reduce restrictions on waste disposal, i.e. permits."

"Cash prizes for good ideas, inventions and practices to help solve problems. Source derelict sites/dwellings for state-of-the-art renewal."

"Cut District Councillors travelling."

"Cut down on school cross lights weekend and holidays. Also street light, i.e. every other one."

"Cycle lanes may stop people cycling on the pavement!"

"Educate and encourage less food waste."

"Encourage children to walk to school."

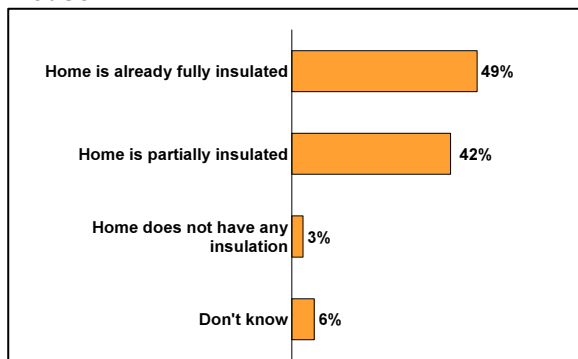
"Encourage people to live close to town centre, to walk and not use cars, lower rates would help and higher rates for country dwellers with large 4x4 cars."

"Give likely costs of replacing old boilers and insulation in types of houses, in simple terms."

4.3 Home Insulation

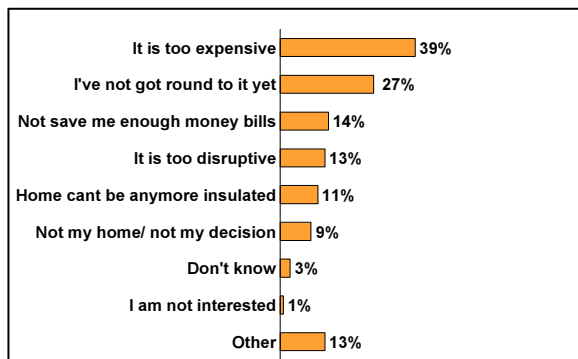
Residents were asked to what extent, if at all, their home was insulated. Nearly half the sample (49%) claimed that their home is fully insulated. Those living in homes owned outright were most likely to say that their home is fully insulated (54%), while 47% of those owning their home with a mortgage said that their home was fully insulated and 43% of tenants in social housing said that their home was fully insulated. Only 12% of those in privately rented accommodation said that their home was fully insulated.

Which of the following describes your house?



Base: All respondents (694)

Why is your home not fully insulated?



Base: All respondents who don't have a fully insulated home (308)

All those who said that their home was not fully insulated were asked what the reason for that was. 39% said that home insulation was too expensive and 27% said that they had simply not got round to it. 77% of those living in privately rented non-fully insulated accommodation said that the reason that their home was not fully insulated was because it was not their decision.

The box below lists some of the other reasons why people had not had their homes insulated. A full list is available in the appendix.

"Do not have heating, so cannot lose it."

"Friends have had cavity wall and loft insulation for free, but I cannot find out about it."

"Haven't looked into it properly yet."

"House too old to have wall insulation."

"House too old, cannot easily insulate walls, no cavity walls."

"I am 84, the next person to buy my house will knock it down to build another."

"I could do with a home energy survey."

"I do not totally believe in any benefits from 'cavity wall insulation', AWP (BSc Building, MCIQB)."

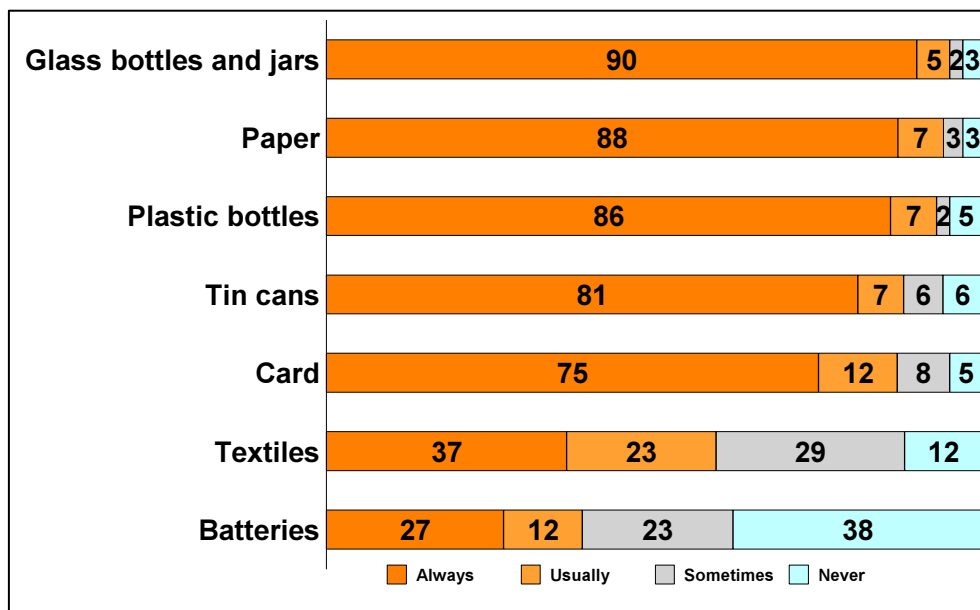
"I don't have cavity walls, I hear it's possible (but disruptive) to insulate with a layer inside, but don't know how to go about it or how effective it is."

4.4 Recycling

Respondents were given a list of different recyclable material that the Council either collects for recycling or provides recycling facilities for. Residents were asked how frequently they recycled each of them and high proportions claimed to always or usually recycle all of them:

- 95% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle paper
- 95% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle glass bottle and jars
- 93% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle plastic bottles
- 86% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle card
- 88% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle tin cans
- 60% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle textiles
- 39% claim to normally (always or usually) recycle batteries

How often do you recycle the following?

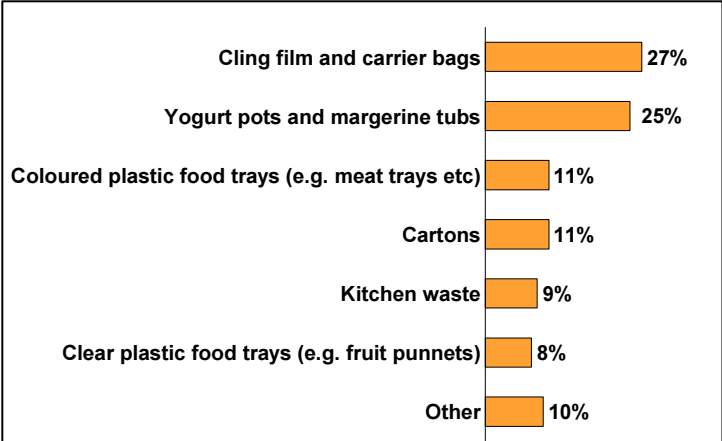


Base: All respondents (619~695)

Interestingly, those in rented accommodation tended to be less likely to recycle most of the materials listed. This may be related to a number of factors not measured in this survey, possibly the type of housing they live in (e.g. flats) or socio-economic factors. There were few other patterns of note, although for many of the materials listed, it was the 18-34 year old age group that was the least likely to claim to 'always' recycle these materials.

Residents were then asked what materials they would most like to be able to recycle. Just over a quarter (27%) said that they would most like to be able to recycle cling film and carrier bags, whilst a quarter (25%) said that they would like to be able to recycle yoghurt pots and margarine tubs. Only around one in ten respondents (9%) said that they would like to be able to recycle kitchen waste.

Which of the following would you like the Council to recycle?



Base: All respondents (644)

The box below lists some of the other items that people would like to recycle. A full list is available in the appendix.

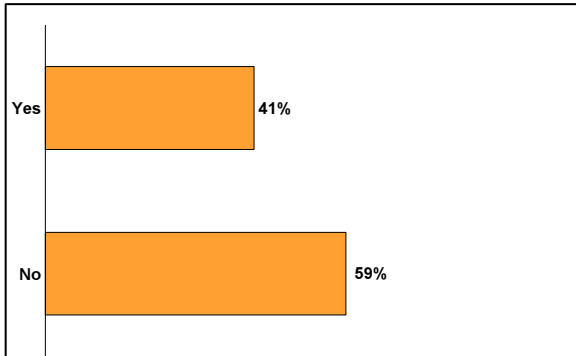
- "Batteries."
- "Cardboard."
- "Garden waste."
- "Horse feed plastic bags, not biodegradable, very thick."
- "I do not have much waste, I suggest you promote from the list whichever category collects most items for disposal."
- "Old furniture."
- "Plastic bottles."
- "Plastic drink containers, for example milk. It is bad that there is no business recycling collection."
- "Plastic shrink wrap, envelopes."
- "Really don't care. A waste of Council tax."
- "Tetra packs (milk)."
- "Textiles."

4.5 Home composting

We saw in the previous section that only 9% of the sample said that they would most like the Council to collect kitchen waste. Kitchen waste is responsible for a large proportion of the waste that is sent to landfill and increasingly councils are offering recycling facilities for this sort of waste and encouraging home composting to reduce the amount sent to landfill.

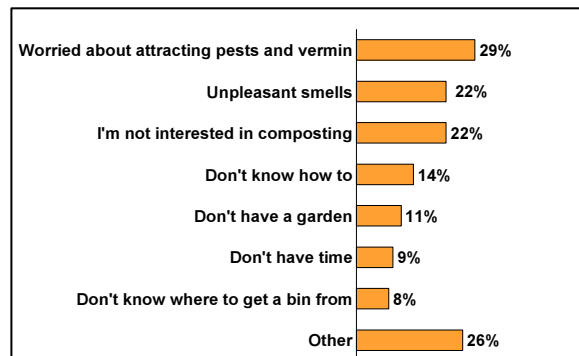
41% of the sample claimed to compost at home. Those in the 18-34 age group were significantly less likely than other age groups to compost at home (12% of 18-34 compared to 43% of those aged 35 or over). This finding may be related to lifestyle (e.g. the amount of time they have, the type of properties they live in) as opposed to attitude. As we saw in the previous section on recycling, those who own their own home, or own a home with a mortgage were more likely than those in the rental sector to compost.

