BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 3RD SEPTEMBER 2008, AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

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

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence

2. Declarations of Interest

3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 30th July 2008 (Pages 1 - 4)

4.   Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board held on 29th July 2008 (Pages 5 - 10)

    (a) To receive and note the minutes
    (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes

5. Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 19th August 2008 (to follow)

    (a) To receive and note the minutes
    (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the

6. Integrated Finance and Performance Report (Quarter 1) (Pages 11 - 48)

7. Review of the Capital Programme (Pages 49 - 56)

8. Comprehensive Performance Assessment - Self Assessment (Pages 57 - 92)

9. Improvement Plan Exception report (June 2008) (Pages 93 - 104)

10. Model Standards for Mobile Home Site Licensing (Pages 105 - 124)

11. Refuse Collection and Recycling Operation Review (Pages 125 - 128)

12. Council Plan 2009-2012 Part 1 (Pages 129 - 198)

13. Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2013 (Pages 199 - 332)

14. Customer Panel Survey (3) - Satisfaction (Pages 333 - 416)

15. 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
<u>Chief Executive</u>

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

19th August 2008

B R O M S G R O V E   D I S T R I C T   C O U N C I L

MEETING OF THE CABINET

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

PRESENT: 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

Observers: Mr. J. Edwards (Lead Official), Councillors P. M. McDonald and E. J. Murray

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mr. H. Bennett, Mr. D. Hammond, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Mrs. D. Warren, Mr. A. Coel and Ms. R. Cole.

33/08   **APOLOGIES**

No apologies for absence were received.

34/08   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

35/08   **MINUTES**

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

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

36/08   **SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD**

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

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

37/08   **PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The minutes of the Performance Management Board held on 15th July 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED:
(a)   that the minutes be noted;
(b)   that whilst the Board's recommendation to focus on performance relating to the areas listed in minute 26/08 (Annual Financial and

Performance Report 2007/2008) be approved, the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to give detailed consideration to these areas and to ensure that either the corporate set of performance indicators for 2008/2009 is amended if necessary, or to ensure that the relevant Heads of Service and Portfolio Holders are continuing to focus on the improvement of performance in these areas, whichever is the most appropriate in each case;

(c)   that the recommendation contained at minute 27/08 (Improvement Plan Exception Report – Care and Repair Agency) be approved and it be noted that discussions are also taking place on a County-wide level relating to the review of the Care and Repair Agency;

(d)   that the recommendation contained at minute 28/08 (Monthly Performance Report – Customer Service Centre) be approved and it be noted that whilst performance has improved, the Portfolio Holder and relevant Officers are already evaluating and reviewing procedures at the Customer Service Centre on an on-going basis.

38/08   **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY**

The minutes of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 3rd July 2008 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting be noted.

39/08   **SIDEMOOR - LAY- BYS AND DROPPED KERBS**

The Cabinet received the following motion submitted by Councillor E. J. Murray:

"Will the Leader of the Council agree to consult his Cabinet and seek agreement to write to the County Council urging them to take steps to create lay-bys and dropped kerbs in Sidemoor in an effort to preserve grass verges and to generally improve the environment within which residents live in this area."

Councillor Murray confirmed that he had also been in contact with the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust in an attempt to achieve some improvement in the situation.

The Cabinet felt that a similar problem existed in a number of other areas within the District and that it would be helpful to ascertain whether the County Council was willing to assist in resolving the issue.

RESOLVED that the County Council be requested to take steps to create lay-bys and dropped kerbs in Sidemoor in an effort to preserve the grass verges in the area.

40/08   **BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE REDEVELOPMENT - PROGRESS REPORT**

Consideration was given to a report which updated members on progress made on aspects of the Town Centre regeneration project. It was reported that the public consultation by way of the Issues and Options process had commenced.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

41/08 **SPONSORSHIP OF ROUNDABOUTS AND OPEN SPACES**

The Cabinet considered a report on the introduction of a policy to cover the sponsorship of and advertising on roundabouts and open spaces. The draft policy had been developed by officers as part of the work of the Celebratory and Sponsorship Group. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED:
(a)   that the policy on sponsorship and advertising on roundabouts and open spaces as set out in appendix 1 to the report be approved; and
(b)   that the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services be authorised to revise the wording of the sponsorship agreement contained within appendix 1 as appropriate to ensure that it is expressed in clear language and that the legal position of the Council is protected in the event of termination of the agreement.

42/08 **TRAVEL PLAN**

The Cabinet considered a report relating to the production of a Travel Plan to encourage and promote sustainable travel habits to and from Bromsgrove District Council Offices.

It was recognised that with increasing acceptance of the significance of reducing carbon emissions as part of addressing climate change, both Central Government and the community in general were expecting Local Authorities to play a part in limiting the impact of carbon emissions and the production of an updated Travel Plan would contribute towards this. It was noted that assistance was available at no cost through the County Council to enable the necessary survey work to be undertaken.

RESOLVED that the Travel Plan be refreshed and updated, including a survey of modes of transport to and from the Council Offices employed by Members, officers and visitors.

43/08 **AUDIT COMMISSION RE-INSPECTION OF STRATEGIC HOUSING SERVICES**

Consideration was given to a report which addressed the recommendations of the Audit Commission following the re-inspection of the Council's Strategic Housing Services in February 2008. The re-inspection had resulted in a one star rating with promising prospects for improvement and it was recognised that this was a significant improvement from the previous inspection in March 2006.

The report included an Action Plan which contained proposed actions to address the areas identified by the Audit Commission as requiring further improvement.

RESOLVED:
(a)   that the report and recommendations of the Audit Commission following the re-inspection of the Strategic Housing Section be noted;
(b)   that the Action Plan as set out in appendix 1 to the report containing Corporate, Strategic Planning and Strategic Housing actions to address the recommendations be approved; and
(c)   that thanks be expressed to the Head of Strategic Housing and all his team for their efforts in achieving such a significant improvement in the service since the previous inspection.

44/08   **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (MAY 2008)**

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

The Portfolio Holder for Customer Care and Service reported that he was satisfied that measures were in place to address outstanding actions contained within the 2007/2008 Improvement Plan prior to the introduction of the new Improvement Plan 2008/2009.

RESOLVED:
(a)   that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report and the corrective action being taken be noted:
(b)   that it be noted that for the 106 actions highlighted within the Plan for May 2008, 81.1 percent of the Plan was on target (green), 3.8 percent was one month behind (amber) and 7.55 percent was over one month behind (red). 7.55 percent of actions had been rescheduled or suspended with approval; and
(c)   that the progress made against all actions scheduled within the Improvement Plan 2007/2008 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.05 p.m.

Chairman

B R O M S G R O V E   D I S T R I C T   C O U N C I L

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY STEERING BOARD

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

PRESENT: Councillors D. L. Pardoe (Chairman), A. N. Blagg, Mrs. M. Bunker,
S. R. Colella and C. B. Taylor

Observers: Mr. J. Edwards (Lead Official)

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. T. Beirne, Mrs. D. Warren and Ms. D. McCarthy

18/08   **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Dr. G. H. Lord.

19/08   **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were made.

20/08   **MINUTES**

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

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

21/08   **SCRUTINY REQUEST - BLUE BADGE HOLDERS**

The Board considered the scrutiny request which had been submitted by a member of the public, Mr. L. Irving, Vice-Chairman of the Older People's Forum in Bromsgrove. The scrutiny request related to abolishing car parking charges for Blue Badge holders.

There was detailed discussion on this item, particularly relating to the scrutiny investigation undertaken by the Car Parking Task Group last year, the funding and use of shopmobility and the need to consult disabled users.

Members were informed that there was a Disabled User Group which the Board could consult and it was stated that there had been detailed discussions with the Group around concessions previously.

The Board had questions around whether discretion was used by car parking attendants in relation to Blue Badge holders and whether policy changes had achieved the objectives set. Members considered the options open to them as stated within the report and believed that further information was required.

RESOLVED that Councillor G. N. Denaro (as the Portfolio Holder for Finance and as the Member who led the Car Parking scrutiny investigation in 2007), Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (as the Portfolio Holder for Street Scene and Community Safety) and the Transport and Engineering Officer be requested to attend the next meeting of the Scrutiny Steering Board to discuss this issue, including past decisions taken relating to Blue Badges and any further information to date which will assist the Board in making a decision on how this matter should be dealt with.

22/08   **BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE CONSULTATION**

Members considered a progress report on the Bromsgrove Town Centre redevelopment and the consultation surrounding the Issues and Options. There was a lengthy discussion on this matter and several questions were raised which were answered by the Chief Executive.

It was clarified that the Bromsgrove Town Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options paper put forward options rather than suggestions so to provide consultees with 'food for thought'.

It was explained that results would be analysed and would form the basis of the preferred option. It was anticipated that further consultation relating to the preferred option would be carried out in early 2009.

The Board was informed that it was a long term strategy and due to planning constraints there were statutory timescales which had to be followed. However, it was expected that some initiatives would be progressed more quickly.

The Chairman urged Members of the Board to complete the questionnaire to ensure their views would be considered. The Board as a whole was also given the opportunity to put forward general comments and views which it wished officers to take into consideration.

Reference was made to likely requests relating to encouraging Hagley residents to visit Bromsgrove town centre.

Members of the Board discussed whether the needs of young people (particularly aged 14-20 years) were being addressed as there was a concern that the consultation document lacked focus on activities and places for young people in and around the town centre. Some options were discussed and it was believed that it was important that other aspects such as housing for young people and families were linked.

There were some concerns relating to the accessibility of the questionnaire for all local residents across the whole of the District. It was also believed that the questionnaire should be readily available throughout the consultation period.

RESOLVED:

(a) that, as part of the town centre regeneration, careful consideration be given regarding the necessity for facilities for young people to ensure their needs were met;

(b) that the Chief Executive consult the Senior Projects Manager (Mr. R. Savory) regarding ensuring the questionnaire was easily accessible to all local residents across the District and that the Board be updated on this matter; and

(c) that the report be noted.

23/08 **OFFICER RESPONSES TO SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consideration was given to a report on a proposal to allow relevant Heads of Service the opportunity to comment in writing on scrutiny recommendations during the scrutiny process.

It was explained that rather than Heads of Service formally commenting on scrutiny recommendations at a Cabinet Meeting, it was proposed that the relevant Head of Service should be requested to give a brief written comment earlier on in the process and this would be first considered by the relevant Scrutiny Task Group.

It was clarified that if Heads of Service did not support a recommendation, it did not mean the Task Group or Scrutiny Steering Board would have to amend or withdraw a particular recommendation. It was also agreed that Scrutiny Members should be probing and challenging officers and other witnesses during a scrutiny investigation. However, there was still concern that having a form for Heads of Service to complete and submit to the Task Group, Scrutiny Steering Board and Cabinet regarding scrutiny recommendations could restrain scrutiny and it might be seen as a 'gatekeeping' exercise.

RESOLVED that rather than the relevant Heads of Service completing a form commenting on scrutiny recommendations (as proposed within the report), the views of the relevant Heads of Service be sought by a Task Group on all scrutiny recommendations before a Scrutiny Report is finalised and submitted to the Scrutiny Steering Board.

24/08 **AMENDMENTS TO CURRENT TASK GROUPS**

The Board considered the report which outlined minor changes to the current two Task Groups.

RESOLVED:

(a) that the membership form for the Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group received from Councillor Miss D. H. Campbell, as requested, be noted; and

(b) that the minor alteration to the Refuse and Recycling Task Group's terms of reference of replacing "level of service and cost" in the first three bullet points with "level, performance and cost of service" be approved.

25/08 **UPDATES ON SCRUTINY TASK GROUPS**

Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Free Zones Task Group

Councillor C. B. Taylor, Task Group Chairman, informed the Board of the progress made by the above Task Group during the two meetings held since the last meeting of the Board.

It was reported that at the last meeting (which Members of the Board who were not on the Task Group had been invited to attend), Chief Inspector Love had been in attendance to present his views on the issues faced by West Mercia Police which the Task Group found very useful.

Refuse and Recycling Task Group – Value for Money

An update from the Task Group Chairman, Councillor C. R. Scurrell, was read out to the Board which informed Members that the Task Group had agreed a programme of work.

RESOLVED that the verbal updates provided be noted.

26/08 **JOINT COUNTYWIDE FLOODING SCRUTINY UPDATE**

The Chairman, who was the Council's representative on the Joint Countywide Flooding Scrutiny Task Group, reminded the Board that as the last Task Group Meeting had been held on the same day as a full Council Meeting, he had been unable to attend. However, he had received an update from officers.

It was reported that a draft scrutiny report had been discussed at the last meeting and comments had been made on the recent Pitt Review recommendations. It had been agreed that recommendations from the Pitt Review would need to be cross referenced. A number of other amendments to the draft report had also been agreed and further information had been requested.

It was explained that the report would include recommendations to a number of organisations, including local authorities and it was anticipated that final recommendations would be agreed at the next meeting due to be held on 6th August 2008. It was hoped that the final report would be ready for the Board to consider at its meeting scheduled to be held on 30th September 2008.

RESOLVED that the update provided by the Chairman on the progress of the Joint Countywide Flooding Scrutiny be noted.

27/08 **FORWARD PLAN**

Consideration was given to the Forward Plan which included key and non-key decisions due to be taken over the forthcoming months.

The Board discussed each key decision in turn and questions raised were answered by officers present.

In relation to the Sports Strategy, clarification was sought regarding whether it included all young people or focussed on certain age groups. It was believed that the Strategy covered everyone and was not aimed at any one group.

RESOLVED that the Forward Plan be noted.

28/08   **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered all the items included within its Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Steering Board's Work Programme be noted and be updated accordingly.

The meeting closed at 7.50 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

03 SEPTEMBER 2008

JUNE (QUARTER 1) INTEGRATED FINANCE & PERFORMANCE REPORT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Webb Cabinet member for Performance Councillor Geoff Denaro Cabinet Member for Finance
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive Jayne Pickering, Head of Financial Services
Key Decision	

1. **SUMMARY**

   To report to Cabinet on the Council's performance and financial position at 30th June 2008 (period 3, quarter 1).

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

2.1 That Cabinet notes that 67% of PI's for which data is available are Improving or Stable.

2.2 That Cabinet notes that 86% of PI's for which data is available are achieving their Year to Date target.

2.3 That Cabinet notes that 96% of PI's for which data is available are predicted to meet their target at year end.

2.4 That Cabinet notes the £268,000 predicted outturn revenue spend variance and other financial information.

2.5 That Cabinet considers the corrective actions being taken on both the Council's performance and finances and whether any further actions are required.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 This is the first integrated quarterly finance and performance report for 2008/09. The performance element has been revised to reflect the introduction of the new 'National Indicator' set which replaced the former Best Value Performance Indicator set on 1st April. As well as the revised corporate performance indicator set, shown in Appendix 2.

4. PROGRESS IN THE QUARTER

An integrated performance and finance report for each department, plus a council summary, is shown on the following pages.

Overall Council Summary				Quarter 1 (June 30th) 2008/09	

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving (I)	19	No. of PI's meeting YTD target	24	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	27
No. of PI's Stable (S)	10	No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%	2	No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	1
No. of PI's worsening (W)	0	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%	2	No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	0

Achievements

67% of PI's are Improving or Stable
86% of PI's are achieving their Year To Date target
96%of PI's are predicted to meet their target at year end

The number of PI's with worsening performance is worthy of further explanation. In most cases the decline in performance is marginal, apart from the increase in vehicle crime (see appendix 2 for explanation and action plan). In all but two cases performance remains on or above target for the year to date, with just two missing their year to date target by less than 10%.

Issues

Overall the Council's performance remains strong, with 88% achieving the year to date targets. Successes include:-

- the reduction in household waste collections missed in June (similarly for recycling);

- the number of affordable housing units built in quarter 1 (50, compared to a target of 20);

- the further reduction in families living in temporary accommodation (13 compared to a target of 23);

- the excellence performance at the CSC through the first quarter (three years ago the times were up at 88 seconds, we now achieved 34 seconds in April, traditionally a very busy month because of Council Tax billing). In June we achieved 26 seconds; and

- the good performance on sickness levels, which if sustained for the rest of the year will see our sickness levels come down to an acceptable level.

There are two indicators where performance is worse than target for the month of June:-

- Violent crimes – this is caused by arrests being made for low level domestic incidents as a way of cooling off the situation; and

- PACT meetings attended to senior officers – this has been caused by late notification from the Police, which has now been resolved.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Corporate Services	812	262	260	-2	816	4
E-Government & Customer Services	62	406	457	50	87	24
Financial Services	1,567	335	266	-69	1,509	-58
Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	923	621	570	-51	891	-32
Human Resources & Organisational Development	99	93	99	6	109	10
Planning & Environment Services	5,661	518	424	-94	5,598	-63
Street Scene & Community	8,071	1,250	1,293	43	8,453	382
TOTAL	**17,195**	**3,485**	**3,369**	**-116**	**17,463**	**268**

Financial Commentary

The Council is operating close to its financial targets across most areas for the first quarter. However, some of the under spends reflected in departments relate to further efficiency/negotiated savings made in areas such as business rates and insurance. As these are corporate in nature they will not be available for departments use to offset alternative expenditure and will be returned to a corporate budget as part of a revised budget exercise due following the second quarter performance report.

The projected variances for Planning & Environment Services includes a £100k projected under spend relating to the Local Plan. It is recommended that this surplus budget be returned to revenue balances as detailed in section 2 of this report.

The projected outturn shows the major pressures arise mainly in Street Scene and Community. This is due to the delay in the transfer of the sports centres to the Leisure Trust together with a projected shortfall on car parking income and increased costs relating to the improved travel concessions scheme.

The current projected outturn for net cost of services is anticipated to be an over spend of £268k. This will be offset by the additional income generated from investments of £262k. This is presented later in this report and is mainly due to the rescheduling of the capital programme resulting in more funds available for investment and the interest rates being higher than anticipated due to current market conditions.

The revised net position would be an over spend of £6k.

Capital Budget summary April-June 2008

Department	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Corporate Services	0	0	0	0
E-Government & Customer Services	6,210	44	4,410	(1,800)
Financial Services	0	0	34	34
Legal, Equality & Democratic Services	606	4	120	(486)
Human Resources & Organisational Development	30	0	0	(30)
Planning & Environment	3,045	282	2,142	(903)

Street Scene and Community	2,577	224		2,033	(544)
Budget for Support Services Recharges	130	0		130	0
TOTAL	**12,598**	**554**		**8,869**	**(3,729)**

Financial Commentary

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members and reported to September Cabinet.

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving (I)	6	No. of PI's meeting YTD target	13	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	14
No. of PI's Stable (S)	4	No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%	1	No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	1
No. of PI's worsening (W)	4	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%	1	No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	0

Achievements

Performance in this area continues to be strong, with 13 indicators showing improved performance. The Customer Panel results show a significant improvement in the perception of street cleanliness and recycling.

Issues

There are no significant performance issues, however, the financial performance of car parking and the negotiations on the transfer of the Dolphin Centre are a concern.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Community Safety	713	183	184	1	718	5
Parks & Recreation	667	70	57	-12	667	0
Promotions	329	61	77	17	369	40
Sports Centres	618	167	177	10	794	177
Sports Development	572	39	14	-25	569	-3
Streets & Grounds	2,312	285	303	18	2,320	8
Car Parks	-817	-178	-143	35	-713	104
Depot Misc	-16	282	269	-13	-13	3
SS&C Mgt/admin	0	96	90	-6	0	0
Transport & Waste	3,257	136	154	18	3,259	2
Travel Concessions	436	108	113	5	482	46
Waste Policy	0	0	-4	-4	0	0
TOTAL	**8,071**	**1,250**	**1,293**	**43**	**8,453**	**382**

Financial Commentary

- The projected overspend for Community Safety relates to an expected increase in equipment maintenance costs; these are slightly offset by an expected increase in income. There are also reduced staffing costs due to post movements.
- Projected overspend on Promotions relates to ongoing costs of the Museum.
- Sports Centres projected overspend relates to the delay of the Trust transfer.
- Sports Development projected under spend relates to the new Sports Development Offices being in post for only 10 months in this financial year.
- Streets and Grounds projected overspend originates from a lack of supply and service budgets these may have been allocated to Depot Miscellaneous.
- Car park income is showing a projected reduction, due to a national footfall reduction of 1.5% reflecting current economic and fuel conditions. The remaining shortfall is a combination of the reduction in use due to the price increase, the trend results in a reduction in ticket sales of 4% in the first year.
- Travel concessions overspend is due to an increase in claims.

Capital Budget summary April-June 2008/09

Service	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Cemeteries	7	0	7	0
Community Safety	164	0	164	0
Parks, Play areas & Open Spaces	890	60	339	-551
Leisure Centres	710	25	710	0
Culture and Community General	126	0	126	0
Replacement Vehicles	680	88	620	-60
Site works	0	0	66	66
TOTAL	**2,577**	**173**	**2,032**	**-545**

Financial Commentary
- The continuation of the 10 year Vehicle Replacement Programme across the service.
- Site works is 2007-08 unspent budget, which is subject to carry forward approval.
- A virement of £90k was approved in July from Dolphin phrase I to Phrase II this has been reflected in the expenditure.
- Parks and open spaces are projecting an annual under spend, two schemes are dependent on an update due in November (Barnsley Hall and District Wide Provision / Enhancement of Sports Facilities) it is considered unlikely that either scheme with commence until 2009/10

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members.

| Planning & Environment Services | | | | Quarter 1 (June 30th) 2008/09 | | |

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving **(I)**	3	No. of PI's meeting YTD target	5	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	5
No. of PI's Stable **(S)**	0	No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%	0	No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	0
No. of PI's worsening **(W)**	3	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%	0	No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	0

Achievements

The Department Managers undertook an "Away Day" at the beginning of April to discuss the financial savings target for the Department for 09/10, as well as what operational efficiencies were likely to be made as a consequence of the introduction of the new CAPS UNIFORM system. The Head of P&E has formulated a draft Review of the entire Department and is currently liaising with HR&OD to work out a timetable for consultation and implementation of the findings of that review.

The Department as a whole has maintained the good performance of last year within the first quarter of 08/09. The determination of planning applications by Development Control remains high:
Majors (7/9) =78%
Minors (36/45) = 80%
Others (229/244) = 94%

The Commercial Food health and Safety section of Environmental Health had an external audit of its activities undertaken by the Food Standards Agency in June. An Action Plan is in the process of being agreed with the Agency in response to the findings of that audit.

The Strategic Housing section received its service re-inspection from the Audit Commission Report on May 15th 2008. The service had previously been inspected in March 2006 when it had been rated as being a poor, zero star service with uncertain prospects for improvement. The outcome of the Re-Inspection that took place in February this year states that Bromsgrove District Council's Strategic Housing Service is a fair, one-star service which has promising prospects for improvement and was assessed as being a one star service with promising prospects.

The comprehensive Longbridge Area Action Plan, a joint regeneration plan with the City of Birmingham, was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate at the beginning of April and the Examination in Public is expected to take place in October 2008.

The Bromsgrove Town Centre Area Action plan issues paper was agreed by the Local Development Framework Working Party and a consultation exercise is to be undertaken in the second quarter of this year.

Building Control received an unannounced inspection to assess their BSI accreditation and was successful in retaining that accreditation.

Issues

The impact of Job Evaluation resulted in staff retention issues within the Development Control Service becoming apparent with the first quarter of this year. 2 members of staff have left and 3 further posts will become vacant within the second and third quarters of this year.

Environmental Health are still seeking to recruit to a post within the Commercial Services section whilst the Environment Officer post within Strategic Planning also became vacant.

Recruitment is on going.

The introduction of the CAPS UNIFORM system has been continuous throughout the quarter but this has resulted in considerable staff time being taken up with training. Service Managers have tried, where possible to ensure that impact on service delivery has been minimal or effectively managed.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Development & Building Control	959	6	-38	-45	908	-51
Environmental Health	997	144	123	-22	955	-42
Licensing	-4	-6	-4	2	-9	-5
Planning Administration	-8	31	49	18	50	57
Strategic Housing	3,089	166	169	3	3,140	51
Strategic Planning	465	130	78	-53	351	-113
Economic Development	115	29	28	-1	122	7
Retail Market	50	17	19	2	82	32
TOTAL	**5,661**	**518**	**424**	**-94**	**5,598**	**-64**

Financial Commentary

- The current under-spends are due to a number of vacancies within the department. These vacant posts will be reviewed as part of a wider Departmental Review that is looking into efficiencies and savings as part of the three year financial plan.
- There has also been identified within Strategic Planning an amount of £100k for the local plan inquiry which it is considered is no longer required. This will be released back to balances after formal a recommendation to do so.
- It is projected there will be an under-spend of 64k by the end of the financial year. This being the net effect of the under-spends on salaries and the Strategic Planning budget against the loss of income in land charges, Market Hall, the closure of the hostels and the loss of income on Pre-transfer Right to Buys(PRTB's).

Capital Budget summary April-June 2008/09

Service	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000		Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Strategic Housing	2,760	131		2,032	-728
Town Centre	284	0		110	-174
TOTAL	**3,044**	**131**		**2,142**	**-902**

Financial Commentary

- Expected under spend on Disabled Facilities Grants and Discretionary Home Repair Grants totals £100k. A number of cost saving measures have been and are currently being introduced, therefore more grants are being completed for better value for money. Measures include the following: - procurement framework, introduction of self contained modular buildings, preferred partnership working.
- Grants to RSL schemes – a number of schemes are under way, in addition we are working with partners to secure additional funding for other schemes, early indications are that either the scheme will not be ready to not commence this year or the budget will be combined with 2009/10's for a larger strategic project.
- The two budgeted schemes for Improvements / upgrade to Houndsfield lane caravan park are to be integrated and but work is unlikely to commence until 2009/10.
- Town centre new toilet block is subject to town centre plans and unlikely to commence until 2009/10.

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members.

E-Government & Customer Services				Quarter 1 (June 30th) 2008/09	

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving **(I)**	3	No. of PI's meeting YTD target	3	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	3
No. of PI's Stable **(S)**	0	No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%	0	No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	0
No. of PI's worsening **(W)**	0	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%	0	No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	0

Achievements

Customer Service Centre

The queue management system continues to improve the management of the flow of customers through the CSC. The large screen is now being used by other organisations e.g.: BARN, to promote their services.

The queue management system also monitors waiting times for face to face customers and provides management information about the types of enquiries being handled in the centre. Since April 08 approx 7500 customers have been logged on the queue management system. The average wait time for customers in the CSC is 9 minutes and is below the HUB performance target of 15 minutes. The average face to face customer serving time is 11 minutes.

In April a PACT feedback system was introduced at the CSC supporting PACT meetings in association with West Mercia Police.

In May building work to meet DDA compliance was undertaken in the CSC involving structural changes to the entrance ramp. The ramp is now fully compliant.

In June the Registration Service went live at the CSC increasing the availability of County services to our customers.

The majority of CSC PI's are exceeding target:
- Resolution at first point of contact (all services) is showing a consistent trend of improvement and is exceeding target. Average of 97%
- Resolution at first point of contact (telephone) is also above target with an average of 96%
- Resolution at first point of contact (face to face) is 98%. The queue management system mentioned above has had a direct positive impact on this PI.
- 85% of calls will be answered before the call is abandoned is above target at 94%

The latest Customer Satisfaction Survey results from this year's survey indicate that 83% of our customers are satisfied with how easy it is to contact the Council. Whilst 73% said they would recommend the CSC to a friend.

Information Communication Technology Services

A full audit of the local area network has been completed and reconfiguration started.
The Citrix Server has been upgraded to the latest software version to provide a more stable platform.
The Hate Crime text messaging service went live in April.

The first trial Virtual Server went live in April.

New support arrangements were introduced for Council Tax Billing yearend processing which resulted in no system failures during this period.

Software packages were created to help speed up the installation of programs to support the Spatial Project.

The rollout of Citrix thin client at home for Cllrs and staff is continuing. Feedback from this rollout is being used to fix issues and improve access.

Spatial Project

The planning module is now live with all new applications being processed in the new system.
Document Management system is now live in the following departments:

- Front of House
- Human Resources
- Chief Executives
- Culture & Community Services
- Street Scene & Waste Management
- E-Government & Customer Services
- Strategic Housing
- Land Charges
- Economic Development
- Building Control

The Elections Management System is now live.
The public access modules that will allow our customers to access and provide information on Scores on the Doors, Local Development Framework, Planning applications, Licensing and Building Control are all installed awaiting roll out during the rest of the year.

Issues
Whilst sickness absence levels at the CSC have improved during the first quarter further monitoring of the situation is required to ensure continued improvement.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Customer Service Centre	54	108	82	-26	58	4
E-Government	8	299	374	76	29	20
TOTAL	**62**	**407**	**456**	**50**	**87**	**24**

Financial Commentary
- It is expected that there will be an over spend of £55,000 at the end of the financial year. The majority of the projected overspend is related to two main areas within E-Government. It is expected that a £17,000 overspend will be incurred in relation to telephone costs, this is due to a first year revenue impact for telephone links between the Dolphin Centre site, the Depot and the main Council Offices. The other large projected overspend is related to computer software where it is expected that this will be £30,000 overspent due to extra Microsoft licences that need to be purchased. Neither of these costs could have been predicted.

Capital Budget summary April-June 2008/09

Service	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
E-Government	6,210	44	4,410	-1,800
TOTAL	**6,210**	**44**	**4,410**	**-1,800**

Financial Commentary
- Phase I of the Spatial Project is on target, the expected variance relates to Phase II.

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members.

Financial Services						Quarter 1 (June 30th) 2008/09	

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving (I)		No. of PI's meeting YTD target	2	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	3
No. of PI's Stable (S)		No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%	1	No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	
No. of PI's worsening (W)	2	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%		No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	

Achievements

- Closedown of 2007/08 and reporting of Statement of Accounts to Cabinet within statutory deadline
- Outturn report presented to members
- Continued roll out of Purchase Order Processing system
- Continued improvement to quarterly finance and performance reporting
- Supported the development of departmental risk registers
- Continued the performance of benefit claims processed
- Performance on Council Tax and Business Rate collection within target
- Successful prosecutions for the Fraud section
- Procurement support to Redditch Council demonstrating improvements

Issues

- Vacancies within Internal Audit impacting on the delivery of the 2008/09 plan. To negotiate support from other districts.
- Number of vacancies within Revenues and Benefits to be advertised.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Central Overheads	117	29	34	5	117	0
Accountancy & Administration	15	126	138	12	22	7
Internal Audit	0	31	21	-10	3	3
Grants & Donations	91	42	37	-5	86	-5
Revenues & Benefits	1,344	107	36	-71	1,281	-63
TOTAL	**1,567**	**335**	**266**	**-69**	**1,509**	**-58**

Financial Commentary
- It is projected that Financial Services will be £58,000 underspent at the end of the financial year. This mainly comprises a projected overspend on agency staff within the revenues and benefits section netted against the extra income expected from Housing Benefit overpayments recovery.

Capital Budget summary April-June 2008/09

Service	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
E-Government	0	0	34	34
TOTAL	**0**	**0**	**34**	**34**

Financial Commentary
- The remaining under spend from 2007/08 is awaiting carry forward approval.
- The Purchase Order Processing system was originally piloted in accountancy and ICT departments. Further rollout to Revenues and Benefits section and the CSC has been completed with programmed rollout to the whole of the Council.
- The majority of this scheme was completed in 2006/07 and the budget is intended for completion of the project.

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members.

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving (I)	1	No. of PI's meeting YTD target		No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	1
No. of PI's Stable (S)		No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%		No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	
No. of PI's worsening (W)	1	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%	1	No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	

Achievements

Clearly, the key issue in the Department has been the consideration and preparation for the joint chief executive position with Redditch BC. This Acting position went live on 01 August.

Issues

The main issue for the Department is the maintaining of a strategic focus on Bromsgrove (including preparation for the forthcoming CPA) whilst starting work with Redditch. The Council Plan Pt 1 document is in draft (this sets the strategic direction for the Council) and a draft CPA self assessment has been produced.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Policy & Performance	38	92	89	-3	38	0
Corporate Management	754	176	166	-10	758	4
Corporate Projects	19	5	5	0	29	0
TOTAL	812	273	260	-13	825	4

Financial Commentary

The Corporate Communication, Policy and Performance team has secured external funding for the post of Improvement Manager and contributions towards the costs of the Local Strategic Partnership. Whilst there may be pressure achieving the income target for Together Bromsgrove it is expected that savings elsewhere within the team's budget will adequately meet any shortfall.

Capital Budget summary April- June 2008 – No Capital budget

Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services				Quarter 1 (June 30th) 2008/09	

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving **(I)**		No. of PI's meeting YTD target	1	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	1
No. of PI's Stable **(S)**	1	No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%		No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	
No. of PI's worsening **(W)**		No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%		No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	

Achievements

- The Council is making progress towards level 3 of the Local Government Equality Standard
- A successful participatory budgeting exercise has resulted in funds being allocated to Black History Month, Diwali and Padstone Day Centre in Bromsgrove for adults with learning disabilities.
- The Council has signed up to a service level agreement with the Worcestershire County Council for the delivery of assets management functions and this has enabled the Council to further the actions outstanding within the Assets Management Action Plan
- The Legal Department have successfully recruited an officer to undertake ethical standards matters and the post holder will be in post by October
- The Committee Administration team has successfully recruited a Scrutiny Officer who will focus primarily on furthering the scrutiny process within the decision making process
- The elections team continue to work with harder to reach groups in their quest to accelerate democratic participation within Bromsgrove District. Easy to follow packs have been prepared and distributed to older persons homes and sheltered accommodation to explain the purpose of and process involved in postal voting. This has been very well received.
- The Equalities and Diversity Conference event was held in April 2008 and over 60 delegated were present, including residents, officers, members and partners. The forum and the Disabled Users Group continue to thrive and provide the Council with an invaluable communication and involvement tool.
- The high dependency unit and community transport projects now boast their own user involvement groups and there are community representatives and stakeholders who are involved in the town centre working group to ensure involvement from disabled people in the planning stages.

Issues

- The introduction of the case management system in the Legal Department has been problematic and it has taken some time to iron out the technical issues. This has now been achieved but it is fair to say that it is behind schedule.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Administration Services	0	31	34	3	-3	-3
Committee & Member Services	819	116	124	8	817	-2
Elections & Registration	176	29	23	-5	191	15
Facilities Management	-81	355	297	-58	-112	-48
Legal Services	10	90	92	2	16	6
TOTAL	**923**	**621**	**570**	**-51**	**892**	**-32**

Financial Commentary

- The budget for the electoral services department is and will continue to be overspent for this year. The Elections Manager post was vacant for a considerable time and as a consequence the budgets in relation the postal voting and publications was not an accurate reflection of the actual costs. It is fair to say that it is unlikely that this would have been predicted accurately in any event given the considerable changes throughout the elections period in relation to the postal voting process and the elections act generally.
- Members need to be aware that the costs associated with the devolution of member investigations from the Standards Board to the Council's Standards Committee are proving to be considerable given the number of elected member complaints being managed through this quarter. If this continues then this will cause a budgetary issue for Legal Equalities and Democratic Services.
- It is projected there will be an under spend for the year due mainly to savings in Facilities Management budgets for insurance and business rates. As mentioned earlier in the report these will be returned to a corporate budget following the second quarter performance reports.

Capital Budget Summary April-June 2008

Service	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Facilities Management	606	4	120	-486
TOTAL	**606**	**4**	**120**	**-486**

Financial Commentary

- The under-spend that is showing to date, is mainly due to schemes still being in the planning and discussion stages – e.g. being the Alterations at the Council House for DDA Improvements, whereby SCOPE have identified 218 priority 1 changes that need to be made. It is anticipated that these budgets will remain unspent until a clearer picture is available on the future of some of the Council's facilities.

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members.

Human Resources & Organisational Development		Quarter 1 (June 30th) 2008/09	

Performance Summary

No. of PI's improving (I)		No. of PI's meeting YTD target	1	No. of PI's where est. outturn projected to meet target	1
No. of PI's Stable (S)		No. of PI's missing YTD target by < 10%		No. of PI's projected to miss target by < 10%	
No. of PI's worsening (W)	1	No. of PI's missing YTD target by >10%		No. of PI's projected to miss target by >10%	

Achievements

Investor in People Full accreditation secured

Completion of staff PDR's an improvement on last year and all complete much earlier.

Sickness absence levels under yearly target – currently reporting at 7.72 days per employee against a target of 8.75. Also an improvement on comparison to equivalent period last year (8.62 days).

Issues

TUPE transfer of Leisure Services staff – negotiations protracted and difficult creating anxiety amongst staff.

Job Evaluation – negotiations with Unison have been protracted, causing delays in the implementation timetable. Timetable adjusted accordingly.

Revenue Budget summary

Service Head	Revised Budget £'000	Profiled budget YTD £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Variance to date £'000		Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Human Resources & Organisational Development	99	93	99	6		109	10
TOTAL	**99**	**93**	**99**	**-47**		**109**	**10**

Financial Commentary
- There is an under-spend is on the corporate training budget and Councillors training budget – however it is anticipated that these budgets will be used fully in 08/09.
- The projected out-turn for the financial year is 11k over-spent. This is due to the vacancy management provision as the department is fully staffed.

Capital Budget summary April-June 2008

Service	Revised Budget £'000	Actual spend YTD £'000	Projected outturn £'000	Projected variance £'000
Human Resources & Organisational Development	30	0	0	-30
TOTAL	**30**	**0**	**0**	**-30**

Financial Commentary
- Research is still under way to identify the requirements of the new system and the link with the spatial project, before a tender specification can be prepared.

A report regarding the profile of capital budgets during 2008-09 including expenditure already identified as unlikely to occur within this financial year has been compiled for members.

4.3 Sundry Debtors

4.3.1 Sundry Debt is raised by the Council to ensure effective recovery of debts owing. The outstanding balance at 30/06/08 was £310k which includes £34k of car parking fines, £27k lifeline debts, £55k rents/ hire charges, £18k building regulations, £92k trade waste and cesspool emptying and £42k in respect of services provided by the Council to other organisations (e.g. contracts with BDHT for legal work). Of the outstanding balance only £77k has been outstanding for a period of 90 days or more.

5.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT

5.1 Investment Interest

5.1.1 For the period to 30 June 2008 the Council received net investment income amounting to £243k against predicted year to date receipts of £110k. This income is a combination of interest earned on in-house managed funds (cash currently surplus to cash flow requirements that is placed on short-term deposit) and the investment income arising on the externally managed funds (HSBC fund managers). The increased interest has arisen due to slippage on the capital programme which has made additional surplus cash available for deposit, combined with enhanced interest rates achieved as a result of the recent market conditions.

Due to the forthcoming rescheduling of the Capital Programme for 2008/09 it is anticipated that additional funds will be available for deposit during the remainder of the financial year. The estimated position at year end is an additional £262k to that included within the budget.

5.1.2 Details on the fund manager's performance are detailed below.

5.2 HSBC

5.2.1 **Investment Objectives/Level of Risk**
The investment objective is set out in the Client Agreement with HSBC with a portfolio mandate of short maturity with a medium level of risk.

5.2.2 Portfolio Performance

At 1 April 2008 the Council's investment was valued at £11.091 million. In the period to June the investment income was £91k. Management fees applied to the portfolio for the period totalled £8k. The market value of the funds invested with HSBC was £11.174 million as at 30 June 2008.

6.0 EFFICIENCY SAVINGS

As part of the budget round for 2008/09 a number of efficiency savings were approved. These challenging targets were allocated across all services as detailed in appendix 4. To date there are no major variances to report against any of these targets.

7.0 REVENUE BALANCES AND EARMARKED RESERVES

7.1 Revenue Balances

The revenue balances brought forward at 1 April 2008 were £2.023 million. The original budget requirement for use of balances in 2008/09 was £0.355 million. This has been increased by £0.534 million due to the approved carry forward of budgets arising from specific under spends in 2007/08. Taking into account the current projected overspend of £0.037 million it is anticipated that revenue balances will equate to £1.097 million at 31 March 2009.

7.2 Earmarked Reserves

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

Earmarked Reserve	Balance 1 April 2008 £000	Transfer to reserve 2008/09 £000	Currently Required 2008/09 £000	Projected Balance 31 March 2009 £000
Building Control Partnership	6	0	0	6
Planning Delivery Grant	397	153	-419	131
Replacement Reserve	536	0	0	536
Litigation Reserve	140	0	0	140
Leisure Reserve	43	0	0	43
Total	**1,122**	**153**	**-419**	**856**

8.0 REVENUE BALANCES AND EARMARKED RESERVES

8.1 Following a recommendation in the review of the Data Quality Strategy by Internal Audit this report will now include a regular section to report on data quality issues. There continues to be some errors in reporting of performance in Departmental submissions as follows :-

> ➢ Planning & Environment – 1 error in reporting and 2 missing items
> ➢ Finance – 1 missing item.
> ➢ Street Scene & Waste Management – 2 errors in reporting

8.2 These errors were primarily in the coding of the target/trend information – i.e. incorrect traffic lighting and/or incorrect reporting as to whether performance is improving, stable or declining or simply transposition of numbers. There was 1 case of an incorrect figure being reported.   All of these were identified by checks applied at the corporate level and quickly resolved. The relevant Departmental Performance Champions have been notified and advised.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Covered in the report

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None

11. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

12. RISK MANAGEMENT

Covered in the report.

13. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

14. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

15. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

| Environmental | None |

16. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	At Leader's Group
Chief Executive	Yes
Corporate 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	No

APPENDICES

Appendix 1   Performance Summary for June 2008
Appendix 2   Detail Performance report for June 2008
Appendix 3   Detailed figures to support the performance report
Appendix 4   Efficiency Savings 2008/09

CONTACT OFFICERS

Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Jayne Pickering, Head of Financial services
John Outhwaite, Senior Policy & Performance Officer

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SUMMARY - Period 2 (May) 2008/09								
Monthly (May) performance						Estimated Outturn		
	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Improving or stable.	18	67%	On target	19	76%	On target	25	100%
Declining	9	33%	Missing target by less than 10%	4	16%	Missing target by less than 10%	0	0%
No data	0	0%	Missing target by more than 10%	2	8%	Missing target by more than 10%	0	0%
			No data	0	0%	No data	0	0%
Total Number of Indicators	27	100%	Total Number of Indicators	25	100%	total	25	100%

SUMMARY - Period 3 (June) 2008/09								
Monthly (June) performance						Estimated Outturn		
	No.	%		No.	%		No.	%
Improving or stable.	19	67%	On target	24	86%	On target	27	96%
Declining	10	33%	Missing target by less than 10%	2	7%	Missing target by less than 10%	1	4%
No data	0	0%	Missing target by more than 10%	2	7%	Missing target by more than 10%		0%
			No data		0%	No data	0	0%
Total Number of Indicators	29	100%	Total Number of Indicators	28	100%	total	28	100%

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Street Scene & Community

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	2007/08 Actuals	Quartile	April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	2008/09 Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	Comments
NI 191	Residual Household waste per household	M	C	n/a	n/a	50.80	50.80	W	105.00	105.25	W	157.50	154.12	I	593.00	593.00	I	Comparable to same period last year
NI 192	Percentage of household waste re-used, recycled and composted	M	C	n/a	n/a	45.00	46.23	I	45.00	49.50	I	45.00	49.49	W	45.00	45.00	S	Comparable to same period last year
LPI depot	%age of reported abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours	M	C	100.00	1	95.00	87.50	W	95.00	95.00	S	95.00	96.43	S	95.00	96.43	I	8 vehicles reported and investigated within timescale
LPI depot	%age of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours of legal entitlement	M	C	98.78	1	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	8 vehicles to be removed and all within timescale
LPI Depot	% animal/debris cleared within timescales	M	C	100.00	n/a	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	26 animals reported and all removed within timescale
LPI Depot	% of flytips dealt with in response time	M	C	99.46	n/a	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	95.00	100.00	S	82 incidents of fly tipping and all removed within timescale
LPI Depot	Number of missed household waste collections	M	C	1102	n/a	116	104	W	232	227	W	348	294	I	1,400	793	I	67 missed refuse collections target revised and agreed at cabinet 02/07/08 - 0.17% of 38,000 collections missed
LPI Depot	Number of missed recycle waste collections	M	C	352	n/a	50	35	I	100	63	I	150	81	I	600	208	I	18 missed recycling collections - 0.05% of 36,000 collections missed
NWBCU 1	The number of domestic burglaries	M	C	355	n/a	30	21	W	60	41	I	90	65	W	360	257	W	There was a rise of 4 more burglaries reported in June against May figures although still under monthly target. Police confirmed this was due to known West Mids burglary team working in Bromsgrove and that they were taking appropriate action to target them via Burglaries Team
NWBCU 2	The number of violent crimes	M	C	1093	n/a	88	89	I	177	181	W	262	282	W	1056	1102	W	Actual is 15 above target for June. Police have confirmed it is due arise in low level domestic related incidents. They have tasked Local Policing Teams to take robust action within their areas.and are confident that the year end target will be achieved.
NWBCU 3	The number of robberies	M	C	67	n/a	5	3	S	10	6	S	14	8	I	60		I	Sllight reduction from May to June. Actual has been under target for each month in first quarter.
NWBCU 4	The number of vehicle crimes	M	C	710	n/a	64	49	W	129	86	I	190	166	W	768	677	W	June is over target, this is a seasonal rise as more country parks and beauty spots have greater levels of visitors/vehilces. This reduces in Q 3 & 4 as usage drops Police have raised public awareness about keeping valuables safe via press releases and poster campaign. Q1remains under target.
LPI SC 1	Number of attendances at arts events	M	C	25,056	n/a	60	66	I	590	456	I	1,090	979	I	25,253	25,253	I	523 events this month

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	2007/08		April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	2008/09			Comments
				Actuals	Quartile										Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	
LPI SC 4	Sports Centres Usage	M	C	592,133	n/a	51,068	53,964	I	107,500	108,544	I	161,493	163,945	I	672,420	672,420	I	Overall above targets for month, much better marketing at both sports centres and parties at Dolphin Centre. Summer plans and marketing now in place and full review of summer programmes completed. Go for fun brochure out and booking being taken for all activities in July and August
LPI SC 5	Sports development usages	M	C	18,213	n/a	1,580	1,655	W	1,636	3,755	I	4,740	5,418	W	18,588	19,703	I	June slightly over target. There was a reduction in multi-skills delivery but increase in tournament delivery and walks for health attendance and recording.

Planning & Environment

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	Actuals	Quartile	April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	Comments
NI 157	The percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	M	C	95.35	1	75.00	100.00	S	75.00	86.00	W	75.00	77.00	W	75.00	75.00	W	1/2 = 50% (National indicator is 60%) There were only two small scale major applications determined this month and no large scale major applications. In March 2008 only 1 major application was submitted and in November 2008 there were none but in general this category has 3 to 5 applications per month. The Weybridge works, Drayton Road was approved within the relevant time period. The Dodford Inn application for change of use went over time as a result of significant publ;ic interest and the need to advertise the development as a Departure.
NI 157	The percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	92.42	1	80.00	67.00	W	80.00	78.00	I	80.00	80.00	W	80.00	80.00	W	11/13 = 85% (National indicator is 65%) This represents a reduction in the number of applications received this month (17 in may and 15 in April) and a slight reduction in performance (88% in May but only 67% in April). Of the two applications that went over time, one (Castlebourne access track) was called to Committee by a Ward Member.
NI 157	The percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	93.11	1	90.00	95.00	I	90.00	96.00	I	90.00	90.00	W	90.00	90.00	W	73/81 = 90% (National indicator is 80%) The number of applications received reflects those in May (84) and April (79) with 8 applications going over the 8 weeks. These were largely as a result of staff making minor errors, some as a result of staff leaving and additional time pressure as a result of Uniform training.
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered	Q	C	46.00	4							20	50	I	80	181.00	I	Our target is 80 per year over 5 years In 2007/8 we missed this target by 34 due to on site slippage. This has been made up in the 1st quarter 2008/9 & we anticipate we will deliver 181 properties in 2008/9, 101 above out target of 80

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	2007/08		April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	2008/09			Comments
				Actuals	Quartile										Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	
NI 156	Number of households occupying temporary accommodation	Q	S	16.0	n/a							23	13	I	34	23	I	We met the target of reducing the number of client in T/A by 50% 2 years early. The original target was 34. We revised this target to 23 and we are well below that target at 13.A major factor in this success is the employment of a dedicated T/A officer at BDHT who can manage the process of clients moving from T/A to permanent tenancies much more effectively.
LPI	Av. time (weeks) from first response to completion of works for Disabled Facilities Grants	Q	S	54.0	n/a	n/a			n/a			n/a	33.00	I	n/a	n/a	n/a	This performance measure has been introduced this year, to be reported quarterly. As it is a new indicator no target has been set, performance will be monitored and managed through the year, a target will be set for 2009/10. Since September there has been a huge improvement in the number of grants provided and the timescales This is mainly as a result of the Grants Administrator and Grants Technical Officer being made up to full time officers. There has also been a re-organisation of the department, all policies, procedures and paperwork have been reviewed and re-assessed to provide efficiency. Regular meetings have been introduced to assess the BDHT and Owner Occupied grants.

E-Government & Customer Services

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	Actuals	Quartile	April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	Comments
CSC	Monthly Call Volumes Customer Contact Centre	M	S	n/a	n/a	n/a	9,685	n/a	n/a	7,576	n/a		6,341		n/a			Calls to customer contact centre are 16% down compared to last month trend is down as is expected. The drop for contact centre calls relates to movement out of the council tax main billing and the national travel bus pass scheme launch periods.
CSC	Monthly Call Volume Council Switchboard	M	S	n/a	n/a	n/a	6,243	n/a	n/a	5,629	n/a		5,412		n/a			Calls to the council switchboard have fallen by 4% compared to last month.
CSCLPI3.1	Resolution at First Point of Contact all services (percentage)	M	C	94.30	n/a	85.00	98.00	I	85.00	98.60	I	85.00	98.90	I	90.00	90.00	I	Resolution rate performance is consistent with last month and is above target
CSCLPI3.2	% of Calls Answered	M	C	84.00	n/a	85.00	79.00	I	85.00	77.00	W	85.00	87.00	I	85.00	85.00	I	Performance exceeding target this month and demonstrates an improvement by 4% compared to last month
CSCLPI3.3	Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	M	C	36	n/a	30.00	34.00	I	30.00	36.00	W	30.00	26.00	I	30.00	30.00	I	Performance exceeding target this month and an improvement of 10 seconds over last month

Financial Services

3

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	2007/08		April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	2008/09			Comments
				Actuals	Quartile										Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	
NI181	Time taken to process HOB/CT benefit new claims or change events	M	C	n/a	n/a	16.00	15.51	new target	16.00	15.87	W	16.00	16.04	W	16.00	16.00		The indicator has taken a downturn by 0.17 of a day from last month and only 0.4 of a day over target for July. The information for this new indicator is contained in the new stats return "single housing benefit extract - SHBE) There have been problems on the Academy system extracting the extract and with the DWP receiving the extract however this is now resolved with effect from July.
NI 179	VFM - total net value of on-going cash releasing VFM gains since the start of 2008-09	Q	C		4													
FP001	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	M	C	97.83	1	98.00	99.85	I	98.00	99.67	W	98.00	99.62	W	98.00	99.00	I	4 invoices late out of 573. Slight decrease on May but marginal number of days over 30 days. Maintaining performance above target.

Chief Executive's Department

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	Actuals	Quartile	April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	Comments
LPI CCPP01 (SS)	Number of complaints received (Council wide) Monthly. Source new complaints system.	M	C	n/a	n/a	n/a	23		n/a	40	I	n/a	58	W	n/a	n/a	n/a	The Council wilil start reporting on trend data in August.
LPI CCPP02 (LB)	% of PACT meetings attended by SMT members	Q	C			85.00	n/a		85.00	n/a	n/a	85.00	72.00	n/a	85.00	85.00	85.00	There have been a number of problems with the Police informing us of changes of dates. This should now have been resolved.
LPI CCPP03 (SS)	Number of compliments received	M	C	n/a	n/a	n/a	9		n/a	14	W	n/a	18	W	n/a	n/a	n/a	Need to encourage staff to report compliments

Legal, Equalities & Democratic services

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	Actuals	Quartile	April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	Comments
LD LPI 1	The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms	M	C	2	n/a	2.00	2.00	S	2.00	2.00	S	2.00	2.00	S	2 moving to 3	2.00	S	The Council is making steady progress towards level 3. It is anticipated that the new equalities bill will reveal a new format for assessment that takes account of all six diversity strands. Bromsgrove has an Inclusive Equalities Scheme that aligns itself to this mode of assessment.

Human Resources and Organisational Development

Ref	Description	Report-ed?	Cum or Snap?	Actuals	Quartile	April Target	April Actual	Target &Trend	May Target	May Actual	Target &Trend	June Target	June Actual	Target &Trend	Target	Est. Outturn	Est. Outturn Target &Trend	Comments
LPI (formerly BV12)	The average number of working days lost due to sickness.	M	C	9.35	2	0.71	0.72	I	1.42	1.22	I	2.13	1.92	W	8.75	7.72	W	Although sickness recorded was slightly higher than last month, the Council remains green for the month and the estimated outturn. See monthly report for further details

Ref	Description	Freq	C or S		2008/09 Monthly Performance figures											
					Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.