Do you compost at home?



Base: All respondents (679)

What prevents you from doing so?



Base: All respondents (394)

All those that did not compost were asked what prevented them from doing so. Only 11% said that the reason they did not compost was that they did not have a garden and the main reason for not composting was that residents were worried about attracting pests and vermin (29%). Around one in five (22%) said that they were simply not interested in composting and 27% gave other reasons.

The box below lists some of the other barriers to home composting. A full list is available in the appendix.

- "As we live in a block of 55 apartments, it is not possible."
- "Cost of bin and size of garden."
- "Council should do it via green bin collection service."
- "Do not have a garden that requires compost."
- "Do not want to keep having to go outside with the compost bin."
- "Handicapped unable to do gardening."
- "Haven't got round to it yet."
- "Need to get into the habit."
- "The Council collects garden refuse."

5 AFFORDABLE HOUSING

5.1 Introduction

A small section of the questionnaire asked residents whether or not there was a need for more housing in the area, and whether or not they would support the building of more housing.

5.2 The need for affordable housing

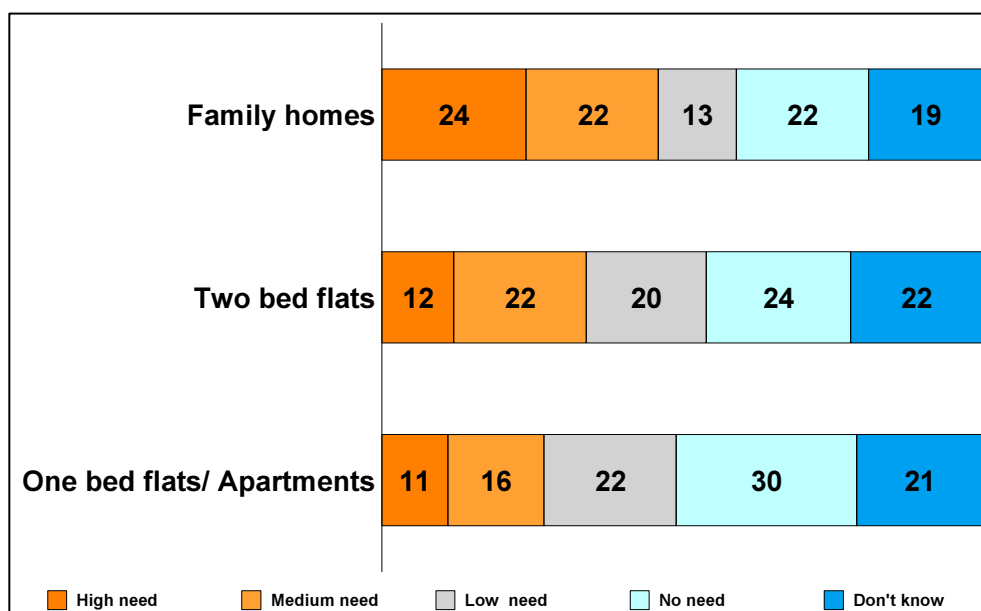
Respondents were shown a list of different types of housing and were asked to say for each whether there was a high need, a medium need, a low need or no need:

- 47% said that there was a high need or a medium need for family homes
- 34% said that there was a high need or a medium need for two bed flats
- 27% said that there was a high need or a medium need for one bed flats/ apartments

It is important to note that the response is very split overall with around one in five respondents saying that they did not know whether or not there was a need for these types of housing. And fairly high proportions also saying that there was 'no need' for these types of housing or only a low need:

- 35% said that there was a low need or no need for family homes
- 44% said that there was a low need or no need for two bed flats
- 51% said that there was a low need or no need for one bed flats/ apartments

How would you describe the need for each of the following:



Base: All respondents (608~652)

Looking at the data in more detail, there are some interesting, though relatively unsurprising patterns. Notably, those in the rental sectors were more likely than those with their own homes or mortgages to say that there was a need for all types of new

housing, and those with children were more likely than those without to say that there is a need for family homes.

The table below shows the proportions of people in different areas that felt that there was a 'high need' or 'medium need' for new homes to be built in their area.

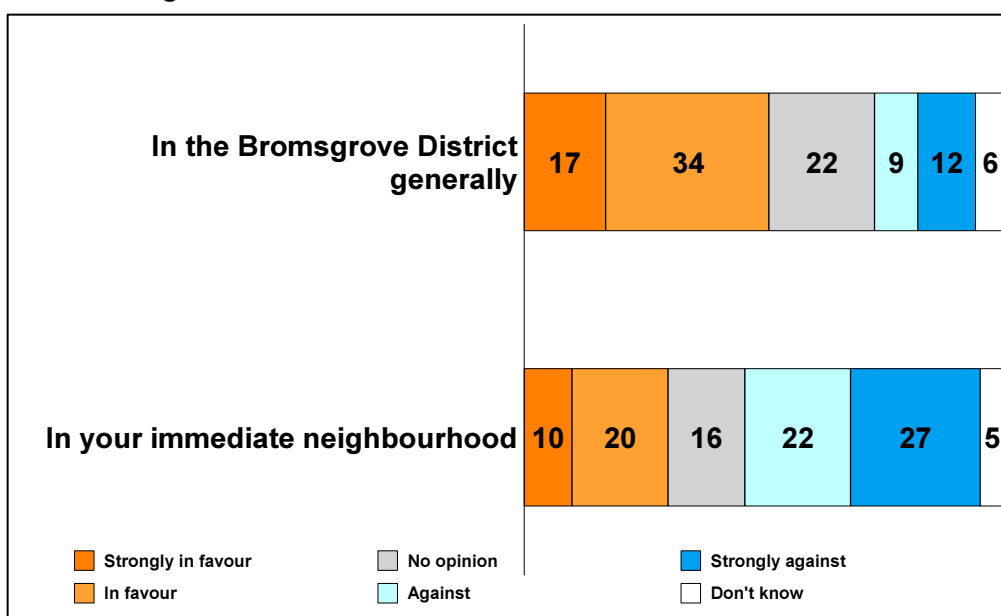
	% High need + % Medium need		
	One bed flats	2 bed flats	Family homes
Urban 1	30%	37%	47%
Urban 2	33%	36%	44%
Rural 1	20%	29%	50%
Rural 2	18%	23%	44%
Total	27%	34%	47%

5.3 Attitudes towards new housing being built

In the last section it was noted that there was no overall consensus as to whether or not new housing is required in the District. Around a fifth of the sample did not know whether there was a need or not, and the remaining proportion being split between feeling that there is and that there is not a need.

The next question asked whether or not respondents would be in favour of more affordable housing being built. Just over half the sample, (51%) were in favour of more affordable housing being built in the District (21% against). This is a significantly higher proportion than were in favour of affordable housing being built in their area (30% in favour and 50% against). The data is shown below.

How would you feel about having some/more Affordable Housing built in the following areas?



Base: All respondents (619~656)

Although affordable housing is often seen to be a young persons issue, younger respondents were not noticeably more likely to support the development of new affordable housing. The largest difference between subgroups was when comparing the responses of those in the rented housing sector against those who own a property: Those in the rented sector were significantly more likely to be in favour of the development of affordable housing both locally and in their area. This is shown in the following table.

	Owners (outright & mortgage)	Tenants (social & private)
Support affordable housing in area	26%	64%
Support affordable housing being built in the District	48%	75%

The table below shows the proportion of people in favour and against affordable housing being built in their area, by area. In each area, there is a higher proportion against the development of new housing than for it.

	Affordable housing built in your area?	
	In favour	Against
Urban 1	31%	48%
Urban 2	27%	56%
Rural 1	21%	55%
Rural 2	38%	43%

6 BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE

6.1 Introduction

Qualitative research and anecdotal feedback from residents repeatedly highlights the need to redevelop Bromsgrove town centre. This section of the report looks at the areas residents feel are most in need of improvement and also looks at attitudes to the Artrix Centre.

6.2 Improvements to the Town Centre

Respondents were given a list of 14 possible improvements and were asked to choose the three that they felt were most important. The option chosen by the most respondents was cheaper car parking (46%), this was closely followed by 45% supporting the introduction of some big name shops and 35% saying that more independent shops are needed.

What improvements would you like to see in Bromsgrove?



Base: All respondents (655)

The areas that people were least likely to select as one of their three most important areas for improvement were street entertainment (2%), more cafes and coffee shops (4%), improved road layout (5%) and improvements to buildings (also 5%).

As we might expect, there were significant differences between what people in different areas thought were important improvements, particular when comparing Urban 1 (which covers Bromsgrove town centre) to the other three areas, including the following differences:

- Those in Urban 1 were significantly more likely than those in other areas to think that the introduction of big name shops was important
- Those in Urban 1 were significantly more likely than those in Urban 2 to think that cheaper parking is important
- People living in Urban 1 were the least likely to think that more parking was important

The data for the top 10 mentions split by area is shown in the table below:

Area	% Important			
	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Cheaper parking	51%	31%	40%	38%
Big name shops	52%	31%	37%	33%
Independent shops	39%	21%	28%	41%
Fewer empty shops	34%	25%	30%	27%
Cleaner look and feel	30%	26%	25%	33%
Lower business rates	31%	18%	17%	25%
More parking	9%	30%	21%	14%
Continental style markets	8%	16%	14%	21%
Pedestrian areas	7%	13%	7%	11%
Historic buildings	4%	9%	6%	6%

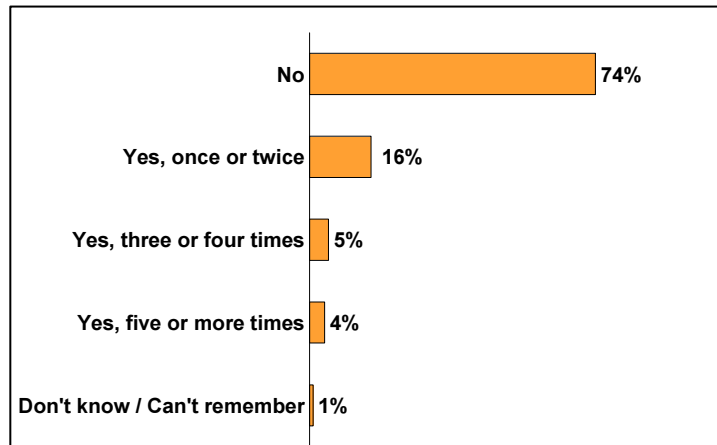
The box below lists some of the suggested improvements. A full list is available in the appendix.

"Better facilities for cyclists, locks and sheds."
 "Better roads maintenance."
 "Do not go to Bromsgrove."
 "Educate public to be more tidy, especially smokers."
 "Fewer charity shops."
 "Free parking for families, disabled and the elderly."
 "Free parking."
 "Have never visited Bromsgrove town centre."
 "More restaurants/wine bars, suitable for older professionals."
 "Remove pedestrianisation of high street, i.e. bring life back into our towns."

6.3 The Artrix Centre

Around three quarters of the sample (74%) had not been to the Artrix in the last year, and of the 25% that had been to the Artrix in the last year, 16% had only been once or twice.

Have you been to the Artrix Centre in the last year?



Base: All respondents (694)

Those in Urban 1 were the most likely to have visited the Artrix (36% had visited), those in Rural 2 were the second most likely to have visited (22%) while only 8% of Rural 1 and 3% of Urban 2 residents had visited the Artrix in the last year.

There was no pattern in terms of the Artrix being more or less likely to have been visited by particular age groups, ethnic groups or genders.

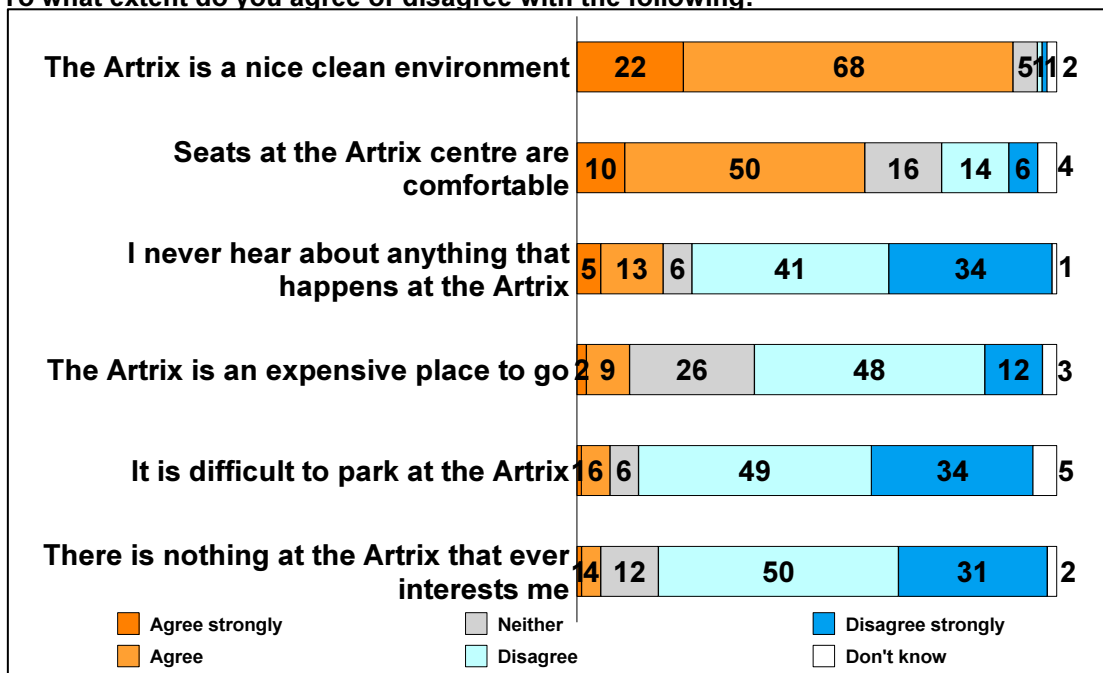
6.4 Attitudes to the Artrix

Those who had visited the Artrix were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with a number of statements about the centre.

The data is generally positive, with most agreeing with the positive statements and disagreeing with the negative statements about the centre. This suggests that, for users at least, the centre is a valuable asset to Bromsgrove town centre.

- 91% agreed that the Artrix is a nice clean environment
- 83% disagreed that it is hard to park at the Artrix
- 75% disagreed that they never hear about what is happening at the Artrix
- 81% disagreed that that is nothing at the Artrix that ever interests them
- 60% disagreed that the Artrix is expensive
- 60% agreed that the seats at the Artrix are comfortable

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following:



Base: All respondents who had visited Artrix in last year

As a final question in this section, respondents were asked what would encourage them to visit the Artrix. Many mentioned that they were simply not aware of the centre, and we have included some of the comments below, a full list can be found in the appendix.

- "Better and more prompt advertising. The catalogues they send out can be up to three weeks late on some productions and it doesn't spend money on advertising in the local papers. If we can't use it we will lose it!!"
- "Child friendly productions."
- "Email alerts giving details of forthcoming events."
- "Established, full time coffee bar, maybe a brand. Place for people to meet then may encourage more folk to give some of side variety of events a try!"
- "Exhibitions/dance/art from around the world. Highly rated films."
- "Family entertainment? To be honest the programme has been quite attractive. Artrix needs more exposure by local press."
- "I am not sure what it is, but I am going to find out now I have heard about it."
- "I don't live near the Artrix Centre, and at present I'm not mobile."
- "I feel that the target for 25-45 age groups is being missed. I like ballet, but not everyone does and the concerts seem to be aimed at young people."
- "I know nothing about what it offers, so information would help."
- "It is a very good programme choice, but we are unable to get there, no transport."
- "It is an art centre so should have more original acts and less tribute bands, sometimes there are that many tributes it is like a social club."

7 TRANSPORT

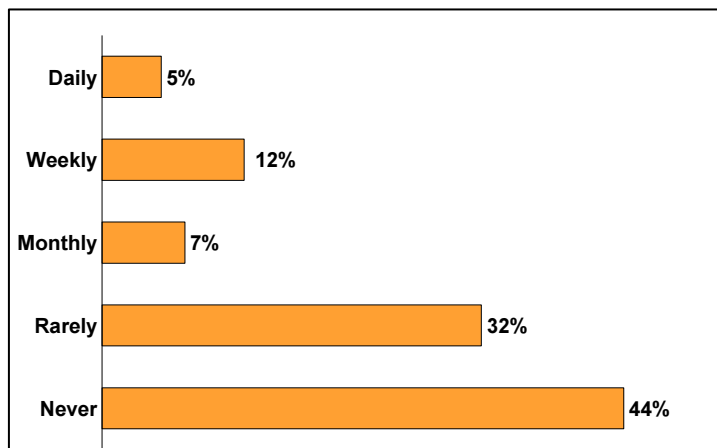
7.1 Introduction

This section looks at how frequently respondents use public transport, how they rate the public transport available to them, attitudes to a community transport service for vulnerable residents and at improvements to the rail franchise services to and from Bromsgrove.

7.2 Frequency of using public transport

Over three quarters of the sample (77%) either rarely or never use public transport in the area. Only one in twenty respondents (5%) use it daily and around one in ten (12%) used it weekly.

How frequently do you use public transport?



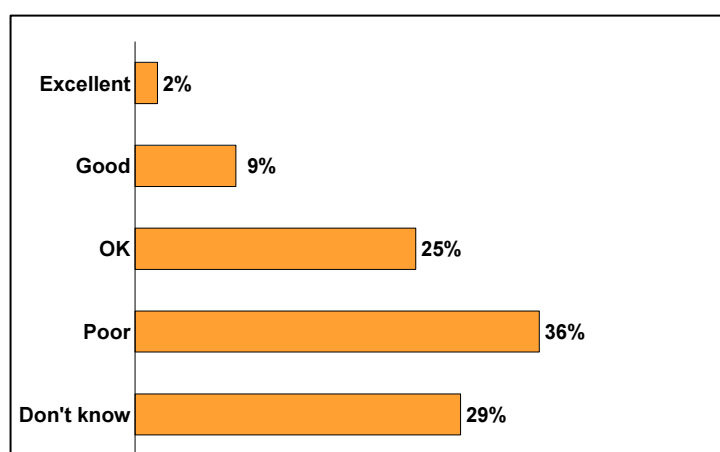
Base: All respondents (695)

There were no significant variations between certain geographical areas using public transport more or less frequently than others. The main variations between subgroups were observed when comparing age group (those aged 65+ and those aged under 35 being the most likely to use public transport) and when comparing disabled and non-disabled respondents (26% of disabled respondents use public transport once a week or more, compared to 14% of non-disabled people). The usage patterns presumably reflect car ownership and access to concessionary travel schemes.

7.3 Rating public transport in the area

Respondents were asked to rate the public transport in their area. Overall, 11% rated it as excellent or good, with 36% rating it as poor and 25% rating it as OK. 29% said that they did not know, which is not surprising given that 44% never used the service (section 7.2).

How would you rate the public transport in your area?



Base: All respondents (686)

It is possible to compare the views of those who use public transport in the area, and those who do not. In the table below 'Users' are defined as those who use the local public transport service once a month or more, and 'Non-users' are those who use it only rarely or never.

	Excellent / good	OK	Poor	Don't know
User	30%	33%	37%	1%
Non-user	5%	23%	35%	38%

It is interesting to observe that a similar proportion of users and non-users class public transport in the area as poor, whilst the users are significantly more likely to rate public transport as excellent or good.