Street Scene & Community

Ref	Description	Freq	C or S		Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.
NI 191	Residual Household waste per household	M	C	Target	50.80	105.00	52.50									
				Actual	50.80	52.75	48.87									
NI 192	Percentage of household waste re-used, recycled and composted	M	C	Target	45.00	45.00	45.00									
				Actual	46.23	49.50	49.49									
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness - graffiti	M*	C	Target	na	na	na									
				Actual	na	na	na									
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness -litter	M*	C	Target	na	na	na									
				Actual	na	na	na									
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness - detritus	M*	C	Target	na	na	na									
				Actual	na	na	na									
NI 195	Improved street & environmental cleanliness - fly posting	M*	C	Target	na	na	na									
				Actual	na	na	na									
NI 196	Improved street and environmental cleanliness - fly tipping	M	C	Target	na	na	na									
				Actual	na	na	na									
LPI depot	%age of reported abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours	M	C	Target	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00
				Actual	87.50	100.00	100.00									
LPI depot	%age of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours of legal entitlement	M	C	Target	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00
				Actual	100.00	100.00	100.00									
LPI Depot	% animal/debris cleared within timescales	M	C	Target	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00
				Actual	100.00	100.00	100.00									
LPI Depot	% of flytips dealt with in response time	M	C	Target	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00	95.00
				Actual	100.00	100.00	100.00									

Category	Indicator	M	C		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12
LPI Depot	Number of missed household waste collections	M	C	Target	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116	116
				Actual	104	123	67									
LPI Depot	Number of missed recycle waste collections	M	C	Target	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50	50
				Actual	35	28	18									
LPI	The number of domestic burglaries	M	C	Target	30	30	30									
				Actual	21	20	24									
LPI	The number of violent crimes	M	C	Target	88	89	86									
				Actual	89	92	101									
LPI	The number of robberies	M	C	Target	5	5	5									
				Actual	3	3	2									
LPI	The number of vehicle crimes	M	C	Target	64	65	62									
				Actual	49	37	64									
LPI Community Services	Number of attendances at arts events	M	C	Target	60	530	500									
				Actual	66	390	523									
LPI Community Safety	Sports Centres Usage	M	C	Target	53,601	53,899	53,993									
				Actual	53,964	54,580	55,401									
LPI Community Safety	Sports development usages	M	C	Target			1,636									
				Actual	1,854	1,901	1,663									

Planning & Environment

NI157	The percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks	M	C	Target	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00	75.00
				Actual	100.00	80.00	50.00									
NI157	The percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	Target	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00	80.00
				Actual	67.00	88.00	85.00									
NI157	The percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks	M	C	Target	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00	90.00
				Actual	95.00	96.00	90.00									
NI 155	Number of affordable homes delivered	Q	C	Target			20			40			60			80
				Actual			50									
NI 156	Number of households ocupying temporary accommodation	Q	S	Target			23									
				Actual			13									
LP Housing	Av. time (weeks) from first response to completion of works for Disabled Facilities Grants	Q	S	Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
				Actual			33									

E-government & Customer Services

CSC	Monthly Call Volumes Customer Contact Centre	M	S	Target	n/a			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
				Actual	9,685	7,576	6,341									
CSC	Monthly Call Volume Council Switchboard	M	S	Target	n/a			n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
				Actual	6,243	5,629	5,412									
CSC LPI 3.1	Resolution at First Point of Contact all services (percentage)	M	C	Target	85.00	85.00	85.00									
				Actual	98.00	98.60	98.90									

CSC LPI 3.2	% of Calls Answered	M	C	Target	85.00	85.00	85.00											
				Actual	78.00	77.00	87.00											
CSC LPI 3.3	Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	M	C	Target	30.00	30.00	30.00											
				Actual	34.00	36.00	26.00											

Financial Services

NI 181	Time taken to process HB/CT benefit new claims or change events	M	C	Target	16.00	16.00	16.00											
				Actual	15.51	16.27	16.42											
NI 179	VFM - total net value og on-going cash releasing VFM gains since the start of 2008-09	Q	C	Target														
				Actual														
FP001	Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days of receipton time	M	C	Target	98.00	98.00	98.00											
				Actual	99.85	99.68	99.30											

Chief Executive's Depaertment

LPI CCPP01	Number of complaints received (Council wide) Monthly. Source new complaints system.	M	C	Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
				Actual	23	17	18											
LPI CCPP02	percentage of PACT meetings attended by SMT members	Q	C	Target			85.00											
				Actual	n/a	n/a	72.00											
LPI CCPP03	Number of compliments received (Council wide)	M	C	Target	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	
				Actual	9	5	4											

Legal, Equalities & Democratic services

LD LPI	The level of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms.	M	C	Target	2.00	2.00	2.00										
				Actual	2.00	2.00	2.00										

Human Resources and Organisational Development

LPI (formerly BV12)	The average number of working days lost due to sickness.	M	C	Target	0.71	0.71	0.71										
				Actual	0.72	0.50	0.62										

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Efficiency Savings 2008-09

	2008/09 £'000
SAVINGS IDENTIFIED	
Corporate Communications	
Departmental Restructure	25
Income generation from additional advertising in Together Bromsgrove.	10
	35
Corporate Services	
Deletion of general expenses budget	18
	18
E-Government	
Desktop printer reorganisation - cancellation of Icon project - balance of saving	3
	3
Financial Services	
Departmental Restructure	35
Income from procurement officer	26
	61
HR & OD	
Departmental Restructure	90
Changes of childcare scheme- replace with Childcare vouchers	14
	104
Legal and Democratic	
Income generation from BDHT	10
Departmental Restructure	104
	114
Planning and Environment	
Departmental Restructure	75
	75
Street Scene & Community	
Departmental Restructure	219
Sponsorship	25
	244
Total Efficiency Savings	**654**

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<u>BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL</u>

<u>CABINET</u>

<u>3rd SEPTEMBER 2008</u>

<u>REVIEW OF CAPITAL PROGRAMME</u>

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

1.   SUMMARY

1.1   To update members on the review of the Capital Programme to ensure the funds are utilised to deliver projects as approved during the Medium Term Financial Plan.

2.   RECOMMENDATION

2.1   Cabinet recommend to Full Council to approve the carry forward requests from 2007/08 as detailed in Appendix 1.

2.2   Cabinet recommend to Full Council to reduce the Capital Programme 2008/09 by £3.935m as detailed in Appendix 2 to reflect both the savings achieved through procurement efficiencies and the projects that due to factors detailed in this report will not be delivered during 2008/09.

2.3   Cabinet request officers to continue to review the Capital Programme with the aim to assess the requirements of project delivery as part of the review of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

3.   BACKGROUND

3.1   As part of the Use of Resources assessment the Council must demonstrate that it has a robust Capital Programme that is delivered on time and within budget. This evidence forms part of the Value for Money judgement.

3.2   Following the significant underspend in capital during 2007/08 a working group was established to review all projects scheduled within the programme for 2008/09. The aim was to assess the delivery of the project, the external influences and the budget available in order to realign the funding of the project if necessary.

3.3   Key issues identified were :
   • Carry forwards not been approved from 2007/08

- Schemes where savings have been made due to improved procurement practices
- Schemes that were to be delayed due to external factors and would need to be reassessed to agree a revised timeline of delivery.

3.4 Appendix 1 details the carry forward requests that were not identified during the closedown process that will be utilised during 2008/09

3.5 Appendix 2 details savings achieved due to improved procurement and negotiation practices. It is proposed that the funds saved will be transferred back to the Capital Receipts fund for future projects.

3.6 Appendix 2 also details the projects that due to a number of factors will not be delivered in 2008/09 and it is proposed that these be transferred into 2009/10 and reviewed again as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. The projects delayed include:
- Spatial project Phase 2. Due to the level of funding required, the Spatial project Board are reviewing the integration that will be delivered as part of Phase 2 to assess any alternative ways of delivery.
- Adaptations to Council Buildings. There is a programme of works being undertaken in Council Buildings as a result of the stock condition survey. It has been decided that during the period of review as to the potential move of staff from the Council House within the next 3-5 years no material spend will be used on this building.

3.7 The capital working group will meet with Heads of Service in October to review the achievement of the project delivery. In addition the integrated finance and performance report for September will reflect the revised position on the Capital Programme for monitoring purposes.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The revision to the Capital Programme will release a potential £3.935 into the bank to increase the interest on investments during 2008/09. Depending on the review of Phase 2 of the Spatial project the additional funds would increase the revenue received by £200k in 2008/09.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 N/A

6. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

6.1 To improve our management of Capital Projects for the delivery of the front line services to our residents..

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The risk associated with the delivery of the accurate budget monitoring for the Capital Programme is included in Financial Services risk register:

7.2 Objective No 6 : Effective and Efficient Accountancy Service

7.3 Key Controls:
- PI monitoring of production of Financial Monitoring reports
- Use of Resources action plan to develop the key areas of improvement to both maintain current scoring and improve for future and subject to ongoing revision.
- Preparation of the medium term financial plan and setting Council Tax in line with, council priorities and statutory timescale

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The effective management of the Capital Programme will ensure that customers benefit from the projects in an agreed framework.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The contracts for the procurement of any supply associated with the Capital Programme reflects the Councils support of ensuring all companies comply with our equality and diversity values. In addition the process for contracting with the Council allows all companies, where relevant, to bid for our work.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The realignment of the Capital Programme is a key element of the Value for Money judgement within Use of Resources.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues – as required by contract & procedure rules
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	**No**
Chief Executive	**No**
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	**No**
Executive Director - Services	**No**
Assistant Chief Executive	**No**
Head of Service	**No**
Head of Financial Services	**Yes**
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	**No**
Head of Organisational Development & HR	**No**
Corporate Procurement Team	**No**

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Statement of Carry Forward requests
Appendix 2 – Statement of Savings achieved & projects to be reviewed

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS
Capital Programme – approved January 2008
Capital Programme monitoring schedules

CONTACT OFFICER

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Tel: (01527) 881207

CARRY FORWARD REQUEST 2007/08-2008/09

SCHEME	CARRY FORWARD £'000		COMMENTS
Purchase Order Processing System	34		Scheme delayed due to vacant Accountancy Manager post - budget required to continue roll out of project to all departments
Spatial Project	3		Balance of funding required for Phase 1 project
Improvements to Depot site	65		Building works not undertaken durign 07/08 to plans not available for development. Budget required for 2008/09 as more staff to be sited at depot following merge with Culture &Community department
Replacement Vehicles - refuse	12		Due to timeframe in delivery of vehicles the funds were not spent in 2007/08. This forms part of the replacement programme and requires carryforward to meet the requirements of the planned fleet changes
Replacement Vehicles - grounds	56		Due to timeframe in delivery of vehicles the funds were not spent in 2007/08. This forms part of the replacement programme and requires carryforward to meet the requirements of the planned fleet changes
Foxwalks - housing	1		Final payments of work being undertaken
Gilbert Court - housing	17		Final payments of work being undertaken
Barnsley Hall - Play area	2		Final payments of work being undertaken
King George V Playing Fields - Floodlights for multi use games area.	22		To undertake the final part of the project in the installation of floodlights
Dolphin Centre Fitness Suite	3		To fund the new scheme
TOTAL	**215**		

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SAVINGS AND SCHEMES TO BE REVIEWED 2008/09

SCHEME	To be removed from 08/09 Capital Programme £'000	COMMENTS
SAVINGS		
New HR Information & Management System	30	Full scheme no longer required - alternative delivery of similar service to be reviewed and presented as part of budget plans
Savings arising from improved procurement procedures for purchase of vehicles	87	Funds no longer required as discounts achieved on the purchase of fleet
Disabled Facilities Grants	98	A review of the funds required and the delivery of the scheme has released the savings to be utilised for future projects
Grants to RSL's - General	77	Funding will be reviewed as part of strategy for joint working with developments of affordable housing
Hostel remodelling	67	Funding to be reviewed as part of the further development of the hostels
New Toilet Block in Town Centre	174	Project delayed due to extensive consultation being undertaken. To commence April 09
Upgrading of Houndsfield Lane Caravan Park	129	Funding reviewed as part of future of Houndsfield Lane Caravan Park
Grants to Principal Preferred Partners (BDHT/ W Mercia) for the development of affordable housing in the district.	350	Funding to be reviewed as part of the strategy for developments of affordable housing in the District
Spatial Project Phase 2	1800	The Phase 2 element of the Spatial project is to be reviewed by the project board with the aim to identify alternative ways of delivering the outcomes
Funding for Cesspool Tanker	62	Current Tanker suitable for delivery of the service for longer than originally anticipated. To be reviewed as part of the budget process
Alterations to Council Buildings in compliance with DDA	250	Refurbishment and alteration works are dependant on the considerations of the future of the Council House and therefore these funds required will be reviewed as part of the budget planning process
Remedial Work to Council Buildings following Stock Conditions Survey	236	Refurbishment and alteration works are dependant on the considerations of the future of the Council House and therefore these funds required will be reviewed as part of the budget planning process
Development of Barnsley Hall	215	Delayed due to specific nature of development not yet identified - to be reviewed as part of budget planning process
District Wide Provision/ Enhancement of Sports Facilities	360	Wider consultation to be undertaken as to the nature of the developments together with evidence from PPCG17.
TOTAL	**3,935**	

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

03 SEPTEMBER 2008

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Responsible Member	Councillor - Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett -Assistant Chief Executive
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides Cabinet with the latest version of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) self assessment.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 It is recommended that:

   i.   Cabinet considers the work in progress draft.

   ii.   Notes that the draft will go forward to Full Council for consideration.

   iii.   Notes that the deadline for submission to the Audit Commission is 26 September 2008.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The Council was assessed as Poor by the Audit Commission last year. This year, we have a much more positive story to tell and have self assessed the Council as Good. The Council has a realistic chance of achieving this. The CPA self assessment forms a crucial part of the CPA. The Audit Commission will use it to consider how they will focus their site visit. Draft copies are also being sent to Scrutiny Steering Board and the Performance Management Board, before going onto Full Council. It is still in draft and some figures, plus the referencing need to be sorted out. Copies have also been provided to the Lead Official, GOWM, the Audit Commission Relationship Manager and ex-Improvement Director, so that they can provide their input.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

6.1 This report applies to all the Council's objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 CPA has its own risk register and is identified as a corporate risk.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Achieving the right rating will improve the Council's reputation with the public.

9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues N/A
Personnel Implications N/A
Governance/Performance Management N/A
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 N/A
Policy N/A
Environmental N/A
Equalities and Diversity N/A

10. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holders	**At Leader's Group.**
Chief Executive	**At CMT.**
Corporate Director (Services)	**At CMT.**
Assistant Chief Executive	**At CMT.**
Head of Service	**At CMT.**
Head of Financial Services	**At CMT.**
Head of Legal & Democratic Services	**At CMT.**
Head of Organisational Development & HR	**At CMT.**
Corporate Procurement Team	**No**

11. APPENDICES

Addendum 1 – Draft CPA Self Assessment

12. <u>**BACKGROUND PAPERS**</u>

CPA Self Assessment January 2007.

<u>**CONTACT OFFICERS**</u>

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CPA Self Assessment

Bromsgrove District Council

September 2008

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

BUILDING **PRIDE**

Contents

1. Local Authority Context and Summary

Geography and Communities

Bromsgrove District is in north Worcestershire, covering a large district area of approximately 83.9 square miles. Whilst only 14 miles from the centre of Birmingham, the Lickey Hills country park provides an important dividing line between the urban West Midlands Conurbation and the rural landscape of north Worcestershire. Ninety percent of the District is greenbelt which causes problems for housing policy, with regional growth being focused on Worcester City and Birmingham, with the District being the green belt break between the two. Four radial routes pass through the District, each served by railway lines and major roads, including the M5 running north and south, the M42 running east and west, with further links to the M40 and M6.

<u>**Table 1 – Map of Bromsgrove District**</u>
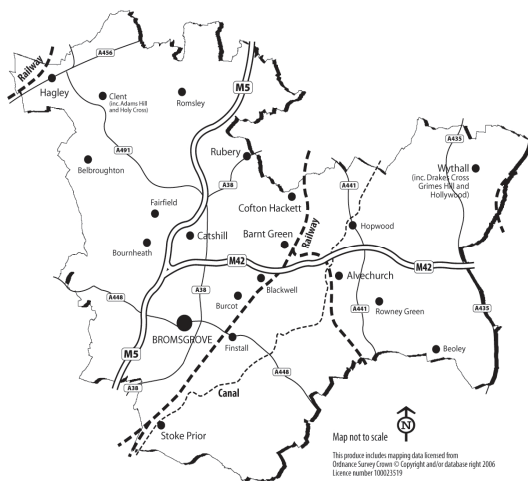
Data suggests that 16,643 people travel into the District for work, with 26,112 (29%) of the population travelling out, a net commute out of 9,469. Our main communities are detailed in Table 1. The District has no wards in the top 20% most deprived in England; however, the Council's recent Labour Market survey highlighted a significant variation in incomes between people who live and work in the District and those who commute out to work.

Population

The population of the District is 91,600 and the Office for National Statistics predicts that this will increase by 15.3% over the next 30 years to 105,615 in 2029. The Regional Spatial Strategy Two (RSS2) has identified only 2,000 homes for the District over the next 25 years, with the possibility that the District may have to take some of Redditch Borough Council's housing allocation. The Council is currently challenging the District's RSS2 allocation, as the need for affordable housing far exceeds this allocation. The Council is working with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust on a full housing market survey to help us challenge the allocation.

The black and minority ethnic population (BME) is only 3.3%, which is low for the region and nationally. This BME % comprises 1% Irish, 0.8% Asian, 0.8% mixed, 0.4% black and 0.3% Chinese. There are 37,798 households in the District. Over

25% of households contain only one older person. An estimated 6,964 households in the District have one or more members in an identified special needs group. This is 19.1% of all households in the District, well above the national average; of these 56.7% have a physical disability and 37% are frail elderly. The elderly population is predicted to expand as a proportion of the overall District population, with the over 80s population estimated to increase by 123.3% by 2029.

Economy

The economic picture of the District has generally been very positive. The mean household income is £36,906, which is the highest in the County (the County average is £34,737). There are three major areas of economic regeneration within the District: the Longbridge site, Bromsgrove town centre and Bromsgrove railway station. In April 2005, parts of Phoenix Venture Holdings (PVH), most significantly MG Rover and PowerTrain entered administration, resulting in the closure of the Longbridge car plant. These parts of the Group employed around 5,850 people in the West Midlands and an estimated £410m was spent with firms based in the West Midlands as part of the supply chain. Whilst unemployment levels naturally increased with the closure, the District's unemployment levels have returned to very low levels (1.5%). Bromsgrove town centre needs a major overhaul to encourage local shopping and to be able to compete with neighbouring shopping centres. Bromsgrove station is the third area of concern. The current station facilities are not considered fit for purpose and a feasibility study is currently being carried out on the possible redesign of the station so that it can take bigger trains and more passengers and an increase of at least 300 additional car parking spaces. This would help "future proof" the station against any changes to transport charges that may affect Birmingham city centre. The current "credit crunch" and poor economic outlook may impact on these regeneration initiatives, particularly, the town centre.

Sustainable Development

A healthy natural environment is vital to our existence. The past twenty years have seen a growing realisation that the current model of development is unsustainable. We already have a number of initiatives in place to help improve our sustainability. The Council House is in the process of switching to 100% green electricity and part of our power comes from solar panels on our roof. We use 100% recycled paper and encourage recycling in house and in the wider District. We are signed up to the Worcestershire car sharing scheme. The Local Strategic Partnership's Better Environment Group has a number of projects underway aiming to reduce our carbon footprint, help conserve and enhance our biodiversity, and reduce pollution. The new Local Area Agreement (LAA) has a number of challenging environment targets which the Council is responding to.

Affordable Housing

One of the biggest issues facing the District is affordable housing: 83.4% of households are owner occupied, the 11th highest figure in England and Wales and historically house prices have risen faster than the national average. The Council is currently operating a planning moratorium with only affordable housing developments being built. The Housing Strategy has a target of 80 units of affordable housing a year for the next four years.

Education, Deprivation and Health

The percentage of the population qualified to NVQ Level 4 is significantly higher than average. GCSE results gained at local authority schools and colleges in Worcestershire in 2006 were amongst the highest in the country (56.3% achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C). The District ranks 299th out of 354 councils on the national index of multiple deprivation 2007 (where one is the most deprived), making the District one of the least deprived nationally. Only 4,456 households are in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in the District, one of the lowest figures in Worcestershire. As a result, identifying the vulnerable within our communities is more difficult than a district with geographic areas of deprivation.

Generally, the District's population is healthier than the regional average. Young people (18-24) have a high risk status being the most likely to smoke, binge drink and not take exercise. Potentially, we could be storing up problems in our young people. The most recent Primary Care Trust (PCT) annual report noted that our children's health is good, but there is a need for more child and adolescent mental health services. The rate of teenage pregnancies in Bromsgrove in 2004 was 22.4 conceptions per 1,000 females, which is almost half that of the England average. The rate has also decreased in Bromsgrove from 26.7 in 1997.

Crime and Fear of Crime

There has been a 31.9% reduction in headline comparator crime figures for the District over the last three years. This, together with the Partners and Communities Together meetings, has had a very positive impact on fear of crime in the District: 98% of residents feel safe in their neighbourhood during daytime and 73% after dark. Low level issues like anti-social behaviour, litter, rubbish, "young people hanging around", vandalism and criminal damage remain an issue. Drug offences are low.
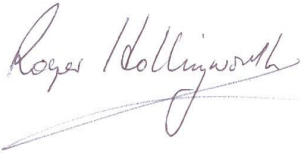
Regulatory, Political, Managerial and Financial Context

The Council has a majority Conservative administration, with twenty-seven Conservatives, six Labour, four Independents, and two Wythall Residents' Association. The Council operates a modernised political structure with the Leader/Cabinet model, supported by three non-Executive Boards: the Audit Board, Scrutiny Steering Board and Performance Management Board. There is also a Planning Committee, Standards Committee and Licensing Committee. The Council operates a Corporate Management Team (CMT) and has an Acting Joint Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council, Kevin Dicks. This joint role started on 01 August 2008 and will be subject to a review at 6 months. The aim of the joint post, is to facilitate a strategic business model of joint working between the two councils, with the aim of delivering better value for money to our residents.

The Council has a net budget of £11.733m (2008/09) and a Government Grant of £4.858m. The Council employs 358 staff. The 2008/2009 budget round involved the deletion of 35 posts, increased charges and a museum closure, as the Council re-aligned its spending to its priorities, something it was praised for in the recent housing inspection.

CPA Self Assessment and Performance

The Council was judged to be Poor in the Corporate Assessment undertaken in early 2007. We self assessed ourselves as poor for that assessment and requested the assessment to help provide us with a benchmark and route map for improvement over the next 12 months. We have now requested a second assessment, as our rate of progress has been significant, as identified in both the recent Direction of Travel and Housing Inspection and as evidenced by the continued and sustained improvement in performance generally over the last two years. We have self assessed ourselves as Good. Our Vision remains to deliver community leadership and excellent services to our residents.

Roger Hollingworth
Leader of the Council

Kevin Dicks
Acting Joint Chief Executive

What is the Council, together with its partners trying to achieve?

2. Ambitions for the Community

2.1 The Council's Vision is: "Working together to build a District where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services". The Vision and the Values that underpin it: Leadership, Partnership, Equality and Customer First, have been developed through our change programme "Building Pride". The programme recognises that the Council needs to re-build a sense of pride in living in the District and working for the Council through the delivery of long term outcomes and excellent services.

2.2 The Councils objectives and priorities are:-

   (1) **Council Objective One: Regeneration** with A Thriving Market Town and Housing as its priorities.
   (2) **Council Objective Two**: **Improvement**, with Customer Service as a priority.
   (3) **Council Objective Three: Sense of Community and Well Being,** with Sense of Community being a priority.
   (4) **Council Objective Four: Environment,** with Clean Streets and Recycling being a priority.

2.3 The Council developed its Vision, Values, Objectives and Priorities through consultation and regularly communicates these to residents. The Council has used a number of focus groups[1] and three high quality customer panels to help find out about residents' views and satisfaction. This consultation is supported by a range of other mechanisms like the Disabled Users Group (DUG), Equalities and Diversity Forum, 68 PACT residents' meetings a year (attended by the ward councillor and a member of Corporate Management Team), Parish Forums and two pilot Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

2.4 The Council's ambitions for its communities are now fully developed through a comprehensive Sustainable Community Strategy, with SMART high level action plans supporting each Theme. The Strategy was based on a detailed quantitative analysis of the District, undertaken by Mott McDonald, with the targets cross referenced to the County Local Area Agreement. The Strategy was launched in November 2007. The Council's annual business cycle includes an annual update of the Sustainable Community Strategy, so it is currently being updated to reflect our quality of life survey and the new Local Area Agreement targets.

2.5 Key strategies flow from the Community Strategy, in particular, the Council Plan and service business plans. The Acting Joint Chief Executive is the current representative for the northern districts on the County LSP Management Group and lead for affordable housing on the Chief Executive's Panel. The Assistant Chief Executive also chairs the County Heads of Policy and Performance Group.

2.6 Through the I&DeA Top Team Development Programme, there is now a sense of shared purpose between Cabinet and CMT and ambition for our communities. The Leader of the Council has also established a Leader's Meeting (Leader and Leader of the Opposition) to improve cross party working. This shared ambition is underpinned by a Member/officer protocol[7], a Member/Member protocol[8], job descriptions for key Member positions[9], a Management Competency Framework[10] (which in turn is planned to be cascaded to all staff within the Council) and a Modern Councillor training

programme. Both the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council Plan go to Full Council for approval. Progress on the Council Plan is reported monthly to Members, with progress on the Community Strategy being reported to the LSP Board and reviewed annually by the Performance Management Board and Full Council. Scrutiny also plays an active role in supporting and developing the Council's ambitions. Recent scrutiny task and finish groups have included transport, air quality and waste. Further ones on community safety and older people are planned.

2.7 Getting residents to understand the difficult trade offs that politicians need to make remains an area of concern for the Council, as it does nationally. The Council has developed a community bidding approach for the Equalities and Diversity Forum, has delegated £15,000 to each Local Neighbourhood Partnership (LNPs), is running a budget jury and will be running its first Children and Young People's participatory budgeting event in April 2009

2.8 The Council is working all the time to improve its intelligence led approach to developing its and its partner's ambitions. The Council has commissioned a ward level analysis for the Community Strategy and more recently has commissioned a Labour Market Survey. The Customer Panel provides a four way split (urban 1 and 2, rural 1 and 2) and this is further supplemented by ward level analysis by the County Council. As part of our developing approach to ICT integration between the front and back office, the Council has cleansed its current data and implemented a corporate gazetteer that will underpin 11 new ICT systems which will support the work of departments.

2.9 Through these mechanisms, the Council has a strongly developed understanding of its communities and the scale of the challenge faces. The basic problem that the Council faces is one of affluence e.g. expensive housing, a town centre that does not reflect the wealth of the District and small pockets of relative deprivation. The Council also understands the diversity issues it faces. The Council has worked hard to develop an All Inclusive Equalities Scheme, supported by the Disabled Users Group and Equality and Diversity Forum. These provide Members and senior officers with face to face examples of the issues residents face. The two groups have been involved in the formulation of the Council's priorities and customer standards. Key issues to emerge are the regeneration of the town centre with suitable disabled access, extended hours of the shop mobility service (already actioned), the need for a community transport scheme (a bid will be made during the 2009/2010 budget process) and the redevelopment of the train station, which is currently not DDA compliant.

2.10 The Council understands the value the voluntary sector can add to its ambitions. The Council has established a service level agreement (SLA) and funding for the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN), the local voluntary sector infrastructure organisation. BARN sits on the LSP Board and chairs the Older Persons Theme Group. The Council has a COMPACT with the voluntary sector, is currently working with the sector on the community transport project and was recently actively involved in national volunteer week, with over 20 staff, including senior officers working with the voluntary sector for the day.

2.11 The Council understands the value of communicating its ambitions. Our Communications Strategy's[18] first priority is the demonstration of visible leadership. Senior Members and managers have adopted a range of leadership styles over the last twelve months depending on particular circumstance e.g. directive in setting the Council's objectives and priorities, working in partnership through the LSP, cross party working through the opposition party chairmanship of scrutiny boards, listening at PACT meetings, empowerment through the pilot Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

and understanding through a programme of "back to the floor"[19] days for every member of the CMT.

2.12 The Council has communicated its Vision, Values, Objectives and Priorities to staff through a range of mechanisms including regular staff forums; a bi-weekly Core Brief, delivered by managers and cascaded via team meetings, team action plans as part of the service business planning process[5], personal development reviews (PDRs), posters for each of its values and one for the Vision and a programme of attendance by senior management at team meetings. Press releases are made available to staff and the Council's Internet has also recently been redesigned. The Council has also introduced the principle of management conferences for the first time in Autumn 2006, to start achieving "buy in" from middle management. The recent IIP assessment commented very favourably on management/staff relations, given the difficult times the Council has had and is still going through with Single Status.

2.13 Finally, the Council has established a Communications Group for the LSP Board, regularly communicates its ambition for the District through Together Bromsgrove (the residents magazine), press releases and events like the "Town Hall" meeting, "Chat with the Chief", Parish Forums etc.

3. Prioritisation

3.1 The Council now has a strong annual business cycle in place to ensure that residents' ambitions are translated into local improvements. Budget decisions are driven by the Council Plan, service plans and an annual improvement plan (a detailed Gantt chart). These reflect a three year and one year focus respectively and are underpinned by the 10 year focus of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

3.2 The Council's Objectives have been defined in broad terms[3] and referenced to national policy and the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement. By providing a broad definition for each Objective, the Council's leadership were then able to select which aspects of each Objective is a priority, so for example, under Council Objective Three: A Sense of Community and Well Being, the Council has made community events, community engagement , the Every Child Matters agenda and community safety priorities, but has not made the Choosing Health agenda a priority. This does not mean that the Council does not contribute to this national objective, just that it will attract less resourcing than other aspects of the national and regional agenda, which have been aligned into the Council's strategic framework.

3.3 The Council is explicit in what are not priorities. The Council has adopted a simple approach to this issue. Service areas that fall outside the delivery of the five priorities are the areas required to find the savings targets in any given year, subject to consideration of the impact any efficiencies or service cuts have on the wider workings of the Council. This approach has proved effective. The 2008/2009 budget round resulted in 35 posts being deleted, the closure of the local museum, the transfer of one of the sports facilities to a school, charging for green waste, increased car parking charges; removing concessionary parking charges for the over 60s; whilst at the same time going through Single Status with staff. These have all been difficult political decisions, but by striking a balance between competing residents' demands, what is most important to residents and what money is available, the Council is in a much stronger position financially than is was several years ago.

3.4 The Council recognises the connections between its various priorities and ensures a cross cutting approach. The planned redevelopment of the town centre, includes not just developing a thriving market town (corporate priority 1), but also affordable

housing in the town centre and potentially on the existing Council House site (corporate priority 2), improved customer access, through community transport and highways improvements, in particular, appropriately placed drop kerbs (corporate priority 3) and designing out crime, ensuring a full programme of community events and encouraging an evening economy (corporate priority 4). A similar approach has been adopted for Longbridge and the proposed new train station.

3.5 Members, officers and staff understand these priorities. XX % of staff said they understood the Council's priorities in last year's Employee Survey. The Council regularly updates staff on the priorities, at staff forums and through Core Brief. Posters are displayed around the building and staff were consulted at the inception of the 2009/2010 budget process through staff forums. This information was then presented by representatives of the Manager's Forum, to Cabinet and CMT at their July away day. Two focus groups were also held with staff on the 2008/2009 improvement plan.

3.6 The recent housing inspection identified a strong alignment between the Council's priorities and MTFP. Service business planning starts each July once the outline priorities and budget parameters are set at the Cabinet/CMT away day (these are then approved by Full Council in September each year). Heads of Service then produce their first draft service business plans with budget bids and identified savings for consideration by Leader's Group in early October. This ensures a strong linkage between strategic direction and spending plans. Bids are scored on their relevance to the priorities, community impact and value for money.

3.7 In developing this strategic agenda, the Council has made extensive use of learning from other organisations in the development of its priorities. The development of the Improvement Plan was assisted by Walsall MBC (changes to the Planning Service and the Council's Team of the Month Scheme also originated from Walsall MBC). Improvements to the performance management regime have been adopted from the experiences of Rotherham and Derby City councils. The Council has recently undertaken an emergency planning exercise with the support of other councils; has taken on board learning from other councils that have used Performance Plus (the Council's performance management software), learning from Kerrier District Council about CPA and researched Warwickshire County Council's and Bracknell Forest's approaches to town centre redevelopment. The Council has visited Northamptonshire County Council to learn about its approach to diversity, Wychavon District Council to find out about their sports trust, Watford Borough Council to find out about their change management programme and Kettering District Council to learn about their planning function. The Council has worked with GOWM and BDHT on trying to develop innovative approaches to affordable housing. The Council has received support from Solihull MBC on both performance management and communications. Through the delivery of the Improvement Plan, the Council can clearly point to how this learning has and is being used, but would accept that the sharing of this learning across the Council could be improved.

4. Capacity

4.1 Member/officer relations have been a key issue for the Council. These relations have significantly improved over the last few years. Cabinet and CMT have worked together on two Top Team programmes, the introduction of new political structures has enabled non-executive Members to examine and scrutinise performance and policy through the Performance Management Board and Scrutiny Task Groups. Members and officers also work together at PACT meetings.

4.2 The introduction of Member/officer protocols, a new Chief Executive and Corporate Management Team, Member training and a clear steer from the Leader about enabling managers to manage has created the right environment for Portfolio Holders to provide strategic direction and oversee progress, supported by the Performance Management Board (and attended by Portfolio Holders) and managers to manage operational detail. Senior managers are also able to contribute to the strategic debate through the Top Team programme and Members are able to drill down into operational areas, when appropriate.

4.3 Relationships between corporate management and departments are good. Heads of Service attend the weekly corporate management team which helps build a one council culture. On occasions when there have been differences of opinion between departments, these are identified, escalated and the relevant Executive Director or Acting Joint Chief Executive involved to ensure a way forward is agreed.

4.4 The Top Team programme has created an atmosphere of respect between senior Members and officers that enables a full and frank debate about the Council's strategic direction. This programme has included developing the Council's priorities together and more recently assessing our combined performance against the I&DeA's Effective Top Team model and developing actions to improve further. A culture of openness between managers and staff exists and has been positively developed through a range of mechanisms (ConnectWithKev, "Back to the Floor", attendance at team meetings by senior managers etc.). This was commented on favourably by the recent IIP assessment.

4.5 The Council recognises its duty to demonstrate openness and transparency in its decision making processes. The Council operates a Standards Committee with an independent chair, supported by the Monitoring Officer. To support this committee, the Council has invested in a new officer post to ensure each complaint is given a detailed consideration. The Council has also commissioned an independent ethical governance review and have implemented the recommendations of this review. All Members receive training, as part of their induction, on the ethical standards and procedures they must follow and existing Members have also been trained. The Council has also made changes to its Constitution[17] and Scheme of Delegation[18] to reflect a more modernised approach and is developing a robust process to ensure that the Constitution remains a live and relevant document that mirrors the way the Council conducts its affairs. Decision making is timely and supports the achievements of priorities. The Council operates a rolling Forward Plan[8] of all decisions to be sought from the Cabinet over a four month period.

4.6 The Council has employed an experienced Member from another council as a facilitator for working with and developing the scrutiny function. The scrutiny task groups have produced a number of excellent reports, including ones on transport, air quality and waste management. These reports are discussed at Cabinet and a significant number of the recommendations have been agreed. The Scrutiny Steering Board (SSB) monitors progress on these recommendations through its scrutiny tracker.

4.7 Risk management now forms a key part of the Council's strategic planning framework. The Council operates a corporate risk register, updated quarterly and reported to the Corporate Risk Management Steering Group and Audit Board. Each service business plan is supported by a service risk register, cross referenced to the service's key deliverables.

4.8 The Council is self aware about its capacity. The Council requested a CPA in 2007, expecting our rating would be Poor, in order to test our plans for improvement. The Council was considered self aware by this assessment. The 2007 CPA identified the need for additional senior management capacity. As a result, a new Executive Director Services post was created. Prior to this, the Council appointed a new permanent chief executive and has previously undertaken a Council wide restructure to build capacity within the organisation. The Council has drawn down £300,000 from reserves to pump prime improvement and has made extensive use of funding opportunities from the Capacity Building Fund, Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) and Intervention Fund. The Council has appointed a Procurement Officer and procurement practices and savings have improved as a result. The Council recognises that the appointment of its Chief Executive, to be Acting Joint Chief Executive of Bromsgrove and Redditch councils is a risk, but it is designed to increase the capacity of both organisations by developing a strategic approach to value for money. An independent feasibility study was conducted prior to the appointment and the Council operates a risk register for this project and the Acting Joint Chief Executive has specific terms to ensure a focus on the issues that can add most value to both councils, whilst retaining a focus on Bromsgrove through its CPA.

4.9 The Council's current VFM profile is mixed[3.] The Council has a VFM Strategy[4] including an approach to scoring each service's VFM and developing agreed actions through the service business planning process[5] The Council deleted 35 posts, mostly in support services through the 2008/2009 budget cycle, is achieving an £80,000 per annum procurement savings target, has increased its income from sponsorship and charging, transferred its payroll function to Redditch BC and established SLAs with a range of partners e.g. the Artrix, BARN, BDHT etc. Most recently, the Council has developed a strategic approach to value for money through the business model of a joint chief executive for Bromsgrove and Redditch BC. Having visited councils with high scores for value for money, Bromsgrove has stronger processes in place to achieve value for money and now needs time to let these take effect.

4.10 The Council has a detailed and fully costed three year MTFP. The MTFP includes clear allocations for priorities requiring significant capital investment like the town centre and affordable housing. The Council has also recently identified the need for future capital allocations to modernise the collection methods at the depot and these will be built into the next update. The Council has appropriate working balances that have been enhanced by a strong performance in treasury management and £20m reserves.

4.11 The Council has invested significantly in organisational development, including an Organisational Development Manager and a corporate staff training budget of £200,000 , a middle managers training programme, Top Team programme and Member Development programme. The rate of improvement by the Council suggests this is paying dividends.

4.12 HR strategies and practices effectively support corporate priorities. The Council has a People Strategy[9] . Through the Strategy, the Council has also introduced a significant range of human resource techniques to improve capacity within its workforce. These include Personal Development Reviews for all staff (a corporately monitored target by Members), a skills audit, a new capability procedure[13] , new Sickness Absence Policy[14], new disciplinary procedure and anti-bullying and harassment procedures. Through its performance monitoring the Council monitors sickness absence, staff turnover, early retirements and a range of indicators to ensure its workforce is representative of the community[15]. The Council is currently undergoing Single Status; as a result the Council has re-programmed the approach to workforce planning to

2009/10. 100% of staff have received a PDR and sickness absence is now falling and below target.

4.13 The Council makes extensive use of ICT. During 2006/07 the Council started three ICT projects. The Internet project which has led to the overhaul and modernisation of the Council's website, the infrastructure project (£1.8m) and the Spatial project (£5.0m). The Spatial project, supported by the new infrastructure will significantly reduce process times and lead to customer information being single sourced avoiding duplication and error. As part of this work, the Council's data has been cleansed, the corporate gazetteer has now been launched and the Council is now in the process of implementing 11 software solutions, primarily in the Planning an Environment Department, that will eventually link into the Council's Customer Service Centre.

4.14 The Council has a clear project management methodology that has recently been the subject to an internal audit (a recommendation of the Performance Management Board) and updated. The Council operates a Programme Board, chaired by the Acting Joint Chief Executive, which supplements the work of Corporate Management Team and provides a setting for a more detailed consideration of the various project documents required. RIEP have identified that the Council has a large improvement agenda for its size and to our credit; we have delivered xx% and xx% of the last two year's Improvement Plan. The Council has also introduced a Capital Strategy Working Group to ensure capital spending is on track.

4.15 The Council is prepared to use long term partnerships and joint working with other local authorities and organisations to deliver service improvement. The Council successfully transferred its housing stock to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust in 2004. Relations with the Trust are now good with the BDHT Chief Executive sitting on the LSP Board and Chairing the Housing Theme. BDHT is the preferred RSL for the Council and we have a joint priority of affordable housing. In 2005, the Council opened its Customer Service Centre (the Hub) in partnership with the County Council. The Council has a track record of working with the Citizen's Advice Bureau (CAB) to improve services to the homeless and through the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group (and in partnership with BDHT and Supporting People) and has developed a new Floating Support and Preventative Service for clients over 25 (younger people are catered for through the Baseline Service). The Council provides £120,000 per annum to the Artrix, with a SLA that links back to the findings from the Council's Customer Panel. The Council has a Compact with the voluntary sector and an SLA with BARN. Most recently has entered into a partnership with Redditch BC, through the appointment of the Acting Joint Chief Executive of the two councils.

4.16 Partners are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The LSP Board has agreed a governance framework, including a performance management framework. The roles and responsibilities of LSP members are defined in the governance framework. LSP Board members, in particular Theme Group Chairs, are supported in their work by a Senior Corporate Policy and Performance officer of the Council and performance information is regularly reported to the Board.

5. Performance Management

5.1 The Council operates a clear golden thread, annual business cycle and a strategy to improve performance management. As a result, the Council delivered 77% of its targets for 2007/2008 which bears comparison with an excellent Council. The Council operates a very detailed corporate Improvement Plan, xx% of which was also delivered.

5.2 The Council sets realistic, but challenging targets for improving its performance. Challenge is provided through the Performance Management Board, monthly meetings between the portfolio holder and head of service and through a "star chamber" by senior officers of each service business plan, in addition to the routine monitoring at Corporate Management Team each month. The Council has significantly reduced the number of indicators reported (to provide focus) and improved the format of all the performance management documentation.

5.3 The Council has used the learning from these improvements to help develop performance management for its key strategic partnerships through the development of a performance management framework for the LSP. This includes: high level action plans (cross referenced to the County LAA) for each theme in the Sustainable Community Strategy, a community improvement plan which expands on the detail of these actions, regular reporting of key performance indicators, challenge at the LSP Board and use of performance clinics, for example on affordable housing. More detailed arrangements for monitoring each partnership sit underneath these, which have been previously referred to e.g. SLAs etc.

5.4 The Performance Management Board has an annual work programme of performance reports, including the corporate Improvement Plan Exception Report each month, performance indicators each month and an integrated financial/performance report each quarter. It also receives a range of other reports, for example: the Council Plan, Annual Report and detailed performance reports on our various partners etc. Portfolio Holders and the relevant heads of service are called to each meeting, to answer questions and recommendations are made to Cabinet. Portfolio Holders also receive the same information as PMB at Leader's Group (informal Cabinet) and each Portfolio Holder receives an integrated monthly report from their head of service and meets monthly to discuss this.

5.5 Performance management is fully integrated with the management of resources through the development of the medium term financial plan. The identified priorities of the Council reflect performance management issues e.g. affordable housing, a clean district, customer service etc.

5.6 The Council launched its Customer Feedback System in January 2008. The system is available to all staff to take complaints or compliments from our customers. The system is monitored daily by the Customer First officer, complaint figures supplied monthly to CMT, Cabinet and the Performance Management Board and a more detailed report, analysing trends produced quarterly. Through the 68 annual PACT meetings there is also an established process for residents to vote on their top three concerns for a particular area, that are then dealt with by the Police or senior Council officer attached to that PACT. There is a clear and publicised grievance procedure for staff, but also opportunities for staff through "ConnectWithKev" and staff forums to feedback concerns to senior management. These were particularly useful during Single Status and the IIP assessor commented very favourably on the state of senior manager/staff relations given the Council's context.

5.7 Customer focus is understood and is a central driver. Customer First is one of our four values.. The Hub receives over 7,000 calls per month, with a 90% plus resolution at first point of contact[9]. On average, the customer has to wait 35 seconds. All staff have received Customer First Training, both in 2007 and 2008. The Council has published customer standards, which are currently being subject to review through customer research and has recently updated the Customer First Strategy to include a stronger focus on customer access, having benchmarked with Shropshire County Council (excellent and improving). The Acting Joint Chief Executive meets regularly with the

County Council to resolve customer issues. A detailed report is produced each month on the Hub's performance which is reported to the CMT, while the Centre itself has installed a large screen to display real time queue data (including comparative data from other districts) and undertaken mystery shopping exercises, which have been similarly conducted across the whole Council. The Council also operates a Customer Panel and is now tracking customer satisfaction every year.

5.8 Because of the Council's "Poor" CPA rating the Council is already subject to a high level of external challenge through inspection, audit and the Government Monitoring Board. The Council can demonstrate a track record of responding to challenges from these mechanisms, including a revised and much more outward focused Improvement Plan, a complete overhaul of the way in which the Council reports its performance indicators, pump priming the Improvement Plan through the use of reserves, a robust strategic housing action plan[10] in response to the nil star inspection and subsequent delivery of a one star with promising prospects and IIP action plan and subsequent re-accreditation, achieving all 10 standards.

5.9 In order to encourage an embedded performance culture across the Council, Core Brief regularly reports to staff on our performance figures and the Improvement Plan[11], the Acting Joint Chief Executive, writes the lead article in the staff magazine "Connect"[12] which updates staff on key developments, the Assistant Chief Executive writes a regular column "Performance Matters". The Council has an established Performance Champions Group, to develop the reporting of performance information, has introduced a staff suggestion scheme "Bright Ideas"[13], introduced "back to the floor" sessions, organised a programme for senior managers to attend every team meeting at least once a year and developed a single A4 poster which sets out our Vision, Values, Council Objectives and Priorities. Every team produces a team action plan, with team managers meeting with the relevant Executive Director and Assistant Chief Executive to examine their plans and every member of staff receives a PDR and six month review.

5.10 Similarly, the Council produces an Annual Report (integrated with financial reporting), published on the Internet and reported in more detail through a wrap around in the local press. The Council also publishes information as part of the Council Tax leaflet[16] on our performance. The Council also reports on its performance through the new Together Bromsgrove residents' magazine. The LSP Board also produces an Annual Report on the Community Strategy and holds an annual "town hall" meeting to update residents on progress on the big issues.

5.11 Finally, cross departmental working is well established within the Council. CMT meets every Tuesday and includes the heads of service. LSP Theme Groups are also well established and provide a forum for departments (as well as different organisations) to co-ordinate their activities. The Council is recognised as having a particularly strong CDRP. The Council has also established a number of meetings to bring together departments and Members, for example: Town Centre Strategy Group, the Longbridge Working Party and Affordable Housing Working Group. The Council operates a range of project groups, for example: Spatial Project Steering Group and has recently established a Programme Board. The Council also sits on a number of County/District groups with a focus on performance improvement, including the Hub Partnership and Heads of Policy and Performance Improvement (currently chaired by Bromsgrove District Council).

6. Achievement and Improvement

Overall Performance

6.1 Outturn figures for 2007/08 show that 72% of BVPI's improved during the year, building on the 59% increase the year before. In terms of quartile distribution 60% of BVPI's are now above the median (compared to 2006/07 quartile positions – the latest ones available) with only 17% in the bottom quartile, continuing the significant improvement trend. This sustained and ongoing improvement has also been achieved in the key local performance indicators, as the table below shows.

	BVPI's		Local PI's	
PI Improvement	2006/07	2007/08	2006/07	2007/08
Performance improving	59%	72%	59%	76%
Performance steady	13%	10%	9%	12%
Performance declining	28%	18%	32%	12%

PIs meeting target				
Meeting or exceeding target	65%	74%	76%	78%
Missing target but within 10%	19%	16%	6%	10.5%
Missing target by more than 1	16%	10%	18%	10.5%

BVPI Quartile spread		
Top quartile	20%	31%
2nd quartile	18%	29%
3rd quartile	36%	23%
Bottom quartile	26%	17%

Council Priority One – A Thriving Town Centre

6.2 The Council is taking a strategic approach to regenerating the town centre and is currently working through the statutory planning requirements to develop an area action plan for the town centre. We have appointed a project manager (jointly funded by County Council). Key achievements include:-

- funding of a new toilet block in the town centre, including a high dependency unit for adults and children with disabilities (£174,000); £25,000 contribution from the Council towards the funding of feasibility study for regeneration of Bromsgrove Railway Station, the funding package has been established for a new train station and now awaiting funding approval; a major retailer for market hall site is being sought; an Issues and Options paper has been sent out for consultation and consultation completed; an Area Action Plan is being produced; and investment in community transport, linked to the town centre is about to be agreed. .

- An Events programme for the town centre has been agreed and is being implemented, with some sponsorship of the programme through the development of a Marketing Strategy. The programme includes a "Showcase" sports event in the town centre in August

- The Customer Service Centre is located in the town centre, including Saturday opening; extended opening of the Shop mobility centre (first

opened in November 2005) in response to recent feedback. The Scheme is very successful, with over 260 registered users and on average 8 to 10 vehicles being on loan at any one time.

- Improved lighting and a spruce up of building town centre multi-story car park (£6,000) after problems with teenage drivers. Achievement of Safer Parking award. Free car parking in Bromsgrove town centre, in two weekends prior to Christmas.

Council Priority Two – Housing

6.3 The Council has moved from a nil star, uncertain prospects service to a one star, promising prospects housing service in only 18 months. The delivery of affordable housing units have significantly improved since 2004/05 (26 units), to 75 units in 2005/2006 and a planned completion of 96 units in 2007/2008, although due to unforeseeable environmental concerns on one site, 26 of these completions will now be finalised in 2008/2009. The Council effectively supports the delivery of new affordable homes by contributing its own resources. It discounts or gifts land to support development, and commits £350,000 annually to grant fund BDHT, our primary partner.

6.4 The Council has challenged the Regional Spatial Strategy 2 housing figures through a Strategic Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA). The Council has delivered the Government's 2010 target for reducing the number of households living in temporary accommodation and have no families staying in B&B accommodation.

6.5 Through the Private Tenancy Scheme over 10 applicants have found suitable housing. The scheme helps financially support home seekers. The Council is second quartile in returning the level of private sector dwellings returned to occupation. There has been a significant Improvement to disabled facilities grant performance.

6.6 The Council and BDHT have a joint commitment to phase out the use of hostels as temporary accommodation and replace them with self contained units. Wythall Hostel has been closed[16] and 21 units of self contained accommodation are currently available.

6.7 Whilst the housing moratorium has impacted on affordable housing provision it has led to a very high proportion of new developments being on brownfield sites, 92% (2005/06)[27], compared to a target of 75% (2004) and 40% by 2011. With a limited amount of brownfield sites and the pressure for affordable housing, the use of Area Development Restraints may mean some greenfield sites will need to be released in the near future.

Council Priority Three – Customer Service

6.8 The CSC is consistently achieving its targets of 80% of answered calls and average waiting time of 35 seconds (this is considered an acceptable wait by our customers and is down from 48 seconds in March 2007). The resolution of customer contacts at the first point of contact has increased from 83% (March 2007) to 94.3% (March 2008) Phone calls go straight through to an adviser (there is no press 1 for, press 2 for) and this compares with the best in the private sector

6.9 We do have periods of higher call volume, particularly, during April with Council Tax. In the first year of opening, the average call waiting time in this month was 88 seconds. For April 2008 it was 34 seconds. The Council has recently invested in a queue management system for the CSC to improve the service to our walk in customers. 71% of our customers would recommend the CSC to a friend. Only 11% of residents were dissatisfied with the service received.

6.10 Customer culture across the whole of the Council has been a key area for improvement. All staff have attended 'Customer First' courses and an IT system to manage and analyse complaints, comments and compliments system has recently been introduced across the Council. The corporate performance indicator set now includes performance measures about complaints and their resolution. The Council has updated its website and has a new DDA compliant Members' entrance.

6.11 The Council is investing £5.0m in the Spatial Project, which will see the roll out of 11 software packages including a land and property gazetteer. The Council had suffered from years of underinvestment in its ICT infrastructure and software, both of which are now being addressed. These improvements will enable residents to view and submit planning applications on-line, ensure information is up to date, provide customer histories, share information between systems and link to the CSC.

6.12 "Chats with the Chief" sessions have been popular, with take up from Parish Councils, Rotary, resident associations etc. The Council has introduced a Council SMS alert messaging service. Only 15% of our residents found contacting the Council difficult and we have subsequently introduced a customer access strategy to address the issues raised by those 15%. 60% of residents found the resident magazine useful and only 7% found the Council Tax leaflet not useful.

6.13 Finally, the Council has, in partnership with SCOPE undertaken an accessibility audit of all Council buildings[30] and polling stations in order to ensure that its services can be accessed and that all members of the community are able to participate fully in the democratic process. Other access improvements include: the modification of the Council's waste collection services officering aid and assistance to people with specific assistance requirements; the launch of a telephone translation service; the increased provision and use of hearing induction loops at the Council House and the Hub; the provision of all literature in alternative formats on request and the inclusion of a yellow information sheet explaining the equality services available with every piece of correspondence sent out.

Council Priority Four – Sense of Community (community events, community enagement, children and young people and crime and disorder)

Community Events

6.14 The Council provides an excellent cultural offer, with an extensive range of community events designed to help maintain a sense of community. Over 17,000 people attend the events each year. Events include the bonfire night, street theatre and bandstand programme. As a result of feedback from our Customer Panel, we now take street theatre out across the whole District and while we introduced a small charge for last year's bonfire night, almost 10,000 people turned up. The bandstand programme includes not only an extensive music programme, but also youth arts, puppets in the park, clowns and magic, story telling and youth bands. The Council also has a very active civic calendar

which helps provide a sense of civic pride and raises money for local charities. The Spadesborne Suite at the Council House is also used for a range of events like tea dances, International Woman's Day, games sessions for people with learning disabilities, weddings and the Equalities and Diversity Forum. The Forum recently successfully bid for Council funding to support Black History Month, Diwali and the Padstone Day Care Centre theatre event for people with learning disabilities. The Council also actively supported the Holocaust Memorial Day with a service held in Sanders Park in January 2008, Vetrans' Day with a special bandstand programme and Democracy Week, with a range of events. Through our Together Bromsgrove magazine, we are also bringing news about the District and a special focus on a particular area in each edition.

6.15 The Council has underpinned this active civic calendar with the establishment of a Standards Committee and complaints procedure to ensure the proper conduct of public life in the District.

6.16 The Council has a lead role in the Artrix , Bromsgrove's theatre, cinema and live music venue and facilitated both its conception and delivery. The Council funded the building of the Artix arts centre and currently underwrites the revenue of the Artrix to the value of £120,000 per annum, supported by an SLA. The Centre provides a wide range of entertainment and an excellent facility for New College (used 14 hours a week). The facility opened in April 2005 and in 2006/2007 for example, provided: 389 performances and screenings, 12 exhibitions and over 350 creative workshop sessions. Over 26,000 people attended the Artrix in 2006/07.

6.17 Finally, the Council recently supported National Volunteer Week, with up to 20 staff, including the Acting Joint Chief Executive and Executive Director Partnerships and Projects going "back to the floor" with local charities to experience the significant contribution the voluntary sector makes to the District.

<u>Feeling Safe</u>

6.18 The Council operates a highly successful Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership with the Police. The last three years has seen a 32.3% reduction in crime levels across the District (target was 17.5%) and a 47% reduction in car crime. There were only three violent incidents in the town centre over the Christmas period due to high visibility policing, better licensing and improvements to taxi pick up points. The Council's Quality of Life Survey found that only 5% of residents said that crime and anti social behaviour affects their lives a great deal. Only 7% of residents disagreed that their local area is somewhere where people from different backgrounds do not get on well. The Council has made a substantial investment in CCTV in the town centre and around the District with another £450,000 worth of programmed upgrades due over the next three years. The CCTV is clearly effective; in 3 years and 6,000,000 car parking tickets, there have only been 20 reported vehicle crime incidents in the town centre. The Council has made careful use of Alcohol Free Zones in areas e.g. Alvechurch, Rubery etc. and we are currently looking at increasing the powers of our Neighbourhood Wardens and the Police's community support officers, so that they can issue fixed penalty notices. A key aspect of the improvement in crime reduction has been the close working relationship with the Police through the 68 PACT meetings, which address the priorities raised by local residents. For example, Waseley, which has traditionally been an area of higher crime has seen vehicle crime drop by 47%

since 2005/06; domestic burglary by 17% and criminal damage offences have reduced by almost 20%. The Council is very unusual in the level of support it provides to the PACT meetings, compared to the rest of the County and nationally. For example, a nearby excellent rated council does not support PACT, due to a lack of management capacity. We have an excellent working relationship with the Police that reflects this level of support. The Council has also worked in partnership on the "adopt the box" scheme, a joint initiative between the Council and Virgin Media, with residents being provided with an unlimited supply of cable box paint, to cover up graffiti. The Council has also actively worked with its partners to develop a Hate Crime Procedure[31] ,which has been rolled out to 22 reporting centres across the District and covers all six equality strands including race .

6.19 The Council also offers an extensive range of diversionary activities, including an angling project; free football coaching sessions, delivered by an FA qualified coach; the mainstream funding of the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme who engage with local residents, particularly young people; and the Charford Multi Agency Resource Centre has set up a youth group, with activities like arts, crafts, cooking, sports or just socialising with friends in a safe environment.

6.20 Finally, the Council also helps older and vulnerable residents feel safer in their own own homes through its externally accredited Lifeline Service (98.85% of Lifeline calls answered within 30 seconds).