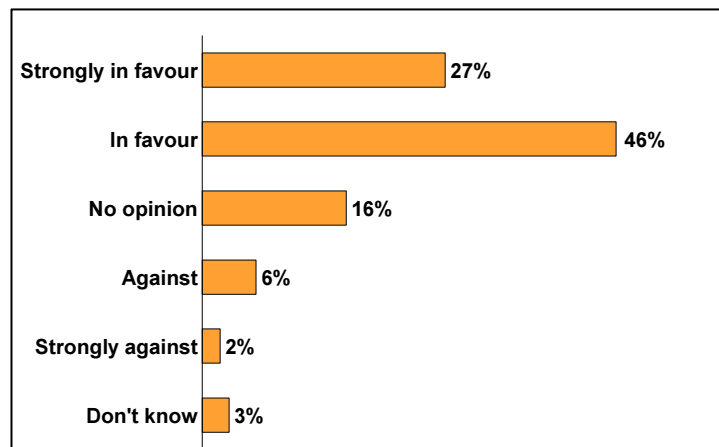
In terms of comparisons between geographical areas, there was little variation between residents rating public transport in their area as good, but there were more notable differences in the proportions saying it was poor. With 29% in Rural 2 rating it as poor, (the lowest poor rating) and 45% in Rural 1 and Urban 2 rating it as poor (the highest poor rating).

7.4 Community transport service

The Council and its partners are thinking of introducing a Community Transport Service for residents with disabilities. Residents were asked whether they would be in favour or against such a scheme.

Nearly three quarters (73%) claimed that they were in favour of the scheme. Generally speaking older respondents were more likely to be in favour of the scheme than younger respondents and disabled respondents were marginally more favourable than non-disabled respondents (78% of disabled respondents were in favour compared to 72% of non-disabled respondents).

Would you be in favour of the Council spending money on a Community Transport Service

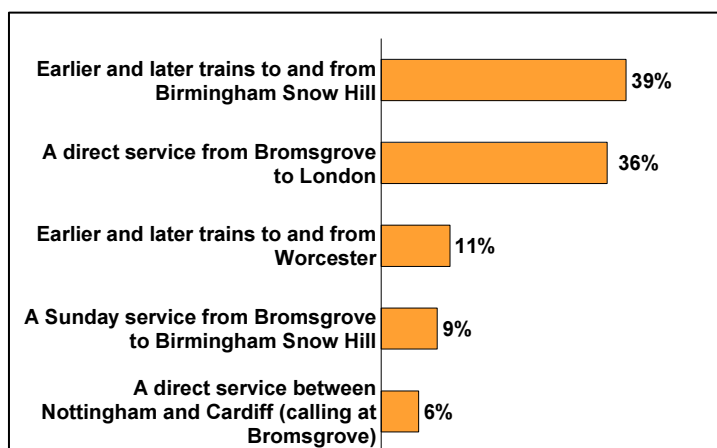


Base: All respondents (690)

7.5 Improving the rail franchise services to and from Bromsgrove

The Council and its partners want to improve rail franchises to and from Bromsgrove to help encourage the use of trains. Respondents were shown a list of possible service improvements and were asked which one they thought would be most beneficial. Two of the options stood out as particularly attractive to the sample: Earlier trains to and from Birmingham Snow Hill (39% felt this would be the most beneficial option) and a direct service from Bromsgrove to London (36% felt this would be the most beneficial option).

Which service would be most beneficial to the people of the District?



Base: All respondents (562)

There was some difference between how residents from different areas responded to this question, in particular when comparing residents from Urban 1 and Urban 2. Urban 2 residents were more likely to want an improved service to Birmingham, whilst Urban 1 residents were more likely to think that improved services to London would be beneficial:

	% Most beneficial			
	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Earlier and later trains to and from Birmingham Snow Hill	34%	58%	47%	32%
Direct service: Bromsgrove to London	38%	20%	32%	48%
Earlier and later trains to and from Worcester	11%	4%	14%	8%
A Sunday service from Bromsgrove to Birmingham Snow Hill	10%	10%	4%	6%
A direct service between Nottingham and Cardiff (calling at Bromsgrove)	7%	7%	3%	6%

8 HEALTH AND WELLBEING

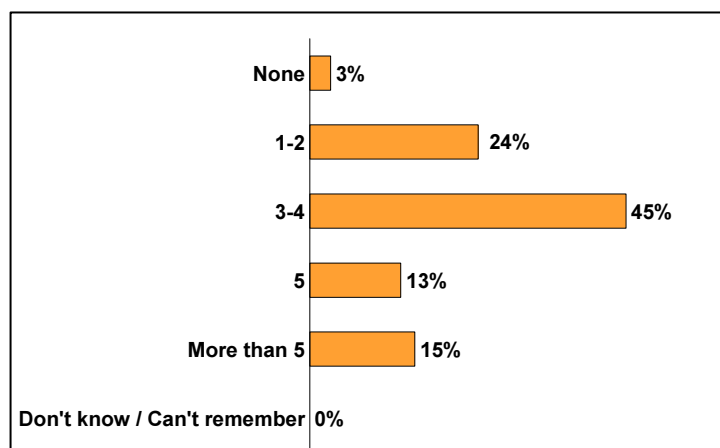
8.1 Introduction

This section looks at the various lifestyle habits of the sample, in terms of diet, exercise, smoking and encouraging an active lifestyle.

8.2 Consumption of Fruit and Vegetables

Respondents were asked how many portions of fruit and vegetables they ate yesterday. Over a quarter of the sample (28%) claimed that they ate the recommended 5 or more portions.

How many portions of fruit or vegetables did you eat yesterday?



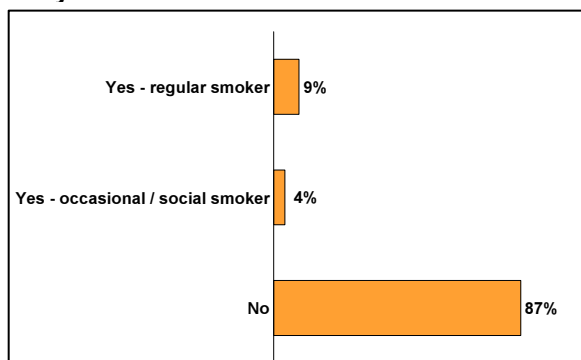
Base: All respondents (700)

There were few differences of note between different subgroups- with different ages and genders not being significantly more or less likely to eat the recommended amount of fruit and vegetables.

8.3 Smoking

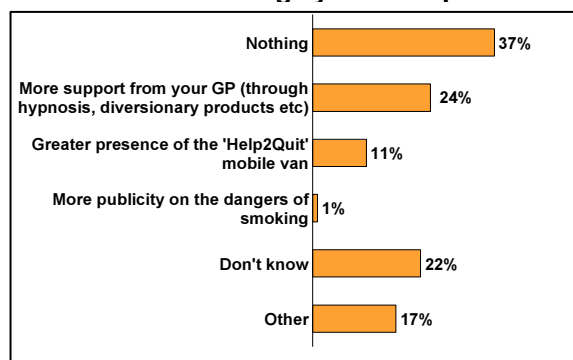
Around 9 in 10 respondents (87%) were non-smokers. Respondents aged over 75 were the least likely to smoke (98% did not smoke).

Do you smoke?



Base: All respondents (697)

What would encourage you to stop



Base: All respondents who smoke (87)

All those that ever smoke were asked what would help them to stop. The response was mixed, with 37% saying that there is nothing that the Council and its partners could to reduce the amount they smoke, and 22% saying that they did not know. However, around a quarter (24%) said that more support through their GP would help.

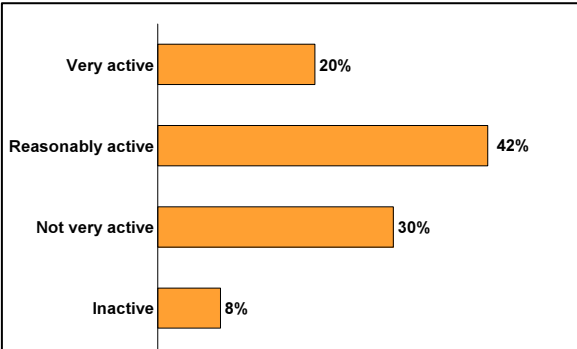
The box below lists some of the suggestions as to what the Council and its partners could do to encourage people to stop smoking. A full list is available in the appendix.

- "Cheaper support to stop."
- "Finances and health."
- "Free patches, etc., it is costing me a fortune!"
- "GPs offer patches, but I would like to get more support (other ideas)."
- "I only smoke 2/3 at weekends with a drink."
- "I will quit without support in the very near future."
- "It is my choice to smoke."
- "It is up to me to give up, I only smoke a couple a day."
- "It's my freedom of choice."
- "Take it or leave it, not a problem."
- "To save money and health."
- "When I'm ready to stop."
- "Why would I want to stop? Leave me my personal choice."

8.4 Exercise and leisure

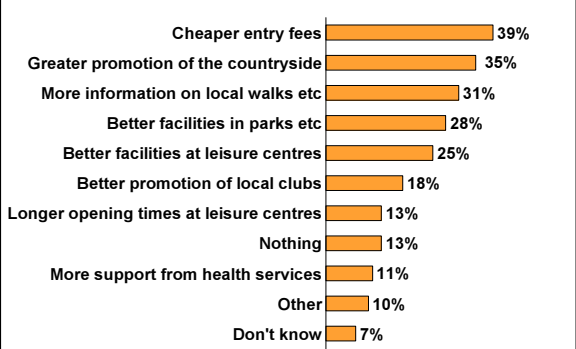
Respondents were asked how much physical activity they participate in. 20% described themselves as very active (participate in 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity more than five times a week). 42% described themselves as reasonably active; (participate in 30 minutes of activity five times a week). 30% claimed to be not very active (participate in 30 minutes of activity less than 5 times a week)- and the remaining 8% admitted to being inactive. Generally speaking, older respondents were less active than younger respondents.

How would you describe the amount of exercise you do?



Base: All respondents (692)

What could the Council do to make you more active?



Base: All respondents (685)

All respondents were asked what could be done to help them be more active, and were given a list of possibilities. 39% said that they would like cheaper entry fees to leisure centres, 35% thought there more should be done to promote the countryside, 31% felt that there should be more information about walks etc.