Community Engagement

6.21 The Council is offering an increasing range of mechanisms for the public to influence the Council's strategy and services. The Council can track focus group feedback into the selection of its corporate priorities[17]. In direct response to comments from PACT meetings, dedicated mobile area cleaners have been introduced in Charford, Sidemoor and Catshill. The Council has anecdotal i.e. not statistically valid, evidence from PACT meetings and the Parish Council Forum that residents have recognised an improvement in the cleanliness of the District and an improvement in the responsiveness of the Council.

6.22 As a result of its two Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, the Council has introduced hanging baskets in Rubery and a new welcome sign, for Vetran's Day developed a bandstand programme and special event at the Artrix Theatre,; and through Section 106 monies available in Alvechurch young people have agreed how this money is to be spent.

6.23 We have previously mentioned that the Council is now using a budget jury to support its budget deliberations, staff have been consulted on the priorities and key deliverables (many of whom live in the District) and consulted the Equalities and Diversity Forum on the Council's priorities and offered them the opportunity to make community bids for the last two budget rounds. Through the LSP, the Council also supports an annual "town hall" meeting. The Council has a Community Engagement Strategy to help it respond to the two White Papers and will be supporting a participatory budgeting event for children and young people, in partnership with the County Council, in April 2009.

Children and Young People

6.24 The Council is concerned about the increasing demonization of young people. It has been recognised at County level that district councils have struggled to

engage with the "Every Child Matters" agenda; however, through the LSP, the Council has established a Children and Young People Board[28] and the Council is the District representative on the County thematic group. As mentioned above the Council is seeking to involve children and young people in the democratic process. The involvement of young people in Alvechurch in the decision on how to use section 106 monies is another example of the Council's developing approach. The Council already provides an extensive range of activities for children and young people including: street theatre, the bonfire night, diversionary activities e.g. the Majors Green Football Scheme, boxing, Sanders Park and St Chads skate parks and play areas. The Council also works with voluntary organisations, for example, re-planting Chestnut Walk, working with the Scouts; and has provided training to nurseries on health and safety issues. The Council also facilitates the Primary Sports Project. This provides high quality physical education in first schools which in turn has led to increased contact and membership of local sports clubs and helps schools meet their healthy schools targets. Other activities include: a swimming gala for primary and second school children; a very successful sports award evening, with sponsorship for each award; the introduction of multi-skills sessions across the District for 5 to 9 year olds to improve their fundamental skills of agility and balance (this also included a multi-skills festival with an excellent turnout); a junior cricket programme, in partnership with Bromsgrove Junior Boars, throughout the Summer, with qualified coaches; a Children and Young People's Convention to find out what youngsters want in the District; a football tournament at Bromsgrove's Ryland Centre, which kicked off a series of sporting projects across the District, delivered by the Sports Development Team, in partnership with the County Council and the voluntary sector and the setting up of a Gymnastics Club by the Sports Development Team, in partnership with the Wyre Forest Gymnastics Club and North Worcestershire School Sports Partnership. Through the 2008/2009 budget cycle the Council has invested in a further two sports development officers for a team that already has an excellent reputation.

6.25 The Council is also working hard to improve the physical play areas for young people. The Council has recently opened the Lickey and Blackwell playground (£40,000 funding from Council). The Council was also recently successful in winning £200,000 from the Big Lottery Fund to improve play facilities across the District. The money will be spent on £50,000 for multi-use games areas at Callowbrook Park, £40,000 towards teenager adventure play area at Wythall Park, £40,000 towards expanding and improving existing equipment at the Wythall Hollywood Lane play area, £35,000 to improve existing play facilities in Sidemoor and £35,000 to revamp the Infants play area at Mayfarm Close.

6.26 As a result of this priority, only 10% of residents felt they did not belong to their local area and 64% felt it was a nice place to live.

Council Priority Five - Clean District and Recycling

<u>Clean District</u>

6.27 As a result of the employment of additional street cleansing staff and investment in new sweepers, graffiti removal systems, area cleaners and hit squads, the proportion of land suffering from unacceptable levels of detritus is now below the local authority average. 85% of our streets now meet the Government's standards for cleanliness compared to 65% a year ago. This improvement is also reflected in improving customer perception (insert

Customer Panel data). The Council's Community Safety Team has also worked in partnership with the Probation Service on local area improvements like the clearing of alleys in Rubery; and dedicated mobile area cleaners have also been introduced and received positive customer feedback. In 2007, the Council won a Green Apple Award for its street cleansing service.

6.28 100% of abandoned vehicle reports are investigated within 24 hours of notification (top quartile) and almost 100% removed within 24 hours of the Council being able to do so (top quartile). Similarly, the Council removes all animal debris within agreed timescales and deals with almost all fly tips within our response times.

<u>Recycling</u>

6.29 Recycling rates are amongst most improved in country with the levels of recycling being in the top 50 in the country at over 40%. The Council has supported this improved delivery through a clearer collection policy, the introduction of a clearer Christmas calendar as a result of customer feedback) and a green waste collection. We have also set up four new bring banks, especially for Tetra Pak beverage cartons, in partnership with Tetra Pak Ltd. The majority of residual waste that is collected is diverted to Combined Heat and Power plants reducing the amount of waste required for landfill.

6.30 The Council actively supports public education on recycling. We run a "Recycle Now" week with drop in sessions; "Waste Stop Shops" so that residents can find out more about recycling; the design and delivery by young people of a green scheme post card to encourage recycling, Recycler, the hip hop Rapping Robot visited 10 schools in the District to encourage the three Rs of recycling and a Recycling Bus tour has visited the District's village to give advice and guidance on the best way to recycle.

6.31 Our focus and investment means that 81% of residents now use one of the Council's recycling facilities and 84% are satisfied with the recycling service.

Other Achievements

6.32 Not all of our services are covered by the priorities, but Improvement is a Council wide objective and staff have worked very hard over the last few years to turn around the performance of the Council across all of our services. Other achievements that Council has made include:-

- The Council is a partner with Advantage West Midlands on the Bromsgrove Technology Park. Basepoint PLC has a building there. Basepoint is a technology centre with "incubator" units to grow new businesses. The Council, in partnership with NEW college operates a successful business start up programme with 90 start ups over the last three years and a 70% survival rate.

- The Council also runs a monthly farmers market in Bromsgrove town centre and a Christmas market.

- Over 30 business start ups in 2007/2008 with a business survival rate of 75%.

- Satisfaction with parks and open spaces is high and improving. Green Flag Sanders Park.

- Only 10% of residents use the Dolphin Centre on a weekly basis and 63% have used it or stopped. As a result, the Council has refurbished the gym facilities (£850,000) at the Dolphin Centre and the transfer of the Centre to a Charitable Trust. Facilities updated to "state of the art" fitness suite.

- A number of teams in the Culture and Communities Department are QUEST accredited. The Planning and Environment Department Building Control Service is ISO9000 accredited and the Environment Health section achieved the highest average score for enforcement practices in a county wide audit. The Council is one of a very few local authorities nationally to have served Noise Abatement Notices in order to prevent nuisance trains (squealing train wheels) from travelling through the District. The Council's Environmental Health Commercial Team and Legal Services has undertaken a number of high profile prosecutions of local businesses which have received local and regional press coverage, with two cases featuring in a national journal.

- The Council is contributing to a better environment through its recycling service and parks service, in particular, the recent award of a Green Flag for Sanders Park. The Council has also recently signed up to the Worcestershire Climate Change Declaration and has employed the Energy Savings Trust to undertake a review of its activities[25]. Domestic energy efficiency is up to 22.68% (2005/06) from a 2003 baseline of 5% and on target to achieve 2011 target of 30%[26].

- The Planning Service has seen a significant improvement in its performance. This performance is high in the top quartile and should place the Council well within the top 50 performing authorities, compared to being one of the worst performing councils in 2005/06 (250th (approx) out of 285 councils). This has been achieved by a combination of resourcing, clearer accountabilities and responsibilities, improved processes and the introduction of 3 planning surgeries per week.

- An extensive consultation on the options for the future of the Longbridge site has been undertaken. As one of the two planning authorities the Council was not able to respond to this consultation; however, the LSP responded to the Issues and Options[14] consultation supporting the mixed development option, which aims to create 10,000 jobs.

- Since its BFI inspection in 2005 the Benefits Service has seen a significant improvement in its performance. The average number of days taken for processing new claims and the average number of days taken to process a change of circumstance have dramatically improved, falling from 37.81 days in 2005/06 to 26.33 days in 2007/08 and 11.88 days in 2005/06 to 6 days in 2007/08. The Council is also now delivering most of the DWP performance standards.

- Benefits Overpayments/fraud – more collected and more fined than before. Top quartile performance at 87.48%, compared to 65.96% the previous year.

- 100% successful prosecutions as a result of improved capacity and bringing service in-house.
- Outsourced sales advertising for Together Bromsgrove, making the three editions self funding and saving the Council £20,000.

- Half way through registering all Council's land, which is significantly ahead of other councils and means we are now selling this service to other councils.

- Procurement savings achieved of over £80,000 per annum.

- Introduction of the "Scores on the Doors" food establishment rating service.

- Development of a County wide Air Quality Strategy aimed at reducing emissions, better planning, transport and controlled areas.

- External funding secured for Improvement Manager to help deliver spatial project, programme management etc.

- Merger of Culture and Communities and StreetScene and Waste Management Department and savings delivered.

- New reprographics service, including new printers and reduced costs (figures).

- Significant reduction in local authority error rate, which has meant the payment of more subsidies by Central Government (£200,000). Achieved 100% for last quarter (quarter 4 2007/2008).

- Installation of new land and property gazetteer which will underpin all the spatial systems and significantly improve the service to customers, by providing a single database for updating change of address details.

- 27,000 people pay their Council Tax by Direct Debit which contributes to our very high collection rates (second quartile). There are 37,000 properties.

- IIP Re-accreditation achieved.

- Winning business seminars for private sector companies who want to get contracts with the public sector. Over 100 delegates. Joint initiative with Redditch BC.

- Development of a "Flooding Matters" leaflet with top tips for homes affected by the recent floods.

- Introduction of a new way of calculating housing benefit, through the Local Housing Allowance, introduced in April 2008.

- £1,612,000 savings target agreed for 2008/2009 in order to release money into priority areas.

- Licensing Policy short and simple to use. Praised by British Beer and Pub Association for short length of policy and easy of use.

- Sickness absence has dropped to 9.35 days per FTE for 2007/2008, compared to 10.66 in the previous year. The estimated outturn for 2008/2009 will see sickness levels drop below the local authority average.

- The Council is in the top quartile for paying invoices within 30 days.

- The Council is top quartile for collecting Council Tax.

- 100% of the Environmental Health best practice list achieved.

7. Conclusions

7.1 This self assessment demonstrates that the Council has made a dramatic improvement since its 2007 CPA. The Council has self assessed itself as good and is ambitious to achieve excellence. In writing the self assessment, the Council is aware that:-

- the District is essentially an affluent one and the societal problems it faces are ones of affluence, for example, affordable housing, very high customer expectations and a town centre that does reflect the wealth of the District;

- to achieve excellence, the Council now needs to address these longer term outcomes;

- in order to deliver this agenda the Council needs to further develop its capacity. The joint chief executive with Redditch BC, working with our partners to lever in resources into the District, delivering efficiency savings through a strong value for money culture, alternative ways of meeting service delivery; generating income and improving Member and officer skills are key to meeting this challenging agenda; and

- finally tackling all of the above is dependent on stable and sustainable political leadership from all parties. The Council recognises this and will continue to pay close attention to this agenda to ensure the governance of the Council is sound and enables officers to deliver a District where people are proud to live and work.

Self Assessment Score by Council

Theme	Self Assessed Score
Ambition	2
Prioritisation	2
Capacity	2
Performance Management	3
Achievement and Improvement	3

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18.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Housing Strategy 2006-2011, Unlocking the Door to Meeting the Housing Needs of Bromsgrove District (2005), p.55*
19.   *Worcestershire County Council, Economic Assessment 2005-2006 (2005), p. 120.*
20.   *Worcestershire County Council, Economic Assessment 2005-2006 (2005), p. 111.*
21.   *Worcestershire County Council, Slides for Bromsgrove Partnership Away Day (March 2006).*
22.   *Audit Commission, Bromsgrove Strategic Housing Services Inspection (2006), p. 14.*
23.   *Healthy Lifestyles in Redditch and Bromsgrove, Public Health Annual Report (2005).*
24.   *West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey – Bromsgrove Results (October 2006).*
25.   *West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey – Bromsgrove Results (October 2006).*
26.   *Audit Commission, Bromsgrove District Council Progress Assessment (2006).*
27.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Medium Term Financial Plan (December 2006 Cabinet), p.5.*
28.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Employee Survey (March 2006), p.7.*

*Q1. **What is the Council, together with its partners, trying to achieve?***

2. Ambition

1. *CSR Survey Ltd, Budget Consultation, A Report on Focus Groups Held with Residents (February 2006).*
2. *http://bromsgrove.whub.org.uk/home/bdc-meetings-minutes-agendas-improvement-plan.*
3. *Bromsgrove District Council, Council Plan 2007-2010 Part 1(September 2006 Cabinet).*
4. *Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement 2006-2009 (April 2006).*
5. *Bromsgrove District Council, Guidance for Producing Business Plans (September 2006).*
6. *Bromsgrove District Council, Statement of Community Involvement (Adopted September 2006).*
7. *Bromsgrove District Council, Ethical Framework, Officer/Member Protocol (2006).*
8. *Bromsgrove District Council, Local Protocol on Relations Between Members (2007).*
9. *Bromsgrove District Council, Modern Councillor Programme Job Roles (June 2006).*
10. *Bromsgrove District Council, Modern Manager Framework (2006).*
11. *Bromsgrove District Council, Application to Engagement (Intervention) Grant Determination (December 2006).*
12. *Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement 2006-2009 (April 2006).*
13. *CSR Survey Ltd, Communication and Customer Experience, A Report on Focus Groups Held with Residents (February 2006).*
14. *Bromsgrove District Council, Consultation Policy and Guidance, (October 2006 Cabinet).*
15. *Bromsgrove District Council, Inclusive Equalities Scheme, Working Draft Version (December 2006).*
16. *Bromsgrove District Council, Community Influence/Neighbourhood Management Pilot (January 2007 Cabinet).*
17. *Bromsgrove District Council, Medium Term Financial Plan 2006/07 to 2008/09 (February 2006 Cabinet).*
18. *Bromsgrove District Council, A Strong Voice for Bromsgrove District (March 2006 Cabinet).*
19. *Bromsgrove District Council, "Back to the Floor" Programme 2006/07 (08 August 2006 Corporate Management Team).*

3. Prioritisation

1. *Bromsgrove District Council, Council Plan 2007-2010 Part 1(September 2006 Cabinet).*
2. *Bromsgrove District Council, Business Planning and Performance Management (December 2006 Cabinet).*
3. *Bromsgrove District Council, Council Plan 2007-2010 Part 1(September 2006 Cabinet).*
4. *Bromsgrove District Council, Climate Change (November 2006 Cabinet).*
5. *Bromsgrove District Council, Medium Term Financial Plan (December 2006 Cabinet), Appendix D.*
6. *Bromsgrove District Council, Improvement Plan (August 2006 Cabinet).*
7. *Bromsgrove District Council, Recovery Plan Update (June 2006 Performance Management Board).*
8. *Bromsgrove District Council, Council's Project Management Methodology (June 2006 Performance Management Board).*
9. *Bromsgrove District Council, Customer First Strategy (March 2006 Cabinet).*
10. *Bromsgrove District Council, Spatial Project Business Case (2006).*
11. *Bromsgrove District Council, Customer First Strategy (March 2006 Cabinet).*

12. *Bromsgrove District Council, Towards a Clean, Safe and Attractive Bromsgrove, A Strategy for the Effective Delivery of Street Scene Services (2005).*
13. *Bromsgrove District Council, A Strong Voice for Bromsgrove District (March 2006 Cabinet).*
14. *Bromsgrove District Council, People Strategy (2006).*
15. *Bromsgrove District Council, Inclusive Equalities Scheme, Working Draft Version (December 2006).*
16. *Bromsgrove District Council, Capital Strategy (March 2006).*
17. *Bromsgrove District Council, Value for Money Strategy, (January 2007 Cabinet).*
18. *Bromsgrove District Council, Management Development Strategy (October 2006 Cabinet).*
19. *Bromsgrove District Council, Modern Manager Framework (2006).*
20. *Bromsgrove District Council, Medium Term Financial Plan (December 2006 Cabinet).*
21. *Bromsgrove District Council, Housing Strategy 2006-2011, Unlocking the Door to Meeting the Housing Needs of Bromsgrove District (2005).*
22. *Bromsgrove District Council, Inclusive Equalities Scheme, Working Draft Version (December 2006).*
23. *Bromsgrove District Council, Inclusive Equalities Scheme, Working Draft Version (December 2006).*
24. *Bromsgrove District Council, Equalities Capacity Building Bid (2006).*

Q2. **What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?**

4. *Capacity*

1. *Bromsgrove District Council, Review of Corporate Management Team (09 January 2007 CMT).*
2. *Bromsgrove District Council, Risk Management Strategy (2006).*
3. *Audit Commission, Value for Money Profiles (2006).*
4. *Bromsgrove District Council, Value for Money Strategy (January 2007).*
5. *Bromsgrove District Council, Value for Money Strategy (January 2007), Appendix 2*
6. *Bromsgrove District Council, Health and Safety at Work, Management Evaluation and Audit Report (16 January 2007).*
7. *Bromsgrove District Council, Business Planning and Performance Management (December 2006 Cabinet).*
8. *http://bromsgrove.whub.org.uk/home/bdc-the-decision-making-process-executive-forward-plan?hilightTerm=Forward%20Plan*
9. *Bromsgrove District Council, People Strategy (2006)*
10. *Bromsgrove District Council, Investors in People Action Plan (2006).*
11. *Bromsgrove District Council, Modern Manager Framework (2006).*
12. *Bromsgrove District Council, Risk Management Strategy (2006).*
13. *Bromsgrove District Council, Capability Procedure(2006).*
14. *Bromsgrove District Council, Sickness Absence Policy (2006).*
15. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 1, p. 5.*
16. *Bromsgrove District Council, Improvement Plan (August 2006 Cabinet).*
17. *http://bromsgrove.whub.org.uk/home/bdc-council-constitution*
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19. *Bromsgrove District Council, Progress and Prospects Bromsgrove District Council (16 January 2007 CMT).*
20. *Bromsgrove District Council, Asset Management Plan (2006).*
21. *Bromsgrove District Council, Integrated Financial and Performance Management Report (August 2006 Performance Management Board).*
22. *Bromsgrove District Council, Compact Bromsgrove (November 2006).*

5.   Performance Management

1.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 2.*
2.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicator Reporting Timetable, (November 2006).*
3.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Application to Engagement (Intervention) Grant Determination (December 2006).*
4.   *Commission, Bromsgrove Strategic Housing Services Inspection (2006).*
5.   *www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/bdc-home-form-complaints.htm*
6.   *www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/bdc-home-get-in-touch.htm*
7.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Customer Feedback System – Not Available to the Public (December 2006 Cabinet).*
8.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Community Influence/Neighbourhood Management Pilot (January 2007 Cabinet).*
9.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3 p.8.*
10. *Bromsgrove District Council, Strategic Housing Action Plan (2006).*
11. *Bromsgrove District Council, Core Brief (12 December 2006).*
12. *Bromsgrove District Council, Connect (December 2006).*
13. *Bromsgrove District Council, Staff Suggestion Scheme CMT Report (2006).*
14. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – Quarter 2 (December 2006 Cabinet), Recommendation 2.4.*
15. *Bromsgrove District Council, Council Results 2005/06 (June 2006).*
16. *Bromsgrove District Council, Council Tax Information 2006-2007.*
17. *Bromsgrove District Council, Draft Community Plan Annual Report 2005/06 (November 2006).*

Q3.   What has been achieved?

6.   Achievement and Improvement

1.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Council Results 2005/06 (June 2006), p.39.*
2.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), p.3.*
3.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 1.*
4.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 1.*
5.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Improvement Plan Exceptions Report (January 2007 Performance Management Board), p.1.*
6.   *http://www.defra.gov.uk/news/2006/061215a.htm*
7.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.2.*
8.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.2.*
9.   *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 2, p.4.*
10. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.8.*
11. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.9.*
12. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.8.*
13. *Bromsgrove District Council, Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team – November Performance Indicators (January 2007 Team Meeting).*

14. *Birmingham City Council and Bromsgrove District Council, Local Development Frameworks, Longbridge Area Action Plan, Issues and Options Report (October 2006).*
15. *Bromsgrove District Council, Housing Strategy 2006-2011, Unlocking the Door to Meeting the Housing Needs of Bromsgrove District (2005).*
16. *Bromsgrove District Council, A Strategy for De-commissioning Council Owned Hostels (September 2006 Cabinet).*
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18. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.3.*
19. *Bromsgrove District Council, Performance Indicators – November Update (January 2007 Performance Management Board), Appendix 3, p.1.*
20. *Worcestershire County Council, Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement 2006-2009 (April 2006).*
21. *West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey – Bromsgrove Results (October 2006).*
22. *West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey – Bromsgrove Results (October 2006).*
23. *West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey – Bromsgrove Results (October 2006).*
24. *West Mercia Constabulary, West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey – Bromsgrove Results (October 2006).*
25. *Bromsgrove District Council, Climate Change (November 2006 Cabinet).*
26. *Bromsgrove District Council, Draft Community Plan Annual Report 2005/06 (November 2006) p. 11.*
27. *Bromsgrove District Council, Draft Community Plan Annual Report 2005/06 (November 2006) p.12.*
28. *Bromsgrove District Council, Minutes of Children and Young People's Theme Group Meeting (12 January 2007).*
29. *Bromsgrove District Council, Bromsgrove Partnership Board, Minutes from November Meeting (30 November 2006).*
30. *SCOPE, Disability Access Audit (August 2006).*
31. *Bromsgrove District Council, Hate Incident Reporting Form (2006).*

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

CABINET

IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT [JUNE 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 final updated Improvement Plan Exception Report for June 2008 (Appendix 1).

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Cabinet considers and approves the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report attached as Appendix 1, and the corrective action being taken.

2.2 That Cabinet notes this is the final exception report of the 2007-08 Improvement Plan. As such, many of the actions scheduled throughout the preceding year have already been completed; hence the relatively low number of outturns for June. It should also be noted therefore that the proportions of actions behind target or rescheduled will in turn present as proportionally higher than might otherwise be expected.

2.3 That Cabinet notes that for the 96 actions highlighted for June within the plan 77.0 percent of the Improvement Plan is on target [green], 4.2 percent is one month behind [amber] and 6.3 percent is over one month behind [red]. 12.5 percent of actions have been rescheduled [or suspended] with approval. This month's performance is shown alongside that of the year to date, and is attached as the first page of Appendix 1 (this is a change in the format of this report, as requested by the Portfolio Holder).

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.   FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1   No financial implications.

5.   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1   No Legal Implications.

6.   COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

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

7.   RISK MANAGEMENT

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

8.   CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

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

9.   EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1   Please see section 3 of the Improvement Plan

10.   VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1   See section 11 of the Improvement Plan

11.   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.

12.   OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	At Leader's

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**

13.   WARDS AFFECTED

13.1   All wards

14.   APPENDICES

14.1   Appendix 1 Improvement Plan Exception Report June 2008

15.   BACKGROUND PAPERS:

15.1   The full Improvement Plan for June will be e-mailed to all Members of Leader's Group and can be found at **www.bromsgrove.gov.uk** under meetings Minutes and Agendas where there is a direct link to the Improvement Plan.

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Exception Report for June 2008 Improvement Plan   Appendix 1

PROGRESS IN JUNE 2008

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

July 2007			August 2007			September 2007			October 2007			November 2007			December 2007		
RED	1	0.6%	RED	1	0.7%	RED	4	2.4%	RED	3	1.8%	RED	5	3.1%	RED	3	2.0%
AMBER	5	3.2%	AMBER	13	9.2%	AMBER	11	6.6%	AMBER	16	9.6%	AMBER	11	7.0%	AMBER	17	11.6%
GREEN	152	95.6%	GREEN	126	88.7%	GREEN	149	89.2%	GREEN	142	85.0%	GREEN	138	86.9%	GREEN	121	82.3%
REPRO GRAMMED	1	0.6%	REPRO GRAMMED	2	1.4%	REPRO GRAMMED	3	1.8%	REPRO GRAMMED	6	3.6%	REPRO GRAMMED	5	3.1%	REPRO GRAMMED	6	4.1%

January 2008			February 2008			March 2008			April 2008			May 2008			June 2008		
RED	2	1.4%	RED	2	1.4%	RED	2	1.5%	RED	3	2.7%	RED	8	7.55%	RED	6	6.3%
AMBER	16	11.4%	AMBER	10	7.3%	AMBER	10	7.4%	AMBER	11	9.9%	AMBER	4	3.8%	AMBER	4	4.2%
GREEN	118	84.3%	GREEN	122	88.4%	GREEN	117	86.7%	GREEN	92	82.9%	GREEN	86	81.1%	GREEN	74	77.0%
REPRO GRAMMED	4	2.9%	REPRO GRAMMED	4	2.9%	REPRO GRAMMED	6	4.4%	REPRO GRAMMED	5	4.5%	REPRO GRAMMED	8	7.55%	REPRO GRAMMED	12	12.5%

Where: -

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

Out of the total of 96 actions for June 2008, 12 actions have been suspended. This amounts to 12.5 percent of the original actions scheduled for this month. These actions are: Longbridge x 2 (2.4, 2.6); Three Charter Marks (5.2.4); Brand Recognition (5.4.5) Satisfaction with Artrix (8.2.2); Maintain Greenbelt (10.1.6); Revisit Planning Moratorium (10.4.3); Improved Financial Management by Budget Holders (12.1.3); Develop and Use Middle Managers (19.5.5); Develop Project Management Arrangements for CMT x 2 (22.6.3, 22.6.4).

An Exception Report detailing corrective actions follows.

Exception Report for June 2008 Improvement Plan   Appendix 1

CP3: Housing

Ref	June 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 in June/July.	AC	Feb-08	Jul-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 July due to delays caused by neighbouring authorities delay in development of schedule of works.		

CP7: Community Influence

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
7.1.5	Deliver plan.		Consultation had been delayed is now underway. Completion date is scheduled for October.	HB	April-08	Oct-08

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
7.1	**Area Committee pilots (probable expansion of two)**																
7.1.5	Deliver plan.	HB													The consultation letter has now been sent out to all stakeholders.		

FP1: Value for Money

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
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'*)	■	The monitoring of the services provided by external agencies (e.g. Payroll – Redditch, Leisure – Wychavon Leisure Trust) is not due to commence until September. A robust framework of monitoring cashable efficiencies realised by the changes services will commence following transfer.	JP	Dec-07	Sept-08

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
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 September 2008

FP1: Value for Money

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
11.1.4	Discuss with provider option to market test combined service delivery	🟥	Due to delays in transfer the service cannot be market tested. See above.	JP	May-07	TBC

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
11.1	**Realisation of cashable savings by alternative methods of service delivery**														
11.1.4	Discuss with provider option to market test combined service delivery	JP											🟥	🟥	Will be delayed until after transfer takes place in September 08. There continues to be other service provision and contracts subject to market testing including graphics design and development of banking and insurance contracts.

Exception Report for June 2008 Improvement Plan   Appendix 1

PR2: Improved Governance

Ref	June 2008 Action		Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
16.3.5	Monthly meetings between Group Leaders		🟥	Leader of the Opposition does not attend												KD	Jun-08	TBC
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead**	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	**Corrective Action**		
16.3	**Improved Member relations**																
16.3.5	Monthly meetings between Group Leaders	KD	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟥	Meetings continuing but without attendance of Leader of the Opposition		

HR&OD2: Modernisation

Ref	June 2008 Action		Colour	Corrective Action												Who	Original Date	Revised Date
20.2.4	Terms and Conditions Negotiations (including Pay Protection).		🟥	Ongoing discussions with Unison holding up completion of ballot. Chief Executive and Head of HR and OD have met with the Regional Officer to stress importance of progress towards implementation.												JP	Feb-08	Sept-08
Ref.	**Action**	**Lead**	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	**Corrective Action**		
20.2	**Single Status**																
20.2.4	Terms and Conditions Negotiations (including Pay Protection).	JP	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟩	🟧	🟧	🟧	🟥	🟥	A further revised timetable for implementation is planned, aiming for Cabinet decision on 3rd September, and implementation on 15th September 2008.		

HR&OD2: Modernisation

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
20.2.6	Ballot of staff		The ballot has opened for GMB, UCATT and non managerial staff, but Unison National are not willing to proceed with a ballot at this time. The absence of a positive ballot result compromises the potential to implement through a Collective Agreement.	JP	Jan-08	TBC (i.e. Unison ballot)

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
20.2	**Single Status**														
20.2.6	Ballot of staff	JP													A further revised timetable for implementation is now planned, aiming for Cabinet decision on 3rd September, and implementation on 15th September 2008.

HR&OD2: Modernisation

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
20.2.7	Implement	■	The planned implementation date of April 2008 had to be put back pending resolution to the concerns expressed by National Unison, and the associated quality assurance test.	JP	Jan-08	Sept-08

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
20.2	**Single Status**														
20.2.7	Implement	JP										▮	▮	▮	Implementation planned for September 08.

HR&OD2: Modernisation

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
20.4.3	Evaluate Manager Induction	▨	Delay is due to the effect of the Implementation of Spatial/EDMS within HR&OD where the Learning and OD Manager is the team lead. This was further delayed due to the unforeseen absence of the Learning and OD Manager.	JP/HP	Aug-07	July-08

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action
20.4.	**Management Development Strategy**														
20.4.3	Evaluate Manager Induction	JP/HP		▨			▨				▨	▨	■	▨	The approach for induction for new managers will be included in the report to CMT on the T&D Strategy in July 08.

HR&OD4: Learning and Development

Ref	June 2008 Action	Colour	Corrective Action	Who	Original Date	Revised Date
22.4.1	Review corporate training programme each quarter.		Report was delayed due to unforeseen absence of Learning and OD Manager, who is now back at work.	HP	Apr-08	July-08

Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action			
22.4	**Review Productive Time**																	
22.4.1	Review corporate training programme each quarter.	HP	🟩			🟩			🟩			🟧	🟥	▨	Report on the T&D strategy was delayed due to unforeseen absence of Learning and OD Manager. Will now be ready in July 2008.			

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
CABINET

DATE 3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

IMPLEMENTATION OF MODEL STANDARDS FOR MOBILE HOME SITE LICENSING

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Peter Whittaker
Responsible Head of Service	David Hammond
Key Decision	

1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 The report updates and asks members to approve the adoption of the new revision to the model standards for Mobile home sites that have been recommended by the government.

1.2 The report asks for members support for officers to take appropriate enforcement action against site owners where non conformity against existing standards exists and to provide awareness raising to owners regarding the new standards and a reasonable period of notice to conform with newly introduced changes to the model standards.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Members approve the adoption of the newly revised Model Standards for Permanent Residential Homes Sites as summarised at Sect 4 of the report and detailed at Appendix 1 to the report.

2.2 That Members approve officers taking action in accordance with the Council's Enforcement Policy against site owners who continue to be in breach of existing model standards upon expiry of the originally set 5 year period of notice subject to an additional 6 months period of grace.

2.3 That members approve officers phasing in new model conditions (following consultation) where the current site license conditions are inadequate in serving its purpose and where legislation has been superseded.

2.4 That site owners be given a period of 12 months to conform to the newly introduced elements of the Model Standards before appropriate enforcement action is implemented.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

3.1 In 2003, the then Head of Environmental Health Services reported to the Executive Cabinet, recommending the development of a strategy

for the licensing of permanent residential mobile home sites.

3.2   The Executive Cabinet resolved to adopt a set of local standard conditions based upon Model Standards for all permanent residential home sites in the District. The Executive Cabinet also approved the adoption of a 'hard line' approach to ensuring compliance that gave owners a five year period to conform to the standards at the end of which a full inspection would be carried out, remaining breaches identified and further enforcement action considered.

3.3   The five year period of grace for site owners to conform to the original standards expires this year. However in April this year the Government published newly revised Model Standards.

3.4   All 13 permanent residential mobile homes sites in the district have recently been inspected to assess the level of conformity against both the original model standards and the more recently updated standards.

3.5   This report summarises the level of conformity of the sites against both the existing standards (2003) and the newly introduced standards (2008) and makes recommendations regarding appropriate enforcement action being taken where non conformity exists against existing standards now that the 5 year period of grace has expired. The recommendations propose that for the newly introduced standards that came in this year, site owners should be given 12 months to conform before appropriate enforcement action is commenced.

4.0   SUMMARY OF EXISTING AND NEWLY INTRODUCED MODEL STANDARDS FOR MOBILE HOME SITES.

4.1   The existing 1989 Mobile Home Site Model Standards (adopted in 2003) detail a maximum of 48 conditions relating to a variety of mobile home sites standards e.g. boundaries of the site, spacing between units, hard-standings and fire safety measures. All 48 conditions were attached to Licenses for sites with more that one unit. Single unit sites had a reduced number of 13 conditions to comply with.

4.2   The Mobile Home Site Model Standards 2008 update those issued in 1989, and reflect the changes in legislation, most notably in relation to fire safety. Under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005, mobile home site license holders are required to undertake a Fire Risk Assessment in relation to their site. This legislation excludes single unit mobile home sites and those entailing entirely of family groups. Other significant changes include the deletion of the standard relating to telephones, the condition of the unit and the introduction of a flooding standards. The model standards are more prescriptive, transparent thus leaving less opportunity for inconsistency between officers, Local Authorities and Sites. A comparison of the existing and new model standards can be found in Appendix 1.

4.3   The new model standards have provided a greater enforcement tool

which increases the fine from £150.00 to £2,500 per offence.

5.0 OVERVIEW OF THE LEVEL OF CONFORMITY OF RECENTLY INSPECTED SITES AGAINST EXISTING AND NEWLY INTRODUCED MODEL STANDARDS FOR MOBILE HOMES SITES.

5.1 All sites within the District have recently been inspected against the existing and new model conditions.

5.2 With the larger sites containing more than one unit, the average compliance level with the existing model standards is 70%. Comparing the same sites against the new model standards indicates that once the new Model Standards are implemented there will be an average compliance level of 74.25%. The reason for the increased compliance level is that many of the outdated conditions have been removed; the introduction of the Fire Risk Assessments also places the responsibility of complying with the original fire safety measures upon the License holder. The main areas of non-compliance with both the new and existing model standards is mainly concerned with the provision of Notices on-site and therefore should not present major problems to site owners in achieveing conformity nor present issues that would put residents occupancy at risk.

5.3 'All of the small, one unit sites are in compliance with all 12 conditions ' attached to their original Licences. These sites will still be subject to the Fire Safety Measures as these sites are excluded from undertaking a Fire Risk Assessment under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005.

5.4 One site that has been inspected is currently undergoing a complete refurbishment. The site is therefore not identified within the comparison tables as the site license holders are working towards the new model standards.

6.0 PROPOSED ACTION TO BE COMMENCED FOR NON CONFORMITY AGAINST EXISTING AND NEWLY INTRODUCED MODEL STANDARDS FOR MOBILE HOMES SITES.

6.1 The guidance notes to the Model Standards 2008 for Caravan Sites in England explain that the standards described in Appendix 1 are not intended to be the ideal. With each individual section, the guidance notes indicate the different agencies to consult with, prior to enforcement action being taken.

6.2 The CLG have stated that *'where a current license condition is adequate in serving its purpose, the authority should not normally apply the new standard'* [Letter dated 4th April 2008 introducing the revised model standards] It is therefore proposed that following appropriate consultation, where legislation has been superseded and current conditions are ineffective these are replaced by the new Model Standards 2008.

6.3 It is therefore proposed that where the material of the Mobile Home Standard Conditions have not been altered and there is still non-compliance with the standards that members agree to standard enforcement measures being taken. All of the larger sites are in contravention of at least one of the 33 conditions which have no significant material change to the original 1989 Model Standards. It is therefore recommended that a further 6 months is given to license holders in order to comply with the existing 1989 Model Standards. Where non compliance still persists it is recommended to Members that the Local Authority undertake Enforcement Action in terms of a Notice to ensure compliance.

6.4 It is proposed that for the new (2008) Model Standards, the Local Authority provides 12 months grace to site licence holders in order to comply with all conditions. Thereafter the Local Authority proposes to take a hard-line approach and enforce against all mobile home sites to ensure consistency across the district.

6.5 It is proposed that a training / consultation event takes place prior to action being commenced for non conformity against new standards.

6.6 It is intended that any enforcement action is undertaken in line with the Berr Compliance Code (Government recommended code) and the Enforcement Concordat once a risk assessment has been undertaken to take into account all possible factors in relation to the prosecution.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There would be no initial significant financial implications associated with the implementation of the new Mobile Home Site Model Standards 2008.

4.2 Financial pressures may be experienced in terms of the provision of a consultation/training event, however this consultation event can be scheduled into an existing consultation event that is due to take place during this period.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The following legislation is essential to the implementation and development of the Mobile Home Site Model Standards 2008: -

- The Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960
- Caravan Sites Act 1968
- Mobile Home Act 1983
- Model Standards 1989 for Caravan Sites
- Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
- Electrical Safety Quality and Continuity Regulations 2002

6. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

6.1 The implementation of these Mobile Home Site Model Standards 2008 link directly to the Council's Regeneration objective, key priority number 1, Housing, which links directly into the Housing Strategy 2006-2011.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

7.1.1 Increase homelessness figures for the district as increased enforcement action and level of fines may result in site owners closing down sites thus resulting in large displacement issues.

7.1.2 Significant increase in enforcement activity may result in increased demand on workload not only internal to the Strategic Housing Department but also may increase pressure on the Legal & Democratic Services department in terms of taking prosecution.

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

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

8. **CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 The recommendations will have an impact upon the Mobile Home Site license holders and also the residents of the sites. The impact may be in terms of enforcement action, removal of items which are in non compliance with the model standards e.g. wooden sheds within the separation zone, as they pose a serious risk of fire spread. The implementation of these standards and follow up of non compliance may also have an impact upon the Legal Department, if prosecutions were to be undertaken. The risk of increased homelessness within the district as detailed within Section 7.1 may have a significant impact upon BDHT resources as they manage the homelessness service and housing register for Bromsgrove District Council.

8.2 Every site has been inspected in line with the existing model standards and new intended model standards, during these site visits each license holder was briefed on the new standards and given a copy of the proposed standards. It is intended that there will be a consultation/training event to be held in September / October in order to communicate with the Mobile Home Site License holders the new Model Standards and the intended enforcement activity.

9. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 The Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies will be applied.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 A consistent and uniform approach to regulation and enforcement helps maximise the impact of existing resources.

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: -None
Personnel Implications: -None
Governance/Performance Management: -None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: - Improvement to the safety and wellbeing of mobile home residents.
Policy: - standardised policy for enforcement.
Environmental: - Improving standards.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

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	No

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 Table comparing Model Standards

15. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Caravan Site Register
- Model Standards 1989 for Caravan Sites
- License Conditions: Residential Caravan Sites
- BERR Regulators Compliance Code
- Model Standards 2008-Caravan Sites in England
- Licensing of Permanent Residential Mobile Home Sites Strategy Statement (1993)
- A New Approach for resolving disputes and to proceedings relating to Park Homes under the Mobile Homes Act 1983 (as amended)

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Mobile Home Site Conditions (1989)	Mobile Home Site Conditions (2008)
Boundaries and Plans of Site	
1. The boundaries of the site shall be clearly marked, for example by fences or hedges. In addition, the site owner shall give the Local Authority a plan of its layout. It is recommended that a 3-metre wide area should be kept clear within the inside of all boundaries.	1(i) The boundaries of the site shall be clearly marked by a man made or natural feature. 1(ii) No caravan or combustible structure shall be positioned within 3-metre of the boundary of the site. 1(iii) A plan of the site shall be supplied to the local authority upon the application for a license and, thereafter whenever there is a material change to the boundaries or layout of the site, or at any other demand of the Local Authority. 1(iv) The plan supplied must show an accurately scaled layout of the site including all relevant structures, features and facilities on it and shall be of suitable quality.
Density, Spacing and Parking Between Caravans	
2. Every caravan should be not less than 6 metres from any other caravan, which is occupied separately, and not less than 2 metres from a main road. The point of measurement of porches, awnings etc are the exteriors cladding of the caravan.	(i) Except in the case mentioned in sub paragraph (iii) and subject to paragraph (iv), every caravan must where practicable be spaced at a distance of no less than 6 metres (the separation distance) from any other caravan, which is occupied as a separate residence. (ii) No caravan shall be stationed within 2 meters of any road or communal car park within the site or more than 50 meters from such a road within the site. 2(iii) Where two adjacent caravans have retrospectively been fitted with cladding from Class O or better fire related materials to their facing walls, then the separation zone between them may be reduced to a minimum of 5.25 meters. 2(iv) In any case mentioned in subparagraph (i) or (iii):
3. Porches may protrude 1 metre into the 6 metres from any other caravan and should be of the open type (which consists of no more than a roof, two side supports and steps).	2(iv)(a) A porch attached to the caravan may protrude 1 metre into the separation zone and must not exceed 2 meters in length and 1 meter in depth. The porch must not exceed the height of the caravan and only one door may be permitted at the entrance of the home, either on the porch or on the home.

4. Eaves, drainpipes and bay windows may extend into the 6 metre space provided the total distance between the extremities of 2 adjacent units is not less than 5.25 metres.	2(iv)(b) Eaves, drainpipes and bay windows may extend into the separation distance provided the total distance between the extremities of 2 facing caravans is not less than 5 metres, except where sub paragraph (iii) applied in which case the extension into the separation distance shall not exceed 4.5meters.
5. Where there are ramps for the disabled, verandas and stairs extending from the unit, there shall be 4.5 metres clear space between them and two such items should not face each other in any space. If they are enclosed, they may need to be considered as part of the unit and, as such, shall not intrude into the 6-metre space.	2(iv)(c) Any structure including steps, ramps etc. (excluding a garage or car port), which extends more than 1 meter in to the separation zone shall be of non-combustible construction. There should be a 4.5meter clear space between any such structure and any adjacent caravans.
6. A garage, a shed or a covered storage space is permitted within 6 metres of any other unit only if it is of non-combustible construction (including non-combustible roof) and sufficient space is maintained around each unit so as not to prejudice means of escape in case of fire. Windows in such structures shall not face towards the units on either side. Carports, extensions and covered walkways shall in no circumstance be allowed within the 6-metre space. (For cars and boats between units, see standard 20).	2(iv)(d) A garage or car port may only be permitted within the separation distance if it is of non-combustible construction.

2(iv)(e) Windows in such structures within the separation distance shall not face towards the caravans on either side. |
| 7. The density shall be consistent with safety standards and health and safety requirements. The gross density shall not exceed 50 caravans to the hectare, calculated on the basis of the useable area (i.e. excluding lakes, roads, communal services and other areas unsuitable for the siting of caravans) rather than the total site area

8. No tents shall be stationed on the said land unless for private use | 2(iv)(f) Fences and hedges, where allowed and forming the boundary between adjacent caravans should be a maximum of 1 meter high.

2(iv)(g) Private cars may be parked within the separation zone provided that they do not obstruct entrances to caravans or access around them and they are a minimum of 3 meters from an adjacent caravan.

2(v) The density of the caravans onsite shall be determined in accordance with relevant health and safety standards and fire risk assessments |
| **Roads, Gateways and overhead cables** | |
| 9. Roads and footpaths shall be designed to provide adequate access for fire applications, (Detailed guidance on turning circles etc is available from fire authorities). Roads of suitable material shall be provided so that no caravan standing is more than 50 metres from a road. Where the approach to the caravan is across ground that may become difficult or dangerous to negotiate in wet weather, each standing shall be connected to a carriageway | 3(i) Roads shall be designed to provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and routes within the site for such vehicles must be kept clear of obstruction at all times

3(ii) New roads shall be constructed and laid of suitable bitumen macadam or concrete with a suitable compacted base. |

by a footpath with a hard surface. Roads shall not be less than 3.7 metres wide, or, if they form part of a clearly marked one way traffic system, 3 metres wide. Gateways shall be a minimum of 3.1 metres wide and have a minimum height clearance of 3.7 metres. Footpaths shall not be less than 0.5 metres wide. Roads shall have no overhead cable less than 4.5 metres above the ground. Roads and footpaths shall be suitably lit. Emergency vehicle routes within the site shall be kept clear of obstruction at all times.	3(iii) All roads shall have adequate surface water/storm water drainage. 3(iv) New two roads shall not be less that 3.7 meters wide, or if they are designed for and used by one way traffic, no less than 3 meters wide. 3(v) One way systems shall be clearly signposted. 3(vi) Where existing two way roads are not of 3.7meters wide, passing places shall be provided where practical. 3(vii) Vehicle access and all gateways to the site must be a minimum of 3.1 meters wide and have a minimum height clearance of 3.7 meters. 3(viii) Gateways shall be maintained in a good condition 3(ix) Cable overhangs must meet the statutory requirements.
Bases	
10. Every caravan shall stand on a concrete hard-standing which shall extend over the whole area occupied by the caravan placed upon it, and shall project sufficient distance outwards from its entrance or entrances to enable occupants to enter and leave safely. (This provision may be phased in on existing sites but regard must be had to unit stability and drainage of surface water).	4(i) Every caravan shall be connected to a road by a footpath with a hard surface which shall be maintained in good condition 4(ii) Where practicable, communal footpaths and pavements shall not be less that 0.9 meters wide.
Requirement to Comply with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005	
	17. The site owner shall make available the latest version of the Fire Risk Assessment carried out under the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 for inspection by residents and when demanded, a copy of the risk assessment shall be made available to the Local Authority.
Fire Safety Measures where the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 does not apply (such as single units sites and those solely occupied by family groups)	
	18(i) These standards in this paragraph only apply if the site is not subject to the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005
11. Fire points shall be established so that no caravan or site building is more	18(ii) These shall be located so that no caravan or site building is more than 30

than 30 metres from a fire point. They shall be housed in a weatherproof structure, easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked "FIRE POINT".

12. Where water standpipes are provided and there is a water supply of sufficient pressure and flow to project a jet of water approximately 5 metres from the nozzle, such water standpipes shall be situated at each fire point. There shall also be a reel that complies with British Standard 5306 Part 1, with a hose not less than 30 metres long, having a means of connection to a water standpipe (preferably a screw thread connection) with a water supply of sufficient pressure and terminating in a small hand control nozzle. Hoses shall be housed in a box painted red and marked "HOSE REEL".

13. Where standpipes are not provided but there is a water supply of sufficient pressure and flow, fire hydrants shall be installed within 100 metres of every caravan standing. Hydrants shall conform to British Standard 750. Access to hydrants and other water supplies shall not be obstructed or obscured.

14. Where standpipes are not provided or the water pressure or flow is not sufficient, each fire point shall be provided with either water extinguishers (2 x 9 litre) or a water tank of at least 500 litres capacity fitted with a hinged cover, 2 buckets and 1 hand pump or bucket pump.

15. A means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire shall be provided at each fire point. This could be by means of a manually operated sounder, e.g. metal triangle with a striker, gong or hand operated siren. The advice of the fire authority shall be sought on an appropriate system.

16. All alarm and fire fighting equipment shall be installed, tested and

metres from a fire point. Equipment provided at a Fire Point shall be housed in a weatherproof structure, easily accessible and clearly and conspicuously marked "FIRE POINT".

18(iii) Where water standpipes are provided:

18(iii)(a) The water supply shall be of sufficient pressure to project a jet of water approximately 5 metres from the nozzle.

18(iii)(b) There shall be a reel that complies with the current British or European Standard, with a hose not less than 35 meters long, having a means of connection to a water standpipe (preferably a screw thread connection) with a water supply of sufficient pressure and terminating in a small hand nozzle.

18(iii)(c) Hoses shall be housed in a red box and marked "HOSE REEL". Access to the fire point shall not be obstructed or obscured.

18(iv) Where hydrants are provided, hydrants shall conform to the current British/European Standard

18(v) Access to hydrants and other water supplies shall not be obstructed or obscured.

18(vi) Where standpipes are not provided or the water pressure or flow is not sufficient, each fire point shall must be provided with water extinguishers (2 x 9 litre) which comply with the relevant British/European Standard.

18(vii) A means of raising the alarm in the event of a fire shall be provided at each fire point.

18(viii) All alarm and fire fighting equipment shall be installed, tested and

maintained in working order by a competent person and be available for inspection by, or on behalf of, the licensing authority. A logbook shall be kept to record all tests and any remedial action, and shall be available for inspection by, or on behalf of the Licensing Authority.	maintained in working order by persons who are qualified in the particular type of work being undertaken and be available for inspection by, or on behalf of, the licensing authority or the Fire and Rescue Service. 18(ix) A record must be kept of all testing and any remedial action taken.
17. All equipment susceptible to damage by frost shall be suitably protected.	18(x) All equipment susceptible to damage by frost shall be suitably protected.
18. A clearly written and conspicuous notice shall be provided and maintained at each fire point to indicate the action to be taken in case of fire and the location of the nearest telephone. This notice shall include the following: - "On discovering a fire Ensure the caravan or site building involved is evacuated, Raise the alarm, Call the fire brigade (the nearest telephone is sited …………………..), Attack the fire using the fire fighting equipment provided, if safe to do so. It is in the interest of all occupiers of this site to be familiar with the above routine and the method of operating the fire alarm and fire fighting equipment".	18(xi) A clearly written and conspicuous notice shall be provided and maintained at each fire point to indicate the action to be taken in case of fire. This notice should include the following: - "On discovering a fire Ensure the caravan or site building involved is evacuated, Raise the alarm, Call the fire brigade (the nearest telephone is sited at...),

Maintenance of common areas, including Grass, Vegetation and Trees

19. Long grass and vegetation shall be cut at frequent and regular intervals where necessary to prevent it becoming a fire hazard to caravans, buildings or other installations on the site. Any such cuttings shall be removed from the vicinity of caravans. The space beneath and between caravans shall not be used for the storage of combustible materials.	7(i) Every part of the site to which the public have access shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition. 7(ii) Grass and vegetation shall be cut and removed at frequent and regular intervals. 7(iii) Every road, communal footpath and pavement on the site shall be maintained in a good condition, good repair and clear of rubbish. 7(v) Any cuttings, litter or waste shall be removed from the immediate surrounds of

	a path.
	7(iv) Trees within the site (subject to the necessary consents) be maintained.
20. Each caravan stationed on the said land must be numbered in a legible and conspicuous manner.	

Supply & Storage of Gas	
21. Any fixed LPG vessel of 150 to 500 Litres capacity should be a minimum of 2.5 metres distance from a building boundary, property line or fixed sources of ignition and there shall be a minimum of 1 metre between vessels. Access to and around the installation should be provided for fire fighting and should be kept free at a times. "Bulk LPG Storage at Fixed Installations Part 1: Design, Installation and Operation of Vessels Located above ground".	8(i) Gas (including natural gas) and oil installations, and the storage of supplies shall meet current statutory requirements, relevant Standards and Codes of Practise.
22. Where there are metered supplies from a common LPG storage tank then Guidance Note CS11 "The Storage and Use of LPG at Metered Estates" provides further guidance. In this case and where a British Gas mains supply is available, and then the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1984 and the Pipelines Act 1962 may also be applicable.	8(ii) Liquefied Petroleum Gas cylinders must not be positioned or secured in such a way as to impeded access or removal in the event of an emergency.
23. Copies of the booklets, notes and Regulations relating to LPG must be displayed with the site licence if they apply to the site	
24. Exposed gas bottles or cylinders shall not be within the separation boundary of an adjoining unit. LPG Installations shall conform to British Standard 5482, "Code of Practice for domestic butane and propane gas burning installations, Part 2: 1977 Installations in Caravans and non-permanent dwellings".	
25. For mains gas supply, the 1984 Regulations and Gas Safety Regulations 1972 will be relevant for the installation of any service pipe(s) supplying any primary meter(s).	
26. In cases where the site owner supplies gas to caravans on the site, he may need an authorisation to do so from OFGAS under the Gas Act 1986	

Electrical Installation

27. Sites shall be provided with an electricity supply sufficient in all respects to meet all reasonable demands of the caravans situated on them.	9(i) On the sites there shall be installed an electrical network of adequate capacity to meet safely all reasonable demands of the caravans and other facilities and services within it.
28. Any electrical installations, which are not Electricity Board works and	9(ii) The electrical network installations shall be subject to regulation under current

circuits subject to regulations made by the Secretary of State under section 64 of the Electricity Act 1947, shall be installed, tested and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the Institution of Electrical Engineers' (IEE) Regulations of Electrical Installations for the time being in force, and where appropriate, to the standard which would be acceptable for the purposes of the Electricity Supply (Amendment) Regulations 1992, Statutory Instrument 1992 No. 2961 and Electricity Supply (Amendment) (No. 2) Regulations 1994, Statutory Instrument 1994 No. 3021.

29. Work on electrical installations and appliances shall be carried out only by competent persons such as the manufacture's appointed agent, the electricity supplier, a professionally qualified electrical engineer, a member of the Electrical Contractors' Association, a contractor approved by the National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting, or a qualified person acting on behalf of one of the above. The installations shall be inspected periodically: under IEE Wiring Regulations, every year or such longer period (not exceeding 3 years) as is considered appropriate in each case. When an installation is inspected, it shall be judged against the current regulations.

30. The inspector shall, within 1 month of such an inspection, issue an inspection certificate in the form prescribed in the IEE Wiring Regulations, which shall be retained by the site operator and displayed, supplemented or replaced, by subsequent certificates, with the site licence. The site operator or licence holder shall meet the cost of the inspection and report.

31. If an inspection reveals that an installation no longer complies with the regulations extant at the time it was first installed, any deficiencies shall be rectified. Any major alterations and extensions to an installation and all parts of the existing installation affected by them, shall comply with the latest version of the IEE Wiring Regulations.

32. If there are overhead electric lines on the site, suitable warning notices shall be displayed at the entrance to the site and on supports for the line. Where appropriate, particular attention shall be drawn to the danger of masts of yachts or dinghies contacting the line.

relevant legislation and must be designed, installed, tested, inspected and maintained in accordance with the provisions of the current relevant statutory requirements.

9(iii) Any work on electrical installations and appliances shall be carried out only by competent persons who are competent to do the particular type of works being undertaken, in accordance with relevant regulations.

9(iv) Any work on the electrical network within the site shall be done by a competent person fully conversant with the appropriate statutory requirements.

Water Supply

33. The site shall be provided with a water supply in accordance with appropriate Water Bylaws and statutory quality standards.	10(ii) All new water supplies shall be in accordance with all current legislation, regulations and relevant British or European Standards. 10(i) All pitches on the site shall be provided with a water supply sufficient in all respects to meet all reasonable demands of the caravans situated on them. 10(iii) All repairs and improvements to water supplies and installations shall be carried out to conform with current legislation and British or European Standards. 10(iv) Work on water supplies and installations shall be carried out only by persons who are qualified in the particular type of work being undertaken and in accordance with relevant regulations.
Drainage and sanitation	
34. Satisfactory provision shall be made for foul drainage, either by connection to a public sewer or sewage treatment works or by discharge to a properly constructed septic tank or cesspool approved by the local authority 35. Each caravan standing shall be provided with a connection to the foul drainage system; the connection shall be capable of being made airtight when not in use. 36. Every site and every hard standing shall be provided with an adequate drainage system for the complete and hygienic disposal of foul, rain and surface water from the site, buildings, caravans, roads and footpaths	11(ii) There shall be satisfactory provision for foul drainage and waste water drainage, either by connection to a public sewer or sewage treatment works or by discharge to a properly constructed septic tank or cesspool approved by the local authority 11(i) Surface water drainage shall be provided where appropriate to avoid standing pools of water. 11(iii)All drainage and sanitation provisions shall be in accordance with all current legislation, regulations and British or European Standards. 11(iv) Work on drains and sewers should be carried out only by persons who are qualified in the particular type of work being undertaken and in accordance with relevant regulations.
Domestic Refuse, Storage and Disposal	
37. Every caravan standing shall have an adequate number of suitable non-combustibles refuse bins with close-fitting lids or plastic bags. Arrangements shall be made for the bins to be emptied regularly. Where communal refuse bins are also provided these shall be of similar construction and housed within a properly constructed bin store.	12(i) Where communal refuse bins are also provided these shall be non combustible and housed within a properly constructed bin store. 12(ii)All refuse disposal must be in accordance with all current legislation and regulations

Communal Vehicle Parking	
38. Suitably surfaced parking spaces shall be provided to meet the requirements of the occupants and their visitors. Plastic or wooden boats shall not be parked between units. One car only may be parked between adjoining caravans provided that the door to the caravan is not obstructed.	13. Suitably surfaced parking spaces shall be provided to meet the requirements of the occupants and their visitors.

Recreational Space	
39. Where children live on the site, space equivalent to one-tenth of the total area shall be allocated for children's games and/or other recreational purposes. This provision will normally be necessary because of the limited space available round the caravans, but may be omitted where there are suitable alternative publicly provided recreational facilities, which are readily accessible.	14. On sites where it is practical to do so suitable space equivalent to one-tenth of the total area shall be allocated for recreational purposes, unless in the Local Authorities opinion there are adequate recreational facilities within a close proximity to the site.

Notices and information	
40. A suitable sign shall be prominently displayed at the site entrance indicating the name of the site.	15(i) The name of the site shall be displayed on a sign in a prominent position at the entrances to the site together with the current name, address and telephone number of the license holder and manager and emergency contact details, a copy of the site license or the front page of the said license and details of where the full license and other information required to be available under this standard can be viewed and between which times (if not displayed on the notice board).
41. A copy of the site licence with its conditions shall be displayed prominently on the site.	15(ii) A current plan of the site with roads and pitches marked on it shall be prominently displayed at the entrances to it. 15(iii) A copy of the current site license shall be available for inspection in a prominent place on the site
42. Notices and a plan shall be displayed on the site setting out the action to be taken in the event of an emergency. They shall show where the police, fire brigade, ambulance, and local doctors can be contacted, and the location of the nearest public telephone. The notice shall also give the name and location/telephone number of the site licence holder or his/her accredited representative. At sites subject to flood risk, warning notices shall be displayed giving advice about the operation of the flood warning system.	15(iv) In addition at the prominent place the following information shall also be available for inspection at the prominent place: 15(iv)(a) A copy of the most recent periodic electrical inspection report. 15(iv)(b) A copy of the site owner's certificate of public liability insurance 15(iv)(c) A copy of the local flood warning system and evacuation procedures, if appropriate.

	15(iv)(d) A copy of the fire risk assessment made for the site
43. All notices shall be suitably protected from the weather and displayed where possible out of the direct rays of the sun, preferably in areas lit by artificial lighting.	15(v) All notices shall be suitably protected from the weather and from direct sunlight.
Flooding	
	16(i) The license holder must establish whether the site is at risk from flooding by referring to the Environment Agencies Flood Map 16(ii) Where there is a risk from flooding the license holder must consult the Environment Agency for advice on likelihood of flooding, depths and velocities that might tbe expected, the availability of a warning service and to take appropriate measures.
Management	
44. All buildings, roads and carriageways shall be maintained in good repair and in a clean and wholesome condition to the satisfaction of the Local Authority. 45. All caravans stationed on the site shall be maintained in good repair and in a sound and watertight condition to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority. 46. The Site Operator shall ensure, through the site rules that no caravan stationed on the said land shall be used for sleeping accommodation by a greater number of persons at any one time, than the number, which is can reasonably be regarded as having been designed to accommodate. 47. The Site Operator shall be responsible for ensuring that the grass is kept reasonably short during the whole of the period that any of the caravans on the site are occupied 48. The Site operator shall ensure, through the site rules that no caravan stationed on the said land shall be used for sleeping accommodation by a	

greater number of persons at any one time, than the number, which can reasonably be regarded as having been designed to accommodate.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3ʳᵈ SEPTEMBER 2008

REVIEW OF THE REFUSE COLLECTION AND RECYLING OPERATION. SUPPLEMENTARY REPORT.

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Margaret Sherrey
Responsible Head of Service	Michael Bell
Non-key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To seek approval to change the type of refuse collection vehicle fleet to a standard type of refuse collection vehicle.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That members agree to commence a migration away from the current side arm refuse collection fleet to a standard type of refuse collection vehicle similar to those operated by all other Local Authorities in this country.

2.2 That members agree to do this on a phased basis commencing with 2 vehicles that will be part funded by the vehicle manufacturer in compensation for losses of bins that have occurred since commencement of the existing operation.

2.3 Members note that the negotiations for compensation have progressed and that agreement has now been reached.

2.4 Members recommend to full Council the virement of £63,500 from the capital budget relating to containers which will no longer be required for this purpose. This will be utilised in conjunction with the compensation arrangements to enable the Council to acquire two new vehicles.

2.5 That members approve the wider vehicle replacement programme in accordance with the funding provision agreed within the capital programme.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 The report to members in June detailed the reasons for modifying the method of operation.

3.2 Members will recall that officers were negotiating with the existing vehicle manufacturer with regard to the provision of alternative vehicles by way of a wider compensation arrangement. Officers can report that these

negotiations are now concluding and that two new vehicles will be part funded as a result thereof.

3.3 The 2008/9 capital programme includes £63,500 in respect of the purchase of containers for side arm vehicles. The new fleet arrangement will negate the need for this equipment and it is proposed that these funds be vired to meet any shortfall between the compensation arrangements and the value of the vehicles.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The funding currently available within the capital programme of £63,500 could be used to fund any shortfall between the compensation arrangements and the value of the vehicles. Any under spend will be transferred to capital receipts.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 These changes will impact on both 'Improvement' and 'Environment' in the Council Objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

- The timescale for delivery of the vehicles and the continuing reliability of the existing fleet. (Risk Register 1.8)

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Residents should see a more consistent level of service in both the short and long term.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Reverting to a standard refuse collection vehicle fleet with a 3 man team on each vehicle will improve the departments capacity to deal with the increasing number of assisted collections as result of the ageing population of the area. We are aware that the age profile within the District is moving towards an older population, this move would therefore future proof the service against the need to make changes in the long term.

10. VFM IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Having a standard service similar to neighbouring Authorities will enable greater opportunity for partnership working resulting in efficiency gains. It will also allow more accurate benchmarking.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues:	Yes. Potential EEC regs.
Personnel Implications:	Yes, Change in JD's
Governance/ Performance Management:	Yes long term improvement.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998:	None
Policy:	None
Environmental:	Improved PI's

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	**Yes**
Chief Executive	**Yes**
Corporate Director (Services)	**Yes**
Assistant Chief Executive	**No**
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

None

14.   APPENDICES

None

15.   <u>BACKGROUND PAPERS</u>

Cabinet Report June 2008: Review of Refuse and Recycling Collections.

<u>CONTACT OFFICER</u>

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

COUNCIL PLAN 2009-2012 PART 1

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Key Decision	

1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 To re-confirm the Council's Vision and Council Objectives. Reduce the number of priorities from five to four and consider the outline budget options for delivering the required improvement on these priorities to meet our residents' expectations.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 It is recommended that Full Council:-

i. Reconfirm the Vision and Council Objectives (**Appendix 1**, 6.1).

ii. Consider the analysis of the Council's national, regional and local context (**Appendix 1**)

iii. Based on this context, agree the definitions of the Council Objectives (**Addendum A of Appendix 1**)

iv. Based on this context agree to a reduced number of priorities (3.5)

3. **BACKGROUND**

Council Plan 2008-2011

3.1 Cabinet and Full Council approved the Council's first Council Plan as part of the 2007/08 budget round. The Council Plan is effectively the business plan for the Council and a key document for Members. The 2009/2012 plan will be published until March 2009; however, the Council needs to agree it priorities now, so that officers can make detailed plans to deliver these as part of the service business planning cycle.

3.2 The first Key line of enquiry in the CPA framework is ambition and the second prioritisation. Understanding our context and setting priorities is critical to achieving a fair rating, but regardless of the CPA framework, feedback from the public suggests that they want the Council to demonstrate greater vision and forward planning (evidence from focus groups November 2005).

Process to Date

3.3 As part of the work on developing the Vision, Objectives and Priorities, the Council must take account of the strategic context within which it operates. The Council is in a strong position to provide this evidence. The Council has received the following information over the last 18 months:-

- A quantitative analysis of all the quality of life data available on the District e.g. deprivation indices, population growth predictions etc.

- Production of a draft Community Strategy, based on this analysis and the County Local Strategic Partnership Local Area Agreement.

- Public consultation feedback on the draft Community Strategy through the "Glad or Grumpy" campaign.

- Best Value Satisfaction Survey data on the Council's services and quality of life in the District.

- Customer Panel One data on the Community Strategy priorities (and satisfaction with them) and the Council's priorities (and satisfaction with them).

- Customer Panel Two data on residents' quality of life.

- Customer Panel Three data, tracking customer satisfaction one year on from customer panel one.

- Regular performance management reporting and the production of the Annual Report.

- Additional focus group feedback (as part of the 2007/08 budget deliberations).

- Regular attendance by Members and senior officers at PACT meetings.

- Budget jury.

- Equalities and Diversity conference.

- Labour Market survey.

- Recent focus groups on customer standards and customer access.

3.4   This information is brought together in **Appendix 1**, into an analysis of the policy context, performance context and financial context of the Council.

3.5   Based on this information, the following priorities are recommended to Cabinet and Full Council:-

- A thriving market town.

- Housing.

- Sense of Community.

- Streetscene and Sustainability.

3.6   The Vision and objectives are still considered appropriate.

Process Going Forward

3.7   The cycle of reporting and decision-making for the 2008/2011 budget is set out below. Last year the Council Plan Part 1 went straight through Full Council without any debate. The priorities drive the budget, so it is important that Members debate the priorities. To aid this process, a Member briefing will be organised in advance of Full Council

Action	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Brief Members before Full Council							
Agree priorities and consider outline budget position at Full Council(Council Plan Pt 1)							
Complete service plans and budget options							
Detailed Budget Options Considered by -							
CMT							
Groups							
Cabinet							

Undertake remaining budget jury sessions.		▓	▓				
Reports results of budget jury.			▓	▓			
Agree budget at Full Council					▓		
Set Council Tax and agree Council Plan at Full Council						▓	▓
Publish Council Plan and send out CT bills.							▓

4. Financial Implications

4.1 The outline budget implications for the priorities identified are set out in the Financial Section of the attached position statement.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

6. Corporate Objectives

6.1 The existing corporate objectives to remain unchanged.

7. Risk Management

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

8. Other Sub Headings

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

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

9. Consultation

9.1 Please include the following table and indicate 'Yes' or 'No' as appropriate. Delete the words in italics.

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

10. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Policy, Performance and Financial Position Statement (July 2007).

Background Papers

Council Plan 2008/2011.

Budget Book 2008/2009

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Bromsgrove District Council

Policy, Performance and Financial Position Statement

04 August 2008

1. Bromsgrove District (some figures need updating)

Geography

1.1 Bromsgrove District is in north Worcestershire, covering a large district area of approximately 83.9 square miles. Whilst only 14 miles from the centre of Birmingham, the Lickey Hills country park provides an important dividing line between the urban West Midlands Conurbation and the rural

landscape of north Worcestershire. Ninety percent of the District is greenbelt which causes problems for housing policy. Four radial routes pass through the District, each served by railway lines and major roads, including the M5 running north and south, the M42 running east and west, with further links to the M40 and M6.

Table 1 – Map of Bromsgrove District
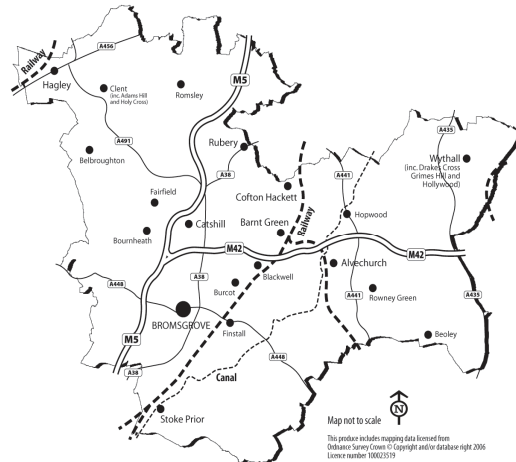
1.2   Data suggests that 16,643 people travel into the District for work, with 26,112 (29%) of the population travelling out, a net commute out of 9,469. Our main communities are detailed in Table 1. The District has no wards in the top 20% most deprived in England (see Table 2 below).

Table 2 – Map of County Deprivation
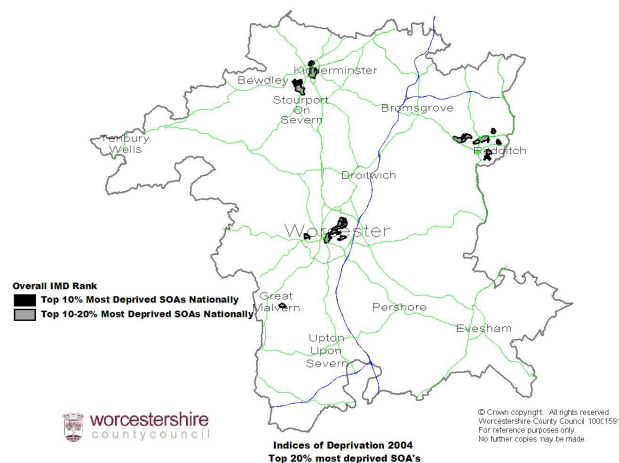
Population

1.3   The population of the District is 90,550 with the District experiencing a 0.8% increase between 2003 and 2004 (the joint highest in Worcestershire). This increase is mainly attributable to inward migration as a result of a number of large housing developments, with the District clearly being viewed as an attractive location to live and work in (or commute from). The District's population is also set to expand by a

further 3,000 to 7,000 households between 2006 and 2010 depending on the outcome of the Regional Spatial Strategy review. There is also the possibility of a further expansion if the District has to take some of Redditch District Council's housing allocation. The black and minority ethnic population (BME) is only 3.3% (figure needs updating) which is low for the region and nationally. This BME % comprises 1% Irish, 0.8% Asian, 0.8% mixed, 0.4% black and 0.3% Chinese. There are 37,798 households in the District. Over 25% of households contain only one older person. An estimated 6,964 households in the District have one or more members in an identified special needs group. This is 19.1% of all households in the District, well above the national average; of these 56.7% have a physical disability and 37% are frail elderly. The elderly population is predicted to expand as a proportion of the overall District population, with the over 80s population estimated to increase by 123.3% in the period 2004 to 2029.

Economy

1.4   The economic picture of the District is generally very positive. The mean household income is £36,906, which is the highest in the County (the County average is £32,699). There are three major areas of economic concern within the District: the redevelopment of the Longbridge site, Bromsgrove town centre and Bromsgrove railway station. In April 2005, parts of Phoenix Venture Holdings (PVH), most significantly MG Rover and PowerTrain entered administration, resulting in the closure of the Longbridge car plant. These parts of the Group employed around 5,850 people in the West Midlands and an estimated £410m was spent with firms based in the West Midlands as part of the supply chain. Whilst unemployment levels naturally increased with the closure, the District's unemployment levels have returned to very low levels (1.7%). The Town Centre needs a major overhaul to encourage local shopping and compete with neighbouring shopping centres. Bromsgrove station is the third area of concern. The current station facilities are not considered fit for purpose and a feasibility study is currently being carried out on the possible redesign of the station so that it can take bigger trains and more passengers, anywhere between an increase of 70 to 300 additional car parking spaces. This would help "future proof" the station against any changes to transport charges that may affect Birmingham city centre.

Sustainable Development

1.5   One of the biggest issues facing the District is affordable housing: 83.4% of households are owner occupied, the 11th highest figure in England and Wales and house prices are rising faster than the national average with the average house price being £219,949 (reduce figure by 15%). The Council is currently operating a planning moratorium with only affordable housing developments being built. The Housing Strategy has a target of 80 units of affordable housing a year for the next five years.

Education, Deprivation and Health

1.6   The percentage of the population qualified to NVQ Level 4 is significantly higher than average. GCSE results gained at local authority schools and colleges in Worcestershire in 2004 were amongst the highest in the country (56.1% achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C). The District ranks 293rd out of 354 councils on the national index of multiple deprivation 2004 (where one is the most deprived), making the District one of the least deprived nationally. Ward deprivation data can now be further analysed into Super Output Areas (SOAs) of 1,000 residents. Using this information, some parts of the Sidemoor and Charford wards fall within the most deprived 20% to 40%. This level of "deprivation" does not feature in terms of Government funding, which would normally focus on the 10% most deprived or lower. Only 4,050 households are in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in the District, one of the lowest figures in Worcestershire. As a result, identifying the vulnerable within our communities is more difficult than a district with geographic areas of deprivation.

1.7   Generally, the District's population is healthier than the regional average. Young people (18-24) have a high risk status being the most likely to smoke, binge drink and not take exercise. Potentially, we could be storing up problems for our young people. The most recent Primary Care Trust (PCT) annual report noted that our children's health is good, but there is a need for more child and adolescent mental health services. The PCT retain a concern (shared by the Council's own Community Safety Team) that domestic violence remains "common place". Between 2000-2003 teenage pregnancies increased marginally across Worcestershire (the overall rate is significantly lower than England as a whole).

Crime and Fear of Crime

1.8   There has been a 31.9% reduction in headline comparator crime figures for the District over the last three years. This, together with the Partners and Communities Together (PACT) community meetings, has had a very positive impact on fear of crime in the District: 97% of residents feel safe during daytime and 70% after dark. Low level crimes like: anti-social behaviour, litter, rubbish, "young people hanging around", vandalism and criminal damage remain an issue. Drug offences are low.

2.   National Policy

2.1   Local government is currently undergoing the most significant policy change since the Local Government Act (1999).

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007)

2.2   Last year we reported on the significant changes beginning to take place in local government as a result of the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper. This has now become an Act (the above) and is probably the most significant legislative change in local government since the Local Government Act 1999 which introduced best value and eventually comprehensive performance assessment.

2.3   The District Council became a failing council for many reasons, but one of them was undoubtedly a lack of awareness of the changes that were happening to local government at a national level. The Council must not repeat that mistake and must pay due regard to the changes in this Act.

2.4   The Act has introduced four key changes to the regulatory framework of local government. These are:-

- The replacement of Comprehensive Performance Assessment with Comprehensive Area Assessment from 01 April 2009. This shifts the regulatory emphasis from the Council's performance to the performance of all public bodies in an area, in this case Worcestershire. This makes working in partnership more critical than ever, in particular, both the District and County Local Strategic Partnerships. Members can clearly see the benefits of partnership working at a local level, in particular, the crime and disorder reduction partnership and PACT meetings.

- New, more focused, Local Area Agreements (LAAs). The County LSP has just recently agreed a new LAA for the County. The targets are set out in **Addendum B**. Key areas of focus within the LAA for the Council are: community safety and affordable housing.

- The replacement of Best Value Performance Indicators with new National Indicators and a Place Survey. The new national indicators are much more outcome focused and perception focused, hence the Place Survey. The Council has already incorporated some of these new NIs into its Council Plan 2008/2011 and is currently updating the District's sustainable community strategy with both the new LAA information and NIs.

- Efficiency. Every Council is now subject to a net cashable efficiency target of 3% per annum. The Act is encouraging the delivery of this target by establishing regional improvement and efficiency partnerships and through inviting councils to become two

tier pathfinders or unitary authorities (and therefore remove some of the structural inefficiency in local government). The Council is responding to this in a number of ways: by developing a strategic approach to value for money through the Joint Chief Executive position, investment in technology e.g. spatial project, a general emphasis on value for money within the council, for example, improved procurement practices and the use of systems thinking to find more efficient ways of doing things (the Council has successfully won £88,000 worth of Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP) funding to support this systems thinking work).

2.5   Although the Council will no longer be subject to a separate CPA, we will still be subject to an updated annual Use of Resources assessment, which will include some of the old CPA key lines of enquiry and a scored direction of travel judgement.

2.6   There were a range of other issues set out in the Act, but these have been tackled later in the report, in order to provide some reasonable grouping of all the changes that are occurring. The extent of the changes should be a cause for concern for the Council. There are a tremendous number of initiatives coming out of Central Government. The Council simply cannot respond to all of them and needs to be able to consider these in the light of its own priorities and local issues and create synergies between national priorities and initiatives and our local priorities and initiatives.

Community Empowerment and Neighbourhoods

2.7   The new Local Government and Involvement in Health Act includes a general "duty to involve" residents (compared to the previous duty to consult residents). This has been significantly expanded upon in the recent White Paper: Communities in Control. Key proposals include:-

- A duty to promote democracy. Councils will be expected to do more to in terms of encouraging young people, giving practical support to councillors and information to residents. The Council is reasonably well placed to respond to this duty, with its annual children and young people's event, linked to the County's youth forum, PACT meetings and Local Neighbourhood Partnerships. The Council expects to invest in this area through the next budget round, in particular, money to children and young people to vote on and the further expansion of Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.

- The power of petitions will be strengthened. There will be a new duty for councils to respond to petitions and potentially to act as "community advocates" should the petition be about something outside of a council's direct control; and

the power of scrutiny may be updated so that scrutiny is more visible to the public and that local senior public officers, outside of the Council may be required to face scrutiny. Again, the Council is already well place to respond to this, as senior officers from the Police and County Council has already attended scrutiny task groups and the Performance Management Board.

2.8   Other potential changes include neighbourhood "policing pledges" (charters), increased visibility for public sector officers, including committee chairs and the chief executive facing regular public hearings and the transfer of community assets (Quirk Review). Again, it is pleasing to report that through our strong commitment to PACT, the first priority in the Communications Strategy being visible leadership (Chats with the Chief, Walking the Ward, Back to the Floor etc.) and the annual "town hall" meeting and our work with the County Council on the Quirk Review (and transfer of assets like the Artrix and Amphlett Hall), we are already well place to respond to these changes.

Crime Strategy

2.9   Last year we reported that the Home Office's new Crime Strategy was set to promise greater freedom for the police and councils to tackle policing problems the public are most concerned with, rather than the current focus on Home Office targets. Again, the Council is well placed to respond to this agenda with a very effective Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (overall crime down by 32%) and high level of involvement from Members and senior staff in PACT meetings/area committees. More recently, the Government has announced it will be producing a green paper on police accountability in the 21st century. It is not clear what this will include at this stage; however, the Local Government Association has published their own views on what should be included. The LGA is seeking a re-balance of the tripartite relationship (Home Secretary, Chief Constable and Council) so that police accountability is more firmly anchored into local communities, a re-merger or police authorities and local authorities and the introduction of community safety charters. The Local Government Chronicle is reporting that directly elected mayors will take "full democratic control over local policing services", when the green paper is published later this month.

Economic Development

2.10   The "Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration" set out proposals to given local authorities (upper tier) new powers to drive and incentivise local prosperity. The County Council is actively involved in these changes and this strategic economic development is not a function of district councils; however, whilst the County Council is now beginning to bring its considerable resource and expertise to bear on the town centre, Longbridge and the railway station, the economic development of the town centre (and the northern districts in general) may need a further boost.

The Council has clearly benefited from the joint County/District appointment of a project manager for the town centre. A similar appointment with a focus on economic growth, in particular, bringing in larger businesses to the town centre and District as a whole may be appropriate. This needs to be set alongside the general economic climate and it may be more better to undertake a review, jointly perhaps with Redditch during 2009/2010 with a possible budget bid the following year.

Housing

2.11   Last year we reported that the Government had recently announced a new green paper on housing. The paper suggested councils will have increased powers in order to increase the amount of affordable housing to rent and buy. It set a target of 70,000 new affordable homes and 45,000 social homes per annum by 2010/2011. Councils would also need to identify 15 years' supply of housing land, primarily brownfield land (this is not an option for our District). The Council was challenging its RSS2 allocation, because while the Government was demanding a significant increase in housing numbers within the County, very few of these were set to be in the District, with the growth areas being Redditch and Worcester City. The situation is now further confused by Central Government pressure for even higher housing targets, which may see a dramatic increase in the number of houses built in the District, but in the wrong place (around Redditch and out from Birmingham towards the M42).

2.12   Another key development since last year has been the achievement by the Housing Team of a "one star with promising prospects" rating. The team were very unlucky not to achieve a two star rating. This is an excellent improvement from the previous nil star, uncertain prospects rating of 18 months ago. Key recommendations from the inspection included: an increased customer focus, an increased focus on diversity, maximising the contribution that private sector renting can make to the housing stock, delivery of affordable housing and improved value for money. The Council accepts all these recommendations.

2.13   Consideration was given last year to dropping housing as a priority, because of our ability to influence the market. In addition, our Council Plan target was to achieve a two star rating and during 2008/2009 we should achieve this (although we will not be re-inspected). Staff feedback this year has also suggested dropping housing as a priority. Cabinet and CMT gave this idea due consideration at their recent away day and concluded that while our ability to influence the market and regional housing allocation is limited, housing is so fundamental to the future shape of the District (in terms of geography and age profile) that it must remain a priority. It was also felt that dropping it as a priority would send the wrong message to our partners, both locally and regionally.

2.14   Members may also wish to note that the planning white paper: Planning for a Sustainable Future, has set out detailed proposals for the reform of

the planning system, in particular, improved speed, responsiveness and efficiency of land use planning and infrastructure planning. This is to be welcomed as it may speed up the redevelopment of the town centre.

Community Cohesion and Diversity

2.15   The Government's focus on community cohesion and diversity tends to be on ways of tackling inter-ethnic tensions in inner cities, which has obtained an increased significance since 9/11. While these tensions do not really apply in the more rural setting of the District, diversity, remains important within the District, as it covers not just ethnic groups, but other minorities, for example, the disabled, the frail elderly, different faiths etc., all of which are relevant to our District. The Council is comparatively well placed (in Worcestershire) to respond to the diversity agenda. The recent county wide "Being Different Together" project supports our claim of level 2 and we should deliver level 3 (of the Local Government Equality Standard) by March 2010, if not sooner, although the Standard is actually changing from April 2009 and will reduce the number of levels from five to three; this is broadly to be welcomed, as the existing standard is too rigid and overly bureaucratic. The Standard is not longer a BVPI; that said the Council will maintain its commitment to this agenda because it is consistent with our value of equality and with our value of customer first, these are particular customer groups with particular needs which we have a social duty to meet.

2.16   We have previously noted that the older population is set to increase dramatically over the next 25 years. The customer panel reports (see below) indicate the public want us to do more in this area and the Audit Commission's "Don't Stop Me Now" report has highlighted that councils are not sufficiently age proofing their work or future plans. The Commission recommend a closer consideration of demographic profiles, more innovation and forward thinking as key areas for improvement. The Council is due to undertake a scrutiny task group on older people and rather like the public transport task group, this is very timely. The Council needs to improve its understanding in this area, not just focusing on some of the current irritants e.g. car parking, but a more fundamental consideration of the needs of an ageing population.

Children

2.17   As part of the re-shuffle a new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has been created. Sporting activities for young people are likely to be boosted as part of the "Every Child Matters" agenda. The new department will also be responsible for the Government's Respect set of policies, previously with the Home Office, which may suggest a move away from focusing on the young from a criminal perspective to a more supportive one. The "Making Space" review recently warned that four out of 10 children end up wandering the streets because they had nothing to do. Anne Longfield, Chief Executive of 4Children commented last year

that "the Government puts a lot of money into young children, but all we have offered teenagers so far is ASBOs". The Leader and Executive Director Partnerships and Projects share a particular concern that we are demonising our young people and not supporting them with enough facilities and support. Children and young people are a key aspect of the sense of community priority. The need for facilities needs to be set alongside the fact that there must be more for children to do today and in previous generations, but that we are less keen now for children to play in unsupervised settings. Feedback from the Customer Panel indicates that residents think good parenting is the key issue, rather than lack of things to do.

Transport

2.18   Since the last report, the Council has had to manage the badly conceived concessions for over 60s on bus travel. The Council has also carried out a detailed scrutiny review of public transport within the District. This was very timely, as the County Council were also in the process of developing an Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy for the county. This Strategy sets out a long term plan for the significant upgrade of the county's transport infrastructure, routes and services. Both councils are now working in partnership to progress these issues in the District. Key areas of focus include: a review of all routes across the District (due to be completed in February 2009), assembling the funding and business case for the proposed new train station and bus interchange in Bromsgrove, developing a community transport scheme, re-considering the highways/pavement layout and quality in the town centre and considering whether it is possible to bring forward the development of new bus interchange as part of the town centre redevelopment. The Strategy sets out clear standards for the quality of future transport infrastructure and both the bus interchanges at the train station and town centre will be "gold standard".

Third Sector

2.19   Last year we reported that the Government had recently published its review of the voluntary sector. The report: "The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration" called for a new partnership between local government and local voluntary organisations working for social change. We also reported that the Government is likely to introduce a new local survey to measure the quality of relationships between councils and third sector organisations by 2009. As part of the new NIs, the Government has now introduced two new performance indicators for the voluntary sector. NI6 seeks to measure the level of participation in regular volunteering and NI7 seeks to measure whether there is a suitable "environment for a thriving third sector". This will be measured through a separate perceptions survey, specifically for the voluntary sector.

The Council is reasonably well place to respond to this agenda. We have a COMPACT with the voluntary sector which has received positive comment from County. BARN is represented on the LSP Board and since the last Council Plan report we have introduced an SLA with BARN, supported by a small funding stream to ensure their participation; however, we are fortunate to have over 140 voluntary organisations working within the District and feedback from BARN suggests we need to do more to make best use of our joint resources to work of the good of our communities. A particular area for development is to look to ensure that the voluntary sector is given proper consideration during procurement decisions and we look to introduce a clear process for assessing funding requests from the voluntary sector. If these requests are consistent with our priorities, we should look to offer them support as, generally the voluntary nature of the sector means we get good value for money.

Single Status

2.20 The Council has done its level best to deliver Single Status, something we are obliged to do as part of the Single Status/Equal Pay/National Pay and Reward Strategy. We commented in last year's report that the impact on staff morale of this process should not be underestimated. Undoubtedly, morale has suffered as a result of staff receiving information on their proposed new grades. This has been further compounded by the delay caused by Unison's requests for a number of independent reviews of our process, all of which have shown the Council followed due process. Having just reached a point at which we appeared to have collective agreement, everything is now on hold as a result of a Court of Appeal judgement on job evaluation/Equal Pay on Wednesday last week (the Bainbridge case), which has implications nationally.

Climate Change

2.21 The United Nations Intergovernmental Group looking at climate change has concluded that greenhouse emissions could be reduced by 26 billion tonnes by 2030 and this would be more than enough to limit the expected temperature rise to between 2 and 3 degrees centigrade. It is recognised that such a move would cost billions of pounds, but could be recouped by savings due to the health benefits and air pollution. Last year, the Council received a report from the Energy Savings Trust and established a cross departmental working group to pursue the recommendations in the report. The first key piece of work to emerge from this group is the updating of the Council's travel plan (which is now underway). Climate change also features much more strongly in the new local area agreement. The Council is struggling to address these issues due to the capacity required to do so and required focus. Previous experience in the Council suggests that a "process owner" is required in order to drive the changes required by the Council, as for example is the case with the equalities officer, customer first officer, performance officer etc.; consequently, this is a potential area for investment.

Customer Service

2.22   The Government does not talk much about customer service, but instead refers to customer access and customer choice. The feedback from the recent customer panel, from the budget jury and from a range of focus groups held on customer access (these were undertaken because of the criticism in the housing inspection about customer access to the Council) do not indicate a desire from residents for additional access channels e.g. remote technology, more hubs etc. What they do show is the need to get our existing access channels right; for example, reduce the average speed of answering at the CSC, reply to voicemails, reply to e-mails etc. In effect, deliver our existing customer standards.

2.23   The Council has undertaken some benchmarking work with an excellent council on additional customer access channels, in particular, remote technology, community lap tops etc. The Council has been through a considerable period of change over the last 2 years. At this stage, it may be more appropriate to get right the existing changes before embarking on any additional expenditure around customer service.

2.24   As part of the customer access agenda, both Central Government and the Audit Commission seem to be obsessed with information, in fact, one of their recent documents has a chapter entitled "information, information, information". Clearly, good information is critical to running a business. The Audit Commission report "In the Know" cites Tesco's clubcard and a range of other multi-national companies as examples of good practice in using information to provide competitive advantage. Poor information can have devastating consequences, for example the Soham murders. How relevant these examples are to a small district council is a mute point. The ability of the Council to undertake direct marketing of its services through improved information would be of benefit; however, it is hard to justify this as a priority for improvement, despite what the Audit Commission are saying. The one area that has come out of the research the Council has been undertaking is community transport. The Council is unusual in not supporting a community transport provision and this is an area with strong public support according to the customer panel.

3.   **Regional/Local Policy**

        Worcestershire Local Area Agreement

3.1   The key strategic document which makes the link between national, regional and local policy is the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Through the Local Government and Involvement in Health Act (2007), the Government has placed even more emphasis on LAAs, particularly, as the inspection regime for local government will now be on an area basis through Comprehensive Area Assessment. As a result the County LSP has had to negotiate a new LAA, which contains thirteen priorities for the County for the next three years (2008/2009 to 2010/2011), having only negotiated the original one in the previous year. A LAA is a form of contract between Central Government and the County LSP with a focus on outcome targets. The County LAA flows out of the evidence based County Sustainable Community Strategy. The District Council responded to the consultation on this Strategy. The following paragraphs provide a brief commentary on each of the LAA blocks in relation to Bromsgrove District.

        Block A: Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe

3.2   The District has a strong Crime and Disorder Partnership which is contributing strongly to this outcome. Previously, the LAA contained targets for reductions in crimes like burglary etc., but now the emphasis is very much on perceptions. There are three key indicators in the new LAA which are important for the Council: NI 2, the percentage of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood, NI17 perceptions of anti-social behaviour and NI 195 improved street and environmental cleanliness (although not technically a perception measure, the link is that a more dirty area e.g. graffiti, fly posting, is likely to contribute to a perception that an area has higher crime). Through the last budget round the Council invested in more area cleaners, hit squads and neighbourhood wardens (although subsequently funding from Central Government was withdrawn for two of our neighbourhood wardens, meaning there was not actually an increase in the number of wardens, just a maintaining of the status quo). The CDRP's performance and improvement in the Council's street cleansing performance suggests this is not a priority for further investment at this stage; however, providing our neighbourhood wardens (and the Police's CSOs) with powers to issue fixed penalty notices is an area that is likely to be well received with by residents.

        Block B: A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow

3.3   This block now has a tighter focus around climate change outcomes. Previously, it contained indicators on parks and open spaces, recycling and street cleanliness. Recycling remains important, but the target is more outcome focused, concentrating on NI 193 municipal waste land filled. The big change is the emphasis on per capita CO_2 emissions with

a 5.8% reduction expected by March 2011 (2005 baseline). The Council has set up a Climate Change Working Party, but is currently under resourced to deliver the changes in our processes and culture in order to deliver our contribution to this important agenda. There is also a target on flood management and while the District missed the worst of last year's flooding, our ability to respond to a repeat of these weather conditions is currently limited. The full list of new LAA indicators is set out in Addendum B to this report.

Block C: Economic Success that is Shared By All

3.4 Block C now has a tighter focus on getting people into employment, for example, long term benefits claimants, 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training or employment (NEETs) and NVQ qualifications. The number of new VAT registrations remains a target, but the growth in employment levels at the science and technology parks has been dropped. BDHT have recently expressed concern that we are not collectively responding to the worklessness agenda, particularly in areas like Sidemoor and Charford. The Council has set up a small group to look into this issue and at the Cabinet/CMT away day, there was discussion about making the next Local Neighbourhood Partnership be in Charford. With the current credit crunch and the difficult in getting big businesses into Bromsgrove, there was also a view that the Council, possibly in conjunction with neighbouring district councils, establish a stronger economic development function.

Block D: Improving Health and Well Being

3.5 The key contribution that the Council can make to this block is improving people's lifestyles through supporting community sports organisations and through direct leisure provision e.g. the Dolphin Centre. The District's population is relatively affluent and therefore relatively healthy. Through the last budget cycle the Council has invested in this area e.g. additional sports development officers and the refurbishment of the Dolphin Centre, as a pre-cursor to its transfer. Worcestershire is also fortunate to have higher than national average participation rates in sports and participation in sports clubs which the sports development officers are building increasing links. This is an area of the Council, whose performance is very strong. This is not an area identified for further investment through this budget cycle.

3.6 This block also includes indicators concerned with older people, in particular, the number of older people who are supported to maintain independent living. The Council can make a contribution to this target through its housing priority.

<u>Block E: Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People</u>

3.7   The LAA targets are focused around obesity, services for disabled children, bullying and teenage pregnancy. The Council can only make a limited contribution to these, as they are primarily delivered by the County's Childrens Services Department. That said, the District Council is keen to encourage more engagement with young people and has provisionally agreed to run another children and young people's event with the County Council, which this year (subject to agreement by Members) will enable children and young people to determine where they would like delegated monies to be spent through a participatory budgeting exercise.

<u>Block F: Stronger Communities</u>

3.8   This block tends to be a catchall for targets that do not fit in the other blocks. The key indicators for the Council in this block concern affordable housing: NI 154 net additional homes provided and NI155 number of additional homes delivered. The other aspect of this block that is relevant to the Council is community engagement.

District Community Strategy

3.9   The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce its own Community Strategy, which provides a long term vision and strategy for the District, bringing together the public sector organisations operating in the District, the voluntary sector and private sector. The District's Community Strategy, while being updated, will maintain the same priorities:-

- Fear of crime;

- Environment (biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions);

- Town centre redevelopment;

- Longbridge regeneration;

- Health and well being (increasing physical activity, ageing well scheme for older people and reducing smoking);

- Children and young people (qualifications, safety, sport and volunteering);

- Older People (lifelong learning, transport and involvement);

- Housing (impact of migration and affordable housing); and

- Transport (train station, community transport and town centre).

Cabinet / CMT Away Day Partner's Feedback

3.10　The Council invited its key partners to the Cabinet/CMT away day to find out about their priorities and ambitions for the District. A summary of the feedback is as follows:-

County Council

3.11　The County Council recognises that relations are much improved (and this is reflected in their funding of the town centre project manager and work on the railway station). The County Council is currently determining its priorities, so was not in a position to share its priorities with us; however, it pointed to the 13 priorities in the new LAA as a strong guide to its own priorities. These are attached at Addendum B and discussed in more detail above.

West Mercia Police

3.12　The Police were very complimentary about the working relationship with the Council and the support provided. Overall crime is down by 32%, the Council has an effective crime and disorder reduction partnership and we are unusual in the level of support we provide to the PACT meetings. Many of the issues raised at these meetings cannot be tackled by the police, so the Council is playing a very active role in tackling some of the wider issues within each PACT area.

Primary Care Trust

3.13　The PCT highlighted the 2008 Health Profile for the District. We are basically a comparatively health district. The key local challenges are to promote and enable healthier lifestyles in order to sustain the reductions in the major causes of death. Diet, exercise and smoking are the key areas of focus. The Council has invested in additional sports development officers through the last budget cycle and works in partnership with the agencies like the PCT, Sport England etc. There is still a hardcore of smokers who do not wish to give up (37% QoL Survey 2008), with 30% of our residents assessing themselves as "not very active". More personal time, cheaper entry fees and greater promotion of activities were identified as key determinants of residents' likelihood of undertaken exercise. The Council has invested in the Dolphin Centre and the transfer should see an improved service offer and marketing. This area is not seen as a priority for further investment in 2009/2010.

Voluntary Sector

3.14　The Bromsgrove and Redditch Network, highlighted the improving relations with the Council, but also that we are fortunate to have over 140 voluntary organisations working within the District and that we need to do more to make best use of our joint resources to work for the good of our communities. A particular area for development is to look to ensure that

the voluntary sector is given proper consideration during procurement decisions and we look to introduce a clear process for assessing funding requests from the voluntary sector. If these requests are consistent with our priorities, we should look to offer them support as, generally the voluntary nature of the sector means we get good value for money.

4.   **Consultation**

Quality of Life Survey

4.1   Earlier this year, the Council received the results of it first quality of life survey through the customer panel. The survey asked residents wider questions about what it is like to live and work in the District (compared to the customer satisfaction survey which concentrates directly on the Council's services). A summary of the key results are set out below.

Quality of Life Survey

The Environment and Climate Change

4.2   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

Promote recycling	49%
Promote locally grown food	40%
Ensure new builds are more energy efficient	33%
Educate children about climate change	31%
Provide grants for solar panels etc	30%
Promote cycling/	25%
Improve energy efficiency in public buildings	23%
Ensure new builds generate energy renewably	21%
Promote car sharing	13%
Promote holidaying in the UK	9%
Make it easier to build wind turbines	6%
Other	8%

Base: All respondents (677)

4.3   The top three priorities were to promote recycling (49%), promote locally grown food (40%) and ensure that new builds are more energy efficient (33%).

4.4   The Council is already in the top 50% performers nationally for recycling, whilst the "thriving market town" priority should encourage the sale of local produce and afford us with an opportunity to build new more energy efficient buildings.

Affordable Housing

4.5   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 survey has a lower response rate from younger people, so this result should be treated with caution).

4.6   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).

4.7   51% said that there was a low need or no need for one bed flats/

How would you describe the need for each of the following:
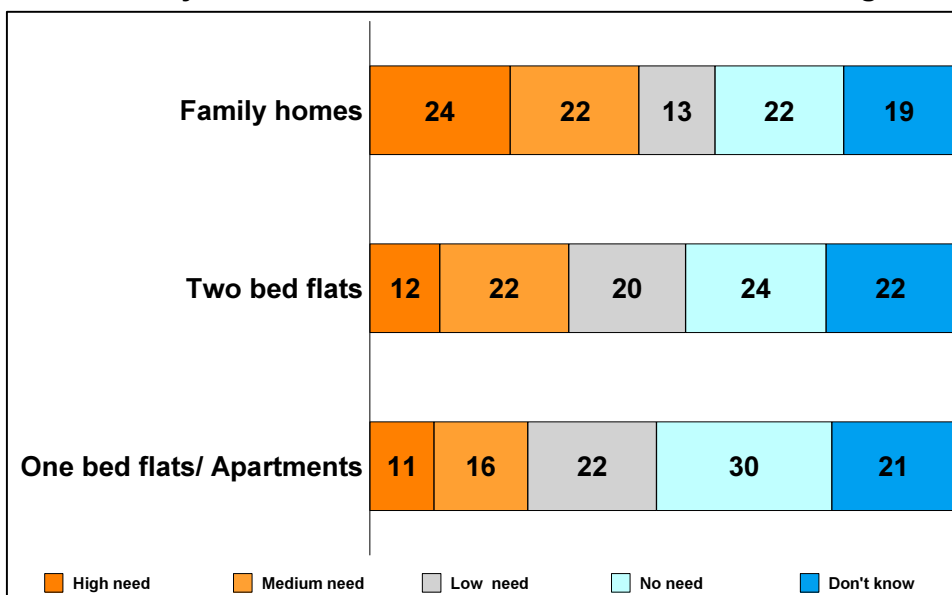
Base: All respondents (608~652)

apartments

Bromsgrove Town Centre

4.8   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.

4.9   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%).

4.10 Cheaper and a more flexible car parking charging regime was also a key issue for the budget jury. Full Council may wish to consider introducing some more flexible charges to reflect this concern. Members will recognise the public desire for big name shops and niche shops. The low percentage in favour of street entertainment may reflect that this is already a strength of the Council. Similarly, the low numbers supporting a change of road layout and improved public buildings may reflect that the public do not appreciate that these changes are a pre-cursor to a more radical improvement to the town centre. The town centre remains a high priority for potential revenue and capital expenditure, but until the preferred option is clearer, it is difficult to budget for it.

What improvements would you like to see in

Improvement	Percentage
Cheaper parking	46%
The introduction of some 'big name' shops	45%
More independent shops	35%
Fewer empty shop units	32%
Cleaner look and feel to the area	29%
Reduction in business rates for businesses	27%
Improved toilet facilities	19%
More parking	14%
Continental-style street markets	11%
Improved pedestrian areas	8%
Improvements to the towns buildings	5%
Improved road layout	5%
More cafes and coffee shops	4%
Street entertainment	2%
Other	7%

Base: All respondents (655)

4.11 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. The Artrix is a very nice venue and is underwritten by the Council (£120,000 per annum). The Council has recently established an SLA with the Artrix to improve these figures.

Transport

4.12 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.

4.13 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.

4.14 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. There is strong support for a budget bid in this area through the 2009/2010 cycle.

Would you be in favour of the Council spending money on a Community Transport Service?

Response	Percentage
Strongly in favour	27%
In favour	46%
No opinion	16%
Against	6%
Strongly against	2%
Don't know	3%
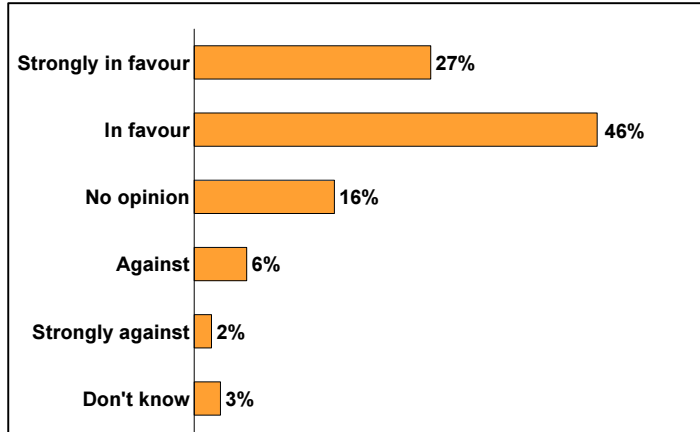
Base: All respondents (690)

4.15   The Council is now working closely with the County Council on transport issues. A District wide study of public transport is already underway, negotiations for the funding of a new Bromsgrove train station are at an advanced stage and an accessibility study for the town centre is about to be commissioned. Transport is not a priority for the Council as we are a minor funding partner, however, it is an important issue for the Council.

Health and Well Being

4.16   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.

4.17   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.

4.18   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%).

4.19   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.

4.20 Marketing and pricing policies for the proposed new charitable leisure trust could help address these issues.

What stops you from participating more in the sports/activities on offer in the District?

Lack of time	39%
Cost	34%
Not enough on offer for my age group	21%
Distance to travel	15%
Range of activities on offer	14%
Nothing	14%
Feel anxious about taking part	8%
Access to public transport	8%
Other	14%
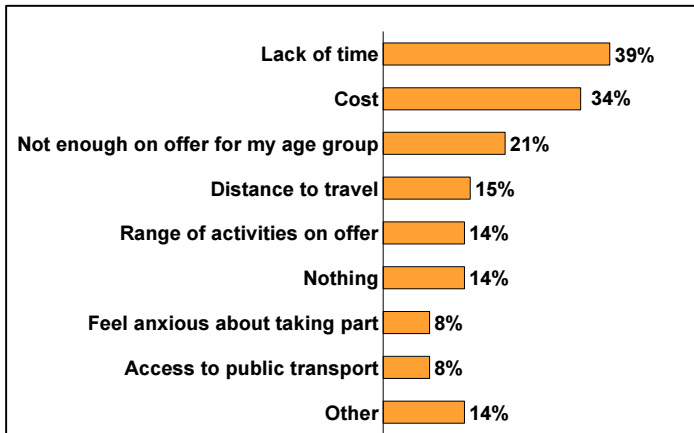
Base: All respondents (685)

Do you feel you have enough information to make a choice about the leisure activities etc in the District?

Yes	39%
No	61%
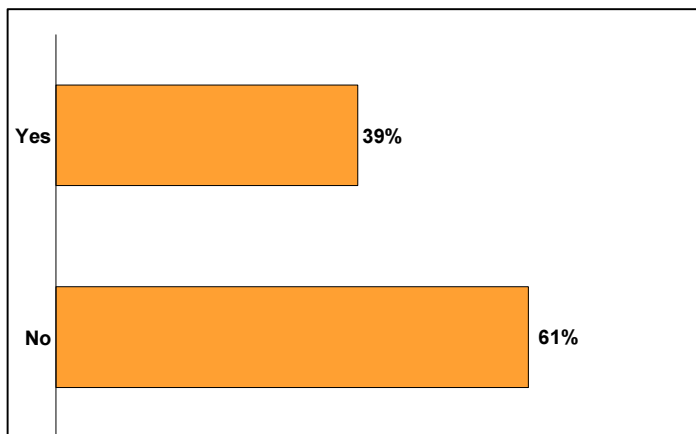
Base: All respondents (668)

Older People

4.21 The majority (61%) of respondents 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?

Helping older people to live in their homes longer	61%
Community transport services	35%
Benefits advice	27%
Meals on wheels and similar schemes	27%
Improved health services	24%
More social/arts events for older people	23%
Activities that bring old & young together	22%
Lifeline service	16%
Information on exercise	10%
Better access to leisure centres	7%
An older person's discussion forum	6%
Sports activities	4%
Other	4%
Nothing	2%

Base: All respondents (651)

4.22 Helping older people to live at home is a new LAA target, while community transport is a 2009/2010 budget bid.

<u>Children and Young People</u>

4.23 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 and 62% felt threatened by young people hanging around on streets.

4.24 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.

4.25 Youth provision is a County Council responsibility, while the expansion of the number of sports development officers through the last budget cycle means the Council is able to address this agenda.

Do you agree with the following about young people in the

	Agree strongly	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Disagree strongly	Don't know
Parents should take greater responsibility	61	34		3	1	
Cause less trouble if there was more to do	33	44	7	12	2	2
Feel threatened by young people	20	42	16	18	3	1
Generally law abiding and well mannered	5	52	23	16	3	2
Unfair media coverage	4	31	31	23	4	7
Unfairly blamed	2	33	25	29	6	6
Attitude is media influenced	2	19	22	43	13	2
Involved in Anti-Social Behaviour	4	13	19	49	14	1

Base: All respondents (600~660)

4.26 The Council has been investing in play facilities and through PPG17 is assessing the play areas for each ward. The Police are taking a strong line on underage drinking, actively confiscating alcohol and pouring it away in front of the underage drinker.

What are the main issues affecting young people?

Lack of things to do	57%
Alcohol	56%
Lack of strong role models	49%
Drugs	39%
Bullying	26%
Sedentary lifestyles	19%
Other people's attitudes	17%
Exam pressure	8%
Social exclusion	5%
Fear of crime	3%
Sexual health	3%
Eating disorders	2%
Depression	2%
Other	8%
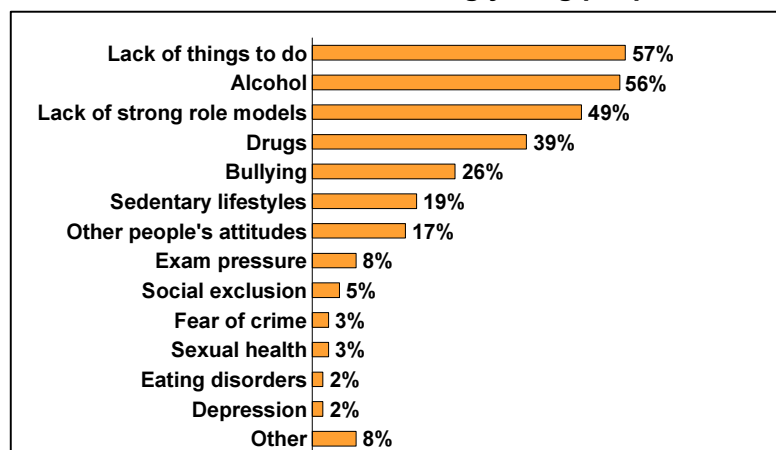
Base: All respondents (636)

What facilities and activities do you think the Council should invest in?

Facility/Activity	Percentage
Youth clubs	55%
Sports coaching and events	44%
Community based activities	36%
Outbound activities	29%
Greater access to leisure facilities	26%
After school clubs	26%
Play grounds and play activities	20%
Skateboard parks, BMX tracks, ramps, etc	15%
Holiday schemes	12%
Hang-out shelters for teenagers	10%
Play schemes	4%
Don't know	2%
Other	4%
None of the above	1%

Base: All respondents (659)

Be Safe and Feel Safe

4.27   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 fairy big problem), followed by underage drinking (38%) and vandalism (29%).

4.28   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. This contrasts with anecdotal evidence from PACT meetings that do have neighbourhood wardens. A report is currently being produced on giving wardens and CSOs the power to issue fixed penalty notices.

What do you think about community support officers and neighbourhood wardens?

	Percentage
They are no substitute for police officers	51%
Their powers are limited	50%
They act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour	39%
They do a good job	32%
They reassure me	23%
I don't think they have any powers	18%
They are in the wrong place at the wrong time	18%
Other	13%
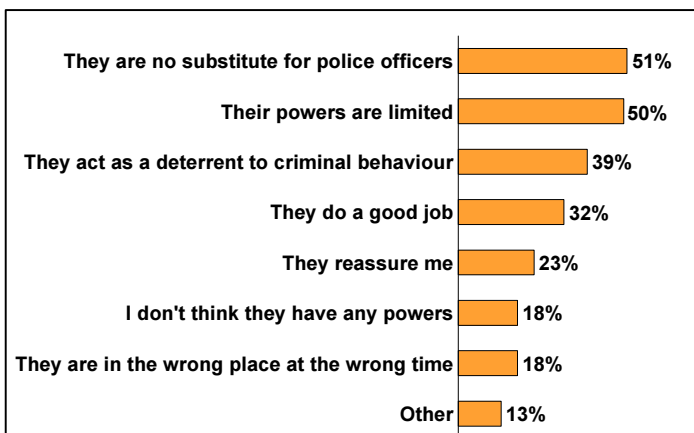
All respondents: (690)

4.29   Speeding motorists are tackled locally through PACT meetings.

How much of a problem are the following?