Inactive respondents and older age groups were less likely to feel that the suggested initiatives should be adopted. The breakdown for respondents who participate in different levels of activity are shown in the following table:

What could the Council and its partners do to help you be more active?	Very active	Reasonably active	Not very active	Inactive
Cheaper entry fees to leisure centres	40%	42%	38%	21%
Promotions of the countryside	40%	40%	30%	21%
Info on local walk etc	34%	36%	25%	15%
Better facilities in parks & open spaces	35%	30%	22%	17%
Better facilities/ range of classes	28%	26%	26%	13%
Promotion of local clubs	20%	18%	18%	8%
Longer opening times at leisure centres	12%	15%	12%	6%
Nothing	8%	10%	15%	29%
More support from health services	8%	11%	10%	23%
Don't know	5%	6%	8%	10%

The box below lists some of the suggestions as to what the Council and its partners could do to encourage people to be more active. A full list is available in the appendix.

- "Affordability is the problem - my neighbours all travel to Birmingham because it's cheaper - carbon footprint implications."
- "Already do what we can."
- "Better swimming facilities."
- "Car parking spaces for wheelchair drivers with zero rated tax discs."
- "Creche at exercise venues."
- "Daytime classes for yoga for example."
- "Do something in Wythall!! Off-road cycle routes."

"Make it easier to find very different social local clubs."

"Centres that are affordable."

"Not sell off the Dolphin Centre."

"Swimming pools."

"The local swimming pool has been shut for nearly 3 months!"

"This is personal choice, anyone can exercise if they want to."

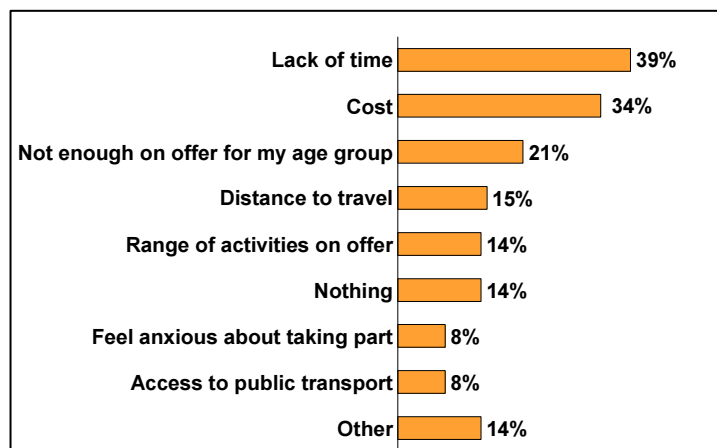
"Too many stiles instead of gates."

"When, if, I feel well, several of these options would be of interest."

"Would like more clubs in Rubery."

Respondents were asked what prevents them from participating more in sports/activities on offer in the District. The main factor was lack of time (39%). This was followed by cost (34%) and lack of choice (21%). Presumably the Council and its partners will not be able to respond due to the fact that a lack of time is the main barrier, but the issues of cost and choice are factors that the Council and partners can have some control over.

What stops you from participating more in the sports/activities on offer in the District?



Base: All respondents (685)

The table below shows how those who are active answered compared to those who are inactive.

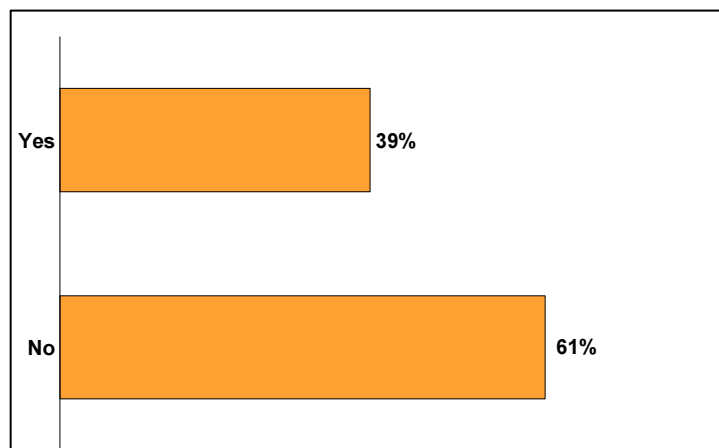
What if anything stops you from participating in sports and leisure activities on offer in the District?	Very active	Reasonably active	Not very active	Inactive
Lack of time	36%	41%	43%	18%
Cost	42%	33%	34%	24%
Not enough on offer for my age group	16%	22%	23%	26%
Distance to travel	17%	13%	16%	16%
Range of activities on offer	20%	16%	11%	4%
Nothing	19%	14%	12%	10%
Feel anxious about taking part	6%	7%	10%	14%
Access to public transport	7%	7%	8%	8%
Other	10%	9%	18%	32%

The box below lists some of the other barriers to participating in more sports/activities. A full list is available in the appendix.

<p>"Appropriate exercise sessions for people with disabilities. Would like designated disabled swimming session."</p> <p>"Better lighting is needed on Charford games field."</p> <p>"Car parking charges add to cost of activity."</p> <p>"Classes at Dolphin Centre oversubscribed."</p> <p>"Cleanliness of changing facilities."</p> <p>"Don't like sport."</p> <p>"Facilities for senior citizens continually being eroded in favour of children and young people."</p> <p>"Increased public swimming times, there are too many closed sessions."</p> <p>"Keep myself active, I do not need to go to public centres."</p> <p>"No public transport to Bromsgrove from Wythall."</p> <p>"Not enough crèche facilities at park times."</p> <p>"Not enough information."</p> <p>"Parking."</p>
--

Respondents were asked whether they felt they had enough information to make choices about leisure activities, sessions and clubs on offer in the District. 39% said that they did have enough information and 61% said that they did not. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to say that they did get enough information on leisure activities in the District.

Do you feel you have enough information to make a choice about the leisure activities etc in the District?



Base: All respondents (668)

As a final question in this section of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to suggest any activities, sessions or clubs that are not currently offered. A sample is listed below, and a full list is available in the appendix.

- "A swimming pool local to Wythall."
- "A wider range of classes later in the evening."
- "After school clubs for mums and children (all ages)."
- "Beginners French conversation. Pottery."
- "Bodypump classes and power plate."
- "Bowling."
- "Boxercise? Fencing."
- "Family walking group."
- "Fencing with foil."
- "How do I know? See question 13 (Promote it, we get no local paper and no general mailshots due to our location)."
- "I think the people should have a say - surveys sent out or meetings for local people. More youth centres and educational courses."
- "I would introduce more family clubs, where all ages can socialise and be involved in activities."
- "I would like to play conkers."
- "Ice Rink. Swimming Pool."

"Pole dancing."

"Swimming baths."

"Swimming, rock climbing, walks."

"Tennis - more public courts available at reasonable prices."

"Tennis club in our locality."

"Woodrush has now gone. You can't go anywhere in Bromsgrove, it's too far and unknown. Go to Solihull."

9 OLDER PEOPLE

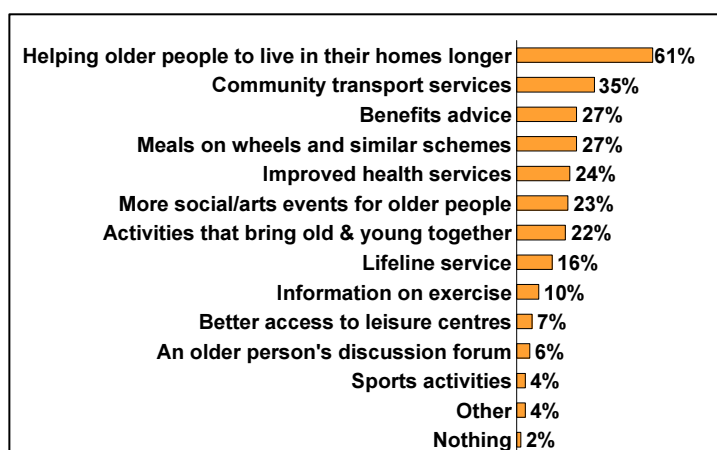
9.1 Introduction

The survey included one question asking residents what they felt the Council could do to most improve the lives of older people.

9.2 Improving the lives of older people

The majority (61%) felt that the Council should be doing more to help older residents to live in their homes for longer. 35% felt that community transport services and concessionary fares would help improve the lives of older people. Benefits advice (27%) and good neighbours schemes and meals on wheels (also 27%) were also thought to be good initiatives.

Which of the following would help improve the lives for older people?



Base: All respondents (651)

There were some interesting differences between age groups. In particular, younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to think that meals and wheels and similar good neighbours schemes are important. Younger people were also more likely than older respondents to think that activities that bring the young and old together would help to improve the lives of older people.

In contrast, older people were more likely than younger people to think that Lifeline services are important. The data for the key initiatives is shown in the following table.

Which do you think would most help improve the lives of old people?	18-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+
Helping older people to live in their homes for longer	61%	57%	50%	60%	67%	67%
Community transport services	25%	35%	36%	34%	37%	27%
Benefits advice	18%	23%	23%	39%	32%	23%
Meals on wheels and good neighbour schemes	45%	37%	29%	26%	16%	18%
Health services	25%	22%	32%	19%	23%	24%
More social/arts activities	39%	27%	21%	19%	22%	17%
Activities that bring the old and the young together	27%	34%	27%	25%	12%	8%
Lifeline services	2%	13%	19%	17%	13%	22%

Some residents took the opportunity to make their suggestions as to what else the Council could do to improve the lives of older people

"Community transport if it were free."
"Concessionary parking."
"Contact with older people who are housebound."
"More and better home care."
"No bus service here! Help with parking charges."
"Re-instalment of concessions."
"Reinstate parking permits for over sixties, (weekdays only!). I shall have to go to Redditch to Tesco/Sainsbury."
"Reinstate subsidised car parking."
"Reinstate/instate/continue Concessionary parking permit for 60 years +."
"Residential and nursing homes at more affordable prices."
"Ring and ride transport."
"Specially allotted car parking."