Category	A very big problem	A fairly big problem	Not a very big problem	Not a problem at all
Speedy/noisy motorists	21	33	36	10
Underage drinking	12	26	46	16
Vandalism	8	21	56	16
Fly-tipping	7	19	48	25
Drunk or rowdy behaviour	6	16	50	28
Graffiti	5	16	55	23
Drug use or drug dealing	7	14	42	37
Intimidation by young people	4	12	53	31
Fly-posting	2	10	50	38
Intimidation by adults	1	5	52	41
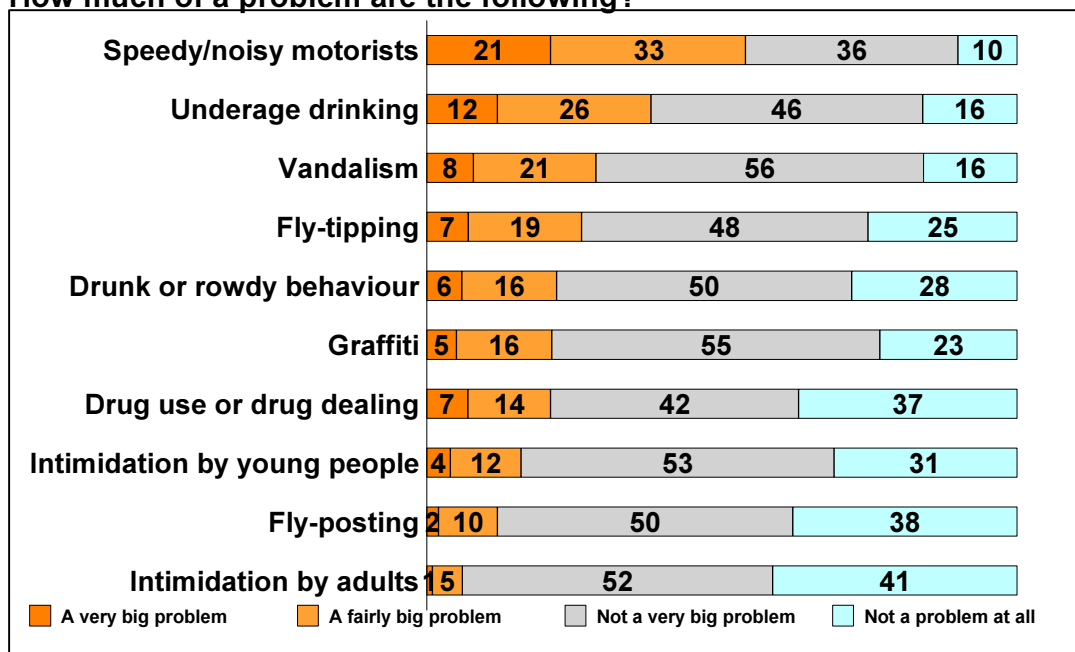
Base: All respondents (586~643)

<u>Your Local Area</u>

4.30   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.

4.31   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. Generally, these are positive results.

Budget Jury

4.32   Over the last two budget cycles the Council has undertaken budget focus groups to find out about residents' priorities for investment and disinvestment. These focus groups have proved rather mixed, as the public are not familiar enough with what the Council does or how little money we have. This year we have piloted a budget jury, which has enabled a group of randomly selected residents to come together for four evening sessions and mirror the same process that Leader's Group go

through. So far they have met twice to consider the Council's priorities and key deliverables. Their feedback is as follows:-

Ranking	Priority
1	Town Centre
2	Sense of Community / Car Parking (Joint)
3	Clean Streets

4.33   Interestingly, the jury generally felt the Council's customer service was good. No one voted for customer service to be a priority. This is consistent with staff, who have suggested that customer service being deleted as priority, but retained as a value of the Council.

4.34   Looking at each of these priorities in turn, an improved retail offer and Christmas lights were by far the most voted for key deliverables for the town centre priority. For Sense of Community, the jury voted surprisingly for the better advertisement and marketing of events as their top priority (they were surprised at the number of things the Council does and were not aware of them) followed by more activities for children and young people. Car parking was a particular concern, the jury looking for greater flexibility in the charging regime e.g. reduced or no charges are 6pm, reduced charges for residents etc. For clean streets the key concern for Bromsgrove residents was the state of the Spadesborne Brook.

4.35   When the jury first met, without considering the financial information, they wanted to suspend the charging for green waste; however, having received a presentation from the Head of Financial Services on the Council's budget, in particular, the budget headroom in any given year, this idea only received only 5 out of the 146 votes caste.

4.36   Further information can be found in **Addendum C.**

Staff Feedback

4.37   Last year, the speed at which the Council was moving and the lack of senior officer time meant that we were not able to consult staff in the way we would have liked on the Council's priorities. This year, we have been able to consult staff through staff forums and the managers' forum, at the inception of the process for thinking about next year's strategic priorities. Two middle managers, who have been through the County Council leadership development programme, presented staff and managers' views to Cabinet/CMT at their recent away day.

4.38   Staff have concluded that the priorities should be further reduced from five to three:-

- A thriving market town;

- Sense of community and well being; and

- Street scene and environment.

4.39 Staff felt that customer service does not now require further investment, but a focus on getting right the systems we now have in place e.g. CSC, e-mail, Spatial, Customer Feedback System and website. The Council has moved very fast over the last two years and a period of stability that would enable the many new systems to embed seems sensible. Staff wanted to retain customer first as a value. Staff also suggested dropping housing as a priority, because of our ability to influence this issue. They were particularly struck by the relatively small level of investment we can make to support this issue and if priorities are about driving investment, then housing should not be one.

4.40 Staff went on to look at the key deliverables for each proposed priority and suggested the following:-

1. A thriving market town;

   - Parking.
   - Transport.
   - Visitors experience/attractions.
   - Tourism.
   - Unique shopping experience.
   - Entertainment

2. Sense of community and well being; and

   - Entertainment and leisure
   - Healthier communities
   - Housing

   - Events
   - Safer communities

3. Street scene and environment.

   - Gateway approaches.
   - Recycling.
   - Waste Management.
   - Clean streets.
   - Sustainability.
   - Climate change.

Equalities and Diversity Conference

4.41　The Council now holds an annual Equality and Diversity Conference. This year's conference included workshops on the Council's future priorities. The issues identified were broadly consistent with the Council's existing priorities, but with some tweaks of emphasis. The following summarises the feedback:-

Housing

- Affordable housing for all sections of the population, including those with special needs;

- A concern about younger people moving away due to the lack of affordable housing; and

- The need for more properties which are shared ownership.

Town Centre

- A general view that the "physical appearance of the town centre is very poor", but that Bromsgrove is basically a nice town;

- The Conference, like residents in general, clearly want a better retail offer and improved town centre layout, particularly, access between ASDA/shopmobility and the rest of the town;

- Access to the town centre was a key issues, in particular, improved public transport, a better bus interchange and a high dependency unit (toilets);

- Proper kerbing that is suitable for shopmobility scooters has also been highlighted as an issue to correct in any future changes to the highways.

Transport

- Storage facilities for personal mobile vehicles whilst users use public transport.

- Community transport provision.

- Removing charges for blue badge holders.

- Extension of the shopmobility hours.

<u>Customer Service</u>

- The Hub was considered a "great service".

- Increased marketing and awareness of this service were considered key.

- The existence of the customer feedback system was not widely understood.

<u>Sense of Community</u>

- More group events.

<u>Clean Streets and Recycling</u>

- Street cleaners following on from refuse collection was identified as an improvement (the same issue has come out of the customer panel);

- Regular attention to litter hotspots.

- The desire for co-mingled recycling collections.

5.   Performance Position

Customer Panel Survey Results

5.1   Last year the Council undertook its first Customer Panel (satisfaction) survey. This year, it has repeated the survey in order to track satisfaction levels

5.2   Key findings of the satisfaction survey were:-

- Only 38% of respondents were satisfied with the way the Council runs things (a slight improvement on the 2007 result of 36%) and 72% disagreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things

Very satisfied	2%
Fairly satisfied	36%
Neither	23%
Fairly dissatisfied	26%
Very dissatisfied	13%
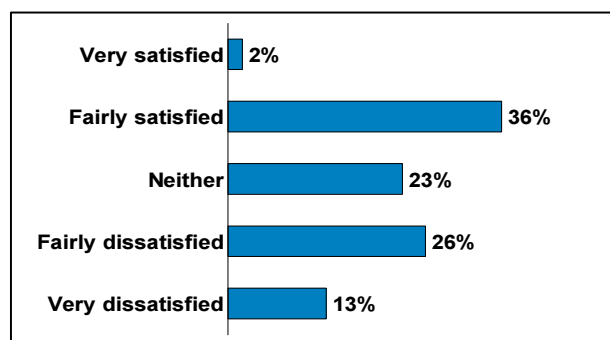
Base: All respondents (602)

- Only 40% of respondents knew who their local ward Councillor was
- 57% of respondents who received a local paper felt that it influenced their views on the Council to some extent (from slight to great)
- The residents of 'Urban 1' (the Bromsgrove local wards of Waseley, Beacon, Hillside, Catshill, Marlbrook, Linthurst, Norton, Sidemoor, St Johns, Whitford, Slideslow, Charford, Stoke Heath and Stoke Prior) were consistently more dissatisfied than residents from elsewhere in the district. Interestingly, the residents from these wards were also most likely to read a local newspaper.
- Residents were least satisfied with the Council's progress towards regenerating Bromsgrove Town Centre.
- Residents indicating they had no understanding of the choices that the Council has to make were more likely to say that they were very dissatisfied with the Council's performance in delivering on its priorities.
- 71% were satisfied with the refuse collection service and of those that were dissatisfied the main reasons were debris left behind in the street and collections not being frequent enough.
- 91% were against the decision to introduce a fee for green waste collections (but this needs to be contrasted with the budget jury feedback).

- Residents living in 'Urban 2' (Hollywood & Majors Green, Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath and Wythall South) were generally less positive about the Council's cultural and recreational offer than those living elsewhere although they were the most positive about the Bonfire Night event. This may indicate that the Council is not providing enough in their local areas
- 83% of respondents were satisfied with the ease of getting in contact with the Council (this is up from 54% in 2007), an excellent improvement.
- 84% of respondents felt that phonecalls should be answered within 35 seconds or less, which suggests faster answer times are required.
- 73% would recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend
- 62% remembered receiving Together Bromsgrove (up from 41% in 2007) and 62% of these found it useful
- 80% remembered receiving the Council tax leaflet and 55% found it useful
- Very few respondents use the Council's website (7% for once a month or more and about19% for once or twice a year)

5.3 This historical comparisons of satisfaction data are set out in Addendum D of this report. These contain some positive improvements ,but also a general drop in satisfaction with the recreational offer. This is an area we are expecting to score well in during our Comprehensive Performance Assessment. The timing of the survey i.e. before the summer events, may have been an issue and we intend to re-survey next year in September.

Council's Performance Outturn 2007/2008

5.3 The Council's performance against its BVPIs, which are critical to the forthcoming CPA have significantly improved. In 2005/2006 we may well have been the worst performing council in England with 74% of our indicators being worse than average. Our outturn for 2007/2008 shows this figure has improved to 40% or more positively 60% of our indicators are now above the All England median.

5.4 Although the BVPIs have now been replaced by NIs, we are continuing to report many of them through the corporate KPI set, so considering them into 2009/2012 remains important. Performance Management Board recently examined the Council's Annual Report and recommended to Cabinet that the following indicators remain an area of focus:-

- Sickness;
- Crime figures;
- Domestic violence;
- The Local Government Equality Standard;
- Affordable housing targets;
- Small business start ups;
- Percentage of recoverable housing benefit; and
- Disabled facilities grants, in particular, the capital underspend.

5.5 Whilst not an indicator, progress on the town centre, was also highlighted as an issue. Most of the above indicators are in the corporate KPI set, which will ensure a continued focus by Members and senior officers. Domestic violence and recoverable housing benefit are monitored at a Portfolio Holder/DMT level. None of the above need further investment to improve and are not priorities for budget investment (they are either already in receipt of planned investment through the MTFS e.g. affordable housing, CCTV, or have new processes that need to further embed e.g. sickness monitoring, improved DFG processes).

Summary of performance

Performance against targets

The following table and graph provides information on how the BVPIs are performing against targets set by the Council, where the data is available.

Performance against target	2006/07	2007/08
Performing above target	65%	77%
Performing below target within 10% of target	19%	16%
Performing below target by more than 10%.	16%	7%
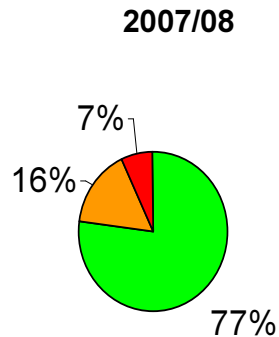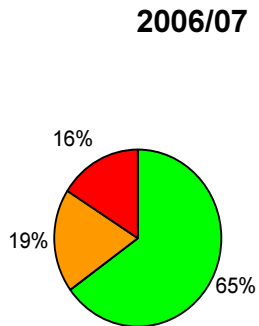
Performance Trends

The following table and graph provides information on how BVPIs are performing against previous year's performance, where comparable data is available.

Performance Trends	2006/07	2007/08
Performance Improving	59%	72%
Performance steady	13%	11%
Performance declining	28%	17%

2006/07

2007/08

2006/07

2007/08
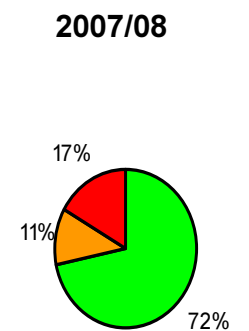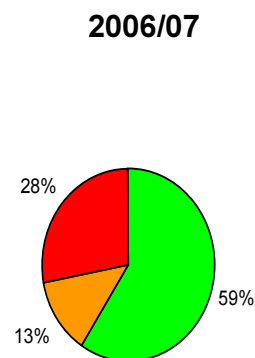
Performance Comparison

Annually performance figures are published detailing the performance of all Councils, which give quartile figures. As a Council we c
our performance against other District Councils. Quartile data is not available for all indicators, the following table, graph and summa
includes BVPIs for which data is provided by the Audit Commission.

Quartile	2006/07	2007/08
Performance in Top Quartile	20%	27%
Performance in 2nd Quartile	18%	33%
Performance in 3rd Quartile	36%	24%
Performance in 4th Quartile	26%	16%

2006/07   2007/08
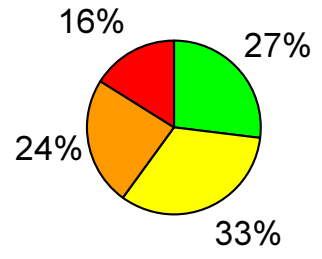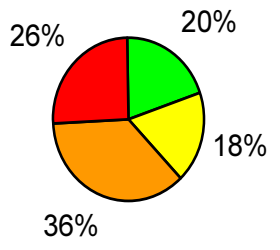
Audit Commission – Direction of Travel Report

5.6 The Council is still rated as poor; however, it received a positive direction of travel report in March 2008. The report identified the following areas of focus:-.

- continue to improve priority services such as refuse collection to provide a value for money service;

- embed VFM mechanisms so the Council can build and develop a value for money and efficiency culture;

- keep focussed and develop robust plans to deliver against its priorities in the Town Centre and Longbridge areas. This is challenging agenda and the Council needs to ensure it has assessed its current capacity and what it needs to deliver;

- boost capacity through considering the business case for shared services with partners and more innovative funding such as sponsorship;

- continue to manage the Spatial project closely;

- embed the changes that are helping to improve member capacity and decision making to ensure the Bromsgrove agenda can be delivered effectively; and

- respond positively to the findings of the ongoing re-inspection of the Council's housing services in February 2008.

6. Strategic Direction

Vision

6.1 The Council's Vision is:-

"Working together to build a district people are proud to live and work in through community leadership and excellent services"

6.2 This Vision is still considered appropriate.

Objectives

6.3 The current objectives are Regeneration, Improvement, Sense of Community and Well Being and Environment. 6.4 below identifies that there is no proposed priority for the improvement objective; however, this is not necessarily a reason to change them, as improvement activity clearly remains important, but is not a priority for investment through this budget round. The definitions of each objective are in Addendum A (these need updating).

Priorities

6.4 The following four priorities have been identified for the year ahead:-

Current Priority	Revised Priority	Comment	Report Ref.
Town Centre	A thriving market town.	Lowest satisfaction score on existing priorities.	4.8, 4.22, 5.2
Housing	Housing.	Key issue to future of District. Important to maintain as priority for message it sends to partners. Agreement that we would like to excel in this service area as a route to excellence for whole Council.	2.11, 3.8
Customer Service		Remains a value of the Council.	4.33, 4.39
Sense of Community - Community influence - Children and	Sense of Community	Need to bring people together through events, participation and feeling of safety in community.	2.7, 2.9, 2.15, 2.17, 3.2, 4.34

young people - Fear of crime			
Clean Streets and Recycling	Streetscene and Sustainability *	Climate change is becoming increasingly important. Street cleanliness remains important to resident's perception of the Council and area.	2.21, 3.3

* note:- working title. Plain English version required.

Key Deliverables

6.5　The budget bids and performance measures for each proposed priority will need to be "worked up" through the business planning process, budget process and production of the Council Plan 2009/2012 (March 2009 Cabinet). The outline key deliverables/budget bids for each priority are:-

Priority	Outline Performance Measures
A thriving market town.	• Increased strategic capacity for economic development of town centre to deliver area action plan (and bring benefits to wider District). • Car parking (more flexible charging regime). • Christmas lights. • Town centre redevelopment including preferred option, retail offer and accessibility (transport infrastructure, traffic management, road layout).
Housing	• Affordable housing (numbers, shared ownership and rental market). • Extra care/independent living for older people. • Private sector housing strategy.

	• Delivery a three star housing service.
Sense of Community	• Local Neighbourhood Partnerships/PACT • Neighbourhood wardens. • Activities for all ages (including intergenerational ones). • Community transport.
Streetscene and Sustainability	• Climate change strategy/officer. • Water course management. • Targeted street cleansing e.g. town centre, hot spots. • Town centre perception (gateways, extra cleaning, enforcement, Spadesborne Brook).

Enablers

6.6   The existing priorities are underpinned by a set of 13 enablers:-

- Value for money;

- Financial management

- Financial strategy

- Financial reporting

- Customer processes

- Improved governance

- Spatial business project

- Improved partnership working

- Planning

- Learning and development

- Human Resources modernisation

- Positive employee climate

- Performance culture

6.7   These are still considered appropriate at this outline stage, but will be subject to further consideration as we work through the service business plans and Council Plan.

Council Objective Definitions

Council Objective 1 - Regeneration

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Improving the physical fabric of the District, in particular, the town centre and Longbridge site.

- Improving the living environment of the vulnerable, in particular, eliminating fuel poverty, reducing the gap in serious accidental injury, and the indoor living environment in so far as it affects respiratory health (cold, damp, indoor pollution).

- Ensuring quality and choice in the local housing market across all tenures with the availability of sufficient decent, affordable and sustainable housing to meet the needs of all of the District's residents including those with special housing needs.

- Ensuring a strong, prosperous and competitive local economy which creates wealth in order to support the level of investment required to close the gap of inequality; contributes to the region's economy and enable people to improve their quality of life.

- Securing public and private investment in the above factors in order to lever in sufficient investment to tackle these issues.

- Reducing inequalities wherever these exist within our District.

- Improving household incomes through increasing economic activity by promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship and the take up of employment opportunities through improved access to jobs, employment growth (both public and private) and improving people's skills (both young people's and adults). Where people are genuinely unable to work ensuring that people take up the full benefits to which they are entitled.

Council Objective 2 - Improvement

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Providing an excellent customer experience including choice where possible.

- Maintaining a clear focus on our customers' priorities.

- Making the best use of new technologies to improve services whilst reducing costs.

- Driving out efficiency savings (3% cashable per annum) and making the best use of our assets in order to further invest in our priorities.

- Using systems theory and other management tools to help deliver these efficiency savings and working with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.

- Making appropriate use of management systems e.g. risk management, performance management and project management.

- Ensuring we recruit the right staff and retain and develop their skills.

- Achieving public confidence in our prudent financial management, service delivery and corporate governance through positive external audit and inspection feedback.

- Maintaining a level of council tax from which the public feel we make good use of the money we spend and reflects the quality of services they receive.

- Ensuring we seek out, listen, respect and represent the views of our diverse customers and communities.

- Communicating consistently to our customers and communities.

- Actively involve our customers and communities in the design and delivery of our policies, strategies, plans and services.

- Joining up and integrating services both within the Council and with our partners making the best use of new technologies.

- Tailoring the mix of customer service, community leadership and democratic engagement to fit the particular circumstances of each community.

- Ensuring people are able to access services whatever their circumstances.

Council Objective 3 - Sense of Community and Well Being

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Ensuring the District's residents have a good cultural "offer" which encourages a sense of community.

- Ensuring the District's residents have a good sports and physical activity "offer" which encourages a sense of community and healthy lifestyles.

- Providing effective community leadership.

- Promoting active citizen engagement in the democratic process.

- Ensuring the value and contribution of the diverse communities in our District is recognised and celebrated.

- Improving the social capital of our communities and developing sustainable and cohesive communities.

- Enabling people to enjoy a high quality independent life in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and when this is no longer possible ensuring more intensive care is available.

- Ensuring the Council fully embraces the "Every Child Matters" Agenda: that our children and young people are: healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well being and can access services.

- Reducing crime and the fear of crime within our communities.

- Ensuring access to lifelong learning opportunities for learning and creativity to help everyone achieve their potential for quality of life and prosperity.

- Improving people's lifestyle choices, including diet, smoking and physical activity.

Council Objective 4 - Environment

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Ensuring the District offers a quality living environment for everyone, with access to good facilities including clean and attractive open spaces.

- Sustaining this quality living environment for future generations.

- Waste collection, recycling and disposal that supports a reduction in landfill.

- Ensuring high levels of environmental cleanliness.

- Maintaining and fostering the District's biodiversity.

- Reducing carbon emissions, both as a Council and a District.

- Adapting to climate change, in particular, flood mitigation measures, flood risk identification and mitigation and improved drainage.

- Developing a modern transport infrastructure and services which encourage modal shift from car to public transport, walking or cycling.

- Maintaining our rural communities.

- Balancing our green belt whilst responding to the economic development needs of the District.

Addendum B

LAA Targets. See separate attachment.

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	**2009/10**	**2010/11**	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI 2 % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	Not available until Place survey is conducted in autumn 2008				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils West Mercia Constabulary Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium
	NI 17* Perceptions of anti-social behaviour Deferred	Target setting delayed until 2009				* Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary, District Councils VCS.
	NI 18* Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision – deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*West Mercia Probation, West Mercia Constabulary

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	**2009/10**	**2010/11**	
	*NI 20 Assault with Injury crime rate	7.12 (2007/08)	*7.12	*7.00	*6.91	*West Mercia Constabulary, Worcestershire County Council, District Councils
	NI 21* Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and the police - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*West Mercia Constabulary Worcestershire County Council District Councils, VCS
To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs	NI 39* Alcohol - harm related hospital admission rates	1245 per 100,000 population 2006/07	*+8% (1518)	*+3% (1564)	*-2% (1533)	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary
To promote economic growth and enable the economy in targeted sectors and locations	*NI 166 Average earning of employees in the area	Baseline period 93.4%		⟶	*94.3%	*Worcestershire County Council Chamber of Commerce H&W District Councils
	* NI 169 Non-principal roads where	11.02%	*9.8%	*8.9%	*8.4%	* Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	maintenance should be considered	(Based on 2007/08 outturn)				
	* NI 171 VAT registration rate - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils LSC, Chamber of Commerce Connexions
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills in education, employment and training	*NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	4.7% (This figure excludes college leavers)	08/09 *0%	09/10 4.6% (*0.1% reduction)	10/11 4.4% (*0.2% reduction)	*Worcestershire County Council, Connexions
	*NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits.	9.2% (May 2007)	*9.0%	*8.9%	*8.4%	* Worcestershire County Council, LSC, District Councils, Connexions, Job Centre Plus
	*NI 163 Working age population qualified to at least	69.9% for those qualified to at least level 2 in	*+2% (2006 base)	*+3% (2006 base)	*+4% (2006 base)	*LSC Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	Level 2 or higher	2006 Annual Population Survey				Business Link
To improve accessibility by addressing congestion and improving public transport	* NI175 access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	93%	*93%	*93%	*94%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils
To improve and support the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 8 Adult participation in sport	21.5% (2005/06)	⟶		*25.5%	*Sport England Worcestershire County Council District Councils
	*NI 54 Services for disabled children - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009	Not applicable			*Worcestershire County Council District Councils VCS, PCT
	*NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6	15.2% (2006/07)	*15.3%	*15.4%	*15.5%	*Worcestershire County Council, PCT, District Councils
	*NI 110 – Young	Target setting				*Worcestershire

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	people's participation in positive activities - deferred	deferred until 2009				County Council, District Councils, PCT, VCS, Diocese of Worcester
	*NI 112 Under 18 conception rate	35.1 (1998)	*29.4	*26.1	We have omitted the year 3 target in line with advice from DoH and DCSF. This issue will be revisited at the first LAA Refresh.	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council
	*NI 116 – Proportion of children in poverty	13.9%	*13.9%	*13.0%	*12.0%	*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils, Jobcentre Plus
	*NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	4.7% (This figure excludes college leavers)	08/09 *0%	09/10 4.6% (*0.1% reduction)	10/11 4.4% (*0.2% reduction)	*Worcestershire County Council, Connexions

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	*NI 121 Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75	69.15 per 100,000 population in 2006.	*54.9	*51.6	*48.6	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council
	*NI 123 16+ current smoking rate prevalence	681 per 100,000 population aged 16+ 3 year average 2004/07	*682 per 100,000	*682 per 100,000	*682 per 100,000	* PCT, Worcestershire County Council District Councils, West Mercia Constabulary
	*NI 133 Timeliness of Social Care Packages	85% (2007/08)	*87%	*89%	*92%	*Worcestershire County Council PCT
	*NI 142 Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	97.52%	*98.01%	*98.01%	*98.02%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils, West Mercia Probation Trust, PCT, VCS
	*NI 146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment -	Target setting deferred until annual refresh				*Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	deferred					
	*NI 150 Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment - deferred	Target setting deferred until annual refresh				*Worcestershire County Council PCT
To provide decent and affordable housing which meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	*NI 154 Net additional homes provided	1910	*1830	*1830	*1830	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council
	* NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	316(HSSA 06/07 outturn)	*345	*380	*500	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council
	*NI 187 Tackling Fuel Poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency	Target setting deferred until review stage				*District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	rating - deferred.					
To improve accessibility by addressing congestion and improving public transport	* NI175 access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	93%	*93%	*93%	*94%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils
To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	*NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area	7.2 tonnes per capita (2005)	*3.0% reduction compared with 2005 (2.4% from national measures, 0.6% from local measures)	*6.0% reduction compared with 2005 (4.7% from national measures, 1.3% from local measures)	*9.0% reduction compared with 2005 (7.1% from national measures, 1.9% from local measures)	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils
To improve flood mitigation measures and improve drainage	*NI 188 Adapting to climate change	Level 0	*All Districts & County to achieve at least level 1	*All Districts to achieve at least level 1 & County to achieve level 2	*All Districts to achieve at least level 2 & County to achieve level 3	*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils
To maximise the diversion of waste away	*NI 193 Municipal waste land filled	57%(2006-07)	*53%	*51%	*48%	*Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	**2009/10**	**2010/11**	
from landfill through prevention, reuse, recycling/composting and recovery						District councils
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)	2007/08 - 11% of transects across Worcestershire surveyed below acceptable standard as measured by NI195a	*10%	*9%	*8%	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council
Worcestershire Local Indicators						
To reduce the risk of flooding (both fluvial and pluvial) throughout the county.	All vulnerable areas identified, integrated flood risk management plans developed and implemented.

Improved flood- | 0 | 5% of total | 50% of total | 100% of total | *District Councils, Worcestershire County Council Environment Agency, Parish Councils, land owners, Severn |

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	warning system in place at parish level.					Trent Water
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	Children who have experienced bullying	35% (TellUs2 Survey) New wider Baseline from late 2008	Unchanged	Improvement of 1% (34%)	Improvement of 2% (33%)	*Worcestershire County Council West Mercia Constabulary District Councils, VCS
To reduce levels of inequality within the community	Successful new claims generated for pension credit, attendance allowance and disability living allowance (as a percentage of population of pensionable age)	To be set during year 1	Establish baseline	To be set during year 1	To be set during year 1	*Pension Service, Worcestershire County Council District Councils, CAB, Age Concern

Budget Jury Feedback – Priorities

Priority	Votes
Town Centre	10
Housing	4
Customer Service	0
Clean Streets (and recycling)	6
Sense of Community	8
Green Issues	1
Car Parking	8
District Wide Regeneration (the jury decided to merge this with sense of community)	3

Budget Jury Feedback – Key Deliverables

Priority – Clean Streets and Recycling

Key Deliverable	Votes
Spadesborne Brook	9
Town centre cleaning including weekends	4
Respect for town centre (enforcement)	5
Reduction in green waste charge	5
Total	23

Priority – Town Centre

Key Deliverable	Votes
Improved retail offer including Xmas lights	18
Attract investors and improve night time economy (less takeaways)	6
Street Markets	5
Change road layout of town centre	7
Total	36

Priority – Sense of Community

Key Deliverable	Votes
Neighbourhood wardens	3
Educating youth	6
More for kids to do	12
More for everyone to do (inter-generational activities)	9

Develop pride in community	5
Advertise and market events better	14
Total	49

Priority - Housing

Key Deliverable	Votes
Affordable housing	13
Homes for all ages – families, older people to live at home	7
Total	20

Priority – Car Parking

Key Deliverable	Votes
More flexible regime on charging times e.g. free evenings	6
Reduced charges for residents/workers in Bromsgrove	7
Improved public transport	5
Total	18

HISTORICAL BENCHMARKING

Satisfaction with the Council's performance against priorities				
	2008 **% Positive**	2007 % Positive	**2008** **%Negative**	2007 % Negative
Clean Streets and Recycling (2008) **Clean District (2007)**	**46**	30	**38**	36
Improving customer service	**32**	36	**21**	19
Sense of community	**27**	n/a	**38**	n/a
Increased availability of housing	**18**	27	**16**	17
Regenerating Bromsgrove town centre	**12**	18	**50**	39

Satisfaction with contacting the Council				
	2008 **% Positive**	2007 % Positive	**2008** **% Negative**	2007 % Negative
How easy it was to contact the Council	**83**	54	**10**	15

Would you recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend?		
	2008	2007
Yes	**73%**	72%
No	**11%**	28%
Don't know	**15%**	n/a

How often do you visit www.bromsgrove.gov.uk?	2008	2007
Daily	0%	0%
At least once a week	1%	1%
Once per week	0%	n/a
Once per fortnight	1%	1%
Once a month	5%	7%
Once every 6 months	10%	16%
Once a year	9%	8%
Less often	12%	8%
Never	63%	59%

What prompted you to use the Council's website?	2008	2007
Info. about the local area	52%	34%
Info. About the Council/services	51%	51%
To make a request for a service	18%	18%
To make a complaint/compliment	18%	10%
Nothing in particular	8%	n/a
To make an application	8%	6%
To pay a bill	8%	n/a
To chase progress on a query	6%	10%
To book facilities or events	3%	1%
To apply for grants or benefits	2%	1%

Can't remember	1%	n/a
Other	7%	20%

How useful did you find Together Bromsgrove?		
	2008	2007
Very useful	**11%**	4%
Useful	**50%**	37%
Neither	**24%**	19%
Not useful	**9%**	7%
Not at all useful	**6%**	2%
Did not read/receive	**n/a**	32%

How useful did you find the Council Tax Leaflet?		
	2008	2007
Very useful	**6%**	3%
Useful	**49%**	48%
Neither	**32%**	23%
Not useful	**8%**	4%
Not at all useful	**5%**	2%
Did not read/receive	**n/a**	20%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the refuse collection service in general?		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	**29%**	27%
Fairly satisfied	**42%**	41%
Neither	**5%**	6%
Fairly dissatisfied	**15%**	`18%
Very dissatisfied	**9%**	7%

Satisfaction with entertainment offered at Bromsgrove's Artrix Centre		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	12%	13%
Fairly satisfied	25%	33%
Neither	10%	47%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%	4%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
Don't know	47%	n/a

Satisfaction with cultural and recreational activities				
	2008 **% Positive**	2007 % Positive	**2008** **% Negative**	2007 % Negative
Parks and Open spaces	**67**	71	**10**	7
Libraries	**61**	69	**8**	6
Nature trails/country paths	**48**	60	**13**	8
Christmas Lights	**35**	49	**29**	9
Bandstand	**33**	36	**5**	3
Street Theatre	**30**	32	**7**	2
Cultural & rec. activities	**28**	n/a	**27**	n/a
Indoor sports facilities	**27**	34	**18**	12
Outdoor sports facilities	**22**	26	**17**	12
Bonfire Night	**22**	36	**24**	5
Range and Quality of Shops	**18**	n/a	**65**	n/a

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	**2%**	2%
Fairly satisfied	**36%**	34%
Neither	**23%**	36%
Fairly dissatisfied	**26%**	19%
Very dissatisfied	**13%**	9%

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

WORCESTERSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2008-2013

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

1.1   To present to Cabinet Members the refreshed Worcestershire Community Strategy 2008-2013. (Attached as Appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1   Cabinet are requested to:

    i)   note the progress to refresh the Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy;

    ii)   give formal approval to the refreshed Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy;

    iii)   note that Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet formally endorsed the Bromsgrove Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy at its meeting on 17th July;

    iv)   note the action being taken by the District Council to ensure both the District LSP and Council's strategies are aligned to the countywide Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement; and

    v)   note that this alignment is critical to the Council achieving a good rating under the new Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) inspection framework which starts in April 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1   The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is a statutory document that sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of a local area, typically for 10-20 years. It is the place where difficult, cross-cutting issues are tackled by a wide range of public, private and voluntary sector partners and is, in effect, the long-term business plan for Worcestershire. Both district and county councils have a duty to prepare a SCS in partnership with those organisations that make up the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).

3.2 The Worcestershire Partnership's ten year SCS "Partnership Towards Excellence" was published in 2003; however, it is recognised that both the policy context and the county's priorities have changed significantly in the last five years; therefore, the Worcestershire Partnership has been undertaking a refresh of the SCS. The refreshed SCS provides a robust 'story of place' – or evidence base – from which the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) has been developed, and to which the Bromsgrove Partnership and District Council are expected to contribute. (This contribution will be assessed under the new CAA framework starting in April 2009).

3.3 In accordance with the required timetable, the LAA final submission was made on 30th May 2008. Government Office West Midlands subsequently agreed the LAA without qualification, and submitted this to the Department for Communities & Local Government on 6th June 2008. The Worcestershire LAA comprises 32 National Indicator targets, 3 local indicator targets and 16 mandatory Department for Schools, Children & Families targets. All of the LAA priorities and targets are drawn from the refreshed SCS. (Attached as Appendix 2).

3.4 The refreshed SCS has been structured around six themes, which were developed as part of the first LAA:

- Communities that are safe and feel safe
- A better environment for today and tomorrow
- Economic success that is shared by all
- Improving health and well being
- Meeting the needs of children and young people
- Stronger Communities (including housing, culture, poverty and volunteering).

3.5 Bridging all of these themes are three cross-cutting themes, which will touch on the work of all of the partners and the theme groups in which they are engaged:

- Tackling climate change
- Community engagement
- Community cohesion.

3.6 These themes and cross-cutting themes – and the actions and benefits that are defined within them – have been drawn from a robust evidence base that includes:

- Citizens' Panel Questionnaire June 2007
  - 1,352 responses (68% response rate)
  - Also circulated to County and District Elected Members
- Best Value General Satisfaction Survey 2006
- Key facts about the County
- Input from the Partnership's Theme Groups
- Input from District LSPs and their SCS documents
- Elected Member Briefing (October 2007)

- Local and regional plans, policies and strategies
- Central Government Departments.

3.7 **Consultation**
The draft Worcestershire SCS was published for consultation and launched at the Worcestershire Assembly in November 2007. This was followed by a twelve-week consultation period.

3.8 Bromsgrove District Council submitted a robust response which was approved by Cabinet on 6th February 2008. The final document makes specific reference to Bromsgrove in respect of the Technology Park; ensuring a robust future economy by improving the skills of residents and creating good quality jobs; and developing proposals for improvements to railway stations, including Bromsgrove.

3.9 **Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy**
It is critical that the District Council aligns both the work of the Bromsgrove Partnership and the District Council to the targets set out in the new county-wide LAA. The Bromsgrove Partnership is currently updating its own SCS to reflect the new LAA and new National Indicators (NIs). This updated document will be taken to November's Full Council for approval. The Council has already updated its Council Plan and corporate KPIs to reflect the new NIs and will update them further through the next business cycle to reflect the new LAA.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 The Strategy links to all corporate objectives.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Working in partnership is a key risk which is identified in the Corporate Risk Register. The Council and the LSP will not be able to deliver its priorities without working in partnership with the Worcestershire Partnership. The Bromsgrove Partnership's Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010 (ratified by Cabinet in November 2007) has been considered by the Worcestershire Partnership during the drafting of the county Strategy, and the Bromsgrove Partnership will be delivering actions locally against the themes in the document.

8 CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Working in partnership delivers joined up outcomes, which is what customers want.

9. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Two specific exercises were undertaken as part of the redrafting process, in order to address the policy implications of the SCS on Worcestershire's rural communities and to ensure that the needs and aspirations of everybody in the county are taken into account. These were:

a) a rural proofing exercise; and
b) an Equality Impact Assessments.

10. **VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 By formally endorsing the strategy, it demonstrates that Bromsgrove District Council is addressing the needs of residents of the district and ensuring that future plans and resources are included in the relevant strategic plans.

11. **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

Procurement Issues - None
Personnel Issues – None
Governance/Performance Management The Strategy will be managed by the Worcestershire Partnership, but the Bromsgrove Partnership has its own performance management framework which will ensure appropriate information can be provided when it is requested.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act 1988 – The new LAA contains new measures on crime, with a stronger emphasis on perception.
Policy The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 illustrates that partnerships are central to building on achievements of recent years to embed them into lasting reform.
Environmental - None

12. **OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT**

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (Partnerships & Projects)	No
Executive Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes
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**

Appendix 1 Partnership Towards Excellence – The Sustainable Community Strategy for Worcestershire, Second Edition 2008-2012
Appendix 2 Worcestershire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011

15. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

No further background papers.

Contact officer

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WORCESTERSHIRE
SOURCE OF EXCELLENCE

Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement 2008 – 2011
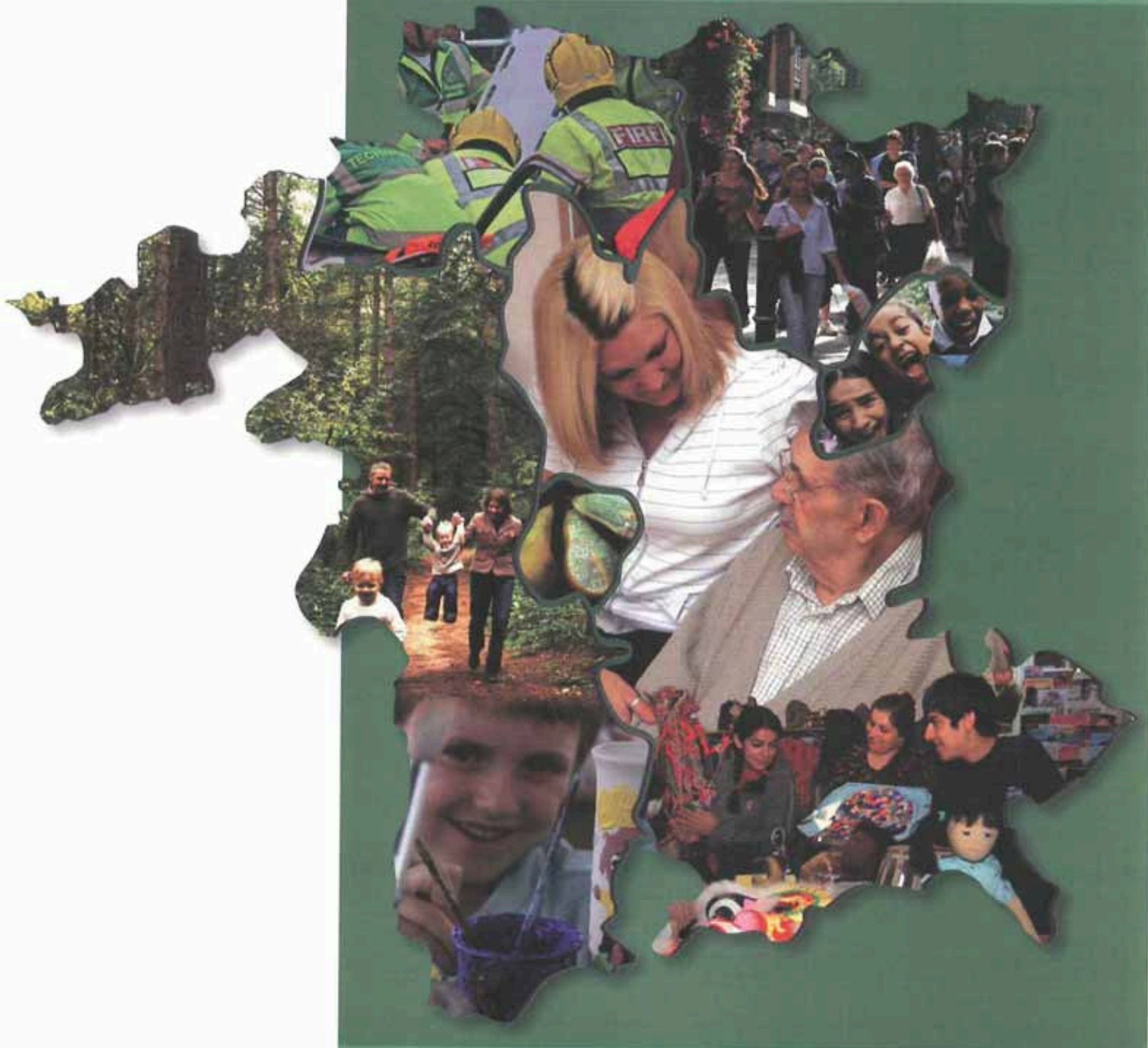
Delivering excellence in Worcestershire

The Worcestershire Story of Place

The county of Worcestershire is located in the heart of England. It comprises six districts: Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, Worcester City, Wychavon and Wyre Forest. There are 161 town and parish councils and parish meetings in the county, although the urban areas of Bromsgrove, Kidderminster, Redditch and Worcester are largely unparished.

Worcestershire has an outstanding and rich natural environment. It is home to spectacular features such as the Malvern Hills, and a large part of the county consists of a combination of fields, orchards, woodlands, meadow, ancient forests and rivers. By contrast, the county's remaining habitat is extremely fragmented.

Though agricultural land and open countryside dominate the landscape, 64% of the total population lives in urban areas. Worcestershire is adjacent to the major West Midlands conurbation and has generally good road access to and from the national transport network.

We have a significant rural population. Approximately one third of Worcestershire's residents live in rural areas (more than the entire population of neighbouring Herefordshire). Many of these residents experience relatively inaccessible services and a lack of facilities. Nearly 40% of areas in Worcestershire are ranked within the top 20% most deprived nationally in terms of geographical barriers to services. Eight areas (all of which are within rural parts of Wychavon and Malvern Hills) are in the top 1% nationally[1]. The physical characteristics and historic focus on villages provide the environment in which the LAA is set, and nurturing and developing this heritage is of importance in terms of quality of life.

Heritage

Worcestershire has a rich and much-visited heritage. With 17,943 historical assets countywide creating a rich archaeological history, and 26 museums visited by more than 300,000 people each year, the built and tangible history of Worcestershire creates its local distinctiveness and draws in visitors which in turn boost the economy in Worcestershire. Partnerships with English Heritage and National Trust add to the vibrancy of the heritage on offer, including Croome Court and Witley Court. The eleventh century cathedral in Worcester draws many visitors to the city, where the first and last battles of the Civil War were fought. Recent lottery grants have enabled the city's Commandery to be refurbished and will see 400 years of Worcestershire's county archives for Worcester City made accessible. Worcestershire has 900 years of archive records, which are visited by nearly 90,000 people each year. 25% of visitors come from outside the county and overseas.

Worcestershire's heritage includes its industries of glove making, porcelain, nail making, carpet weaving and agriculture. There is also a long sporting

[1] The English Indices of Deprivation, 2004

tradition in the county, with the county cricket ground in Worcester being one of the most beautiful and most-photographed grounds in the world. In addition Worcestershire can also boast top-graded rugby union, and many sports clubs. All of these organisations have strong links to the local community and draw people to the county for sporting events.

Environment

Worcestershire is one of the most environmentally diverse counties in Britain. It has a very varied geology and landform. The county encompasses the southern limit of many northern plant and animal species, and the northern limit of species found in the south, and is therefore exceptionally rich ecologically.

Some of Worcestershire's landscapes, such as the Malvern Hills, have been recognised nationally as being amongst the most notable in the country and have been designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, giving them added protection against inappropriate development. The situation is by no means ideal. The West Midlands retains virtually the lowest proportion of semi-natural habitat in England and landscape-scale conservation will be needed through improving the management of existing sites and creating buffers, links and corridors to provide the space to enable wildlife to adapt.

Worcestershire's geological sites provide a window in which to view the past, and to see how the Earth has responded to past climate change. Worcestershire is keen to have a full understanding of the natural processes that take place (such as river processes, weathering, erosion and mass movement, amongst other natural hazards) as a vital first step in creating a management plan to mitigate the effects of climate change. The loss of such sites is happening continually, with the recent destruction of a Site of Special Scientific Interest and Regionally Important Geological Sites. In a geodiversity audit of the county currently underway, up to 40% of all recorded sites in the county over the last 20-30 years have been lost.

Our landscape cannot be taken for granted. In recent months, Worcestershire has experienced significant flooding which has adversely impacted upon the county's residents and economy. This flooding was not just fluvial flooding (i.e. rivers bursting their banks) but also resulted in very heavy rainfall and many incidences of flash flooding.

This summer 2007 flooding was quite exceptional and overall approximately 6,000 buildings were affected and approximately 3,500 residential properties were severely flooded. The economic cost to the county was estimated at £6.4 million per week during the height of the flooding. Approximately 10% of the land area of Worcestershire is at risk of flooding (about 167km2). Worcestershire has the second highest percentage of total land at risk from flooding in the West Midlands.

There are over 9,146 properties at risk of flooding - approximately 4% of the total number of properties. 38% of the 9,146 properties are at significant risk; 30% are at moderate risk; 32% are at low risk. Worcestershire has the third

highest number of properties at 'high' risk in the West Midlands. At least part of the adverse impact of the exceptional summer floods seems to be the result of human intervention. Worcestershire will address flooding as one of its priorities. It will be important to balance the demand for new development with the need to protect the natural environment.

Climate change is a major issue in Worcestershire. The county produces significant amounts of greenhouse gases[2]. This was around 5.3 million tonnes of CO^2 in 2004; including around 1.6 million tonnes from the industrial and commercial sectors, 1.5 million tonnes from domestic energy use, and 2.0 million tonnes from road transport. The highest areas of emissions were in Wychavon and Bromsgrove. CO^2 emissions from domestic energy use and road transport are also higher than the West Midlands regional average.

CO^2 emissions from the industrial and commercial sectors (3.1 tonnes per capita) are lower than the WM regional average (3.8 tonnes per capita). CO^2 emissions from road transport (3.8 tonnes per capita) are higher than the West Midlands regional figure (2.7 tonnes per capita). Total CO^2 emissions per capita (9.7 tonnes per capita) are higher than the WM regional figure (9.1 tonnes per capita).

The Citizens' Panel survey showed that 60% of respondents agree that climate change is already having an impact on Worcestershire. 83% of respondents thought it important that action was taken in Worcestershire to tackle climate change. The more we do now to reduce emissions, the less extreme the expected impact.

In terms of water resources Severn Trent Water has a slight supply-demand deficit in a dry year. More significantly, customer security of water supplied by Severn Trent Water is ranked 20th out of 23 (where 23rd is poorest performance) in England and Wales[3].

Mitigating the effects of climate change is important for Worcestershire. This includes considering the way that people manage the environment to alleviate, rather than exacerbate such issues as flood risk and flooding.

Environment issues are not confined to climate change. Surveys show (Citizens' Panel 2007) that effective waste management arrangements by reducing landfill, street cleansing and dealing with graffiti are of concern to Worcestershire residents.

Housing

A suitable, decent and affordable home is central to ensuring that residents enjoy a good quality of life and contributes to the sustainability of our local communities. (Affordable decent housing is high on the list of what Worcestershire residents think is important, but which also needs improvement)[4]. Housing impacts across the spectrum and an inclusive,

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[2] Environment Agency 2007
[3] Ofwat, "Security of supply 2006-07"
[4] BVPI Satisfaction Survey, 2006

partnership approach is essential to achieve successful outcomes for Worcestershire residents

Increased delivery of affordable housing is a priority for Worcestershire, but there are a number of well-documented constraints that inhibit delivery. There is a lack of suitable sites that Housing Association partners can secure for new development, both in terms of the number of sites generally available, and the financial rules that Housing Associations are bound by, in terms of competing with the private sector.

The housing proposals in the RSS Phase 2 Revision suggest that Worcestershire will need to accommodate 36,600 additional dwellings between 2006 and 2026. The majority of this housing will be located in and around Worcester and Redditch as the county's two designated "Settlements of Significant Development". Development of this magnitude will require cross district council co-operation to ensure that the right infrastructure can be provided to release development sites. Residential development will need to be balanced by a suitable portfolio of employment land to provide an alternative to out of county commuting.

Worcestershire County Council is working with a range of partner organisations, including the South Housing Market Area Partnership to ensure that the full range of housing needs are addressed and funding bids to meet those needs are submitted to the Housing Corporation. This is a particular challenge in Redditch as a former new town. There are increased in-migration pressures from both the south as well as from the north, and the effect on house prices and longer distance commuting by higher paid employees is significant in South Worcestershire and Bromsgrove.

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

The result is that the lower paid and locally employed are being increasingly excluded from the market, with increasing numbers of households on waiting lists and in inadequate accommodation. Only one third of households currently in housing need are in their own accommodation, and only one quarter are single persons, which suggests an overall shortage of housing that cannot be overcome to any significant extent by increased sharing by younger persons. The longest waiting times for social rented accommodation is for two bedroom houses for young families and four bedroom houses for established families that have outgrown their present accommodation[5].

Rural housing needs are not being adequately met in Worcestershire. These areas require additional and appropriate affordable housing, as without it, the

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[5] Rupert Scott, Affordable Housing Consultant: Strategic Housing Market Assessment Report April 2007

provision of an equitable supply of affordable homes in rural communities is unlikely to be realised.

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

Culture

Access to culture, leisure and recreation has a key role to play in enhancing the quality of life in Worcestershire. Cultural and recreational activity have a positive impact on the way that people feel about the place that they live, as well as having personal benefits to individuals in terms of improved health, confidence, and providing opportunities for learning and self expression.

Most residents are very positive about Worcestershire. 80% think that they enjoy a good lifestyle. People in towns feel reasonably well catered for in all sorts of activities, and 74% of the population believe that the Worcestershire quality of life is good for families.

There is, however, much lower satisfaction with quality of life for those aged 16-34 and for households without cars. Some people in the rural areas have many fewer cultural opportunities, citing insufficient information, poor transport and high costs as deterring them from taking part in activities.

There is a lack of funding to pay for cultural and other development, and a shortage of activities aimed at young people and families. People recognise that a large amount of money is generated by culture, which helps to support the local economy, but they want to strike a balance between attracting visitors and keeping life enjoyable for residents.

Worcestershire must do more so that people can take part in arts, sports, heritage and countryside activities. The Citizens' Survey panel listed access to the countryside amongst the top three most important things about where they live and access to country parks, picnic sites and public footpaths was listed amongst the top three most important facilities in the county. The 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics offers Worcestershire cultural opportunities, and also in terms of improved health, business, volunteering and tourism.

Population change

The population of Worcestershire is expected to increase by about 38,000 (or 7%) by 2026 (Office National Statistics [ONS], 2004-based projections) to approximately 590,000. This compares with an estimated increase of about 10% in England over the same time period. As is the case nationally, the most significant population growth in Worcestershire will be in the older age groups.

The 65 and older population is expected to rise by 56% to 151,000, with the 85+ population almost doubling to just over 24,000. The Centre for Census and Survey Research (CCSR) at the University of Manchester has undertaken a study examining the potential future change in the population of the County with a Limiting Long-Term illness (LLTI).

Figure 1 - Projected Numbers of Older People in Worcestershire with Limiting Long-Term Illness (LLTI) by age, 2001-16
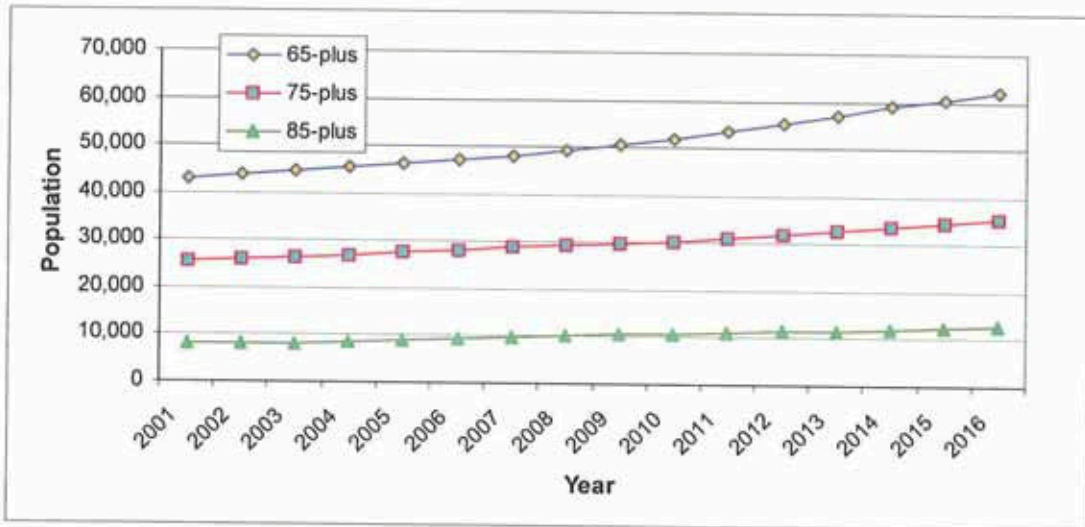
Source: CCSR, University of Manchester

Figure 1 shows that up to the year 2016 the number of people in the county aged 65 and over with a LLTI is projected to rise to around 67,800, an increase of around 45% on 2001 levels. For the 85 plus age group, the increase between 2001-2016 is set to rise at a rate of almost 60%, as this age group has the highest proportional population increase. Clearly ensuring that older people stay healthy with a good quality of life for as long as possible, and shaping services to maintain older people's independence whilst addressing often complex needs, is a key issue for the future.

Although 2001 census data shows the proportion of the Worcestershire population assessing themselves as "not in good health" or with a "LLTI" were below national averages, the rate of increase in LLTI in the county was much greater than the national comparison since 2001. Analysis by the Cathie Marsh Centre for Census and Social Research, commissioned by Worcestershire County Council, indicates that more than 160,000 people in Worcestershire may have some type of LLTI by 2026 if the same rate of growth continues. This will have major resource implications for public services.

About one sixth of people will suffer from a mental illness during their lifetime. There is much we can do to prevent mental health problems and to treat them early. We also need to ensure that people with mental health problems have access to high quality health services and opportunities for a full and productive life.

In comparison, the 0-19 population is expected to fall by 9% by 2026, whilst the corresponding projection for the 10-19 years age group predicts a 13% reduction. This could have implications for the number of school places needed and there is a need to develop strategies to retain school leavers in the county.

Whilst the total population of the county is projected to increase, the numbers of 0-19 year olds are forecast to decrease further by 2011 and at a rate greater than the national average (see figure 2). It is estimated that by 2016, there will be 7,300 fewer 0-19 year olds than there were in 2005. Some of this decline is a result of a projected decrease in birth rates as well as net migration of 18-19 year olds out of the county, primarily to access higher education.

Figure 2 – Population estimates for 0-19 year olds

Age Group	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
0-19	132,081	132,621	132,763	132,681	132,490	132,099
0-2	18,126	18,064	17,916	17,730	17,572	17,418
3-5	17,538	18,052	18,468	18,833	18,760	18,603
5-16	81,643	81,281	80,759	80,813	81,091	81,321
16-18	22,085	22,531	22,561	22,356	21,985	22,112

By 2011, Redditch will continue to have an increase of younger children and a decrease in older children, whilst Malvern Hills will have an increase in 15-19 year olds and a decrease in younger children. Worcester City and Wyre Forest will have a reduction in children across all age groups over the next three years. The projected decline in numbers of children and young people and the forecast changes in the age profile of children and young people in certain areas will be significant in planning service delivery over the next 3 years.
The implication of this is that resources for Early Years should be targeted towards Redditch, as this is where the population of young children is expected to grow. Resources for young people should be directed towards the Malvern area to meet the forecast growth in numbers of 15-19 year olds.

An increasing population will have a number of impacts on the county, creating additional demands for housing, along with increased pressures on existing infrastructure and public services. As an example, Worcester City is identified as a New Growth Point and as one of the County's "Settlements of Significant Development" in the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 2 Revision, submitted to the Minister in December 2007.

A recent Environment Agency water quality wastewater infrastructure study showed possible wastewater infrastructure issues for designated New Growth Points. This will probably require significant investment in infrastructure.

Deprivation

Worcestershire is not regarded as having very high levels of deprivation overall, but parts of the county do experience significant deprivation. Worcester City is in the top half of most deprived local authorities in terms of education and crime (2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation for England).

The English Indices of Deprivation 2004 rank Worcestershire as a whole as 116th out of the 149 counties and unitary areas in England (with 1 being the most deprived). However, when viewed at a national level, deprivation issues in Worcestershire can be missed. This is in part because areas of deprivation in Worcestershire are small geographically but in these areas it is highly concentrated.

Redditch is ranked as the most deprived district in the county, followed by Worcester. Worcestershire has 47 Super Output Areas that fall within the most deprived 30% in England. Eleven areas in Worcester are in the top 20% most deprived nationally and two areas are in the top 10%. These are Old Warndon and southwest Gorse Hill. These two areas experience multiple deprivation associated with income, employment, ill health, education, and crime, and are ranked as particularly deprived for education, being in the most deprived 1% of areas nationally.

Areas of challenge also cover Oldington & Foley Park, Horsefair, Broadwaters & Greenhill, Pickersleigh and Batchley, Greenlands and Central Redditch. Deprivation concerns are not solely linked to the urban parts of Worcestershire. Some rural parts of the county are within the top 1% most deprived areas in England in terms of geographical access to services. These include wards within Malvern Hills District Council at Lindridge, Teme Valley, the Tenbury area and Longdon.

Better fuel efficiency is crucial and needs to be provided both for new buildings and the current building stock where appropriate. Fuel poverty is also a major issue, with clear links to health. Addressing child and pensioner poverty is seen as a priority. Worcestershire recognises the benefits of promoting renewable energy, as this has economic and environmental benefits.

Ethnicity

Table 1 – Ethnic Population of Worcestershire

Ethnic Group	Percentage of Total population – Worcestershire (%)	Percentage of Total population – England (%)
White-British	95.5	87
White-Irish	0.8	1.3
Other White	1.3	2.7
Mixed	0.7	1.3
Indian	0.3	2.1
Pakistani	0.5	1.4
Bangladeshi	0.2	0.6

Other Asian	0.1	0.5
Black or Black British	0.3	2.3
Chinese	0.2	0.5
Other Ethnic Group	0.1	0.4

Source: 2001 census

Around 2.5% of the population of Worcestershire is made up of black and minority ethnic communities (non-white); this has increased from 1.5% in 1991. By 2011, it is estimated that black and minority ethnic communities will account for 4.3% of the population of Worcestershire (based on 2001 Census results and fertility, mortality and migration statistics for each ethnic group). The Asian community is currently the largest ethnic minority community in Worcestershire, making up 1.1% of the population. The Pakistani population accounts for 0.5 per cent of the county's total population. The percentage of BME groups is significantly lower than the regional and national averages.

In recent years there has been significant international migration into Worcestershire, particularly from the A8 European Union Accession countries. Since 2002/03, a total of 12,000 new resident migrants have been registered for National Insurance (Department for Work and Pensions). The largest numbers are in Wychavon, Worcester and Redditch. Over the last 12 months (2006/07), more than half of the migrants have been from Poland.

Migrant workers are bringing proven and welcome economic benefits to the county and we will aim to maximise the use of this skilled migrant labour. By contrast, this also has to be considered in terms of how these groups can become successfully integrated, both within our indigenous communities and in the workforce.

Six areas in Worcestershire are in the top 10% most deprived areas in England for income deprivation affecting children[6]. These include the Old Warndon and South-West Gorse Hill areas in Worcester City, the Rifle Range and Horsefair areas in Kidderminster, Batchley in Redditch and part of the Westlands estate in Droitwich. Children live in poverty because of their family situation. Tackling child poverty is inextricably linked with the need to address worklessness in the county.

Fourteen areas in Worcestershire are within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally for income deprivation affecting older people, with 11 of these areas in the borough of Redditch. Pensioners are also at increased risk of having debt related problems because of low income. In the future, Worcestershire may face greater levels of pensioner poverty as more people earning below national average earnings find it difficult to contribute to pension schemes. Combined with an ageing population in the county, this presents a real challenge for Worcestershire to ensure that pension, council tax and housing benefits are taken up where there is entitlement. We must also ensure that grants such as the Social Fund, Warm Front or Disabled Facilities Grants are accessible to those who need them.

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[6] Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004

Community Safety

Worcestershire is a comparatively low crime area and the Worcestershire Partnership is committed to maintaining and seeking to improve this positive situation. It is however accepted that, given an increasing population and a projected rise in the number of households in the county over the next few years (contributed to by the implications of the Regional Spatial Strategy), very significant further reductions are unlikely.

The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships within Worcestershire have achieved significant reductions in British Crime Survey (BCS) Comparator crimes. At 31st March 2007, Worcestershire had seen a 24% reduction since the 2003/2004 baselines were set. Within the BCS crime set, theft of a vehicle has decreased by 34 percent since 2003/04. Theft from a motor vehicle has seen a reduction of 24% and criminal damage 16%.

By contrast, recent data (2005/06 compared with 2006/07) indicated a 22% increase in robberies, although the volume of robberies in Worcestershire is low compared to other similar areas. During the same period common assault increased by 15.2%, however this increase is mainly due to amendments to Home Office Crime Recording Rules, which apply to all police forces and is not, therefore, confined to Worcestershire. Over the same period racially aggravated offences fell by more than 11% and there have been similar levels of reduction in assault with injury, acquisitive crime and sexual offences.

Worcestershire had approximately 2,000 young offenders aged under 18 committing offences in 2006/07. A reward element outcome in the first Worcestershire LAA up to March 2009 related to reducing the re-offending rate of this age group and increasing the take-up of employment and training.

Drug offences increased by nearly 13% in 2007/8. While this is itself a reflection of increased levels of police activity targeting drug dealers during that year, it does indicate an underlying problem with illegal drug use in the county. It is, therefore, considered essential to maintain effective treatment services as these are a key to achieving progress in a number of areas, including crime and anti social behaviour, re-offending rates, health, domestic violence and social and educational exclusion.

The projected total number of problem drug users in effective treatment for 2008/09 is 1,362, an increase of 3% on the previous year. The minimum requirement for National PSA 25 is a further 1% increase and this is an area of challenge that the county would wish to develop.

The Adult Treatment Plan within Worcestershire for 2008/09 recognises the need to focus on improving rates of successful completions from treatment, and increasing new presentations to treatment[7]. We want to introduce new initiatives providing rapid access to methadone prescribing for the most vulnerable users and a harm reduction programme to ensure support for clients at risk of dropping out of structured treatment. Alcohol consumption

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[7] NDTMS - Worcestershire SMAT

has a significant impact on public perceptions of local safety and anti social behaviour, with alcohol misuse being identified as a significant concern for Worcestershire residents. Alcohol related crime and disorder has been raised as a concern by community safety partnerships across the county and through Crime and Safety surveys.

Seventy five percent of respondents in north Worcestershire, and 64% in south Worcestershire, identified underage drinking as a problem in their area. Sixty percent in north Worcestershire and 50% in south Worcestershire stated that drunken disorder is a problem, and 57% in north Worcestershire and 48% in south Worcestershire think that alcohol related violence is a problem[8]. This is seen by the public to arise as a result of the night time economy, leading to violence in public places, domestic abuse, and youth related drinking leading to anti-social behaviour and criminal damage.

Worcestershire has significant problems around underage drinking and under 18 year old alcohol related hospital admissions (particularly in Redditch, with 128 per 100,000 population and Bromsgrove at 69, both above the national average of 60)[9].

Services need to be focussed on provision of effective treatment, ensuring that whatever length of treatment journey the client undertakes, it should be care planned and the outcome positive.

Information on domestic abuse across Worcestershire is limited and inconsistent. This makes it difficult to know the full extent of the problem and to inform and plan the commissioning of services. Nationally, one in four females and an estimated one in six males will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lives[10]. On these levels we can estimate that 69,475 females and 46,317 males in Worcestershire will experience domestic abuse during their lives. Between April 2006 and March 2007 there were 2,456 offences of domestic abuse of which 785 (30%) were repeat offences[11]. This is an area where more work needs to be undertaken to ascertain the true levels, tackle the issues and reduce re-offending rates.

Among results from the last Citizens' Panel survey, the issue of "troublesome teenagers or children" was identified by 30% of respondents as being important. The Citizens' Panel and West Mercia's Crime and Safety Survey also identified that anti-social behaviour was an important issue for residents. In response to this we are looking to promote opportunities for inter-generational activities in order to address perceptions and stereotypes that younger and older people hold about each other.

Thirty nine percent of respondents stated that rubbish and litter were a problem in their local area and 26% stated that vandalism, graffiti and deliberate damage to be a problem[12]. More work is required by partner

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[8] 2007 West Mercia Crime and Safety Survey
[9] North West Public Health Observatory report 'Indications of Public Health in the English Regions' 2007
[10] Women's Aid
[11] Worcestershire Domestic Violence Unit
[12] 2006/2007 Best Value Satisfaction survey

agencies to re-assure the public and tackle all aspects of anti social behaviour.

Worcestershire is looking at the wider implications of actions with cross cutting themes. As an example, an increase in community safety technology, such as CCTV and better street lighting, will need to incorporate energy efficiency measures, to limit or avoid an increase in emissions.

Improving road safety is another cross cutting area, where a multi-agency approach can make a significant difference. Partner work in highway improvement, community safety education, prevention and enforcement has helped to see a reduction in the numbers of people killed in road traffic collisions in the county. There has been a fall from 43 recorded deaths in 2005-6 to 32 in 2006-7, although there has been a rise in the number of people seriously injured, from 242 in 2005-6 to 256 in 2006-7. This is still too high and partners will work to reduce this further.

Health

Worcestershire residents have generally good health and life expectancy is increasing. Nevertheless there are a number of health issues that need to be tackled. Worcestershire needs to improve health and well being overall, and close the gap between the health of the worst-off and best-off in Worcestershire, where there are marked variations. There is a need to encourage and facilitate healthier lifestyles, developing projects with a focus on the most disadvantaged areas of Worcestershire.

Currently, evidence suggests that one in four adults in the county is a smoker, and almost as many are obese. More than 15% of Year 6 pupils attending local authority schools were classified as obese in 2006 [13].

In recognising that population growth in Worcestershire will be in the older age groups, we will support the commissioning and redesign of integrated older adults' services including preventive services. Worcestershire is currently producing a Joint Strategic Needs Analysis for Health and Well-being for the County Council and the Primary Care Trust. Worcestershire has to do more to provide comprehensive information about health and healthy lifestyles in a variety of easily accessible formats.

Whilst Worcestershire is making progress in a number of areas, health inequalities appear to be worsening by some measures. This is the case in terms of reducing the relative gap in all cause all age mortality rates between the most and least deprived quintiles. Worcestershire is stepping up efforts to increase preventive services in disadvantaged areas, focusing on those with long term conditions. Nevertheless this will take some years, (beyond the life of a three year Local Area Agreement) to produce results.

Mental health problems are a key cause of health inequalities. People with more serious mental health problems suffer poor health not just because of

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[13] Department of Health 2006

their condition, but also because they find it difficult to access health and other public services. They need medical treatment, but they also need their broader health and social needs met in order to allow rehabilitation. Opportunities for employment are key to this - there is good evidence that people with mental health problems who gain, obtain and sustain employment have a much better chance of avoiding relapse and securing the best possible chances in life.

Within Worcestershire, approximately 42,000 adults are experiencing a common disorder, such as general anxiety and depression and 2,000 people will be suffering from a psychotic disorder including schizophrenia, manic bipolar and depressive disorders[14]. Mental health problems can also have a significant impact on the health and well being of other family members and carers.

Each year across Worcestershire there are approximately 700 hospital admissions for mental health problems, and about 25% of these are readmissions. Analysis of the former PCT areas shows South Worcestershire PCT accounted for 56% of total admissions with Bromsgrove and Redditch PCT and Wyre Forest PCT having 28% and 16% respectively. Just over 90% of all admissions were within the county services.

Evidence from the Mental Health Needs Assessment suggest that there are higher than expected admissions for patients admitted with mental health problems within Worcester City, Malvern Hills and to a lesser extent Wychavon.

A total of 26,000 new and follow up out-patient contacts with Consultant Psychiatrists took place in Worcestershire last year. A weighted population (i.e. ratio by population size) demonstrates that higher numbers of patients are seen by Consultant Psychiatrists in south Worcestershire. A greater number of non-consultant contacts are seen by psychological services in Wyre Forest.

On average, Worcestershire's mental health teams see around 350 new or re-referred patients each month. Approximately 3,300 patients are recorded on the community mental health team register at any one time. The caseload distribution ranges from 50 patients in Kidderminster to 680 in Bromsgrove. The workload is increasing.

In the north of the county, where greater needs and demands would be expected, there are fewer admissions and treatment activity, particularly in Redditch and Wyre Forest. Possible explanations for the apparent disparity between need and activity include variations in people's willingness to seek help, differences in the thresholds for admission amongst hospitals and the availability of alternatives.

People from Worcestershire's ethnic minority groups are more likely to be diagnosed as having a mental disorder. There is also evidence of a strong

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[14] Worcestershire Mental Health Partnerships Trust 2007

association between disability or long-term physical illness and mental disorders, particularly depression. This is of particular importance when considering the projected growth in the number of older people with a limiting long-term illness in the county over the next 10 years.

These challenges are not unique. "People with less education, with low income or belonging to manual social classes are more likely to suffer from mental disorders. Among older people those with supportive and extensive social networks tend to be less likely to suffer from mental disorders"[15]. The numbers of social care clients with mental health problems continues to climb each year.

Social Care Clients, 18-64, Worcestershire, 2004/05 - 2006/07

Client Type/Service User Group (RAP)	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07
Mental Health (total)	923	1,013	1,016

Mental health hospital admissions involve long and expensive lengths of stay.

Analysis of causes of hospital admissions by length of stay, Worcestershire, 2006/07

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[15] "Indications of health in the English Regions: Older People, Association of Public Health Observatories 2007.

Primary Diagnosis Description	Total Length of Stay for all Admissions*	Total Number of Admissions	Average Length of Stay (Days)
Fracture of femur		22,247 994	22.4
Other disorders of urinary system		12,985 1149	11.3
Cerebral infarction		12,415 467	26.6
Pneumonia, organism unspecified		11,800 1224	9.6
Schizophrenia	**7,611**	**138**	**55.2**
Vascular dementia		7,008 117	59.9
Other chronic obstructive pulmonary disease		6,848 855	8.0
Unspecified acute lower respiratory infection		6,520 894	7.3
Heart failure		6,323 587	10.8
Coxarthrosis [arthrosis of hip]		5,922 892	6.6
Acute myocardial infarction		5,818 953	6.1
Senility		5,632 296	19.0
Gonarthrosis [arthrosis of knee]		5,520 863	6.4
Depressive episode	**5,066**	**127**	**39.9**
Alzheimer's disease	**4,743**	**110**	**43.1**
Fracture of lower leg, including ankle		4,607 458	10.1
Cellulitis		4,566 561	8.1
Bipolar affective disorder	**4,315**	**97**	**44.5**
Problems related to care-provider dependency		4,165 124	33.6
Syncope and collapse		4,068 713	5.7
All other diagnosis codes		**292,641 58,863**	**5.0**
Grand Total		**440,820 70,482**	**6.3**

Albeit for people of all ages the table above illustrates that mental health conditions result in significant hospital stays in Worcestershire, and that the average length of stay for these conditions is well above the overall average, admissions related to mental health related conditions are more prevalent amongst the older population.

Dementia is a term for a range of progressive, terminal organic brain diseases. The prevalence of both early onset and late onset (aged over 65) dementia increases with age, doubling every five-year increase across the entire age range. An estimated 158 people in Worcestershire aged 30-64 have early onset dementia and 6,834 have late onset dementia. Dementia affects approximately one in 20 people aged 65 and one in five people aged 80 and over. Nationally it is estimated that the direct costs of dementia in people aged over 65 exceed the combined cost of stroke, cancer and heart disease. Prevalence is not expected to change in the next five years, although

the population increase alone is likely to account for an additional 974 people with dementia[16].

The management of people with long-term conditions is one of four key national priority areas[17]. Additionally demand in Worcestershire is increasing from the numbers of people with disabilities (mental and/or physical) who have improved life expectancy and/or who are developing age related conditions at an earlier age.

In December 2007 there were a total of just over 1,900 adults with a learning disability who are recorded on the combined caseload list of the Joint Learning Disability Service in Worcestershire. This equates to 4.46 people per 1,000 of the adult population. This compares with 1,704 adults recorded on GP-practice lists at the end of March 2007 as having a learning disability.

National estimates of prevalence of severe learning disabilities in the general adult population range from 0.28% to 0.5%[18]. For the adult population of Worcestershire this gives a range between 1,218 and 2,175 people. Valuing People estimates prevalence of mild/moderate learning disabilities as 25 per 1,000 population, which equates to about 11,000 people in Worcestershire.

The distribution of people with learning disabilities that receive services from the joint service is uneven across the county.

Number of adults with a learning disability by area

Area	Number of adults with a learning disability per 1000 population
Wyre Forest	4.86
Bromsgrove and Redditch	2.47
South Worcestershire	3.06

Source: Joint Commissioning Strategy 2005-2010

The numbers in Wyre Forest are influenced by the location of the Lea Castle centre, which indirectly also impacts upon the re-settlement of those in residential accommodation in that area. There is national evidence to suggest that the number of people with learning disabilities will increase. This is the result of several factors including both changes to the demographic profile of the population and the effects of reduced mortality among people with learning disabilities.

Within this increased number the service is likely to be working with increased numbers of young people with profound and multiple learning disabilities who are surviving into adulthood, and an increasing number of people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and challenging behaviour.

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[16] Worcestershire Mental Health Partnerships Trust 2006
[17] 'National Standards, Local Action' - Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework 2005/6 to 2007/8
[18] Harker report to the Valuing People Support Team 2007

Particularly important is the need for services for those young people who are moving into adulthood. The table below shows numbers of young people who moved through the transitions pathway to adult services or are predicted to do so in future years. Numbers are less certain the further into the future that is examined. This table also shows the type of service, either actually provided or that it is anticipated at this stage will be provided. The most notable aspect is the move away from use of residential/nursing placements.

Number of young people in transition to adulthood, Worcestershire

Year	Numbers	Residential/ Nursing placements	Domiciliary services	No services in place	
2006/07	31	12	11	8	A
2007/08	38	1	23	-	A
2008/09	61	0	57	-	P
2009/10	38	0	14	-	P
2010/11	43	0	19	-	P

A – Actual, P – Predicted Where actual services in place are given, information is based upon Framework-I as at December 2007.

Age span of people on social care learning disability caseload in Worcestershire, December 2007

Age Range (Years)	Proportion of Caseload (%)
18 - 19	2.82
20 - 29	20.58
30 - 39	19.45
40 - 49	21.49
50 - 59	18.89
60 - 69	12.61
70 - 79	3.45
80 - 89	0.63
90 +	0.07

Number of adults with Downs Syndrome in Worcestershire

Age Range	Numbers
18 - 19	18
20 - 29	55
30 - 39	65
40 - 49	70
50 - 59	46
60 - 69	9
70 - 79	1
Total	264

It can therefore be predicted that the service is going to have to manage an increase of approximately 30 people with Downs Syndrome and dementia within the next five years.

The overall number of adults with a learning disability in Worcestershire is not expected to increase significantly. However:

- There will be more people with PMLD surviving into adulthood and outliving their parents.
- There will be more people with a diagnosis of challenging behaviour and autism.
- There will be more people developing early onset dementia.
- There will be more young people entering the adult service whose carers will expect a specialist residential short breaks service.

Worcestershire needs to further improve the benefits of partnership working. Investment in one sector (for example drug treatment) can generate benefits in another (for example crime reduction) and encourage an integrated approach to improving health and well-being.

Another example of Worcestershire's LAA cross cutting approach is evidenced by the recognition of physical and mental benefits to be gained from access to the countryside. Issues such as tipping, contaminated land, air quality, and the quality of the environment generally will affect people's health

The VCS plays an important role in promoting health and well-being. As an example, they support a large number of carers in the county. Many are juggling employment with their unpaid caring responsibilities at home. National statistics from Carers UK reveals that one in eight workers are also carers, which is around six million people. In Worcestershire, there are over 57,000 people providing unpaid care[19]. This is 10.5% of the total population of Worcestershire. The top five wards in the county with the largest clusters of carers are Claines and Bedwardine in Worcester City, Headless Cross and Oakenshaw in Redditch and Broadwaters in Wyre Forest.

Children and Young People

Our vision is for Worcestershire to be the best place for children and young people to grow up. This will be achieved through the delivery of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) - a statutory, single and overarching plan for all services delivered to children, young people and their families.

Our CYPP will focus on the areas of life that most need improving and, consequently, the CYPP will be based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment – a comprehensive and accurate assessment of what life is currently like for children, young people and their families.

The original Worcestershire's CYPP – Making Life Better (2006-2009) had 12 priorities that are based around the five Every Child Matters outcome areas. Since the plan has been published, considerable progress has been made by all agencies in the Children and Young People's Partnership in improving outcomes for children, young people and their families in Worcestershire. The plan has been substantially revised for 2008-2011, with new priorities

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[19] 2001 census

identified. Particular emphasis has been placed on 'narrowing the gap', supporting families and making services accessible.

The tables below show the most recent information on performance at the Key Stages by schoolchildren in Worcestershire. These results (from 2007) indicate that achievement in Worcestershire is, in general, slightly above the average for the maintained sector in England.

Table 2 - Percentage of pupils achieving the expected levels at Key Stages 1, 2 3 and 4 in Worcestershire and England, 2007

Key Stage 1	Reading	Writing	Mathematics	Science
Worcestershire	85	83	91	91
England	84	80	90	89
Key Stage 2	**English**		**Mathematics**	**Science**
Worcestershire	80		75	88
England	80		77	88
Key Stage 3	**English**		**Mathematics**	**Science**
Worcestershire	76		77	75
England	73		77	72
Key Stage 4	**5+ A*-C @ GCSE**		**5+ A*-C @ GCSE inc maths and english**	
Worcestershire	61.5		47.7	
England	62.0		46.7	

Source: DfES, 2008

The positive overall figures for Worcestershire do not highlight individual areas of concern with regard to educational attainment. There are significant challenges being addressed in particular wards, such as Oldington and Foley Park in Wyre Forest, which is in the top 1% of deprived areas in England in terms of children and young people's education deprivation[20]. Although important, raising educational attainment is only part of meeting the needs of children and young people. Worcestershire also wishes to support children and young people to lead healthy lifestyles, to deal effectively with bullying and support those affected by it, and to ensure children and young people have things to do and enjoy their communities.

Leading a healthy lifestyle as a child / young person carries health benefits into adulthood. There has been a focus in recent years on promoting the importance of a healthy diet for children and young people. The number of overweight and obese children has risen steadily over the last 20 years. Nationally 13.4% of children aged 2 –10 were defined as obese[21]. Results for Worcestershire show 15.1% of children in Year 6 (i.e. age 11) are obese, and a further 15.1% are overweight.

The Citizens' Panel findings reinforced concern about this agenda, where education for parents and educating children about healthy eating and exercise were suggested as ways of increasing the life expectancy of children and young people in Worcestershire. In addition, young people in

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[20] The English Indices of Deprivation, 2004
[21] Department of Health, 2006

Worcestershire report above average smoking and alcohol consumption levels.

Although the overall number of teenage conceptions remains comparatively low, the rate of decline is behind the national target. These young women are less likely to achieve economic wellbeing for themselves or their children, which means their children get a poor start in life. Employment levels, deprivation and household income are important factors in determining the life chances and outcomes for children and young people, particularly in relation to their health, educational achievement and chances of being employed as adults.

The distribution of deprived super output areas and areas of low household income are important factors we consider when planning services, as children, young people and families living in deprived areas are likely to require a wider range of services and support.

The majority of female parents take responsibility for childcare and the proportion of working women within the population is therefore a useful indicator for childcare demand.

Bullying is a major national agenda, and was identified by the Children's Commissioner for England as the top agenda for young people[22]. This concern is reflected in Worcestershire, where young people report both an experience of, and concern about, bullying, which is above the national average.

In September 2005, University College Worcester was renamed the University of Worcester, after gaining full university status. It is the only Higher Education Institution in Herefordshire and Worcestershire, and is one of the fastest growing universities in the country. A new £120 million city centre campus is currently being developed, and represents a rare opportunity for the county to use this facility as one of the vehicles for retaining and attracting young people to Worcestershire.

Economy

Total employment levels in Worcestershire are projected to increase by 0.2% per annum during the period 2005-2010 and by 0.4% per annum for 2010-2015[23]. Forecasts suggest that between 2005-2010 there will be significant growth in the electricity, gas and water industry, whereas, agriculture will see a large decrease in employment.

In terms of occupation, between 2005-2010, there will be a forecast increase in personal, sales and customer service occupations as well as professional occupations. By contrast a decrease is expected in administrative, clerical and elementary occupations.

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[22] Bullying Today – Children's Commissioner Office, 2007
[23] Cambridge Econometrics, March 2007

The average residents based household income for Worcestershire is £34,737, which is over £4,000 more than the West Midlands average and £500 greater than the figure for England[24]. In 2006, people who lived in Worcestershire and worked full-time (either in or out of the county) earned £904 gross per annum more than the West Midlands average.

By contrast those who worked full-time in Worcestershire earned £1,698 gross per annum less than the West Midlands average. Census data also tells us over 69,000 people travelled out of the county to work, compared to almost 37,000 people who travelled into the county to work.

Almost 15% of Worcestershire's residential workforce is self-employed, an increase of 1.7% since 2001[25]. It is also estimated that 15.1% of the residential workforce are classed as home workers, over 3% higher than regional and national figures[26]. The vast majority of home workers use different places to work but use their home as a base.

Claimant count rates (unemployment) in Worcestershire remain consistently below those recorded regionally and nationally[27]. The long-term claimant count rate for Worcestershire in June 2007 also follows this trend. The average household income for each district within Worcestershire is shown below[28].

Average Household Income by District, 2007.

District	Mean Income (£)	Change from 2006 (%)
Bromsgrove	37,085	3.9
Malvern Hills	33,870	4.5
Redditch	34,799	4.9
Worcester City	34,034	4.8
Wychavon	35,853	4.4
Wyre Forest	32,629	4.8
Worcestershire	34,737	4.5
West Midlands	30,515	5.1
England	34,166	5.6

The employment rate between October 2005 and September 2006 was 79%, which is above the national average of 73%[29]. Unemployment in 2004 was 2.3%, which compares favourably to the West Midlands and the National average.

Between 2004 and 2005, there was a 2.4% decrease in the number of jobs in the county with changes in all industries[30]. Most significantly, manufacturing

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[24] Based on PayCheck CACI Household Income Model
[25] Annual Population Survey
[26] Labour Force Survey 2005
[27] ONS June 2007
[28] CACI, PayCheck 2007.
[29] ONS 2006
[30] Annual Business Inquiry 2004, 2005 DEFRA 2004,2005

has decreased by 13.6%, whereas, banking, finance and insurance jobs have increased by 8.8%.

More recently migrant workers have been attracted to Worcestershire, particularly to the seasonal and manufacturing work provided by the counties agricultural industries. Migrant workers across the West Midlands can be found in industries such as manufacturing, transport storage and communications, hotels and restaurants and agriculture. Businesses report that they are employing migrant workers to address labour shortages.

Agriculture takes up large numbers of migrant labour, making an important economic contribution to the county, but agriculture is also important for land management. A regional study[31] has evidenced the positive impacts on business performance from employing migrant workers – 47% reported a positive impact on business performance. The main disadvantage identified was a communication problem because of poor English.

The Regional Economic Strategy will have a major influence on economic development in Worcestershire, as it sets out where key regional investments will be required. In terms of business opportunities, our priorities will include technology led growth (as demonstrated by the work of companies in the Central Technology Belt), environmental technologies and the tourism economy. Tourism is important in a number of ways, including the jobs created by tourism and by the voice it gives Worcestershire further afield.

In terms of place, the development of key locations at Longbridge, Redditch, Worcester and Kidderminster will feature strongly in the County Economic Strategy. Investment in people will focus on addressing the major challenge or raising skills levels, involving links to worklessness and the demographic challenges of an older workforce. Though Worcestershire has relatively good rates of skills achievement overall, there are specific wards that are significantly below the national level of attainment, where considerable work will be required to ensure through delivering Skills for Life and NVQs level 2 and 3 that sustainable employment is achievable. This is critical for Worcestershire to maintain its position but if Worcestershire has aspirations of increasing its skilled workforce and employment, this area will need to be a priority.

A case can always be made for directing resources to areas of higher than average unemployment, but for Worcestershire addressing worklessness rather than unemployment is most important as it extends beyond the unemployed. It includes those who are economically inactive, that is, those who are of working age not in work, full time education or training, and not actively seeking work. Approximately 57,600[32] of Worcestershire's residents of working age are classified as economically inactive, which equates to 17.5% of the working age population. Reducing levels of worklessness is a real challenge for the county.

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[31] The Economic Impact of Migrant Workers in the West Midlands, IER, University of Warwick
[32] Job Centre Plus, Department for Work and Pensions 2007

There are also sound arguments for supporting regeneration initiatives such as the Bromsgrove town centre redevelopment. On the other hand there are a number of locations offering significant economic opportunities within the county. We need to include some strategic investment in identified locations of economic opportunity in order to maximise the potential benefits to Worcestershire as a whole.

In 2005 just under one sixth of establishments in Herefordshire and Worcestershire reported skill gaps in their workforce[33]. This suggests that nearly 7% of the total workforce has a skills gap, which is poorer than both the West Midlands region (4.8%) and England (5.9%). Of particular concern are gaps in technical and practical skills, customer handling skills, communication skills and team working skills, all of which were cited by more than 30% of employees in the survey.

Connexions data suggests that nearly 7% of 16-18 year olds in Worcestershire were not in education, employment or training (NEET), as at June 2006, with Redditch and Worcester having the highest levels. Relative to the national figure of 10.3 percent, Worcestershire compares quite well, but since 2005, the national figure has dropped whilst the county figure has increased. NEET individuals are known to be more prone to poor health, involvement in crime, and misuse of drugs and/or alcohol. It is estimated that the average new NEET individual will cost the taxpayer £97,000 during their lifetime – which means that the current numbers for Worcestershire NEET could cost approximately £140million. Redditch has been identified as having above the national average levels of residents with poor numeracy and literacy[34].

Transportation

Problems over transport congestion and poor public transport feature regularly in resident surveys, and are often highlighted by the business community as a constraint on growth in the county. Reducing traffic congestion in Stourport is a reward target in the existing Local Area Agreement.

Major economic growth such as that envisaged for Worcester City could exacerbate congestion problems unless this is addressed strategically. The Local Transport Plan proposes a range of measures to support this growth, including new park and ride sites and bus priority measures on Worcester City's main radial routes, as well as a strategic parkway site to the east of Worcester where the Birmingham/Bristol and Hereford/London railways intersect. Improvements to Worcester's peripheral roads, river crossings and junctions with the M5 motorway will also be required.

Substantial infrastructure funding is being sought from the Regional Funding Assessment, and round two of the New Growth Points programme. The recent success of the "Connect2" bid to the People's Lottery led by Sustrans means that the construction of a new foot and cycle bridge over the River

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[33] National Employer Skills Survey 2005,
[34] Basic Skills Agency 2007

Severn at Diglis Lock can now go ahead, which will to some extent improve sustainable transport access to the city centre from the west.

Major investment in transportation infrastructure must also be accompanied by a significant modal shift from private car use, as both will be necessary to accommodate strategic levels of growth in and around Worcester City as well as high technology employment developments along the Central Technology Belt.

Worcestershire has limited public transport accessibility and a lack of transport choice in rural areas. Although improving transport infrastructure at a strategic level is vital, this still needs to be balanced against the more rural transport and accessibility challenges.

Along with traffic congestion, public transport is high on the list of priorities for improvement in Worcestershire[35]. Poor take up of public transport is one of the main barriers to the shift from private cars, thus exacerbating the problems of congestion. This is of particular concern for residents in the more rural parts of the county, which without the availability of a vehicle find it difficult to access shops and services, the majority of which are located near the urban centres.

The Voluntary and Community Sector

Worcestershire has a rich tapestry of voluntary and community organisations. The VCS (or Third Sector), has a growing and important role and is engaged in developing and sustaining civil society and in delivering a raft of public and community level services. Recent research[36] has identified over 2700 voluntary and community organisations with an annual income of £365 million and assets worth in the region of £2.3 billion operating in Worcestershire.

The sector employs over 4,500 people and utilises in excess of 54,000 volunteers. It is increasingly recognised as having a cross cutting role in Worcestershire with a role in campaigning and voice. It plays a pioneering and culture changing role, as the sector's voice is heard more loudly. In terms of public services, there is increasing VCS delivery, focussed users. The VCS is an integral part of building strong and active communities with the sector's ability to reach out, engage and provide support and networks for people who find themselves isolated and alone, particularly in rural settings.

The VCS in Worcestershire is making a major contribution in social enterprise, contributing to a stronger economy and fairer society. This is critical to the successful economic and social regeneration of many communities, and in helping to deliver the vast majority of LAA outcomes across all our themes. The challenge for the county will be to assist in creating the right environment in which organisations are empowered and enabled to achieve these changes.

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[35] BVPI Satisfaction Survey 2006
[36] Valuing the Voluntary Sector in Herefordshire and Worcestershire – Sustain Consultancy 2007

The VCS in Worcestershire will make important contributions to achieving virtually every one of the new LAA priorities. The VCS already contributes to the delivery of key priority outcomes through the new Public Service Agreement (PSA) framework[37]. This focused on supporting the environment for a healthy VCS, enabling voice and campaigning, strengthening communities, transforming public services, and encouraging social enterprise. The new PSA aims to build more cohesive, empowered and active communities. Worcestershire recognises the critical role of the VCS in strengthening communities and welcomes the creation of a PSA indicator to measure a thriving third sector, focusing on levels of formal volunteering and the number of people employed by the sector. The VCS in Worcestershire is effectively a golden thread, which will run through the delivery of the new LAA.

Parish and Town Councils

Parish and town councils in Worcestershire form the first of the three tiers of local government in the county and play an important role in representing communities at the most local level. The 151 councils are made up of 1,350 seats and vary greatly in size, from Malvern Town Council with an electorate of 21,000 to Frankley Parish Council with an electorate of 95. 105 councils have an electorate of less than one thousand, and 66 have less than 500. There are also ten parish meetings, representing smaller communities.

Many of the councils are active in promoting the welfare of their community, and supporting the VCS. Seventy nine parish councils work with the County Council in its Lengthsman Scheme to improve local road maintenance and develop individual initiatives. Forty eight of the town and parish councils are members of the Parish Paths Partnership. Thirty eight councils have published a parish plan, documenting the aspirations of the community, and a further 36 had plans in development.

Community Cohesion

Worcestershire's vision and values highlight our commitment to build communities that enhance individuals' life opportunities, treat people with equality and value diversity and build strong cohesive communities and good community relations. We have adopted the definition of cohesive communities developed by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion: -

An integrated and cohesive community is one where:

- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country.
- There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn.
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment.

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[37] Office of the Third Sector review July 2007

- There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny.
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common.
- There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

The active involvement of communities of place or interest, in improving the quality of life is critical to achieving the best outcomes in civil renewal and neighbourhood regeneration. Community cohesion can help tackle both social exclusion and the deprivation faced by marginalised groups. The VCS in Worcestershire has a key role in promoting and developing this involvement.

In Worcestershire, as elsewhere, there may be as yet unquantified social impacts from the growth in the numbers of migrant workers. We asked the Citizens' Panel some specific questions about migrant workers. Forty five percent of respondents believe that migrant workers are beneficial to our economy, 23% of respondents do not think they are beneficial, 27% neither agreed nor disagreed. Although 68% of respondents agree that we should respect the rights of migrant workers, only 33% think that we should do more to learn about the culture of migrant workers but 31% disagreed with this.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that migrant workers may be displacing the Gypsy and Traveller communities from seasonal agricultural work. Established black and minority ethnic communities have also expressed concerns about competition for jobs, housing and resources from migrant workers. The longest-established minority community is the travelling community, with some local families having roots in Worcestershire for several hundred years. Worcestershire County Council's Gypsy and Travellers' Service estimate that there are about 5,000 gypsies and travellers in the county, although the majority of families and children are Gypsy.

Two and a half percent of Worcestershire's population is classified as Black or Minority Ethnic (BME). This is lower than the national figure of 8.8% and significantly lower than the West Midlands BME regional figure of 11.3 percent[38]. Perhaps, as a result, race relations is rated as the least important aspect of living in Worcestershire and the thing that residents would least likely prioritise as something that needs improvement, according to the BVPI Satisfaction Survey.

Ethnic minority groups tend to be concentrated in certain areas of the county. Redditch has the highest proportion of non-white residents, and Wychavon has the lowest. By ward, Central, Abbey, and Lodge Park in Redditch, and Cathedral ward in Worcester had the highest proportion of non-white populations in the county, primarily made up of Pakistani and Bangladeshi residents. In addition, Broadwaters ward in Wyre Forest has a significant

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[38] 2001 Census

Bangladeshi community, Chase ward in Malvern has a Chinese community, and a number of wards in Redditch, including Headless Cross and Greenlands have Black Caribbean communities.

Community Engagement

Better decisions are made, better services are provided and places are more likely to be improved and transformed when individuals and communities are given a real say and are active in shaping the places in which they live[39]. Community Engagement is our commitment to a two-way relationship with communities. Put simply, community engagement is the processes we use to involve people in the decisions that affect them. This includes formal consultations, citizens' panels, parish or community lead planning exercises or other mechanisms designed to involve communities in the planning, development and management of services and facilities.

The role of the VCS in promoting community engagement is particularly important in enabling individuals to participate actively in their own communities through for example providing opportunities for volunteering, community development work and through delivering flexible and user focussed services. The Worcestershire Compact ensures effective partnership working between the VCS and public agencies in the county. The VCS plays a role in reaching groups who may be marginalised or excluded from the sorts of activities described above for reasons of disability, age, ethnicity, language, gender or cultural barriers. Across the partnership there are examples of specific targeted work to seek and hear these voices. This work is important in developing cohesive communities.

Worcestershire's mix of urban and rural environments is both an asset and a potential challenge. There has been successful work in the county to address rural isolation and to enable access to housing, training, jobs and services for people in rural communities – but community cohesion issues in rural communities may need to be more fully explored, for example the impact of second home owners on rural communities and possible fragmentation between established communities and newcomers to these areas.

Worcestershire Priorities – Best Value Satisfaction Surveys

The results below are based on the combined responses to the County Council Best Value Satisfaction survey and the six district council Best Value Satisfaction Surveys, which were carried out in September and October 2006. In total, the results are based on 9,404 individual responses. The Best Value Satisfaction survey asked respondents to identify their priorities for improvement in their local area.

For residents in Worcestershire, activities for teenagers are the top priority for improvement, followed by road and pavement repairs, and the level of traffic congestion. It is interesting to note that reducing crime is no longer in the top three priorities for Worcestershire.

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[39] The Politics of Place, Leadership Centre for Local Government

The top two priorities have remained the same since the survey was last conducted in 2003/04, however, the third priority for improvement in 2003/04 was crime and is now traffic congestion. Figure 2 below shows the top priority for improvement by ward as identified by respondents[40].

Figure 2: What respondents to BVPI General Satisfaction Surveys said most need improving in their local area, 2006/07

What most needs improving in your local area?

Legend:
- Activities for teenagers
- Affordable decent housing
- Health Services
- Public transport
- Road and pavement repairs
- The level of crime
- The level of traffic congestion
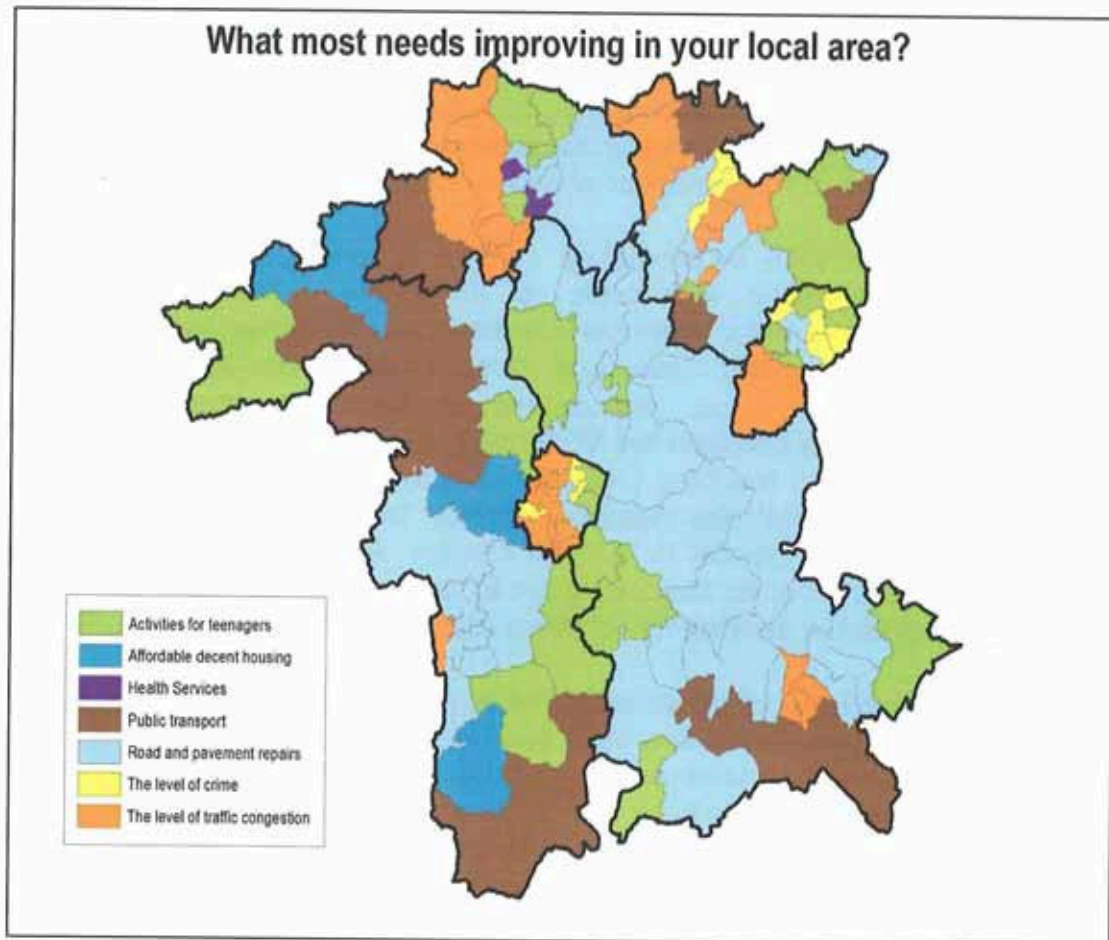
In terms of activities for teenagers, respondents in a mix of urban and rural areas have highlighted this as the number one priority for improvement.

Figure 3 shows how Worcestershire residents rate the aspects of Worcestershire that are important alongside what they think is a priority for improvement. This shows not only those issues that need improving, but also the ones that need to be maintained. For example, level of crime may not be thought of as needing as much improvement as it has in previous years, but it is still very important to Worcestershire residents' quality of life.

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[40] Best Value General Satisfaction Surveys, 2006/07, District Councils

Figure 3 – Scatter Plot of Priorities – Quality of Life versus What Needs Improving in 2006/07

Quality of Life - Ideal v's Needs Improving

Legend:
- ◆ Access to nature
- ■ Activities for teenagers
- ▲ Affordable decent housing
- × Clean streets
- ✕ Community activities
- ● Cultural facilities
- + Education provision
- − Facilities for young children
- − Health services
- ◆ Job prospects
- ■ The level of crime
- ▲ The level of pollution
- ■ The level of traffic congestion
- ■ Parks and open spaces
- ■ Public transport
- ■ Race relations
- − Road and pavement repairs
- − Shopping facilities
- ◆ Sports and leisure facilities
- ■ Wage levels & local cost of living

Source: Best Value General Satisfaction Surveys, 2006/07, District Councils

SWOT Analysis

In drawing together this Story of Place for Worcestershire, the Worcestershire Partnership undertook a SWOT analysis of the county. The results of this are shown in the table below. The Worcestershire Story of Place is a description of the county. This SWOT analysis represents a snapshot of Worcestershire's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. A more detailed description of the issues for the county can be found in the draft Worcestershire Sustainable Community Strategy. There will be further work to develop this through the analysis of comments received as part of the consultation process. To access the draft SCS, please visit the following website address:

http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/draft_6_-_final_version_for_consultation.pdf

Table 4 – WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP SWOT ANALYSIS

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
- Outstanding natural environment: surveys show that residents and visitors value the environment - Low crime rates - Strong and diverse base of voluntary and community sector services - Mix of urban and rural - Proximity to both Birmingham and remote rural England - Good access to and from national road network - Principle disease trends are downwards, general good health and increasing life expectancy - High quality primary care infrastructure - Excellent range of opportunities to maintain health and wellness - Skilled, stable workforce - Strong sense of place in local communities - Good track record of partnership working - Relatively low traffic congestion - Central Technology Belt - Historical 'honey pot' e.g. Worcester Cathedral, Malvern Priority, Worcester Commandery, etc. - Below average unemployment rates - Low levels of income deprivation and child poverty in some districts - Increasing visible commitment to partnership working - High level of grassroots community planning (Parish Plans) activity - People generally get on well together – good community cohesion - General quality of life is high - Commitment to inclusivity	- Inadequate infrastructure to serve the proposed RSS additional housing demands and demands on local resources and services - Deprivation and poverty challenges in specific geographical areas, including rural areas - High cost and poor provision of public transport and limited access in places, particularly rural areas - Higher than average house prices and lack of affordable housing - Relatively low-wage economy - Poor rail links - Lack of identifiable Worcestershire 'brand' - Poor retailing provision - Poor youth provision - Few opportunities for art and cultural events in some districts - Under-developed tourism profile - Varying strengths of partner organisations - Reputation of excellence can lead to complacency and lack of acceptance of need to continue to change and improve - Continuity of projects funded by fixed term/short term programmes put at risk/not sustainable

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
- Maximising the use of skilled migrant labour - Developing businesses in the Central Technology Belt, including Qinetiq - Higher education opportunities, including expansion of the University of Worcester - Opportunities to grow businesses and attract entrepreneurs - Improvement of rail links, e.g. opportunities presented by Norton Parkway - Develop innovative approaches to improving and sustaining services in the most rural localities - New LAA and funding changes - Mobilise community enterprise to deliver neighbourhood services - Use good partnership track record to create new and nimble public bodies planning and commissioning local services - Develop partnership working around the South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy - Development of Worcester's river frontage for leisure and tourism purposes - Tourism and heritage opportunities 2012 London Olympics - Creative delivery of services	- Emergence of new risks to health that are lifestyle-based, e.g. obesity and binge drinking - Increased risk of fluvial and localised flooding, which can also result in damaging landslips - Increasing elderly population - Inadequate transport infrastructure - Loss of intellectual resources as people leave the county - Danger of becoming a dormitory county between Birmingham and Bristol - Consequences of poor rail links to London - Under-funding of public services - Emergence of global/local public health risks from climate change and pandemic disease - Too much national influence - Lack of funding - Inability to stop doing things - Lack of starter units for new enterprises - Lack (or confusion) of availability of business start-up packages - Balancing new development with protecting the natural environment - Lack of active management of the natural environment (or its key sites). - Unrealistic Targets

Final version: 14 March 2008

Worcestershire submission template as set out in LAA Operational Guidance

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI 2 % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	Not available until Place survey is conducted in autumn 2008				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils West Mercia Constabulary Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium

The target will be a meaningful improvement in the level from the 2008 Places Survey Baseline to the 2010 Places survey final measure, subject to response rate.

We recognise that a low response rate would impact on the size of a statistically significant increase. Therefore, should the increase required by that standard exceed 5% using the 95% confidence level, we will adopt an interpretation of 'meaningful improvement' similar to that adopted for NI7 - for example, by reducing the confidence level required in calculating statistically significant improvements

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 8 Adult participation in sport	21.5% (2005/06)		→	*25.5%	*Sport England Worcestershire County Council District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	NI 17* Perceptions of anti-social behaviour Deferred	Target setting delayed until 2009				* Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary, District Councils VCS.

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	NI 18* Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision – deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*West Mercia Probation, West Mercia Constabulary

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI 20 Assault with Injury crime rate	7.12 (2007/08)	*7.12	*7.00	*6.91	*West Mercia Constabulary, Worcestershire County Council, District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	NI 21* Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and the police - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*West Mercia Constabulary Worcestershire County Council District Councils, VCS

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol	NI 39* Alcohol - harm related hospital admission rates	1245 per 100,000 population 2006/07	*+8% (1518)	*+3% (1564)	*-2% (1533)	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To ensure all children and young people have the opportunity to participate in positive activities	*NI 54 Services for disabled children - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009	Not applicable			*Worcestershire County Council District Councils VCS, PCT

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6	15.2% (2006/07)	*15.3%	*15.4%	*15.5%	*Worcestershire County Council, PCT, District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 110 – Young people's participation in positive activities - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils, PCT, VCS, Diocese of Worcester

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09 2008 data	09/10 2009 data	10/11 2010 data	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 112 Under 18 conception rate	35.1 (1998)	*29.4	*26.1	We have omitted the year 3 target in line with advice from DoH and DCSF. This issue will be revisited at the first LAA Refresh.	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To reduce levels of inequality within the community	*NI 116 – Proportion of children in poverty	13.9%	*13.9%	*13.0%	*12.0%	*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils, Jobcentre Plus

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills in education, employment and training	*NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	4.7% (This figure excludes college leavers)	08/09 *0%	09/10 4.6% (*0.1% reduction)	10/11 4.4% (*0.2% reduction)	*Worcestershire County Council, Connexions

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 121 Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75	69.15 per 100,000 population in 2006.	*54.9	*51.6	*48.6	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 123 16+ current smoking rate prevalence	681 per 100,000 population aged 16+ 3 year average 2004/07	*682 per 100,000	*682 per 100,000	*682 per 100,000	* PCT, Worcestershire County Council District Councils, West Mercia Constabulary

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 133 Timeliness of Social Care Packages	85% (2007/08)	*87%	*89%	*92%	*Worcestershire County Council PCT

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 142 Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	97.52%	*98.01%	*98.01%	*98.02%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils, West Mercia Probation Trust, PCT, VCS

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment - deferred	Target setting deferred until annual refresh				*Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 150 Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment - deferred	Target setting deferred until annual refresh				*Worcestershire County Council PCT

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills in education, employment and training	*NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits.	9.2% (May 2007)	*9.0%	*8.9%	*8.4%	* Worcestershire County Council, LSC, District Councils, Connexions, Job Centre Plus

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To provide decent and affordable housing which meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	*NI 154 Net additional homes provided	1910	*1830	*1830	*1830	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To provide decent and affordable housing which meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	* NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	316(HSSA 06/07 outturn)	*345	*380	*500	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills in education, employment and training	*NI 163 Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher	69.9% for those qualified to at least level 2 in 2006 Annual Population Survey	*+2% (2006 base)	*+3% (2006 base)	*+4% (2006 base)	*LSC Worcestershire County Council Business Link

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To promote economic growth and enable the economy in targeted sectors and locations	*NI 166 Average earning of employees in the area	Baseline period 93.4%		→	*94.3%	*Worcestershire County Council Chamber of Commerce H&W District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To improve accessibility by addressing congestion and improving public transport	* NI 169 Non-principal roads where maintenance should be considered	11.02% (Based on 2007/08 outturn)	*9.8%	*8.9%	*8.4%	* Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To promote economic growth and enable the economy in targeted sectors and locations	* NI 171 VAT registration rate - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils LSC, Chamber of Commerce Connexions

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To improve accessibility by addressing congestion and improving public transport	* NI175 access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	93%	*93%	*93%	*94%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	*NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area	7.2 tonnes per capita (2005)	*3.0% reduction compared with 2005 (2.4% from national measures, 0.6% from local measures)	*6.0% reduction compared with 2005 (4.7% from national measures, 1.3% from local measures)	*9.0% reduction compared with 2005 (7.1% from national measures, 1.9% from local measures)	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To provide decent and affordable housing which meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	*NI 187 Tackling Fuel Poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating - deferred.	Target setting deferred until review stage				*District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To improve flood mitigation measures and improve drainage	*NI 188 Adapting to climate change	Level 0	*All Districts & County to achieve at least level 1	*All Districts to achieve at least level 1 & County to achieve level 2	*All Districts to achieve at least level 2 & County to achieve level 3	*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To maximise the diversion of waste away from landfill through prevention, reuse, recycling/composting and recovery	*NI 193 Municipal waste land filled	57%(2006-07)	*53%	*51%	*48%	*Worcestershire County Council District councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)	2007/08 - 11% of transects across Worcestershire surveyed below acceptable standard as measured by NI195a	*10%	*9%	*8%	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire Local Indicators

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To reduce the risk of flooding (both fluvial and pluvial) throughout the county.	All vulnerable areas identified, integrated flood risk management plans developed and implemented. Improved flood-warning system in place at parish level.	0	5% of total	50% of total	100% of total	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council Environment Agency, Parish Councils, land owners, Severn Trent Water

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To support and improve the leading of healthy	Children who have experienced bullying	35% (TellUs2 Survey) New wider Baseline from late 2008	Unchanged	Improvement of 1% (34%)	Improvement of 2% (33%)	*Worcestershire County Council West Mercia Constabulary District Councils, VCS

lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people					

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with a *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed-up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
To reduce levels of inequality within the community	Successful new claims generated for pension credit, attendance allowance and disability living allowance (as a percentage of population of pensionable age)	To be set during year 1	Establish baseline	To be set during year 1	To be set during year 1	*Pension Service, Worcestershire County Council District Councils, CAB, Age Concern

DCSF STATUTORY TARGETS

Priority	Indicator (s) including those to be designated (shown with an *)	Baseline (source/year)	LAA Improvement Target including those to be designated (shown with an*) and including education and early years targets			Lead Partners[1]
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
Statutory education and early years targets	NI 72: Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with at least 6 in each of the scales in Personal Social and Emotional Development and Communication, Language Literacy (S)		*41			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 73: Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2 (Threshold) (S)		*79			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 74: Achievement at level 5 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 3 (Threshold) (S)		*78			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 75: Achievement of 5 or more A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths (Threshold) (S)		*55			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 83: Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3 (S)		*83			*Worcestershire County Council

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[1] Where partners are shown in *italics*, confirmation of their involvement is still awaited. An * next to the Partner indicates that they are the named lead.