10 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

10.1 Introduction

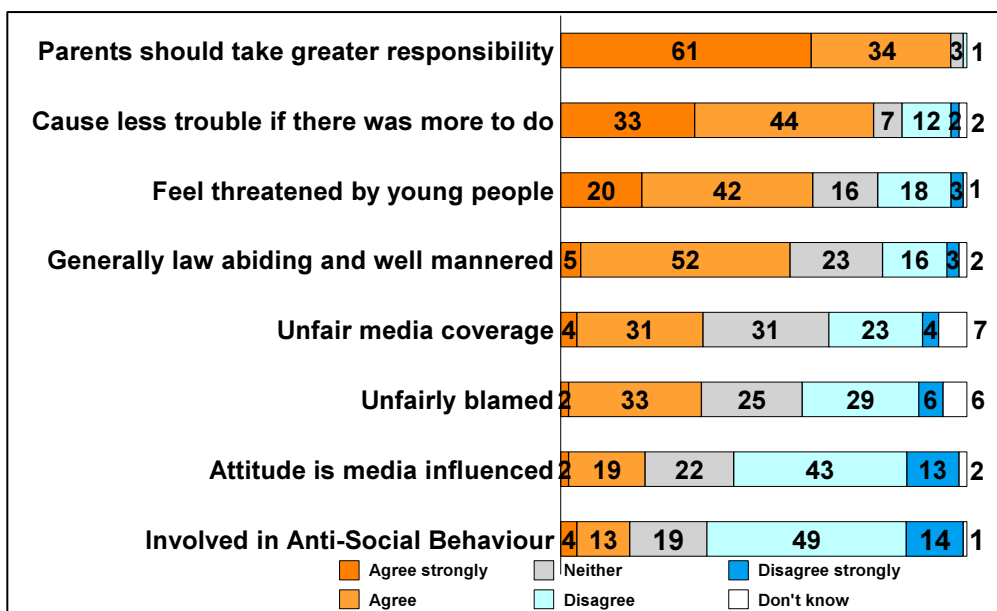
This section of the report looks at attitudes to young people, the issues people think affect young people and at what facilities the respondents thought should be invested in for children and young people.

10.2 Attitudes to children and young people

Respondents read a list of statements about children and young people and were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each.

- 95% agreed that parents should take more responsibility for their teenage children
- 77% agreed that young people would cause less trouble if there was more for them to do
- 62% felt threatened by young people hanging around on streets
- 57% felt that young people are generally law abiding and well mannered
- 35% agreed the young people get unfair media coverage
- 35% felt that young people are unfairly blames for issues that are out of their control
- 21% agreed that their attitude towards young people is influenced by the media
- 17% agreed that young people are always involved in antisocial behaviour

Do you agree with the following about young people in the area?



Base: All respondents (600~660)

Respondents with children were more positive about young people than those without children. This is shown in the table below.

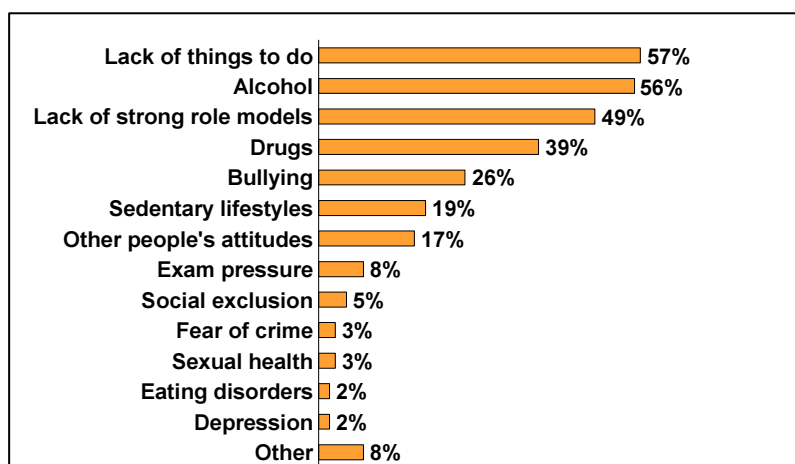
% Agree	Parents	Non parents
Parents should take more responsibility for their teenage children	91%	97%
Young people would cause less trouble if there was more for them to do	84%	75%
Feel threatened by young people hanging around on streets	53%	66%
Young people are generally law abiding and well mannered	58%	56%
Young people get unfair media coverage	45%	31%
Young people are unfairly blamed for issues that are out of their control	43%	31%
Attitude towards young people is influenced by the media	21%	20%
young people are always involved in antisocial behaviour	16%	18%

There were also some interesting differences between different age groups, in particular, those aged 18-34 were more likely than those aged 35 or over to feel threatened by young people (75% Vs. 62%) and were less likely to think that young people were generally law abiding (38% Vs 59%).

10.3 Issues affecting young people

Respondents were asked what they felt were the main issues affecting children and young people. 57% said that there was a lack of things for them to do, 56% said that alcohol was a problem and 49% said that a lack of strong role models was a problem.

What are the main issues affecting young people?



Base: All respondents (636)

There were few differences between subgroups, with the exception of those aged 18-34 being less likely to think that drugs were a problem (21%) than older respondents (42%).

A number of respondents took the opportunity of suggesting other issues that they felt were affecting children and young people. Some of the comments are listed below, the rest are contained in the appendix.

"Bad, misleading teaching. Lack of belief in mankind's creator, (giver of life)."

"Lack of discipline and punishment."

"Lack of discipline from parents particularly, schools and extremely poor involvement by Police."

"Parents giving their children quality time. Hectic working lives can lead to childrens' lives having no routine."

"Respect for themselves and others."

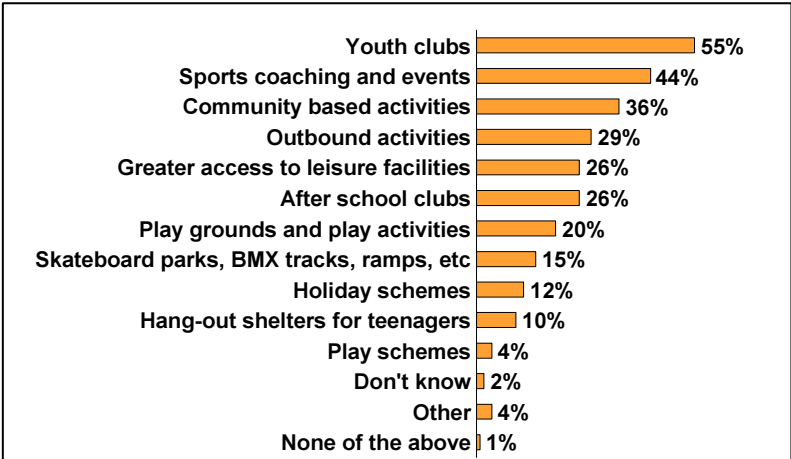
"Tony Blair's Human Rights Bill."

"We need safe and secured places for the 8-16 year olds parents who get told off if their children play outside their own houses. If you get PACT notices, alternatives should be offered."

10.4 Facilities for young people

Residents were asked what facilities for young people they felt that the Council and its partners should invest in. Over half the sample (55%) said youth clubs, 44% said sports coaching and events and 36% said community based activities. There were no significant differences of note between subgroups.

What facilities and activities do you think the Council should invest in?



Base: All respondents (659)

Respondents were given the option of making other suggestions. A selection of these are listed below, and a full list can be found in the appendix.

"It is not the Council's function to keep kids occupied. Pressure should be put on parents."

"Living proof of mankind's creator and his purpose, (who is shortly to act on what he sees)."

"More inclusive 'young and old' activities, e.g. dancing."

"More subsidised leisure activities."

"Music and films."

"National Service would be more than worthwhile (if the Council could bring to bear some influence on this)."

"Parenting classes so helping reduce problems in next generation."

"Pay more attention to education, ensure more money for our children is provided by Government."

"Support for organisation who welcome members of all ages."

"We need a cinema, bowling alley, laser quest, etc."

11 BE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE

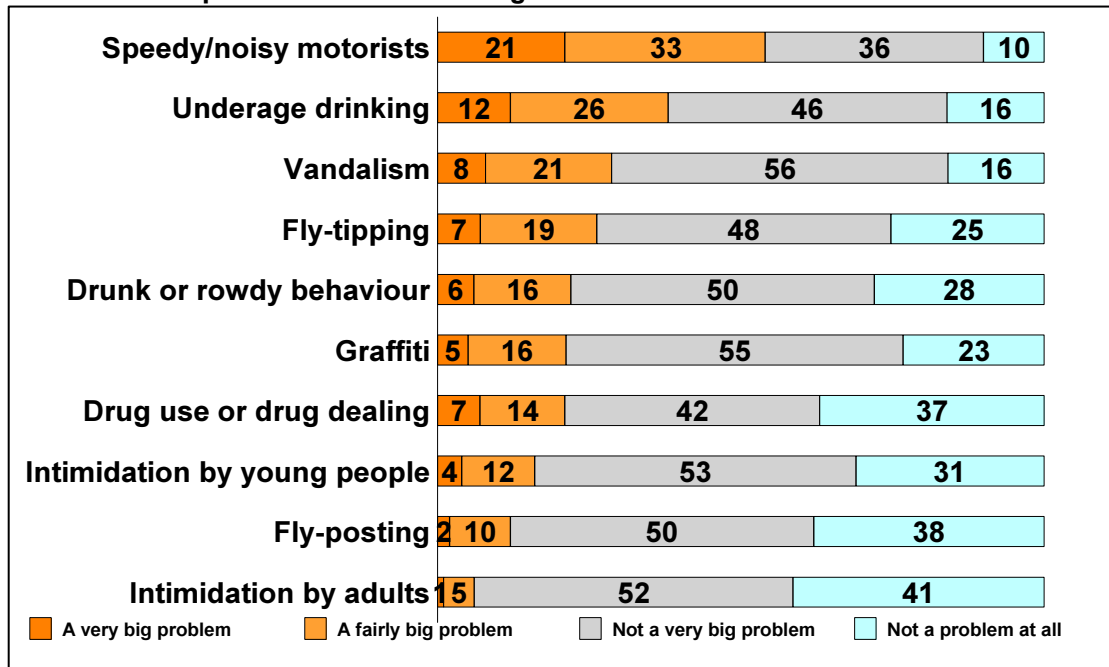
11.1 Introduction

This section looks at the responses to the questions on crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB). In particular, at the areas residents feel are problematic, the affect ASB has on the lives of residents, the impact of the media and attitudes to community safety officers and neighbourhood wardens.