Priority	Indicator (s) including those to be designated (shown with an *)	Baseline (source/year)	LAA Improvement Target including those to be designated (shown with an*) and including education and early years targets			Lead Partners[1]
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
	NI 87: Secondary school persistent absence rate (S)		*4.9			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 92: Narrowing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% in the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile and the rest (S)		*32.2			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 93: Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (S)		*89			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 94: Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 (S)		*84			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 95: Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 (S)		*38			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 96: Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 (S)		*67			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 97: Progression in 2 levels in English between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (S)		*66.3			*Worcestershire County Council

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Priority	Indicator (s) including those to be designated (shown with an *)	Baseline (source/year)	LAA Improvement Target including those to be designated (shown with an *) and including education and early years targets			Lead Partners[1]
			08/09	09/10	10/11	
	NI 98: Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 (S)		*34.3			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 99: Children in care reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2 (S)		*41			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 100: Children in care reaching level 4 in Maths at Key Stage 2 (S)		*41			*Worcestershire County Council
	NI 101: Children in care achieving 5 A*-C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (Including English and Maths) (S)		*15			*Worcestershire County Council

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PARTNERSHIP TOWARDS EXCELLENCE – THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE

SECOND EDITION 2008 – 2013

WORCESTERSHIRE
SOURCE OF EXCELLENCE

CONTENTS

SECTION ONE – THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR WORCESTERSHIRE

1.1. What is the Sustainable Community Strategy for Worcestershire?

This document is the second edition of 'Partnership Towards Excellence - A Community Strategy for Worcestershire 2003 – 2013'. The job of **the Sustainable Community Strategy[1]** is to set out the strategic vision for the future of Worcestershire and to focus on activity needed in the short term (2008 – 2013) to make it happen. The aim is to improve the quality of life of people who visit, work or live in the county.

Crime, health, housing, jobs, learning, the environment and transport are some of the big issues that this strategy is concerned with. It deals with these issues at a *countywide* **or wider regional or national level**. In developing the countywide strategy we are not starting from scratch – we are **'refreshing'** and updating the work that was set out in 'Partnership Towards Excellence' and building on a firm evidence base (see Worcestershire's Story of Place in Section 2 and Appendix 1) to identify the priorities that will need to be tackled over the next five years.

Each district and borough Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has produced a community strategy that will tackle issues at the more local neighbourhood or district level. The 151 town and parish councils, particularly those 48 (at October 2007) that have produced or are developing **parish plans**, are working at a more local level still. Parish plans will have influenced the **district community strategies**, which have in turn influenced this county strategy. The idea is that we identify where and how issues are best addressed, and encourage action and decision making at the most local level possible.

To emphasise this commonality of purpose each of the district sustainable community strategies in Worcestershire will address the following **six themes**:

- Communities that are safe and feel safe
- A better environment for today and tomorrow
- Economic success that is shared by all
- Improving health and well-being
- Meeting the needs of children and young people
- Stronger communities - covering a range of issues including housing, culture and volunteering

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[1] In this document when we say Community Strategy or strategy we mean this Sustainable Community Strategy for Worcestershire

Section 4 describes the **three cross-cutting themes** that underpin this Community Strategy. These are tackling the challenges of climate change, community engagement and promoting community cohesion. These themes act as a 'golden thread' that runs through the whole strategy.

Section 5 sets out the **29 priority outcomes** that we will tackle together in the years ahead

This document is intended for the many agencies, organisations and community groups that have been involved in shaping the strategy and who will deliver it. Its content has been influenced by responses to the **Draft Sustainable Community Strategy** that was produced in November 2007. You can find out more about this in Section 2.

An easy to read, **summary version** of this strategy will be produced and will be available through the Worcestershire Partnership website (www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk).

1.2. What is the Worcestershire Partnership?

This strategy has been produced by the **Worcestershire Partnership**. This is the countywide Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) for Worcestershire.

The Worcestershire Partnership brings together local government, public services such as health, learning providers, police and probation, voluntary and community organisations and local businesses within Worcestershire. The work of the partnership is based on a shared common purpose and good will. These agencies across the public, voluntary and private sectors have committed themselves to achieving the vision and priorities that this strategy sets out.

Partnership working is not new in Worcestershire – and over time it has matured and developed to ensure that it continues to be relevant in a changing environment. You can find out more about the membership of the Worcestershire Partnership and how it is organised at Appendix 2.

The **partnership's website** (www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk) is packed with information about the partnership and what it is doing – you can find out much more by using this link. If you do not have access to the web please get in touch via the contacts given at the end of this strategy.

1.3. What is the Worcestershire Partnership's vision for the county?

Vision

In order to shape the first edition of 'Partnership Towards Excellence - A Community Strategy for Worcestershire 2003 – 2013' the partnership developed a vision for Worcestershire and a set of values that underpin the partnership.

This **partnership's vision** is based on what Worcestershire residents told us was important to them in making our county a great place to visit, work or live in:

> A county with safe, cohesive, healthy and inclusive communities, a strong and diverse economy and a valued and cherished environment

Values

The Worcestershire Partnership has agreed the following values. These values apply to all partners in their work for the Worcestershire Partnership. The **values underpin** everything we do. In order to join the partnership individuals and groups must agree to subscribe to the values below.

In all our work and planning we will:

- Provide for the needs of all groups in society
- Treat people with equality and value diversity
- Build strong, cohesive communities and promote good community relations
- Remove barriers that prevent individuals from reaching their full potential
- Intervene early to prevent problems from becoming entrenched
- Take account of the needs of future generations
- Actively seek ways in which to improve people's health and well-being
- Work in partnership with others
- Provide high quality and value for money services
- Involve and listen to local people and local communities – these could be geographical communities or communities of interest
- Promote Worcestershire on the regional, national, European and international stage and maximise the opportunities available to the county

During the consultation process on the draft strategy a number of comments were made about the partnership's vision and values. This

refresh of the Community Strategy has not covered the vision and values; this will be done when the strategy is fundamentally reviewed in 2010/2011. Comments made during the consultation process will be taken forward to that review.

1.4. How is this second edition of the Community Strategy different?

Since Worcestershire's Community Strategy was published in 2003 there have been changes in the county and new issues have emerged that have resulted in shifts in priorities.

This version of the strategy, for example, has a specific theme on children and young people to reflect an increased emphasis in national policy. Furthermore, **Local Area Agreements (LAAs)** have been introduced that act as the delivery plan for the Community Strategy (see Section 12 for more information on LAAs). These developments make successful partnership working even more important for the future.

We have a strong base to build on. The partnership has had considerable success in tackling some of the problems that residents had highlighted in 2003. For example:

- Worcestershire's Greenspaces and Community Partnership was awarded £3.4 million from the Government's Liveability Fund to carry out projects to improve public open spaces throughout the county.
- £1.2 million has been drawn down from the Big Lottery Fund to provide high quality play opportunities for children and young people in the county – picking up on a consistent priority for our residents of improving activities for young people.
- Neighbourhood policing has been introduced across the county, bringing police officers closer to the communities that they serve.
- We have developed joint standards across the county for street cleaning, litter control and investigation and clearing of fly tipping, eliminating any 'postcode lottery' and responding to residents' concerns.
- Bus passenger numbers have increased and a new Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy is being established to deliver a sustainable passenger transport network for Worcestershire.
- We have produced a Green Directory that is full of tips and contacts to help us all live a greener lifestyle.
- We secured £725,000 from the £1 million available from Advantage West Midlands to implement our recovery plan from the flooding in Summer 2007.

- Destination Worcestershire is a partnership initiative that has brought together the tourism functions of the County Council and district councils and key partners from the private sector.
- The incidence of coronary heart disease and cancer has reduced
- There has been an upward trend of pupils aged 16 gaining five or more GCSE at grades A* - C. 2006/7 results showed that 57.6% achieved this result – the highest percentage ever.
- Young people aged between 13 and 16 in the Oldington and Foley Park Junior Pathfinder Project have drawn up a charter to change the way that their age group is perceived in the community and help agencies work more effectively with them. The charter has been distributed to the area's 2,000 households.
- A Compact has been agreed governing the relationship between public bodies and the Voluntary and Community Sector in the county. The Compact is supported by a number of codes of practice making clear the roles and responsibilities of all parties.

You can find out more about what we have achieved by visiting the website, reading the regular newsletters and briefings produced by the partnership or by looking at progress against the targets in the first Local Area Agreement (www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk)

In some areas, for example waste, health and raising educational achievement, we want to build on what has already been achieved and do more, so you will find that we continue our activity in these areas through this Community Strategy.

SECTION TWO - SHAPING THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

2.1. What information did we draw on to develop the Sustainable Community Strategy?

The diagram below illustrates the many sources of **information and evidence** that have shaped this strategy. These are further explained in this section and in Section 3.

Figure 1 – The information that shaped Worcestershire's Community Strategy

2.2. How did we find out Worcestershire residents' views?

The Worcestershire Partnership developed the six key themes of this Community Strategy in response to what **Worcestershire residents** have told us is important to them. There are a number of ways that we have found this out.

The Worcestershire wide **Citizens' Panel** is a sample of about 2,000 residents who are canvassed for their views on a wide range of issues.

The findings of the panel are weighted to ensure that they reflect Worcestershire's population. The partnership commissioned panel surveys in 2003 and 2005[2] following the Community Strategy themes in order to identify and track quality of life issues in the county. A further survey in June 2007 asked some key questions to support this SCS review[3]. You will find reference to the panel findings throughout this strategy.

In addition, this countywide strategy has built on the work of district LSPs and of the **district community strategies**. These have been produced using local knowledge and involvement, including that provided by the **parish planning process**. District LSPs identified the priorities they believed this countywide strategy should reflect and this has ensured that the local perspective has influenced this strategy.

The findings of the **Best Value General Satisfaction Survey 2006** showed that across the county residents identified the level of crime, health services, clean streets, education provision and affordable decent housing as being the most important factors in making the county a good place to live. Further information about residents' priorities for improvement can be found in the Story of Place (see Section 2.4).

2.3. How did we find out Worcestershire Councillors' views?

Worcestershire has a total of **285 councillors** across the County Council and six district councils in the county (there are 36 councillors who have been elected to both the County Council and a district council). In addition we have **1,350 parish and town councillors.**

Councillors have a specific **role in the partnership**. They provide a gateway to the community and the people who elected them and are in a strong position to both advocate community concerns and support communities to raise concerns and issues for themselves. Their role is unique as they are democratically elected **by** communities to work **for** communities.

Councillors have a community leadership role to support communities to develop a vision for their area and bring neighbours and partners together to improve the quality of life for local people. In some circumstances councillors may need to lead and challenge communities as well as support them, for example to counter prejudice and to build social inclusion. Community leadership is often delivered through partnership, particularly when it is tackling cross- cutting issues.

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[2] February 2003 and May 2005 Citizens Panel Surveys
[3] June 2007 Citizens Panel survey, a total of 1352 responses received representing a response rate of 68%

The Worcestershire Partnership has specifically acknowledged councillors' community leadership roles. All council leaders have a seat on the **Worcestershire Partnership Board** and parish and town councillors are represented through the County Association of Local Councils (the umbrella body for parish and town councils) on the Board and partnership task groups.

In addition, one county councillor and one district councillor sit on each of the theme groups[4]. The partnership has recently established **Member Reference Groups** (consisting of both county and district councillors) for each of the themes of this Community Strategy. This ensures that the work of the partnership is influenced by councillors' democratic mandate.

District councillors' priorities for this Community Strategy have been reflected through district LSPs. County councillors were asked for input and priorities through a briefing session and the formal consultation process. The Citizens' Panel survey was also sent to all district and county councillors to canvas views.

2.4. The Worcestershire Story of Place

Underpinning the development of the themes and priority outcomes included in this strategy and in our Local Area Agreement (see Section 12 for more information) we have developed a **strong evidence base**, which we have described as **Worcestershire's 'Story of Place'.**

The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out our vision and ambitions for Worcestershire, which is backed up by evidence and analysis contained within the Story of Place. The story draws on a wide range of **statistical information**, as well as **survey evidence**, to describe Worcestershire as it is now. It also highlights what the evidence tells us are some of the **strengths, opportunities, issues and threats** that face the county in the years ahead.

The Story of Place is a key piece of evidence underpinning our Community Strategy. It can be found at: http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/story_of_place_final_submission_march_2008-2.doc

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[4] Due to statutory requirements, some theme groups have different Member representation arrangements. For example, the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People (a County Councillor) sits as a member and two further councillors, one appointed by the Leader of Worcestershire County Council and one appointed by the Leaders Group of the District Councils sit as advisors on the Joint Commissioning Board (the commissioning body of the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership).

2.5. The relationship between the Community Strategy and other key plans and strategies

In November 2007 the Department for Communities and Local Government introduced **draft** Statutory Guidance on **'Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities'**. The draft guidance included reference to sustainable community strategies and their role in setting a long-term vision for the area based on local needs, and setting key priorities that can be achieved in the medium term. The community strategy is described as the overarching plan for the area, but it must have regard to other regional and sub regional plans, statutory plans and local and neighbourhood plans. Although the guidance was still in draft when this Community Strategy was approved we have had regard to key plans and strategies for the county.

Through the work of the **thematic groups** and through the **district sustainable community strategies** we have had regard to: -

- 36 National plans, strategies and documents
- 16 Regional plans, strategies and documents
- 5 Sub Regional plans, strategies and documents
- 67 Worcestershire plans, strategies and documents and
- 15 District and local plans, strategies and documents

You can see the full list at Appendix 1.

We have also addressed the requirement in the guidance to make the links between **spatial plans and community strategies** in Section 3 of this strategy, although in two tier areas this is often more appropriately done at district level.

2.6. Consultation on the draft Sustainable Community Strategy

In November 2007 a **draft Sustainable Community Strategy** (http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/draft_6_-_final_version_for_consultation.pdf) was published for consultation.

There were a number of ways that individuals and organisations could comment on the draft in order to contribute to the development of this Community Strategy.

- **Workshops** to discuss each of this Community Strategy's themes were held at the Worcestershire Assembly that took place in November 2007. In total, over **200 people** attended the workshops.
- **Written / emailed comments** were requested on the draft strategy, including replies to specific consultation questions found throughout the draft document. In total **eight** individuals **and 40** groups responded in writing or by email to the consultation.
- A consultation forum was set up on the partnership's **website.** The forum covered seven topics. **Fifteen posts** were logged on the forum and the most popular topic was read by **315 people.**

Every consultation comment submitted was carefully considered by the Worcestershire Partnership thematic groups or the Partnership Management Group.

You can find a **summary of the comments** that we received, and the **partnership's response** on our website
http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk

You can see that the partnership has made a number of changes to the draft in this final version of the Community Strategy as a direct result of consultation comments.

2.7. 'Rural Proofing' the draft Community Strategy

As part of the consultation process, the strategy was **'rural proofed'** by a group of officers from the County Council, district councils and the Rural Community Council. The group used a method recommended by the former Countryside Agency to ensure that the needs and aspirations of all of Worcestershire's communities – both urban and rural – have been fully considered.

2.8 Assessing the impact on all of Worcestershire's communities of the draft Community Strategy

An Equality Impact Assessment has also been undertaken, using a toolkit specifically developed for LSPs by the former Commission for Racial Equality (West Midlands Hub) and Race Equality West Midlands. This takes into account the impact of the priority outcomes on **everyone** living and working in Worcestershire, regardless of their age, disability, gender, race, colour, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, sexual orientation or other difference.

The full results of both of these exercises can be found on the partnership website at http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk and have informed the drafting of the strategy, including its thematic content.

SECTION THREE - THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND SPATIAL AND GEOGRAPHIC PLANS

3.1. Spatial Planning in Worcestershire

This Community Strategy is about the **vision for the future** of Worcestershire, covering the big issues over the next years, and inevitably these will have a **spatial dimension**. If, for example, we are making plans for our economy, considering future employment and the need to bring targeted industries to the county, expanding the university in Worcester or considering the need for new and affordable housing, health facilities and schools then all these facilities need to be located somewhere – and that is the role of spatial planning.

In the future the Government proposes to merge regional spatial strategies and economic strategies – creating even greater synergies between these linked issues. This will be achieved by the introduction of a single integrated strategy for the region which will help to join up planning and economic policy and will establish closer links between strategies and implementation on the ground.

3.1.1. The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

In 2004 the Government introduced a new planning system to manage how developments take place across the country. **Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS)** set out the broad spatial planning strategy for how a region should look in 10 to 15 years time. Worcestershire is part of the West Midlands region.

The West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) published the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy in June 2004. It is the statutory framework for development within the West Midlands region until 2021 and beyond. It identifies the key challenges facing the region and sets out policies designed to tackle them. It is also taking a closer look at some issues in more detail – this is being approached in three phases.

Phase One focused on the Black Country. **Phase Two** directly impacts on Worcestershire and focuses on a range of issues including housing figures, employment land, transport and waste, as well as which towns and cities should be the focus for development.

Following an initial consultation on strategic options in January 2007, in January 2008 the WMRA submitted its preferred option for the development of the region to 2026 to the Secretary of State. This presents a number of key issues for the county.

- **Level of housing growth**

The WMRA has identified a **preferred option** for the level of housing growth to be achieved in Worcestershire between 2006 and 2026 of 36,600 dwellings. This is to be focussed on Worcester and Redditch but with some provision across the whole of the county. There is considerable Government pressure to raise the region's housing targets even higher in order to fully meet demand and subsequent to the WMRA submitting its preferred option the Secretary of State established a further study to consider options for the region accommodating **additional housing growth**. The outcomes from this additional study will be considered alongside the Assembly's preferred option at an Examination in Public in Spring 2009.

The Worcestershire Partnership has emphasised that housing growth should meet the full range of needs of residents and the workforce, including social and affordable housing as well as executive housing. Of particular concern to the Worcestershire Partnership is the ability to provide appropriate social, community and transportation **infrastructure in advance** of strategic housing growth. A focus on housing numbers alone will lead to unsustainable patterns of development with attendant social and economic problems, for example poor access to jobs and services. There is a concern within Worcestershire that unsustainably high levels of growth are likely to damage Worcestershire's environment and lead to congested travel conditions, particularly if adequate priority is not given to public transport improvements.

- **Employment Land**

The RSS Preferred Option suggests that there is a need to identify a five year reservoir of 96 hectares of readily available **employment land** across the county with an indicative long-term supply of 288 hectares. Worcestershire Partnership has highlighted the need to ensure that the allocation of new employment land is directly related in size and location to the new housing allocations. We also want to ensure that a balanced portfolio of employment sites is available at district level to provide good quality jobs near to where people live and minimise the need for commuting. It is important that we attract employment in the growth clusters identified in the Regional Economic Strategy such as medical and environmental technologies. The Central Technology Belt stretching from Birmingham to Malvern will provide a focus for high technology industries.

- **Ensuring that growth is targeted appropriately**

The RSS Revision Preferred Option identifies **Worcester City** and **Redditch** as 'Settlements of Significant Development', with the majority of growth in the county to take place in and around

Worcester. The Worcestershire Partnership wishes to ensure that the focus on Worcester City is sustainable, as well ensuring that local growth needs and aspirations elsewhere in the county can also be met.

The Worcestershire Partnership submitted a formal response in January 2007 to the Phase Two RSS Revisions Strategic Options consultation. We will be responding again to the RSS Preferred Option before the closing date for responses in December 2008. We will then be providing a written submission to the Public Examination into the Revisions programmed for Spring 2009.

The **RSS Phase Three Revision** has now commenced and is considering critical rural services, recreational provision, regionally significant environmental issues, minerals and provision for Gypsy and Traveller sites.

We will continue to emphasise at every opportunity that Worcestershire's economic and social needs have to be met by **appropriate and sustainable levels of growth** in focussed geographical locations that enhance and not threaten the unique qualities of our towns and villages and the surrounding countryside. We will also stress that **climate change** is of major concern to us, the more so in the light of the exceptional severe flooding events experienced in Worcestershire in the summer of 2007.

The Worcestershire Partnership will act as one of the forums where these challenging and vital debates will take place, drawing on the vision and outcomes expressed in this strategy.

3.1.2. Spatial Planning at the county level

Worcestershire County Council has the responsibility for producing plans on issues that affect the whole county such as the **Minerals and Waste Development Framework.** This involves considering issues over how and where we should dispose of our waste in an environmentally friendly and sustainable way. This will be set out in the **Waste Core Strategy.** Updated guidance on minerals, particularly hard rock, will also be produced. The County Council will continue to use its powers under the Planning Acts to advise the West Midlands Regional Assembly on all strategic planning matters affecting the county. It will also provide research and policy advice in key areas such as natural resources and the historic built environment to support the district council's more detailed **Local Development Frameworks.**

3.1.3. Local Development Frameworks (LDF) – spatial planning at the district Level

The LDF is a portfolio of documents (**Local Development Documents** or LDDs) that outline the spatial planning strategy for the local area. District and borough councils prepare these documents. They set out at district level how land will be allocated for housing, employment, and open spaces, etc. Of particular importance in respect of the Community Strategy is the Core Strategy. The **Core Strategy** plays a key role in the delivery of both district and county community strategies by setting out its spatial aspects and providing a long-term spatial vision. The Core Strategy should express those parts of the community strategies that relate to the development and use of land and outline that council's strategy for delivering strategic development needs including how and where new homes, schools, offices, roads, bridges and other structures and facilities will be built.

The three district councils in south Worcestershire (Worcester City, Wychavon and Malvern Hills) are developing a Joint Core Strategy. The three northern district and borough councils – Wyre Forest, Bromsgrove and Redditch – are all in the process of developing their core strategies as individual authorities, although each of the councils recognise the need to work together to address issues that cross administrative boundaries.

3.1.4.   Statements of Community Involvement

A key component of both the Community Strategy and the spatial planning framework is community engagement and involvement. How this is achieved is set out in a **Statement of Community Involvement (SCI).** These describe how councils will engage communities in the preparation of their LDDs. The aim is to ensure that consultation begins at the earliest stage of document development so that communities are given the opportunity to participate and to make a difference to how their area develops.

In future years a partnership wide community engagement framework will be developed, which will cover the whole spectrum of public involvement. The partnership's approach to this is discussed further at Section 4.2.

3.2. Examples of the relationship between the Community Strategy and spatial plans

The table below demonstrates the sorts of spatial policies that will relate to the Community Strategy themes.

Table 1 – The relationship between Community Strategy themes and spatial issues

Community Strategy Theme	Examples of Spatial Issues
Communities that are safe and feel safe	• Support for CCTV schemes or improving highway safety • Housing design and location to design out potential crime • Better facilities for younger people to reduce complaints of anti-social behaviour
A better environment for today and tomorrow	• Biodiversity & Geodiversity Action Plans and AONB Management Plans to protect the natural environment • Ensuring the use of sustainable building methods and materials and identifying opportunities for renewable energy within new and existing developments • Waste Core Strategy to identify the location and provision of landfill and recycling facilities
Economic success that is shared by all	• Appropriate location of employment land such as the Stourport Road Employment Corridor, Longbridge site, Central Technology Belt and Bromsgrove Technology Park • Provision of transport infrastructure to ensure employment land is accessible without over-reliance on the car • Planning resource management, e.g. provision of waste facilities, water supply and sewerage
Improving health and well-being	• Provision and appropriate location of health and social care facilities and housing that enables vulnerable people to remain independent • Planning an environment that supports healthy choices – for example walking, cycling and healthy eating • Identifying land for recreation and sport
Meeting the needs of children and young people	• Provision and appropriate location of places for young people to go, e.g. youth shelters, drop in centres and play areas • Location and provision of schools and other educational establishments
Stronger communities	• Making land available for an appropriate housing mix, including affordable housing and homes for vulnerable people • Provision of community buildings and other places where communities can come together • Ensuring access to cultural and sporting activities and events • Investment in more sustainable transport modes, such as passenger transport, walking and cycling

SECTION FOUR – CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

4. What is a cross-cutting theme?

A cross-cutting theme is one that runs through all of the sections of this Community Strategy. This section spells out the high level outcomes and some selected actions that relate to the cross-cutting themes. Each of the six Community Strategy themes will contribute to a greater or lesser extent to meeting the outcomes that relate to these cross-cutting themes. They act as a **'golden thread'** that runs through the whole strategy, connecting with many of our priority outcomes, and will be knitted into the actions set out in the themes. The table in Section 5.2 shows how the cross-cutting themes relate to the other outcomes in the Community Strategy.

4.1. Tackling the challenges of climate change

4.1.1. Why is Tackling the challenges of climate change important?

Worcestershire is not immune to global and national environmental challenges. There is widespread acceptance that climate change is already happening, and further change is inevitable. We know that the climate has changed significantly over the last century[5]. The extremity of change is expected to depend on such things as future levels of **emissions of climate change gases** such as carbon dioxide and methane (known as greenhouse gases). In 2004 Worcestershire produced around 5.4 million tonnes of carbon dioxide, much of which was produced by emissions from transport, industry and homes[6].

The Citizens' Panel survey[7] showed that 60% of respondents agree that climate change is already having an impact on Worcestershire. Eight three percent of respondents thought it was important that action was taken in Worcestershire to tackle climate change. The more we do now to reduce emissions, the less extreme the expected impact.

Adapting to the **effects of climate change** is a priority in Worcestershire. Worcestershire has experienced significant flooding which has adversely impacted upon the county's residents and economy[8]. There is a need to consider the way that people manage the environment to alleviate rather than exacerbate flood risk and flooding. The challenges of climate change are not only environmental but also have economic and social dimensions, such as the effects of extreme

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[5] Worcestershire Climate Change Impacts Study 2004
[6] Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy 2004
[7] Worcestershire Citizens Panel, June 2007
[8] Further details can be found in Worcestershire's Story of Place
http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/index/wp-laa.htm

weather conditions on people's safety and health. There is a need for services and businesses to consider preparation, response, recovey and lessons learnt from such events.

4.1.2. Priority outcomes

The partnership has already developed the Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy. This sets out how we intend to tackle the challenges of climate change in the county, and we are constantly reviewing and improving our practice in this area. The aims of the strategy are:

- To raise awareness of the issue of climate change
- To reduce harmful climate change causing gas emissions across the county
- To assist adaptation to the impacts of climate change on the county

4.1.3. Actions on tackling the challenges of climate change

- Continue to implement the Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy and to develop specific actions through the Climate Change Task Group
- Develop a Local Climate Change Impact Profile for the county
- Raise awareness of the issue of climate change through formal education, raising awareness amongst staff in organisations and businesses, using the local media and by incorporating climate change into other awareness programmes
- Implementing actions throughout this strategy relating to tackling the challenges of climate change – see Table 3 in Section 5.2
- Consider how the Worcestershire Partnership can use its influence to ensure that the impacts of climate change are fully considered and planned for
- Consider how the Worcestershire Partnership can use its influence to improve the management of the environment (for example flood prevention and defences, drainage, land use) to take account of the impact of climate change
- Implement our short and long-term flood recovery plans

4.2. Community Engagement

4.2.1. Why is Community Engagement important?

The partnership believes that better decisions are made, better services are provided and that places are more likely to be improved

and transformed when individuals and communities are given a real say and are active in shaping the places in which they live[9].

Community engagement is our **two-way relationship with communities**. It is how we obtain information from local communities and individuals and how they receive information from us. Across the partnership's agencies and organisations there is a wide range of activity that aims to ensure that this happens. You can find out more about our **approach and find examples** of what already takes place in Appendix 3.

The role of the **Voluntary and Community Sector** (VCS) and other locally based partners, such as parish and town councils, is particularly important in enabling individuals to participate actively in their own communities through, for example, providing opportunities for volunteering, community development work and through delivering flexible and user focussed services. The Worcestershire Compact aims to ensure effective partnership working between the VCS and public agencies in the county.

We recognise too the role of the sector in reaching groups who may be **marginalised or excluded** from the sorts of activities described above for reasons of disability, age, ethnicity, language, gender or cultural barriers. Across the partnership there are examples of specific targeted work to seek and hear these voices. For example partners were involved in Community Fairs held in Worcester, Redditch and Kidderminster during 2007. These multicultural events engaged with Black, Minority Ethnic and Eastern European communities to promote and publicise public services and gather views and opinions about community concerns. This work is important in developing cohesive communities (see 4.3 below).

4.2.2. Priority Outcome

* To empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in the planning, design and delivery of public services

4.2.3. Actions on community engagement in Worcestershire

* Develop a framework for Community Engagement in Worcestershire – the framework should cover the whole spectrum of involvement (information, consultation, involvement and devolution), taking into account expected Government guidance
* Incorporate within the framework the work and learning developed through the Statements of Community Involvement described in Section 3

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[9] The Politics of Place, Leadership Centre for Local Government

- Utilise a range of community engagement mechanisms - appropriate to the issue concerned and local circumstances, including those provided by the Voluntary and Community Sector
- Ensure that community engagement is inclusive and that proactive steps are taken to reach communities that do not traditionally participate in consultation and engagement mechanisms (see 4.3 below)
- Where possible join up community consultation and engagement mechanisms across partners to avoid duplication (e.g. through the use of the Ask Me! Consultation Planner and Finder database)
- Develop a common framework across participating councils to respond to requests from community organisations to manage or own public assets
- Promote democracy and participation in the democratic process
- Implement actions throughout this strategy relating to Community Engagement – see Table 3 in Section 5.2

4.3. Promoting Community Cohesion in Worcestershire

4.3.1. Why is Community Cohesion important?

The Worcestershire Partnership's vision and values highlight our commitment to build communities that enhance individuals' life opportunities, treat people with equality and value diversity and build strong cohesive communities and good community relations.

We have adopted the **definition of cohesive communities** developed by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion[10]: -

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An integrated and cohesive community is one where:
- There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country
- There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them, and what they can expect in turn
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment
- There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny
- There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common

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[10] Our Shared Future – Final Report of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion (COIC), June 2007

> - There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.

The Story of Place[11] describes Worcestershire and the different communities that live within it. The **evidence** suggests the following community cohesion issues for Worcestershire:

- The small size of Worcestershire's **Black and Minority Ethnic Communities** requires a pro-active approach to ensure that the particular needs and concerns of these communities are listened to and addressed.
- The longest established minority community in the county is the **Gypsy and Traveller** community, with generations of some local families having lived in Worcestershire for several hundred years. Despite their deep roots within the county there is evidence that the Gypsy and Traveller communities experience prejudice and inequality[12].
- More recently **migrant workers** have been attracted to Worcestershire, particularly to the seasonal and manufacturing work provided by the county's agricultural industries. Businesses report that they are employing migrant workers to address labour shortages[13]. A regional study has evidenced the positive impacts on business performance from employing migrant workers – 47% reported a positive impact on business performance. Disadvantages include communication problems due to poor English[14]. Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that migrant workers are leaving the UK due to the economic conditions here, which could cause labour shortages in some industries. The potential social impacts from the growth of migrant workers in Worcestershire have not been fully quantified, but evidence so far does not suggest any heightening of community tensions.
- Worcestershire's mix of **urban and rural environments** is an asset and a potential challenge. There has been successful work in the county to address rural isolation and to enable access to housing, training, jobs and services for people in rural communities but community cohesion issues for people in rural communities may need to be more fully explored, for example the impact of second home owners on rural communities and possible fragmentation between established communities and newcomers to these areas.
- Building cohesive communities is about **addressing perceptions** and **tackling myths** as well as about identifying the facts.

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[11] Worcestershire's Story of Place can be found at
http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/index/wp-laa.htm
[12] The Forgotten Minority - Gypsies and Travellers November 2007
[13] Economic Impact of Migrant Workers in the West Midlands, West Midlands Regional Observatory, October 2007
[14] ibid

Perceptions of cohesion are linked to a complex range of factors including individuals' experience of deprivation and discrimination, perceptions about levels of crime and antisocial behaviour, perceptions about the impacts of immigration, and perceptions about the fair allocation of public services and resources[15]. The partnership will remain alert to community cohesion issues and monitor any potential tensions and concerns.

4.3.2. Priority Outcomes

- To build more inclusive communities
- To improve integration in our communities

4.3.3. Actions on Community Cohesion

- Worcestershire councils are participating in a capacity building project that will enable them to tailor their equality and diversity strategies to Worcestershire's particular circumstances. This two-year project will include work to ensure that councils have effectively identified and mapped gender and ethnicity across the county, and the barriers that may affect these groups.
- Continue to encourage community groups to celebrate cultural diversity through community events and activities.
- Promote the implementation of the Worcestershire Gypsy and Traveller Partnership Manifesto for Change, covering housing choice, direct and indirect discrimination, consultation and engagement and ethnic monitoring.
- Consider the implications of the regional study on the economic impact of migrant workers (to which the Worcestershire Partnership contributed) and identify any further actions that need to be taken as a result of the report.
- Develop a website to provide a welcome to migrant workers, help them to settle into their new communities and develop mechanisms of communication between partners to identify any emerging tensions. Wyre Forest LSP is leading the work and the Worcestershire Partnership will investigate the potential of rolling this out across the county.
- Build on existing work to bring young people together with local faith leaders to jointly tackle issues of cohesion.
- Develop a programme in nine pilot schools in order to support other schools in developing community cohesion projects.
- Establish more opportunities for young people and their families from different communities to engage with each other.
- Continue to monitor and assess community tensions, and intervene early to diffuse any potential situations.

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[15] COIC – Our Shared Futures

- Implementing actions throughout this strategy relating to building more inclusive communities and improving integration in our communities – see Table 3 in Section 5.2.

SECTION FIVE – COMMUNITY STRATEGY OUTCOMES

5.1. Priority outcomes addressed by this Community Strategy

Partnership working is all about adding value - that is increasing the impact that we can **collectively** make to improving the quality of life in Worcestershire over what can be achieved by working as separate individuals and organisations.

The themes and outcomes in this strategy have been selected precisely because they need this **partnership approach**, looking at the evidence and then identifying those issues where collectively we can make a difference; these are the difficult issues that cannot be solved by one agency alone.

The table below sets out the **29 priority outcomes** that this strategy will address.

Table 2 - Priority Outcomes for Worcestershire's Sustainable Community Strategy

Cross–cutting themes that underpin the Community Strategy priorities
Tackling the Challenges of Climate Change - To raise awareness of the issues of climate change - To reduce harmful climate change causing gas emissions across the county - To assist adaptation to the impacts of climate change on the county **Community Engagement** - To empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in the planning, design and delivery of public service **Community Cohesion** - To build more inclusive communities - To improve integration in our communities

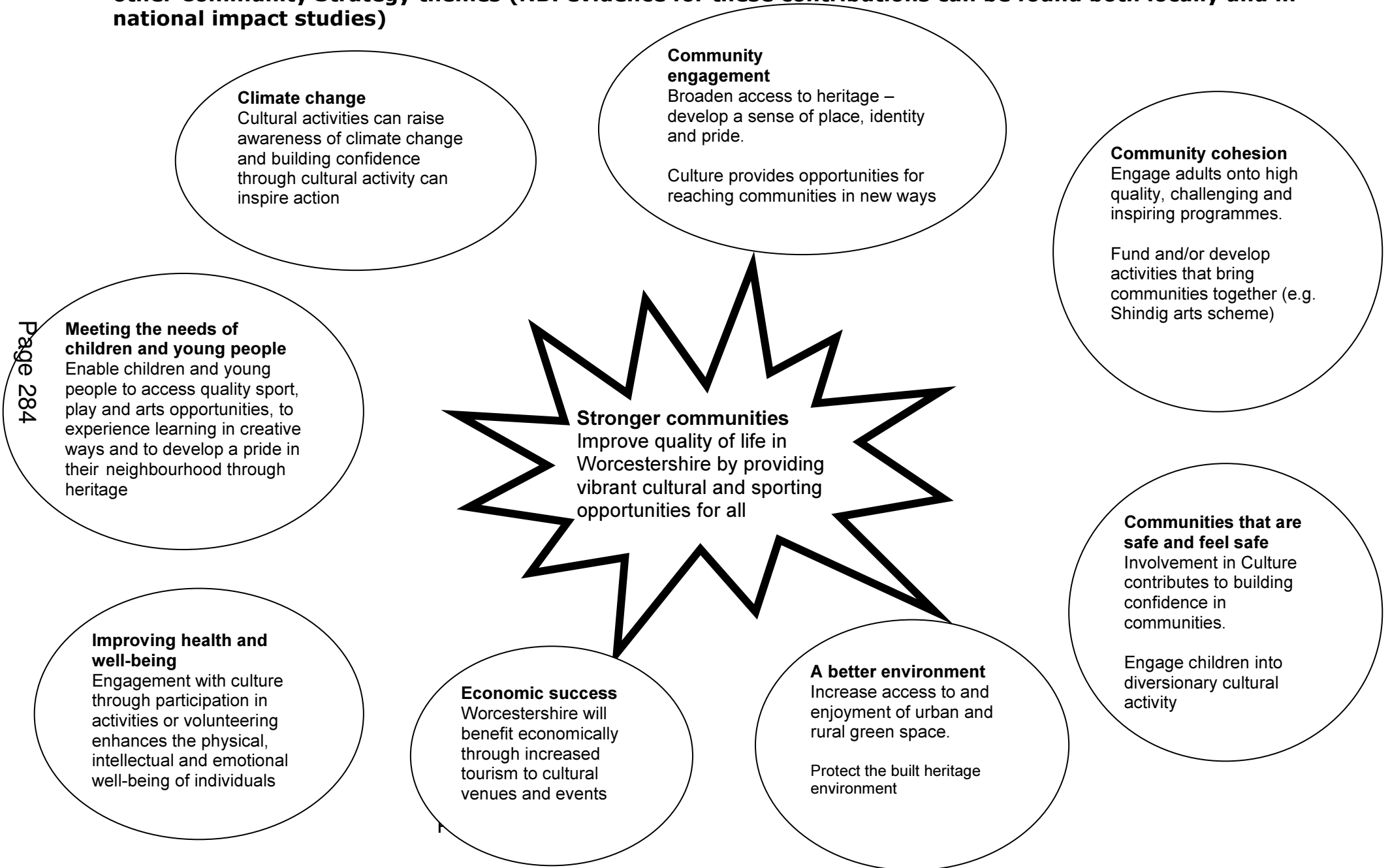| Communities that are safe and feel Safe	A better environment for today and tomorrow
- To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities - To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol	- To enhance Worcestershire's countryside and urban greenspace and appropriate access to them while protecting the natural and historic environment - To maximise the diversion of waste away from landfill through prevention, re-use, recycling/composting and recovery - To address issues of water quality, supply, and consumption and land drainage in Worcestershire - To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources
Economic success that is shared by all	**Improving health and well-being**
- To promote technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the county - To support the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development (in particular transport infrastructure) and establish Worcester as a growth point - To remove barriers to employment and improve skills - To ensure that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels	- To support adults to lead healthy lifestyles - To reduce health inequalities - To improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness - To improve mental health and well-being
Meeting the needs of children and young people	**Stronger communities**
- To support children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles - Identify and deal effectively with bullying, and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it - To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people - To ensure children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities	- To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire - To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all - To support effective volunteering that is accessible to all - To reduce income deprivation, including child and pensioner poverty - To deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network

The following sections address each of the themes and outcomes in detail and provide evidence about **WHY** these outcomes are a priority, the sorts of **ACTIONS** we will take to meet the priority outcomes, and the **BENEFITS** that there will be to Worcestershire from achieving the outcomes.

Section 12 of this strategy provides further information about how we will **implement and monitor the strategy,** including references to the main **delivery plans**.

5.2. Connections between the Cross-Cutting Themes and the Community Strategy Outcomes

All of our partners and theme groups will take account of the cross-cutting themes of tackling the challenges of climate change, community engagement and community cohesion in their delivery against all of the priority outcomes in this strategy. This matrix shows the key relationships but, of course, there will be many others.

Table 3 – Matrix showing the relationship between Cross-Cutting Themes and Community Strategy Outcomes

PRIORITY OUTCOME	TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY COHESION
Communities that are safe and feel safe			
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities		✓	✓
To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol		✓	✓
A better environment – for today and tomorrow			
To protect and improve Worcestershire's natural and historic environment		✓	
To promote the prevention, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste	✓	✓	
To address issues of water quality, supply, and consumption and land drainage in Worcestershire	✓	✓	
To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	✓	✓	
Economic success that is shared by all			
To promote technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the county		✓	✓

PRIORITY OUTCOME	TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY COHESION
To support the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development (in particular transport infrastructure) and establish Worcester as a growth point	✓	✓	✓
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills		✓	✓
To ensure that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels		✓	
Improving health and well-being			
To support adults to lead healthier lifestyles		✓	
To reduce health inequalities		✓	✓
To improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness		✓	✓
To improve mental health and well-being		✓	✓
Meeting the needs of children and young people			
To support children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles		✓	
To identify and deal effectively with bullying and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it		✓	✓
To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people		✓	✓
To ensure children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities		✓	✓

PRIORITY OUTCOME	TACKLING THE CHALLENGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE	COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT	COMMUNITY COHESION
Stronger communities			
To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	✓	✓	✓
To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all		✓	✓
To support effective volunteering that is accessible to all		✓	✓
To reduce income deprivation including child and pensioner poverty		✓	✓
To deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network	✓	✓	✓

5.3. Connections between the different Community Strategy themes and outcomes

Although these outcomes are presented thematically here, in reality many of them have an **impact on each other**. We have already described in the table above how the outcomes throughout the strategy contribute to the cross-cutting themes. There are many other examples of how one priority outcome will make a contribution to meeting that expressed in another.

The diagram below serves to illustrate this by taking one of the outcomes this Community Strategy has prioritised within the Stronger Communities section - *"To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all"* - and shows how this outcome makes a contribution to all the other themes[16].

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[16] Note abbreviations of the Community Strategy themes and of the outcomes and actions including within the "Improving quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant, cultural and sporting opportunities for all" have been used within the diagram. See Section 11.2 for full details

Figure 2 - Diagram showing some examples of the contribution of the priority outcome on culture to the other Community Strategy themes (NB: evidence for these contributions can be found both locally and in national impact studies)

Climate change
Cultural activities can raise awareness of climate change and building confidence through cultural activity can inspire action

Community engagement
Broaden access to heritage – develop a sense of place, identity and pride.

Culture provides opportunities for reaching communities in new ways

Community cohesion
Engage adults onto high quality, challenging and inspiring programmes.

Fund and/or develop activities that bring communities together (e.g. Shindig arts scheme)

Meeting the needs of children and young people
Enable children and young people to access quality sport, play and arts opportunities, to experience learning in creative ways and to develop a pride in their neighbourhood through heritage

Stronger communities
Improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all

Communities that are safe and feel safe
Involvement in Culture contributes to building confidence in communities.

Engage children into diversionary cultural activity

Improving health and well-being
Engagement with culture through participation in activities or volunteering enhances the physical, intellectual and emotional well-being of individuals

Economic success
Worcestershire will benefit economically through increased tourism to cultural venues and events

A better environment
Increase access to and enjoyment of urban and rural green space.

Protect the built heritage environment

SECTION SIX – COMMUNITIES THAT ARE SAFE AND FEEL SAFE

6.1. Priority Outcomes

1. To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities
2. To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol

6.2. Why are these the priority outcomes?

We know that the **level of crime** is for our residents the most important factor in making an area a good place to live[17]. In fact compared to national and regional figures since 2003/04, crime reduction in Worcestershire has been amongst the highest in the country[18].

Overall 92% of our Citizens' Panel respondents[19] feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day. After dark the figure changes to 62%. There is a significant difference between those respondents living in rural areas who feel safe after dark in comparison to those living in urban areas (73% and 57% respectively). We recognise that there is more to be done to **reassure** those that live, work or visit Worcestershire of the relative safety that we all enjoy. The perception of a low level of crime is by far the most important factor residents of Worcestershire say makes their neighbourhood a good place in which to live (Worcestershire County Council, Best Value General Satisfaction Surveys 2006/07, 2003/04, 2000/01). Additionally, 35% of respondents to the 2006/07 General Satisfaction Survey said that litter and graffiti had a major influence on their perception of anti-social behaviour[20].

In addition to the need to address crime and the community's crime concerns, there is a need to address other issues affecting **community safety** and personal well-being. These include the impact of accidents, the well-being and safety of older and vulnerable people, and the impact of events such as traffic collisions, fires[21] and flooding.

It is also important to tackle crimes such as vandalism, arson and other forms of **anti-social behaviour** through education and other prevention work, in order to prevent escalation into potentially more

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[17] Best Value General User Survey 2006 / 07
[18] At 31st March 2007 Worcestershire had seen a 24 per cent reduction in British Crime Survey Comparator Crimes since the 2003/2004 baselines were set.
[19] Citizens Panel June 2007
[20] BV General Satisfaction Survey 2006/07
[21] Deliberate fires now represent almost 3 out of 4 fires to derelict building or outdoors and 3 in 5 of all vehicle fires – H&W Fire and Rescue Service

serious crime. We also recognise the impact that the condition of the **built environment** - littering, abandoned and burnt out vehicles, graffiti - can have on people's sense of safety and well-being.

Partners recognise the interdependence of many of these issues and will work together to address them through a range of community safety, education and prevention initiatives.

It is understood that a relatively small number of offenders are responsible for a disproportionate volume of crime. Worcestershire has made significant progress with partnership activity regarding prolific offenders. An evaluation of the 'Catch and Convict' and 'Resettle and Rehabilitate' programmes showed a 65% reduction in the numbers of crimes committed by offenders engaged with this activity. However, this type of intervention is long-term. Worcestershire is currently reviewing structures to make sure they will continue to provide the most effective outcomes in the future.

We know that misuse of **illegal drugs and alcohol** can fuel crime and anti-social behaviour[22]. Between April 2006 and March 2007 drug offences increased by nearly 13%. It is estimated that there are approximately 2,750 'problematic drug misusers' within the county[23], and approximately 4% of the Worcestershire population drink alcohol at a harmful level[24]. We have a clear strategy to reduce the harm of drugs and alcohol in the county[25]. The West Mercia Fear of Crime Survey shows a slight reduction in the proportion of respondents in Worcestershire who think illegal drug misuse in their local area is a fairly or very serious problem (29% in 2007 compared with 31% in 2006).

6.3. Actions over the next five years

- Work with the media to reduce the fear of crime and present an accurate picture of Worcestershire as a low crime area.
- Tackle and reduce the level of crime and disorder with specific emphasis on:
  - assault with injury
  - criminal damage, including deliberate fires
  - burglary
  - violent crime
  - personal robbery and theft
  - vehicle crime
  - anti-social behaviour.

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[22] Alcohol misuse and related crime in Worcestershire Jan 2002 – Dec 2003, Worcestershire SMAT
[23] Frischer M, Heatlie and Hichman M (2004). Estimating the prevalence of problematic and injecting drug use for Drug Action Team areas in England
[24] Tackling Substance Misuse in Worcestershire: A Partnership Approach 2008 - 2011
[25] ibid

- Review and enhance partnership interventions to effectively target and address the most prolific adult offenders.
- Work together on a monthly basis to review the facts about crime and anti-social behaviour to identify any geographical hotspots or emerging issues. This multi agency tasking enables us to respond early and quickly when problems are identified.
- Implement the recommendations of the joint strategic review of domestic abuse services across Worcestershire including priorities to support the domestic abuse helpline, to develop multi agency risk assessment conferences (MARAC) and specialist domestic violence courts (SDVC), to develop perpetrator programmes and to increase the range of provision to adults and children affected by abuse.
- Extend the Hate Incident reporting schemes, which put the victim at the centre of our concern.
- Develop a range of community safety, education and crime prevention initiatives.
- Work together to reduce levels of graffiti and respond quickly to remove litter, fly tipping and abandoned vehicles.
- Develop partnership approaches to improve community safety outcomes, including harnessing the role of the Voluntary and Community Sector, housing associations, private businesses and other partners.
- Continue to strengthen joint working on these issues by exploring bringing together the three Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) in the north of the county to form one North Worcestershire CSP.
- Continue to implement our strategy to reduce the harm of drugs and alcohol to both individuals involved and the wider community
- Continue to be responsive to our communities' concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour through mechanisms such as:
  - Neighbourhood policing initiatives – local policing teams have been established across the county to enable police to be easier to contact and more visible in the community.
  - Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings – an opportunity for police, partners and communities to meet and agree local policing priorities and report back on progress.
  - Responding to issues raised through Community Calls for Action[26].

6.4. Benefits to Worcestershire

- Reductions in levels of crime
- Concerns about crime and community safety are listened to, understood and acted upon, people are re-assured and realistic about levels of crime in the county

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[26] A mechanism by which communities can raise issues of concern about crime with District Ward Councillors

- Reduction in anti-social behaviour which will improve quality of life for everyone
- Reduction in costs to the community of anti-social behaviour
- Improvements to the environment with less litter and graffiti and fewer deliberate incidences of burnt out vehicles and fires in open spaces
- Reduction in the harm caused by drugs and alcohol to the individuals involved and to the community

SECTION SEVEN - A BETTER ENVIRONMENT FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

7.1. Priority Outcomes

1. To enhance Worcestershire's countryside and urban greenspace and appropriate access to them while protecting the natural and historic environment
2. To maximise the diversion of waste away from landfill through prevention, re-use, recycling/composting and recovery
3. To address issues of water quality, supply, and consumption and land drainage in Worcestershire
4. To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources

7.2. Why are these outcomes the priorities?

The quality of the county's environment is one of its most valuable assets, and includes a rich built heritage, varied and sensitive habitats and diverse landscape. Residents have repeatedly told us how much they **value Worcestershire's environment**[27].

Two habitats are of particular significance in Worcestershire - **species-rich grassland and wetlands.** The county is a national stronghold for species-rich lowland grassland, containing a significant proportion of the national resource. With three major rivers (the Severn, Teme and Avon) and numerous tributaries, wetland habitats such as wet grassland are also a major feature in the county. These habitats and others are included in the **Biodiversity Action Plan** for Worcestershire, which sets targets for their restoration and creation. Achieving these targets is a major challenge, which the county needs to meet if we are to retain our valued and valuable biodiversity in the face of future impacts such as climate change and urban expansion.

Worcestershire's **archaeological sites and historic buildings** are an irreplaceable asset that contributes to our understanding of the present and the past. They need to be considered within their surrounding landscape, which can itself be of significance in defining the character of the county.

We have developed a process to annually report on and monitor the condition of the Worcestershire environment. At the end of each year, a **State of the Environment Report** is prepared to publicise the findings. The information collected aims to give a key indication of the State of the Environment in Worcestershire. The report provides

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[27] Citizens Panel Survey – 2003 and 2005

accessible and scientifically sound information to inform the preparation of policy, and has been used as the evidence base for the priorities included in this strategy. It can be found at http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/index/wp-structure/wp-structure-theme-group/wp-structure-theme-group-env.htm

The next two decades will continue to see **waste management** in the United Kingdom transformed. The challenges presented by climate change, along with more stringent government targets, new UK and European legislation and a higher social awareness will drive these changes. The cost of dealing with domestic waste in Herefordshire and Worcestershire in 2006/07 was £28 million and these costs are increasing. We need to divert waste from landfill sites. Landfill tax will increase from £24 to £56 per tonne within the next few years and new treatment facilities will be needed to treat our waste so that we can meet the changes in legislation.

Domestic waste only accounts for between one fifth and one sixth of the amount of commercial, industrial, construction and demolition waste produced in the county[28] – these amount to about one and a quarter million tonnes of resources, less than half a million tonnes of which is currently recycled.

We must make tough decisions as to how we tackle the problem. We need to consider waste as a resource. Everyone can play their part by reducing, reusing, and recycling or composting as much waste as possible. Seventy seven percent of Citizens' Panel respondents gave a high priority to increasing the range and amount of materials that are recycled[29].

Water is a vital natural resource, the management of which is fundamental to sustainable development. It plays an important role in the county in terms of its contribution to landscape character, as well as making a significant economic contribution, for example in agricultural irrigation and recreational use. There are a number of **water issues facing the county** including river water quality, rates of water consumption, infrastructure requirements, in particular sewerage capacity linked to proposed new developments, and flooding and other climate change impacts. This will be an important area of work over the coming years.

We are all aware of the contribution of greenhouse gases to climate change[30]. A significant proportion of these greenhouse gases arise

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[28] Minerals and Waste Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2006/07, WCC
[29] All references to the Citizens Panel in this section are from responses to the June 2007 survey unless otherwise stated
[30] See IPCC report on climate change

from our **energy use** and our dependence on diminishing and increasingly expensive fossil fuel reserves. Reducing our reliance on fossil fuels, together with increasing energy efficiency measures and increasing the use of **renewable energy**, can make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions. Ninety percent of the Citizens' Panel support the generation of renewable energy in Worcestershire. Sixty nine percent of panel members gave a high priority to constructing extremely energy efficient buildings, 65% gave a high priority to improving energy efficiency in existing buildings and 51% of respondents gave a high priority to ensuring new developments generate renewable energy on site.

7.3. Actions over the next five years

- Continue to implement and develop the Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan[31] which aims to protect Worcestershire's variety of plants, birds and animals, the habitats in which they live and the interactions between them.
- Establish a Geodiversity Action Plan for the county - geodiversity is the variety of rocks, minerals, fossils and soils which, combined with biodiversity, make up the physical landscape.
- Identify and progress priorities to enhance and protect Worcestershire's landscape character, which has arisen as a result of a combination of agricultural uses, buildings, wildlife and local traditions as well as underlying geology.
- Contribute to the regional agenda through the Landscapes for Living project dealing with biodiversity and landscape character.
- Protect and enhance ancient woodlands by restoring these sites to native woodland and increasing the sustainable management of woodlands.
- Develop a Worcestershire Historic Environment Action Plan which aims to protect Worcestershire's rich physical heritage of archaeological sites, historic buildings and historic landscapes and complements and interacts with Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans, with an immediate focus on legislative change, development pressures and climate change.
- Support and promote the Management Plans of the Cotswolds and Malvern Hills Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) within those parts of the county that fall within their influence.
- Review and monitor the Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy[32] and commission the required waste management facilities to increase recycling and recovery of municipal waste to ensure diversion from landfill.