11.2 Problems in local area

Residents were given a list of possible problems and were asked whether each was a very big problem, a fairly big problem, not a very big problem or not a problem at all. The main issues were speedy/noisy motorists (54% saying this was a very big or fairly big problem), followed by underage drinking (38%) and vandalism (29%).

How much of a problem are the following?



Base: All respondents (586~643)

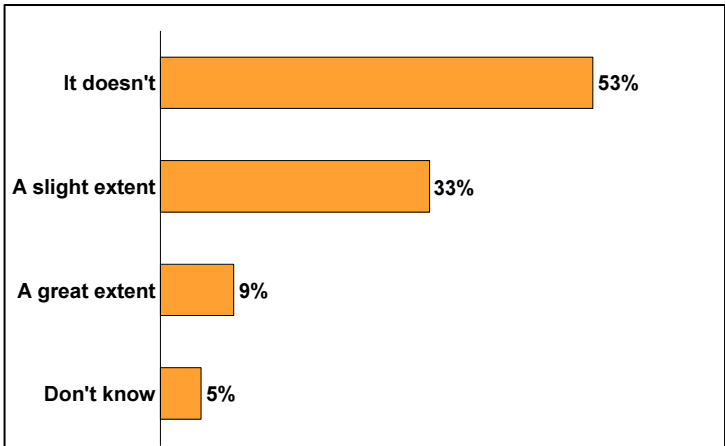
The data for the different areas is plotted in the table below:

	% A very big or fairly big problem			
	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Vandalism	32%	36%	15%	22%
Graffiti	24%	28%	6%	18%
Speedy/noisy motorists	52%	62%	59%	44%
Underage drinking	39%	50%	26%	32%
Fly-tipping	21%	33%	36%	37%
Fly-posting	12%	14%	7%	22%
Intimidation by children and young people	19%	17%	8%	13%
Intimidation by adults	7%	8%	3%	2%
Drunk or rowdy behaviour	27%	17%	13%	15%
Drug use or drug dealing	23%	20%	14%	19%

11.3 The influence of the media

Respondents were asked the extent to which they felt that the media influenced their views on crime in their area. Over half (53%) said that it had no impact, but a third (33%) said it had some impact and almost one in ten (9%) said that the media influences their views on crime in their local area to a great extent.

To what extent does the media influence your views on crime in your area?



Base: All respondents (689)

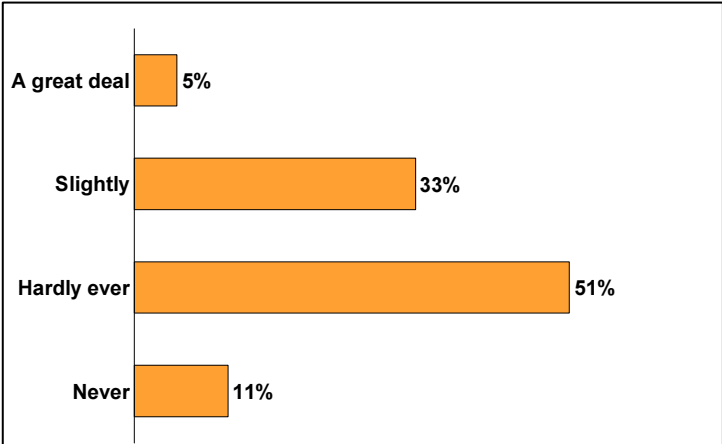
It is interesting to make comparisons between those who admitted that the media does influence their perception of crime, against those who said that the media does not influence their perception of crime, for different types of crimes and ASB. Whilst those that admitted that the media did influence their views were more likely than the rest of the sample to view all the aspects as problematic, the only aspects where the difference was mathematically significant was for vandalism and underage drinking:

- 34% of those who said that the media influences their views on crime in the area felt that vandalism was a problem- compared to 25% of those that said that the media does not influence their views of crime in the local area
- 42% of those that said the media influence their views on crime in the area said that underage drinking was a problem, compared to 34% of those who said the media does not influence their views of crime in the area.

11.4 Affect of crime on daily life

Respondents were asked whether crime and ASB has an impact on their life. 5% said that it impacted their life a great deal, and a third (33%) said that it slightly impacted their life.

How does crime & anti-social behaviour affect your life?



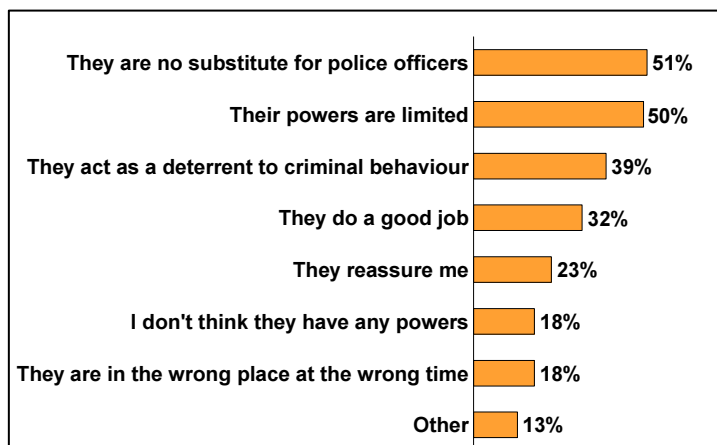
Base: All respondents (687)

Just over half (51%) said that it hardly ever impacted their life and around one in ten (11%) said that it never impacted their life.

11.5 Community Support Officers and neighbourhood wardens

Respondents were asked what they thought of neighbourhood wardens, and were given a list of possible attitudes. Opinions were very mixed, with 51% saying that neighbourhood wardens are no substitute for police officers and 50% saying that their powers are limited, but 39% said that they act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour.

What do you think about community support officers and neighbourhood wardens?



All respondents: (690)

Respondents were given the opportunity to make other comments to this question. Some of the free text response is listed below, the rest is in the appendix.

"If the police aren't prepared to tackle crime, what on earth are the community officers and neighbourhood wardens supposed to do?"

"In Marlbrook one never sees a Police presence, let alone a community and safety officer or neighbourhood warden. Therefore my answers to question 30 are not a credit to the Police, (or the Council)."

"It's policing on the cheap. They are a waste of time."

"Lets see more of them outside Bromsgrove town centre."

"Neighbourhood wardens make me feel spied on, not nice."

"Putting semi-skilled police into area will have positive effect. Is a club bouncer a good safety role model? People who take these jobs will either be vigilantes or little Hitlers... dangerous."

"There just are not enough Police or CSOs' for Bromsgrove."

"They need to work later, weekdays and weekends."

"They should stop and speak to people, not just walk on by!"

"With limited powers it would be better to free police officers' time up by reducing their ""office"" time and getting them on the streets. Local police officers in an area mean they become part of it."

12 YOUR LOCAL AREA

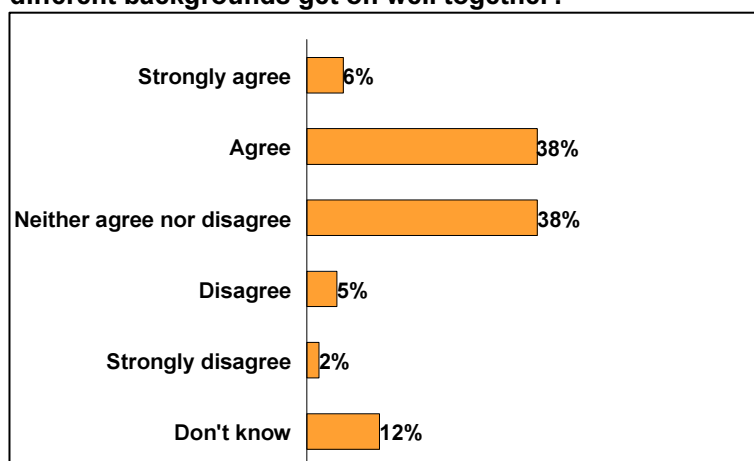
12.1 Introduction

The final section of the questionnaire asked residents what they felt about their local area. In particular, whether or not they felt that it is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together, whether or not they felt they belong there and what they feel about the area in general. Respondents were told that for the purposes of the survey, their local area was being defined as being within 2 miles of where they live.

12.2 People from different backgrounds

To begin the section, respondents were asked whether or not they thought their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Only a small proportion of the sample disagreed (7%) while 43% agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well together. A significant proportion of the sample did not give an opinion (38% neither agreed or disagreed and 12% answered 'Don't know').

Is your local area a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together?



Base: All respondents (682)

When looking at the data for different areas, there was very little difference between the proportions of people agreeing as is shown in the table below.

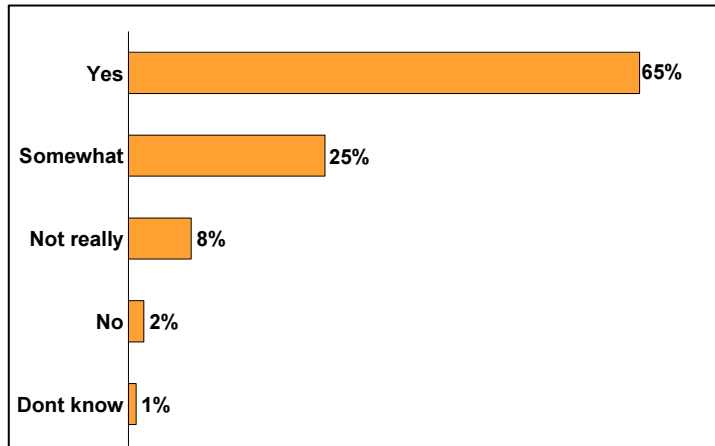
	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
My local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	42%	42%	45%	48%

There was also very little difference between the responses of BME (44% agreed) and non-BME (43% agreed) respondents.

12.3 Do you feel you belong in you local area?

65% of residents said that they felt they belong in their local area, 8% said that they did not really feel as if they belong in their local area, and 2% said that they did not feel like they belong at all.

Do you feel you 'belong' in your local area?



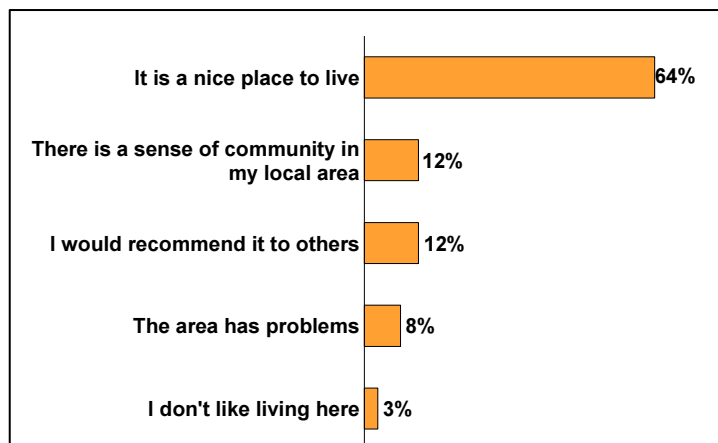
Base: All respondents (693)

There were no significant differences between BME and Non-BME respondents, and there was no particular geographical area that residents were more or less likely to feel that they belong to. The main difference, as we might expect, was that residents who had lived in their current home for over 5 years were more likely to feel that they belonged (69%) than those who had lived there less than 5 years (53%). Younger respondents were also less likely to say that they felt as if they belonged to the area.

12.4 Which best describes your local area

Respondents were asked which of a number of options they felt best described their local area. 64% said that there area is a nice place to live, 12% said that there is a sense of community in their area and 12% said they would recommend it to others. Only around one in ten respondents (12%) chose negative options: 8% said the area has problems and 2% said they don't like living here.

Which best describes your local area?



Base: All respondents (672)

There were few significant differences between different areas, with the exception of those in Urban 1 being significantly more likely than those in Rural 1 to say that the area has problems.

	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
It is a nice place to live	61%	67%	71%	73%
There is a sense of community in my local area	10%	14%	19%	14%
I would recommend it to others	14%	10%	7%	10%
The area has problems	11%	7%	2%	3%
I don't like living here	5%	2%	1%	-

As a final question, residents were asked to list three things that need improving in their local area. A selection is included below and a full list is available in the appendix.

- "1) No parking charges evenings and Sundays. 2) More high street national name shops. 3) Less litter."
- "1) The Council and the money that they waste. 2) Road network is appalling. 3) Council tax levels."
- "1. A decent family pub in the village. 2. Better parking facilities at local shops."
- "1. A second road sign at the junction of Hollywood Lane, and Corbett Road. 2. Quality of road surfaces. 3. Quality of footpaths."
- "1. Antisocial behaviour by young people. Hanging around old garage sites, etc., drinking and abusive. 2. More secure fencing put up in alleyways (Charford, estate). 3. Educate parents who turn their kids out on the street."
- "1. Better train services. 2. Better policing on beat. 3. Cleaner streets, sewers and drains."
- "1. Cross road junction Perryfields Road/Kidderminster Road not traffic lights, but a high sided roundabout. 2. All dogs must be on leashes in all public places. 3. ""Boy racers"" stopped in Bromsgrove."
- "1. Excessive litter on local roadsides, particularly the Bromsgrove Feeder Way Carriageway. 2. More precise timing on wheelie bin collection, say a definite 2 hour window, which may prevent bins being put out 24 hours early. At the moment, we never seem to be without bins lining our streets."
- "1. Improve shopping centre. 2. More facilities for teenagers. 3. More community policemen/women."
- "1. Improvement in pavements at junctions, which enable scooter users not to go onto the road. 2. Bobbies on the beat. 3. Control of speeding traffic in Houndsfield Lane (Alcester Road half)."

"1. Local shops/restaurants on the Oakalls Estate. 2. Lower Council Tax bills. 3. Better rubbish collection/street cleanliness."

"1. Main one is bus service. I was born in Romsley and it has never improved. 2. Community hall for old people to go. 3. Parking on roads (bends, close to junction, on verges) should have police checking for this, even if once a month."

"1. More police officers dealing with vandals. 2. Quicker repairs to local roads. 3. Better parking in Rubery Village."

"1. More police presence. 2. Removal of youths drinking at roadside most nights. 3. Litter dropped from recycling boxes and not picked up."

"1. Parents keeping better control on their young teenagers. 2. Stop youngsters swearing and drinking on the streets. 3. Stop rudeness of young people."

"1. Peterbrook Road needs to be closer monitored for speed. 2. Graffiti is an issue. 3. Some District sign are very dated."

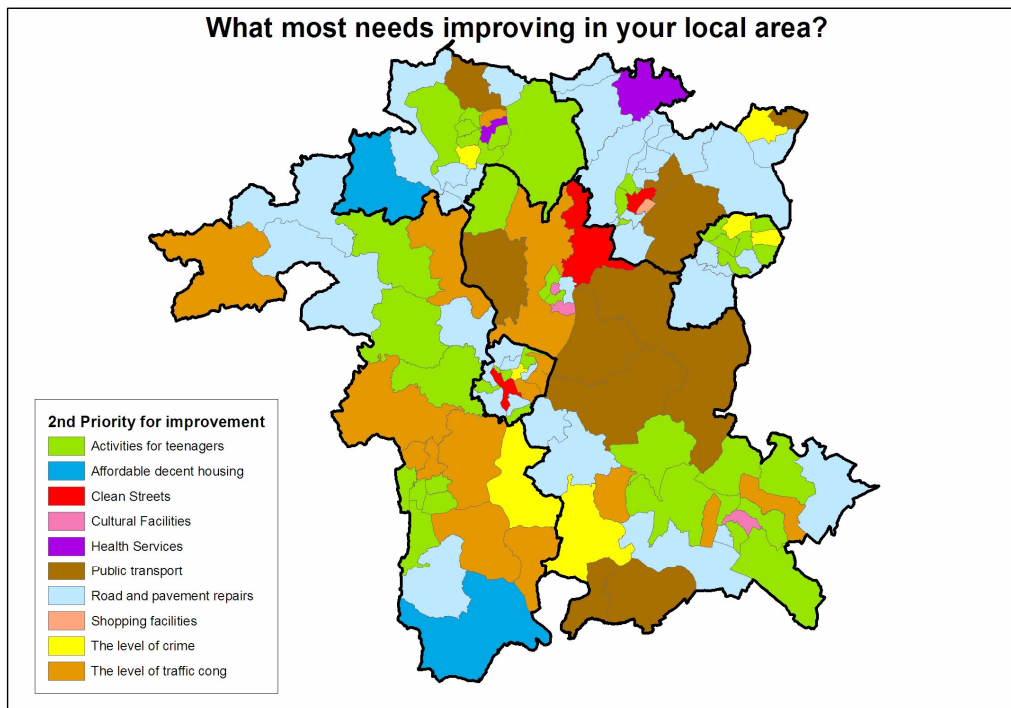
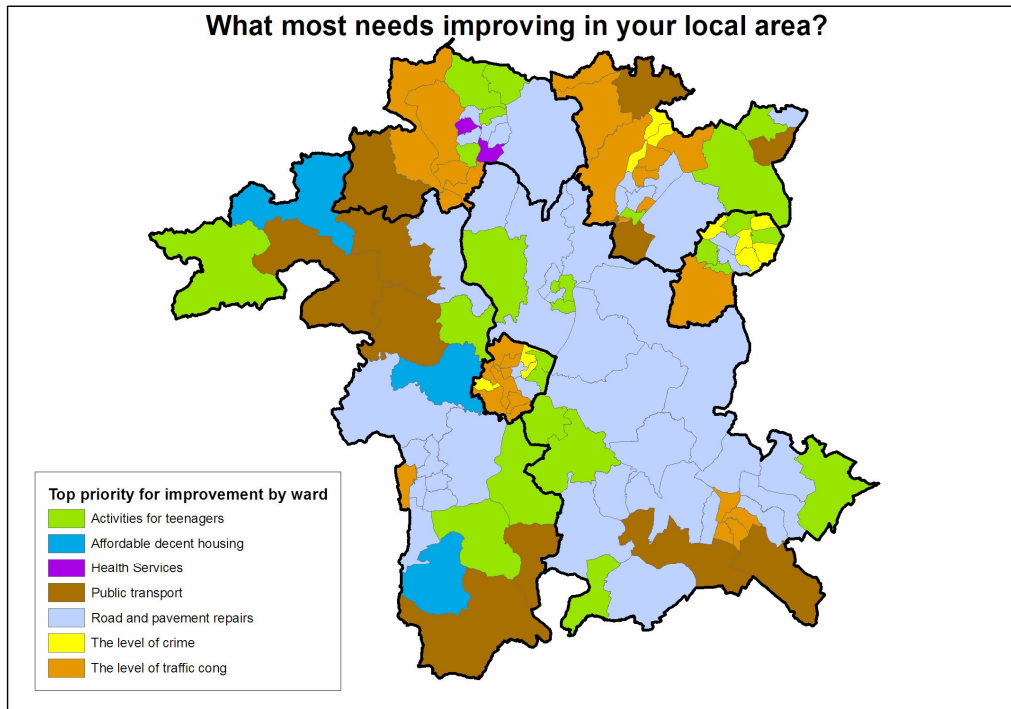
"1. Police or community support. 2. Stop locals fly tipping on Chelworth Road/Apsley Croft (Birmingham border). 3. Provide dog poo bins and fine inconsiderate owners."

"1. Potholes in Shawhurst Lane. Walked it 26th March 2008 and counted 53. 2. Longer daily library. Closed half day Tuesday and all day Thursday. 3. Bus timetables on display."

"1. Prevention of traffic using roads as rat runs to and from motorways and Birmingham. 2. Adequate drainage for water from heavy rainfall. 3. Improvement of sewerage system to cope with new buildings."

"1. Protecting local countryside and no building. 2. Road types of recycling, i.e. plastic cartons/yoghurt pots, etc."

Ward results for Worcestershire depicting results of 2006/07 BVPI satisfaction survey, Q2 'What most needs improving in your local area?' (9,404 responses – county and district results combined)



What most needs improving in your local area?