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[31] Biodiversity Action Plan 1999 and Revisions 2007
[32] The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy is jointly produced by Herefordshire Council, Worcestershire County Council and all of Worcestershire's District Councils

- Encourage prevention, re-use, recycling and composting and recovery of waste through public and business awareness and information campaigns; for example by developing the re-use / recycling capacity of voluntary and community sector organisations.
- Improve water quality – all surface and ground waters should reach good status (this is achieved by meeting demanding environmental objectives) by 2015 as set out in the EU Water Framework Directive.
- Ensure that issues of water, water use reduction, drainage and sewerage are taken account of in the spatial planning process.
- Provide advice and guidance on energy efficiency in the home.
- Promote the use of renewable energy in the county, including through the development of a renewable energy paper to influence spatial planning.

7.4. Benefits to Worcestershire

- The high quality of Worcestershire's environment contributes to economic and social well-being
- Increased and improved understanding and management of the natural and historic environment
- Enhanced access to and engagement with the natural and historic environment
- Increased wildlife, able to withstand pressures such as climate change
- Reduced quantity of waste going to landfill
- Saving resources that are currently wasted, at considerable expense
- Appropriate facilities to manage a reduced quantity of waste
- Water will be conserved and its quality improved and new developments will avoid flood risk areas
- Increased take up of renewable energy technologies

SECTION EIGHT - ECONOMIC SUCCESS THAT IS SHARED BY ALL

8.1. Priority Outcomes

1. **Business** – to promote technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the county
2. **Place** – to support the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development (in particular transport infrastructure), and establish Worcester as a growth point
3. **People** – to remove barriers to employment and improve skills
4. **Powerful Voice** – to ensure that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels

These priorities reflect those of the Regional Economic Strategy.

8.2. Why are these outcomes the priorities?

"In ten years time, technology-led growth will have contributed to the sustainable development of Worcestershire and strengthened its role as an economic driver for the region – acting as a catalyst for all sectors of the economy and areas of the county to benefit and providing well paid and highly skilled jobs and a high quality of life for residents." This is the bold vision for Worcestershire's economy, which sees **technology-led growth benefiting the whole county and all sectors,** including agriculture and manufacturing.

A key area of work is diversifying the county's economic base and developing a **knowledge driven economy**. Worcestershire has a higher proportion of workers in low technology industries and a lower proportion of workers in knowledge based services compared with both the regional and national average[33]. Our objective is to create jobs and encourage employment in high technology industries to provide a sustainable base for the county's economy in the long-term.

Section 3 describes the level of housing growth identified for the county over the next 10 years, and the focus for development on Worcester City. Location of **employment opportunities** near to housing development, tackling congestion and promoting sustainable integrated transport are all key to ensuring that the building blocks are in place to enable sustainable development that protects quality of life. Ensuring residents can access key services including education, training and employment is a major part of a transport strategy to

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[33] Worcestershire County Economic Assessment 2006 –2007, Table 2.18 Employees by industry as a percentage of all employees, Page 26

support the county's economic aspirations. This strategy deals with transport - in particular, the choice and accessibility of more sustainable modes of transport – in more detail in Section 11.

Worcestershire's unemployment rate is below the national and regional average[34]. However, in order for residents to benefit from business diversification and to attract high technology industries there needs to be concerted action to **improve educational and skills attainment** across all age ranges. Section 10 sets out our aspiration to raise educational achievement. Worcestershire has an above average number of 19 year olds who are not in employment, education or training in comparison to our national statistical benchmarking group[35]. We aim to increase levels of participation for this age group. We also have a higher than the regional and national average working age population at NVQ1 level[36].

People need support to rebuild confidence after a period out of the workforce and work is needed with employers to tackle barriers to employment. The Voluntary and Community Sector have a key role to play here. Tackling **'worklessness'** will be a key priority in the coming years

Worcestershire also experiences considerable levels of 'churn' whereby seasonal and low skill workers move frequently as employment opportunities become available.

To meet our vision for our economy we need to ensure that we have tapped into the talent pool in the county, and **raised skill levels** to enable people to take on the technical and supervisory roles that our Economic Strategy will attract.

Worcestershire's economic aspirations are ambitious. We are well placed to benefit from the outcomes of the **Sub National Economic Development Review,** which will devolve significant economic development to county level. Worcestershire will become a higher value added economy, making an important contribution to closing the £10 billion regional gap in Gross Value Added (GVA), which measures productivity, by providing well paid jobs and a high quality of life for its workers.

8.3. Actions over the next five years

- Develop and implement the actions identified within the Worcestershire Economic Strategy's Joint Investment Plan.

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[34] Economic Assessment 2006 –2007, Table 4.4 Unemployment by District, August 2006, Page 74
[35] Annual Performance Assessment 2007
[36] ONS annual population survey (Qualifications Jan 2006 – Dec 2006)

- Work with the Central Technology Belt to maximise the potential for technology growth, linking to expertise in Malvern and Birmingham.
- Encourage environmental businesses to Worcestershire through demonstrating expertise in this area.
- Support the growth of existing and new local businesses - including rural businesses and those run by women - through better networking, clustering and business support initiatives.
- Reduce the reliance on private car travel through improvements to walking, cycling and passenger transport networks.
- Ensure the successful delivery of key physical developments that contribute to the economic prosperity of the county, such as the Worcester City Centre Masterplan, which outlines plans for the University of Worcester campus, the new Library and History Centre and the development of the riverside.
- Improve transport infrastructure through the Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy and Worcester Transport Strategy to facilitate the sustainable growth of Worcester City.
- Ensure that towns such as Kidderminster, Redditch and Bromsgrove have a strong robust future economy by improving the skill levels of local residents and creating good quality jobs.
- Ensure that market towns continue to support their rural hinterlands by remaining as attractive focus for business, residents and visitors.
- Encourage visitors to urban and rural Worcestershire, and work with providers in the tourism sector to ensure that visitors want to return.
- Target work on those vulnerable young people who are not accessing employment, education and training, e.g. young offenders and pregnant teenagers.
- Improve the skills of the existing workforce – particularly focusing on those at NVQ Level 2+ and below to move them onto NVQ level 3 and 4.
- Reduce worklessness by removing barriers to employment - especially for those who are out of work due to their circumstances such as people with disabilities or family commitments.
- Utilise the skills, knowledge and resources of the Voluntary and Community Sector to promote an active and vibrant social economy in Worcestershire, providing business solutions to meet community needs.
- Work with AWM to demonstrate how economic development can be successfully delivered at the county level, including looking across county boundaries to identify opportunities to enhance the economy to mutual advantage.

8.4. Benefits to Worcestershire

- Increase in the numbers of and access to quality jobs throughout the county and across all sectors
- Increase in skill levels of people of employment age
- Increase in wage levels as a result of economic diversification
- Increase in Gross Valued Added (GVA) and a reduction in the regional £10 billion output gap
- Increase in competitiveness in key sectors
- Reduction in the numbers of people who are workless in the county
- Increase in the number of visitors to the county
- Minimised impact of traffic congestion through reducing reliance on private car travel and improving opportunities to use sustainable transport
- Reduction in the number of young people who are not in employment, education and training

SECTION NINE - IMPROVING HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

9.1. Priority Outcomes

1. To support adults to lead healthier lifestyles
2. To reduce health inequalities
3. To improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness
4. To improve mental health and well-being

9.2. Why are these outcomes the priorities?

If adults cannot be encouraged to take responsibility for their own health and to **lead healthier and more active lifestyles** the repercussions will affect not only particular individuals, but all of us because of the knock on implications for local services and the economy. Reducing **smoking, obesity and alcohol consumption** are all priorities nationally and regionally. Between 20 to 25 percent of adults smoke, this figure is higher in disadvantaged areas[37]. Smoking causes one fifth of deaths from circulatory disease and one third of all cancer deaths[38]. Obesity is another major cause for concern. Two thirds of adults are classified as overweight and obese[39] – and again these rates are higher in disadvantaged areas. Obesity is now a major cause of diabetes, heart disease and cancer. Alcohol misuse is responsible for social and health problems. One fifth of adults drink more than the safe limit[40]- the highest rates being among young adults and those living in disadvantaged areas. The death rates from alcohol related liver disease are rising[41], as are the number of hospital admissions due to alcohol misuse - over 1,200 visits in 2006/07[42].

The above figures demonstrate that there is a clear link between areas of disadvantage and health. Detailed mapping work has been carried out to identify hot spot areas across Worcestershire[43] to enable **targeted interventions to address health inequalities.**

Our Story of Place[44] describes the expected increase in the **older population** in Worcestershire. Almost half of the people aged 65 and over have a limiting long-term illness[45]. Our aim is that older people

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[37] West Midlands Regional Lifestyle Survey, 2005, West Midlands Regional Observatory (WMRO)
[38] Smoking Kills – ONS General Household Survey 2003
[39] Regional Lifestyle Survey ibid
[40] Regional Lifestyle Survey ibid
[41] West Midlands Regional Observatory
[42] Hospital Episode Statistics 2006/07
[43] PCT Health Hotspots mapping, October 2007
[44] The story of place can be found at http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/index/wp-laa.htm
[45] 2001 Census

stay healthy, active, with positive opportunities and good quality of life for as long as possible. Local organisations need to work together to develop the low level and preventive services that will enable this. When greater help and support is required this needs to be provided promptly by all the relevant organisations working together, and at the appropriate time to offer most benefit. When people come to the end of their lives, good quality services need to be provided.

Looking forward a major challenge is to enable more personalised services for all age groups – services that give people choice and control over how they maintain their independence and well-being, whilst complex needs are met.

In December 2007 there were just over 1,900 **adults with a learning disability** recorded on the combined caseload list of the Joint Learning Disability Service in Worcestershire. There is national evidence to suggest that the number of people with learning disabilities will increase[46]. We will be working together to ensure that appropriate services are available, particularly services that are based in the community. People with learning disabilities will be supported to live active and independent lives, including taking up employment opportunities where appropriate.

At any one time, about one sixth of people are suffering from a **mental health problem**. Mental health problems are a key cause of health inequalities. People with more serious mental health problems may find it difficult to access health and other public services, and to stay in work. They need medical treatment but they also need their broader health and social needs met in order to allow rehabilitation. There is much we can do to prevent mental health problems and to treat them early. We also need to ensure that people with mental health problems have access to high quality health services and opportunities for a full and productive life.

We also acknowledge that those who care for others often require help and support themselves. We will build on existing services to support carers.

9.3. Actions over the next five years

- Increase awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and providing more and better information to help people look after themselves.
- Providing local leadership to encourage and enable healthier lifestyles and overcome barriers to staying healthy.

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[46] Further information and evidence can be found in Worcestershire's Story of Place

- Increase the capacity and activity of the smoking cessation service and providing signposting into the service.
- Develop a weight management service.
- Increase opportunities for sport and other physical activities.
- Fund local projects to enable people to take exercise and to improve awareness and access to healthy food, especially in the most disadvantaged areas.
- Develop and implement Healthy Transport strategies.
- Develop a Health Trainers service to provide support for people in disadvantaged areas to develop healthier lifestyles.
- Focus mainstream services on disadvantaged areas to improve access.
- Increase the capacity of alcohol services, particularly for early interventions to prevent harm.
- Reshape adult social care services as part of the Choice and Control programme including widespread use of individual budgets.
- Establish a Joint Health and Well-Being Team for older people to carry on the work of the WiNN project in providing early intervention and low level support services that help older people stay healthy, active and independent as long as possible.
- Increase the use of tele-care and tele-health to increase independence and well-being.
- Improve management of people with long-term conditions.
- Improve time taken to put care services in place.
- Develop an end of life care pathway.
- Continue to develop and expand services for people with dementia.
- Reshape day time services for people with a learning disability including the development of more employment opportunities.
- Increase opportunities for people with learning disabilities to live in the community rather than residential care.
- Jointly review and commission mental health services.
- Actively promote mental well-being.
- Ensure equality of access to mental health services across the county.
- Develop vocational/employment services for people with a mental illness.
- Continue strong partnership working and expand joint commissioning arrangements.
- Continue to develop support for carers in their caring role.

9.4. Benefits to Worcestershire

- There will be a reduction in the proportion of adults who smoke
- Overweight and obese adults will lose weight
- More adults will be participating in sport or other physical activities
- Death rates from circulatory diseases and cancers will fall
- More services will be accessible on foot or bicycle

- There will be better access to services for people from disadvantaged areas
- Health will improve more quickly in the most disadvantaged areas and the health gap between these areas and the county as a whole will narrow
- There will be a reduction in hospital attendances for alcohol related conditions
- There will be fewer delayed discharges from acute and community hospitals
- More vulnerable and older people will be able to live independently, for longer and with a better quality of life
- Fewer people will suffer from mental illness and those who do will have better access to effective services
- More adults with learning disabilities or with a mental illness will be in employment

SECTION TEN - MEETING THE NEEDS OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

10.1. Priority Outcomes

1. To support children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles
2. To identify and deal effectively with bullying, and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it
3. To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people
4. To ensure children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities

10.2. Why are these outcomes the priorities?

Leading a **healthy lifestyle** as a child or young person carries health benefits into adulthood. There has been a focus in recent years on promoting the importance of a healthy diet for children and young people. The number of overweight and **obese** children nationally has risen steadily over the last 20 years. A programme of weighing children in reception classes (4-5 year olds) and in year 6 (10-11 year olds) commenced in 2007 in Worcestershire. This demonstrated that overall 15.10% of children in year 6 were overweight and 15.21% of children in year 6 were obese[47]. Research shows that obese children are at risk from a number of serious health problems more usually seen in adulthood, including higher risk of heart attack and stroke, high blood pressure and type two diabetes[48]. Concern about this is reinforced by our Citizens' Panel[49], where education for parents and educating children about healthy eating and exercise were suggested as ways of increasing the life expectancy of children and young people in Worcestershire. In addition, young people in Worcestershire report above average **smoking and alcohol consumption** levels[50].

The proportion of **under 19s who are pregnant** is reducing at a lower rate in Worcestershire than in comparable authorities[51]. These young women are less likely to achieve economic well-being for themselves or their children, which means their children get a poor start in life[52].

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[47] Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children, Young People and Families
[48] Audit Commission – Tackling Childhood Obesity – First Steps
[49] Citizens Panel – June 2007
[50] Audit Commission TellUs 2 Survey 2007, SHEU: Supporting the health of Young People in Worcestershire 2007 Survey
[51] Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Children, Young People and Families
[52] Ofsted Annual Performance Assessment Dataset for Worcestershire for 2007

Bullying is a major national agenda and was identified by the Children's Commissioner for England as the top agenda for young people[53]. This concern is reflected in Worcestershire, where young people reported both an experience of, and concern about, bullying which was above the national average[54].

Educational achievement is a critical determinant of good life chances in adulthood. Although Worcestershire's performance remains above average, the gap with similar areas is narrowing and it still means that less than half of all young people do not achieve 5 GCSE's at A* to C grade including Maths and English[55].

Nearly half of all respondents (48%) to the June 2007 Citizens' Panel survey did do not think that children have enough **opportunity to play** safely and freely within walking or cycling distance of their home. Providing more **activities for teenagers** was also the top priority for improvement from the Best Value General Satisfaction User Survey.

10.3. Actions over the next five years

- Implement Worcestershire's Children and Young People's Plan Action Plan 2008 – 2011.
- Continue the work of the Joint Commissioning Board of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership to implement its phased work plan to make best use of available resources, and to target resources effectively in those areas where children and young people are not doing so well.
- Measure and weigh children in year 6 and reception classes in school as part of our new Obesity Strategy. This will establish a baseline against which further progress can be judged when year 6 and reception children are measured and weighed in future years.
- Continue to roll out the Healthy Schools programme to schools and assist 100 early years providers to work towards 'Healthy Settings' status.
- Continue to work on the revised Teenage Pregnancy and Parenting Action Plan.
- Improve sex and relationship education in schools, with a particular focus on young people attending schools in areas of identified need.
- Make sure all professionals working with young people are fully trained on how to talk to young people about sex and relationship issues.
- Improve systems for collecting and electronically recording the incidence of bullying, ensuring there is consistent recording and reporting.

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[53] Bullying Today – Children's Commissioner Office, 2007
[54] Audit Commission TellUs 2 Survey 2007
[55] Ofsted Annual Performance Assessment Dataset for Worcestershire for 2007

- Use data on bullying and the results of ongoing consultations to further develop the anti-bullying strategy.
- Develop systems for recording bullying and the impact of strategies in out of school settings.
- Hold roadshows for practitioners, parents/carers and families in all communities and school clusters on how to address bullying.
- Work with schools to continue to improve performance at each key stage of education from foundation to post 16.
- Work with schools where there is evidence of underachievement, and intervene where necessary to ensure that problems are resolved and schools improve.
- Continue to work with schools to increase the percentage of young people who achieve five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C.
- Implement the national improvement strategies for primary and secondary schools, and supporting schools where underachievement is apparent, so that children can achieve more at school.
- Continue to show that young people's achievement improves as they progress through school (referred to as 'value added' measure).
- Put in place an integrated youth support strategy so that all young people receive information, advice and guidance, are able to access positive activities and receive targeted support when the need arises.
- Increase the number of educational and recreational leisure time activities for young people.
- Further develop Play Strategy Action Plans for each district council.
- Develop partnerships at a local level through the Community and Schooling Clusters, so that there are local solutions to meet local needs.
- Develop and make information for parents available through the Family Services Directory, particularly for children at the point they transfer to and between school, college or employment.
- Promote the www.plugandplay.org.uk website to coordinate, publicise and promote positive activities for young people across Worcestershire.

10.4. Benefits to Worcestershire

- More children and young people with healthy diets
- Fewer women under 19 becoming pregnant
- Fewer children and young people are bullied
- More children and young people who are bullied are helped and supported
- A wide range of learning experiences are available, giving children and young people skills for life
- Better results at school, especially for those groups who usually do less well

- Greater access by children, young people and their families to community resources

SECTION ELEVEN - STRONGER COMMUNITIES

The Stronger Communities theme differs from others in the Community Strategy in that it brings together five discrete outcomes, which taken together with the other themes in the strategy, are key in shaping the places that people live – and their experience of living in them. The Stronger Communities section deals with housing need and mix, increasing opportunities for participation in cultural and volunteering opportunities, addressing income deprivation and improving the passenger transport network.

Priority Outcomes

1. To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire
2. To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all
3. To support effective volunteering that is accessible to all
4. To reduce income deprivation including child and pensioner poverty
5. To deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network

11.1. To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire

11.1.1. Why is this outcome a priority?

Suitable, decent and affordable housing helps to ensure that local residents enjoy a good quality of life and it also makes a significant contribution to the sustainability of urban and rural communities in Worcestershire. Housing impacts on a wide range of customers and services within the county and an inclusive, partnership approach is essential to achieve successful outcomes for local people.

More new homes, with a focus on affordability, is a Government priority. Ongoing assessments of housing need highlight this as a growing problem in Worcestershire and there is a clear aspiration to address this need through targets for housing completions. Those Worcestershire Partnership members who have land available for disposal have agreed to consider, where appropriate, its disposal to Housing Associations for affordable housing. As a result, additional general needs and supported housing schemes, which also attract Housing Corporation funding are now being developed. New homes need to be affordable, whether rented or for shared ownership, well designed and sustainable and must meet the needs of people now and

into the future. New housing can be a catalyst for economic growth and regeneration and help sustain and support local communities across Worcestershire.

The Government has set targets for achieving the **Decent Homes Standard** to improve conditions in both socially rented and private homes and this is supported by a range of funding and advice interventions by local authorities, and working with partners such as Housing Associations, private landlords and the Care and Repair agencies. There are proven links between property standards and health and there will be a focus upon improving energy efficiency, tackling fuel poverty and reducing domestic carbon dioxide emissions as part of the climate change agenda. It is vital to recognise the importance of our existing housing stock and to improve and preserve it for future generations.

There is a strong commitment to ensuring that **older and vulnerable people** within our communities receive the support they need to enable them to live independently where possible. This is supported by a robust partnership approach as set out in a range of countywide strategies which include Supporting People, Older People and Homelessness Strategies. Ensuring that a range of housing options are available and that there is a focus on **homelessness prevention** underpins the strategic approach to housing in Worcestershire.

11.1.2. Actions over the next five years

- Work in partnership to evidence local needs and to use this to develop policy responses.
- Maximise the development of new affordable housing in sustainable rural and urban locations to meet local needs whilst ensuring that new homes are well designed, more energy efficient and produce less carbon dioxide emissions.
- Increase the range of housing options available for local people and preventing homelessness wherever possible but, when this cannot be achieved, supporting people in temporary accommodation and securing alternative housing.
- Make the best use of the existing stock and ensuring that choices are made available for people to live in good quality, suitable accommodation which meets their needs.
- Tackle fuel poverty by improving affordable warmth and thermal comfort particularly for vulnerable people and those on low incomes.
- Provide a range of housing and support options for older and vulnerable people to enable them to maintain their independence.
- Ensure that housing related services contribute to other key policy areas such as community safety, health, social care, sustainability, regeneration and climate change.

11.1.3. Benefits to Worcestershire

- Reduced levels of homelessness and temporary accommodation
- Increased levels of independent living
- More choice of housing and support options for older and vulnerable people
- Improved standards of accommodation
- Reduction in fuel poverty
- More mixed and sustainable local communities

11.2. Improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all

11.2.1. Why is this outcome a priority?

Access to culture, leisure and recreation has a key role to play in enhancing the quality of life in Worcestershire. Recent government research[56] shows that **cultural and recreational activity** has a positive impact on the way that people feel about the place wher they live, as well as having personal benefits to individuals in terms of improved health, confidence, independence and providing opportunities for learning and self expression. Culture has a significant role to play in **regeneration and boosting the economy**, for example through the creative industries. Section 5 demonstrated how actions relating to this outcome contribute to many of the other themes in this strategy.

11.2.2. Actions over the next five years

- Through the countywide network of facilities and services, engage adults onto a wide range of high quality, challenging and inspiring learning opportunities to enhance the intellectual and emotional well-being and economic prosperity of individuals, society and for community cohesion.
- Use innovative ways to broaden access to Worcestershire's heritage (museums, archaeology and archives) for everyone in the county to develop a sense of place and identity and a pride in where they live.
- Enable all children and young people to access quality sport and play opportunities through the direct provision of facilities and services and the implementation and delivery of Worcestershire Play Strategy and Physical Education and School Sport Club Links Strategy and associated district action plans.

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[56] DCMS Culture on Demand

- Work closely with professional and voluntary arts organisations and individuals to develop and enable a wide range of opportunities for all people in Worcestershire to take part in the arts in all its forms.
- Maintain and where possible improve standards on parks and countryside sites and routes through the implementation of the Worcestershire Countryside Access and Recreation Strategy and the Rights of Way Improvement Plan.
- Directly provide, or assist the voluntary sector in providing, high quality leisure events for our local communities.
- Continue to support and recognise the significant contribution that our thriving voluntary and community sector makes to culture across Worcestershire, through the provision of grants, facilities, promotion and publicity of activities, information, advice and guidance appropriate to the array of clubs, organisations and groups within the county.

11.2.3. Benefits to Worcestershire

- There will be more opportunities for people to enjoy and participate in cultural activities
- People will feel more able to participate in society with improved confidence, health or education as a result of involvement in a cultural opportunity
- There will be increased quality of, and access to, the natural environment
- Worcestershire will benefit economically through increased tourism
- People will be better able to understand others through arts and culture, contributing to community cohesion
- The cultural heritage of Worcestershire will be preserved for future generations to enjoy

11.3. Support effective volunteering that is accessible to all

11.3.1. Why is this outcome a priority?

Volunteers make an invaluable contribution to the quality of life in Worcestershire. Their commitment benefits those they work with, the voluntary groups and services they support, local employers, the community and the environment[57]. Their activities also benefit the volunteers themselves, offering them new experiences and helping them develop new skills, in some cases providing an opportunity to put something back into society, in others a chance to re-build confidence and self-esteem.

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[57] The value of the wider VCS in Worcestershire was evidenced by research carried out by Sustain Consultancy – Valuing the Voluntary and Community Sector in Herefordshire and Worcestershire – January 2007

11.3.2. Actions over the next five years[58]

- Reduce barriers to volunteering and ensuring that volunteering activity is valued, adequately resourced and well managed.
- Promote the importance, recognition and value of volunteering throughout Worcestershire.
- Develop, promote and continuously improve standards of good practice in working within voluntary organisations and in supporting all aspects of volunteering.
- Promote equal opportunity to volunteering.
- Improve the accessibility and opportunities for volunteering.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of volunteer-placing organisations and those of individual volunteers.
- Enable leaders within the volunteering sector to work together throughout Worcestershire to unite as partners.

11.3.3. Benefits to Worcestershire

- More residents have opportunities to develop skills and employability
- Isolation is reduced, with opportunities to develop more and new social contacts
- Volunteers are engaged in their community
- Community cohesion is increased
- Skills and knowledge about volunteering are shared between partners and sectors

11.4. Reduce income deprivation, including child and pensioner poverty

11.4.1. Why is this a priority outcome?

A total of six areas in Worcestershire – the Old Warndon and South-West Gorse Hill areas in Worcester City, the Rifle Range and Horsefair areas in Kidderminster, Batchley in Redditch and part of the Westlands estate in Droitwich - have rankings in the top 10% most deprived in England for **income deprivation** affecting children. National research shows that the highest concentration of child poverty outside London is in the West Midlands[59].

A further 14 areas in Worcestershire are within the top 10% most deprived areas nationally for income deprivation affecting older people. Eleven of these areas are in Redditch. Furthermore, the rural nature of

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[58] Note these actions reflect the Worcestershire Volunteering Strategy and the Worcestershire Compact Code of Practice on Volunteering
[59] Households Below Average Income 1994/95-2003/04. DWP & National Statistics (2005).

large parts of the county can disguise smaller pockets of deprivation, often caused by isolation and poor access to services[60].

Poverty has a direct impact on the health of those affected. **Problem debt** can result in stress, depression or anxiety and cutting back on food or heating also affects physical health[61]. **Low household income** in childhood can be at the root of many of the cycles of deprivation, often leading to poor education attainment and low self-esteem[62] and, in some circumstances, to crime and re-offending. Research shows that almost a fifth of prisoners in the UK experience problems with rent arrears, unpaid bill and fines; problems that many find worsen while they are in prison[63].

The Worcestershire Partnership recognises that poverty can affect a number of vulnerable groups in the county, including families living in deprived areas, people with disabilities and their carers, prisoners and migrant workers. By taking a joint approach to tackling issues of fuel poverty, unmanageable debt and financial exclusion and improving access to services across the county, the life chances of Worcestershire's residents can be improved.

11.4.2. Actions over the next five years

- Establish a countywide task group to take a coordinated approach to tackling issues leading to child and pensioner poverty and developing an action plan.
- Improve benefit administration, with the emphasis on benefit take-up, by joining up services and challenging negative perceptions.
- Build on the work of the Third Age Joint Worcestershire County Council and Department for Work and Pensions Team and the Signposting Service, to increase the take up of benefits amongst pensioners and help to alleviate poverty.
- Reduce over-indebtedness and financial exclusion by working alongside and building on existing work of organisations such as Black Pear Savings and Loans – Worcestershire's Credit Union and Citizens Advice Bureaux.
- Ensure close links with existing initiatives to reduce worklessness, to support those who want to work but cannot due to incapacity or family pressures, back into employment.
- Tackle fuel poverty by providing advice and guidance on energy efficiency in the home.

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[60] Rural disadvantage: Reviewing the evidence. Commission for Rural Communities (2006)
[61] Action on Debt: why it matters and what you can do. Social Exclusion Unit (2004), p. 4
[62] Breaking the Cycle: taking stock of progress and priorities for the future. Social Exclusion Unit (2004)
[63] Through the Prison Gate: a joint thematic review by HM Inspectorates of Prisons & Probation, Home Office (2001)

11.4.3. Benefits to Worcestershire

- Fewer children and pensioners living at or below the poverty line
- Fewer children living in households in receipt of out of work benefits
- Increase in residents – particularly pensioners – taking up the benefits to which they are entitled
- Fewer residents taking on unmanageable debt and reduced incidences of loan sharking
- Increase in levels of financial literacy in the county
- Reduction in health inequalities in the most economically disadvantaged parts of the county

11.5. Deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network

11.5.1. Why is this a priority outcome

The "rural proofing" exercise carried out on the Draft Community Strategy and feedback from the consultation highlighted the importance of the transport network and in particular the **availability, integration and accessibility of passenger transport** as a key issue for the County. Public Transport (now more commonly known as Passenger Transport) was high on the list of priorities for improvement in Worcestershire according to the Best Value Performance Satisfaction Survey of 2006. In response this additional priority outcome has been included in the Community Strategy.

Transport is critical to the performance of the Worcestershire economy. It provides access to work, shops, education, health care and leisure facilities and services. In some areas this needs to be improved, particularly in respect of sustainable modes of transport such as walking, cycling and passenger transport. Providing integrated passenger transport involves working with a wide range of partners and service providers to ensure that the different **passenger transport services and policies complement each other,** making it easier for the passenger to travel. So, for example, buses are scheduled to arrive at rail stations at times that reflect train arrivals, or one ticket can be used on different services.

Delivering a more accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network will improve the performance of the transport provision in Worcestershire. It will **increase the range of facilities and services accessible by passenger transport** opening up choices and opportunities for those without access to a car and providing a realistic alternative to the car

for others. This is fully in keeping with national and regional transport and land use planning policies, which require a balanced and integrated approach to transport planning.

This outcome is also consistent with the longer-term transport strategies for the County. The delivery of this outcome will require investment in additional and improved passenger transport services and infrastructure. Funding, including from external sources, will need to be sought and secured in order to deliver our long-term ambitions in this area.

11.5.2. Actions over the next 5 years

- Deliver the action plans set out in existing local transport policies, strategies and plans.
- Reduce the reliance on private car travel through improvements to walking, cycling and passenger transport infrastructure and services.
- Develop proposals for a high quality and accessible bus network (in line with the Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy), which will protect buses from the effects of traffic congestion, deliver higher quality buses, bus stops, passenger information and provide a higher quality service.
- Develop integrated ticketing options across different passenger transport services.
- Work with national and regional partners to implement wide ranging improvements to the local rail network, both facilities and services.
- Develop proposals for improvements to railway stations in Worcestershire, including Bromsgrove and Kidderminster, Worcester Foregate Street, Malvern Link and Hartlebury stations, and the development of Worcester Parkway.
- Work with bus and rail operators and other partners to improve information on passenger transport.
- Enhance existing and implement new walking and cycling routes and priority measures across the County.
- Develop Community Transport and other accessible services across the County.

11.5.3. Benefits to Worcestershire

- Improved choice for those without access to a car and a realistic alternative to the car for others, offering a genuine choice of transport options
- Enhanced cycling and pedestrian facilities
- More reliable, convenient and attractive passenger transport services

- Improved accessibility by passenger transport to jobs, services and facilities
- Safer and more accessible bus stops and railway stations
- Better information for the public
- Newer, more accessible buses
- Increased public satisfaction with the transport network
- Reduced congestion
- Environmental improvements for local communities

SECTION TWELVE - IMPLEMENTING AND MONITORING THE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

12.1. Delivering the outcomes in the Sustainable Community Strategy

This table shows the key delivery mechanisms for each of the priority outcomes in this Community Strategy. There will be other sub-strategies and action plans, produced by theme groups and individual organisations, and these will constantly change and develop as the strategy is delivered. However, this table highlights some of the main places where you can find out more about how and when we will be delivering our priorities. You will find further explanation about these mechanisms below.

Table 4 – Delivery Mechanisms for Community Strategy Outcomes

PRIORITY OUTCOME	DELIVERY PLAN
Communities that are safe and feel safe	
1. To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	Local Area Agreement Community Safety Partnerships' Crime and Disorder Strategies
2. To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs and alcohol	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team (SMAT) Strategies
A better environment for today and tomorrow	
1. To protect and improve Worcestershire's natural and historic environment	Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans AONB Management Plans District Local Development Frameworks
2. To promote the prevention, re-use, recycling and recovery of waste	Local Area Agreement Waste Core Strategy Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Climate Change Strategy
3. To address issues of water quality, supply, and consumption and land drainage in Worcestershire	Local Area Agreement District Local Development Frameworks Environment Agency's Flood Management and River Basin Management Plans
4. To increase energy efficiency and increase the	Local Area Agreement Climate Change Strategy District Local Development Frameworks

proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	
Economic success that is shared by all	
1. To promote technology-led growth benefiting all sectors and parts of the county	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Economic Partnership Joint Investment Plan
2. To support the sustainable development of the county through infrastructure development (in particular transport infrastructure), and establishing Worcester as a growth point	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Economic Partnership Joint Investment Plan Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2 Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy and Worcester Transport Strategy South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy District Local Development Frameworks
3. To remove barriers to employment and improve skills	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Economic Partnership Joint Investment Plan
4. To ensure that Worcestershire's economic interests are effectively represented at all levels	Worcestershire Economic Partnership Joint Investment Plan
Improving health and well-being	
1. To support adults to lead healthier lifestyles	Local Area Agreement Public Health Business Plan Health Improvement Plan (in development)
2. To reduce health inequalities	Local Area Agreement Public Health Business Plan Health Improvement Plan (in development)
3. To improve the quality of life and independence of older people and those with a long-term illness	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older Peoples Services Worcestershire Joint Commissioning Strategy for Learning Disability
4. To improve mental health and well-being	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Joint Commissioning Strategy for Mental Health
Meeting the needs of children and young people	
1. To support children, young people and families to lead healthy lifestyles	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan

2. To identify and deal effectively with bullying and support all children, young people and families who have been affected by it	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan
3. To raise the educational achievement of all children and young people	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan
4. To ensure children, young people and their families have access to positive things to do and enjoy in their communities	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan
Stronger Communities	
1. To provide decent, appropriate and affordable housing that meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	Local Area Agreement District Housing Strategies Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy District Core Strategies
2. To improve quality of life in Worcestershire by providing vibrant cultural and sporting opportunities for all	Local Area Agreement Cultural Theme Group – Task Group Action Plans
3. To support effective volunteering that is accessible to all	Worcestershire Volunteering Strategy
4. To reduce income deprivation including child and pensioner poverty	Local Area Agreement Poverty Task Group Delivery Plans
5. To deliver an accessible, affordable, safe, convenient, sustainable and integrated passenger transport network	Local Area Agreement Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy Worcestershire Accessibility Strategy Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2 Worcestershire Cycling Strategy

Cross-Cutting Themes	
1. To raise awareness of the issue of Climate Change	Climate Change Strategy All theme group and LAA delivery plans
2. To reduce harmful Climate Change causing gas emissions across the county	Local Area Agreement Climate Change Strategy All theme group and LAA delivery plans
3. To assist adaptation to the impacts of Climate Change on the county	Local Area Agreement Climate Change Strategy All theme group and LAA delivery plans
4. To empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in the planning, design and delivery of public services	All theme group and LAA delivery plans
5. To build more inclusive communities	All theme group and LAA delivery plans
6. To improve integration in our communities	Local Area Agreement All theme group & LAA delivery plans

12.2. Local Area Agreement (LAA)
- The first Worcestershire Local Area Agreement

The **LAA** is an agreement between central government and public bodies in Worcestershire. It is prepared by the County Council on behalf of the Worcestershire Partnership and negotiated with the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM). In **2006** the Worcestershire Partnership signed its first LAA, which will run until 2009. The LAA follows the themes of this Community Strategy. It contains 39 outcomes with associated indicators and targets. This includes 13 reward targets. These targets encourage us to stretch our performance beyond what we would normally achieve. If we are successful by the end of the agreement we will be rewarded with additional money.

The partnership has set up an easy to use model that tracks progress against LAA targets using a 'traffic light' system. Outcomes are reported as being on target (green), borderline (amber), or below target (red). This model enables the partnership to check that we are

on course for success – or to take corrective action. You can see this system and review the progress made on our first LAA at http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/ten/laa/index.html. The LAA is reviewed with GOWM every six months.

12.2.1. The Worcestershire LAA 2008-2011

The Government has described a new role for **LAAs as the main delivery mechanism for sustainable community strategies (SCS)** across the country, and as the central delivery contract between central Government and local government and its partners.

Worcestershire's new LAA was signed in June 2008 and draws on the outcomes identified in this Community Strategy to set specific **measures for delivery.** Some of the measures in Worcestershire's LAA have been negotiated with GOWM to reflect national priorities, others were driven by the partnership and reflect our local issues and concerns as expressed in the Story of Place and this Community Strategy.

The LAA does not specify HOW the partnership will deliver the outcomes – but focuses on WHAT the desired outcome will be, in a way that is easily measurable. Once partners have agreed to a target in the LAA they are individually and jointly responsible for making sure that it is delivered.

To meet the reporting requirements of the LAA, we have agreed **13 priority outcomes,** compared to the 29 that are contained in the Community Strategy. In some cases, different wording has been used to express the outcome we are seeking to achieve. However, clear links can be made between LAA priorities and Community Strategy outcomes.

Worcestershire's new LAA contains **32 national** improvement targets for the area, **three locally defined** targets and **16 mandatory performance targets** from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). The LAA is reviewed with GOWM every six months and there is an opportunity to modify measures and targets on an annual basis.

This LAA will follow a new approach to **allocating funding**. Most funding for core services will come mainly from the Revenue Support Grant, which is not ring fenced. There will also be another non-ring fenced grant, the Area Based Grant (ABG), which will contain funding streams from across Government departments.

In addition, other funding will come through specific grants. In some limited circumstances this will happen where funding allocations are

difficult to predict and are uncertain (e.g. grants which are demand-led).

There will also be a further round of rewards against the new LAA, although this will be lower than it has been in the past and will be awarded for performance against the whole agreement, rather than a limited number of identified targets.

You can see a full list of Worcestershire's improvement targets at http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk/home/index/wp-laa.htm.

12.3. Worcestershire Partnership Management Group and Theme Groups and District LSPs

The Worcestershire Partnership Board recognised the need for a smaller group to manage the day to day running of the LAA and so the **Management Group** was formed, consisting of representatives from the key sectors on the Board.

The Management Group is responsible for **performance managing** the targets we set ourselves in the LAA.

The partnership's **theme groups** lead on delivering the outcome measures. The people responsible for coordinating each of the thematic blocks of the LAA report to the Management Group on a rotating basis. Together they review progress against delivery plans, including how the theme groups are contributing to progress against our three cross-cutting themes. This enables them to identify when problems arise and address these before it is too late. The Management Group has also appointed a performance management champion who closely monitors the performance of all partners responsible for delivering the agreement.

All of the **district LSPs** will be delivering actions against the themes in this Community Strategy at the local level.

In addition district LSPs are represented on the Worcestershire Partnership Board, Management Group and thematic groups – ensuring continuity and co-ordination of activity at the local and strategic level.

12.4. Local Development Frameworks (LDFs)

Section 3 of this strategy sets out the relationship between the Community Strategy and spatial plans. The **LDFs** will provide the spatial expression of this Community Strategy and the district community strategies, as these are the documents that will detail how land will be allocated for uses such as housing and employment use.

12.5. Through other agencies and partnerships

The Worcestershire Partnership aims to ensure that the county's needs and interests are advocated and recognised at the **regional and national** level.

The partnership recognises that the whole Community Strategy cannot be delivered within the county. It will also influence the planning and decision-making processes of other regional and national agencies and partnerships over the coming years.

12.6. Through detailed strategies and action plans

The table above identifies some of the key plans and strategies that will contribute towards the delivery of this Community Strategy. Appendix 1 lists the **key plans and strategies** that we have had regard to in the development of this Community Strategy. Many of these documents (especially Worcestershire and district and local plans and strategies) will also enable the delivery of the Community Strategy, as they will contain more detail and specific actions that will be taken to address the themes and outcomes described in this document.

APPENDIX ONE – KEY PLANS AND STRATEGIES

European Plans and Strategies

1. European Landscape Convention, 2004, Congress of Regional & Local Authorities of the Council of Europe

National Plans and Strategies

1. Strong and Prosperous Communities, Local Government White Paper October 2007,CLG
2. Our Shared Futures, June 2007, Commission on Integration and Cohesion
3. Making Assets Work – The Quirk Review of community management and ownership of public assets, Quirk Review Team
4. Opening the transfer window: The government's response to the Quirk Review, CLG
5. Working together for well-being: from vision to reality, LGA
6. UK Climate Change Programme, 2006, DEFRA
7. National Community Safety Action Plan, 2006 –2009, Home Office
8. Crime and Disorder Act Review, 2006, Home Office
9. Together We Can Action Plan, June 2005, Home Office
10. Respect Action Plan, January 2006, Home Office
11. Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy, 2004, Cabinet Office
12. Cleaner Safer Communities, November 2004, ODPM
13. Tackling Drugs Changing Lives, Home Office
14. Cutting Crime: A New Partnership 2008-11, Home Office
15. Countryside Quality Counts – Tracking Change in the English Countryside, 2006, Natural England
16. National Planning Policy Guidance & Statements, CLG
17. Heritage White Paper, 2007, DCMS
18. Woodfuel Strategy for England, 2006, Forestry Commission
19. Developing our Water Resources Strategy for England & Wales, Consultation Document, 2007, Environment Agency
20. Waste Strategy, 2007, DEFRA
21. Energy White Paper, 2007, DTI
22. Delivering a Sustainable Railway: White Paper, 2007,DfT
23. Planning White Paper, 2007, CLG
24. Choosing Health: making healthy choices easier, 2004, DoH
25. Our Health, Our Care, Our Say, January 2006, DoH
26. Game Plan: a strategy for delivering Government's sport and physical activity objectives, 2002, DCMS
27. Tackling Childhood Obesity – First Steps, Audit Commission
28. Bullying Today, 2007, Children's Commissioner Office
29. Code for Sustainable Homes – a step-change in sustainable home building practice, 2006, CLG

30. Delivering Housing Strategy through Local Area Agreements, Chartered Institute of Housing & IDeA
31. Homes for the Future: more affordable, more sustainable. Housing Green Paper, 2007, CLG
32. Culture on Demand, 2007, DCMS
33. Culture & the Shared Priorities, 2004, DCMS/LGA
34. Action on Debt – Why It Matters and What You Can Do, 2004, Social Exclusion Unit
35. Breaking the Cycle, 2004, Social Exclusion Unit
36. Through the Prison Gate: a Joint Thematic Review, 2001, HM Inspectorates of Prisons & Probation, Home Office

Regional Plans and Strategies

1. WM Regional Spatial Strategy, 2004 and subsequent revisions, West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA)
2. WM Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revisions Options Consultation, January 2007, WMRA
3. WM Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revisions Preferred Option, October 2007, WMRA
4. Worcestershire Partnership response to WM Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revisions Options Consultation, Worcestershire Partnership
5. West Midlands Economic Strategy Consultation Draft, May 2007, Advantage West Midlands (AWM)
6. Regional Skills Assessment, 2006, West Midlands Regional Skills Partnership
7. West Midlands Visitor Economy Strategy, 2007, AWM
8. Regional Biodiversity Strategy, 2005, West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership
9. Green Infrastructure Strategy for the West Midlands, Forestry Commission
10. West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy & Adaptation Programme, 2004, Energy West Midlands
11. Regional Assembly Climate Change Action Plan, 2007, West Midlands Regional Assembly
12. Healthy Choice? You Decide: Developing a Regional Health and Well-Being Strategy, West Midlands Regional Health Partnership
13. West Midlands Regional Lifestyle Survey
14. Investing in Health, A Strategic Framework for the West Midlands, 2007 – 2012, NHS West Midlands
15. West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy, 2005, West Midlands Regional Assembly
16. Valuing People & Places: West Midlands Cultural Strategy, 2006, Culture West Midlands

Sub-Regional Plans and Strategies

1. Rural Regeneration Zone Implementation Plan, 2007-2010, AWM
2. West Mercia Divisional Policing Plan, 2005-2008, West Mercia Police
3. West Mercia Fear of Crime Survey, 2006, West Mercia Police
4. Severn River Basin District - River Basin Planning: working together, statement of steps and consultation measures for preparing Severn River Basin management plan, Environment Agency
5. Water for life and livelihoods – River Basin Planning: summary of significant water management issues (Severn River Basin District), 2007, Environment Agency

Worcestershire Plans and Strategies[64]

Cross – Cutting Themes
1. Impacts of Climate Change in Worcestershire, 2004, Worcestershire County Council
2. Worcestershire Climate Change Strategy, 2004, Worcestershire County Council
3. Worcestershire Flood Recovery Plan, Worcestershire, August 2007
4. Worcestershire Citizens Panel Surveys (February 2003 and May 2005, June 2007)
5. Worcestershire Best Value General Satisfaction Survey 2006
6. An investigation into the barriers to integration as perceived by young people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds in the Worcestershire area, Worcestershire Racial Equality Council
7. West Midlands Forgotten Minority, Meeting the needs of the Gypsy Traveller Community, November 2007
8. Economic Impact of Migrant Workers in the West Midlands, November 2007, West Midlands Regional Observatory

Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe
9. Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Strategy (CSP) 2005 – 2008
10. Redditch CSP Strategy, 2005 - 2007
11. South Worcestershire CSP Strategy 2005 – 2008
12. Wyre Forest CSP Strategy 2005 – 2008
13. West Mercia Divisional Policing Plans 2005 – 2008
14. Worcestershire Domestic Abuse Strategy
15. Worcestershire SMAT Treatment Plans (adult, young people)

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[64] We recognise that, due to the linked nature of many of the Community Strategy outcomes, many of these Strategies and Plans will have impacts across the themes. However to avoid repetition they have been listed here only once

16. Tackling Substance Misuse in Worcestershire: A Partnership Approach 2008 - 2011

A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow
17. Biodiversity – Endangered Wildlife of Worcestershire, 1998, Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership
18. Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment, 1999
19. Biodiversity Action Plan for Worcestershire, 1999, Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership
20. Worcestershire State of the Environment Report, Worcestershire Partnership Environment Group
21. Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, 2004 – 2034, Worcestershire County Council, District Councils and Herefordshire Council
22. Malvern Hills and Cotswolds AONB Management Plans 2004 – 2009 and subsequent revisions

Economic Success that is Shared by All
23. Worcestershire County Economic Summary
24. State of Worcestershire Economy 2007,Worcestershire Partnership, Economy & Transport Theme Group
25. Worcestershire Economic Strategy, 2004, Worcestershire Partnership, Economy & Transport Theme Group
26. Destination Worcestershire Business Plan, 2007, Destination Worcestershire
27. Worcestershire Rural Action Plan, 2004, Worcestershire Partnership, Economy & Transport Theme Group
28. Worcestershire Food & Drink Action Plan, Worcestershire Partnership, Economy & Transport Theme Group
29. Strengthening Worcestershire's Economy Fact Sheet, Worcestershire County Council
30. Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2, 2006 – 2011, Worcestershire County Council
31. Worcester Transport Strategy

Improving Health and Well-Being
32. Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older Peoples Services 2008 - 2009
33. Day Services for Older People, Draft Strategy, September 2007
34. Worcestershire Supporting People Five Year Plan
35. Worcestershire Joint Commissioning Strategy for Mental Health, 2007 – 2012, Worcestershire Mental Health Trust
36. Worcestershire Suicide Prevention Strategy
37. Interim Carers Strategy April 2008/09
38. Countywide Strategy for Telecare 2007 - 2011
39. Joint Commissioning Strategy for Learning Disability
40. Work to develop the Joint County Council / PCT Strategic Needs Assessment

Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People

41. Making life better: Every child and young person, every agency, one plan. Worcestershire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009, Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership
42. Worcestershire's Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011- Every child, Every Young Person, Every Agency, One Plan.
43. Raising Standards in Schools Fact Sheet, 2007, Worcestershire County Council
44. TellUs2 Survey of Children and Young People, June 2007
45. The Big Questionnaire, February 2008
46. Joint Strategic Assessment of Need for Children Young People and Families in Worcestershire, July 2008

Stronger Communities

47. Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy
48. "Unlocking the Door to Meeting Housing Needs in Bromsgrove District" – 2006 – 2011
49. Malvern Hills Housing Strategy 2006- 2009
50. Redditch BC Housing Strategy Statement 2005 –2009
51. Worcester City Council Housing Strategy 2004 – 2009
52. Wychavon Housing Strategy 2005 – 2008
53. Wyre Forest DC Housing Strategy 2004 - 2007
54. Living Life to the Full: A Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire, 2002-2007, Worcestershire Partnership Cultural Theme Group
55. Worcestershire Play Strategy
56. Worcestershire Arts Strategy, Worcestershire County Council
57. Physical Education and School Sport Club Links Strategy
58. Worcestershire Countryside Access & Recreation Strategy, 2007, Worcestershire County Council
59. Worcestershire Rights of Way Improvement Plan, Worcestershire County Council
60. Valuing Worcestershire Volunteers in 2007 and beyond – draft, 2007, Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium
61. Valuing Worcestershire Volunteers, 2006-2007, Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium
62. Worcestershire Compact, 2006 (and Volunteering Code of Practice, 2007), Worcestershire Partnership
63. Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium 10 Year Strategy, 2006-2016, Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium
64. Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy
65. Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy, 14 Best Practice Reports, 2007,Worcestershire County Council
66. Worcestershire Accessibility Strategy 2006 –2011, Worcestershire County Council
67. Worcestershire Cycling Strategy, Worcestershire County Council

District⁶⁵ / Local Plans

1. Community Strategy for Worcester 2nd edition 2007 – 2012, Worcester Alliance
2. Shaping the Future Together, Wychavon Community Strategy, September 2007, Wychavon Core Group
3. Sustainable Community Strategy, Malvern Hills District, 2006 – 2016, Malvern Hills Partnership
4. Making a Real Difference, Community Strategy 2008-2014, Wyre Forest Matters
5. Your District, Your Future, Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy, 2007 – 2010, Bromsgrove Partnership
6. Redditch Partnership Draft Sustainable Community Strategy Consultation Document, January 2008
7. Written submissions from Bromsgrove LSP, Vision 21 Malvern Hills, Worcester Alliance, Wyre Forest Matters, Wychavon Core Group about district LSP priorities for inclusion in the County SCS
8. Written submission from Wychavon DC and Worcester City Council
9. South Worcestershire Joint Core Strategy, Draft, November 2007, Malvern Hills DC, Worcester City DC, Wychavon DC
10. Wyre Forest Core Strategy, Issues and Options Paper, July 2007, Wyre Forest DC
11. Bromsgrove Core Strategy, Issues and Options Paper, June 2005 (preferred option in development 2007), Bromsgrove DC
12. Redditch Town Plan No.3 (core strategy in development 2007), Redditch BC
13. Central Technology Belt Business Plan, 2002 onwards, CTB
14. University of Worcester Strategic Plan, 2007-2012, University of Worcester
15. Community Housing Business Plan, Wyre Forest Community Housing

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⁶⁵ NOTE – District SCS's have been built on a local evidence base that will refer to district, neighbourhood and parish plans as appropriate – these references have therefore not been reproduced here

APPENDIX TWO – WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Worcestershire Partnership structure chart (see Figure 3 below) shows how the partnership is organised to deliver Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement and our Sustainable Community Strategy. The Worcestershire Partnership Board is the strategic body of the partnership and develops the vision for Worcestershire. The Management Group ensures the continuous development of the Worcestershire Partnership as a driving force for change, picks up on key themes and issues from the theme groups and oversees the development of the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement on behalf of the Worcestershire Partnership Board. The theme groups are the 'engine rooms' of the partnership and are responsible for turning strategy into practice. There are also three task groups that focus on specific areas of interest.

Worcestershire Partnership Board
The Worcestershire Partnership Board is the strategic body of the partnership and is responsible for:

- Identifying and agreeing strategic priorities for the county
- Shaping the countywide Community Strategy and Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement
- Gaining partner agreement to the vision, values and outcomes of the partnership
- Agreeing the roles and responsibilities of the key elements of the wider partnership structure and delegating work to them
- Debating issues of mutual interest and concern
- Identify cross-cutting issues and gaps and overlaps in countywide provision
- Representing Worcestershire at a regional and national level.

Membership

- Worcestershire County Council
- Wyre Forest District Council
- Wychavon District Council
- Worcester City Council
- Redditch Borough Council
- Malvern Hills District Council
- Bromsgrove District Council
- Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils
- Wyre Forest Matters
- Wychavon Local Strategic Partnerships
- Worcester Alliance
- Redditch Partnership
- Malvern Hills Partnership

- Bromsgrove Partnership
- Worcestershire Primary Care Trust
- Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
- Chamber of Commerce
- Community First
- Diocese of Worcester
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council
- Jobcentre Plus
- Local Development Agency Network
- Racial Equality Council
- Thomas Vale Construction plc
- University of Worcester
- West Mercia National Probation Service
- West Mercia Police Constabulary
- Police Authority
- Worcestershire Wildlife Trust
- Worcestershire Partnerships NHS Mental Health Trust

Sustainable Community Strategy – Cabinet 17th July 2008

Worcestershire Assembly

Worcestershire Partnership Board

Support Team:
Partnership Co-ordinator
Communications and Policy Officer
Funding and Resources Manager
Policy Officer (Community Strategy & LAA)
Opportunities Coordinator 2012 Games

District LSPs

Management Group

Task Groups:
Community Strategy Task Group
Funding and Resources Group
Engaging Worcestershire Steering Group

Member Reference Group

Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership

Member Reference Group

Health and Social Care Board

Member Reference Group

Worcestershire Partnership for the Environment

Member Reference Group

Safer Communities Board

Member Reference Group

Economy and Transport Theme Group

Member Reference Group

Including Cultural Theme Group, Chief Housing Officers Group, Poverty Task Group

Meeting the needs of children and young people

Improving health and well-being

A better environment for today and tomorrow

Communities that are safe and feel safe

Economic success that is shared by all

Stronger Communities

All LAA blocks aligned with Community Strategy themes

APPENDIX THREE – EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN WORCESTERSHIRE

Community Engagement can be best described by using a simple model: **The Ladder of Participation**. The table below sets out each stage of the ladder, describes what it means and then gives some examples of work that is already happening in Worcestershire.

Table 5. Examples of Community Engagement in Worcestershire according to the Ladder of Participation

The Ladder	What does this mean?	Examples in Worcestershire
Informing	Telling people what is planned so that they are informed about what is happening.	e.g. Area Forums / Spotlights – County Council and partner meetings that enable information exchange on specific topics for people in a particular location. e.g. Council Tax leaflets give information about how councils, police and fire and rescue services spend public money.
Consulting	Asking people's opinion – consultation should offer a number of options and listen to the feedback received. The decision is made taking account of the results of consultation alongside other factors.	e.g Citizens Panels / Surveys – questionnaires that ask residents opinions on issues or topics – able to give a representative snapshot of opinion.
Deciding Together	Encourage people to provide some additional ideas and options, and to decide together the best way forward.	e.g. Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings - police led events linked to neighbourhood policing areas that enable residents to identify, prioritise and tackle issues of importance to them.
Acting Together	Not only do different interests decide together what is best, but also they form a partnership to carry it out. They are equally responsible for the outcome.	e.g. Oldington and Foley Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder – puts residents in charge of identifying the improvements needed in their area. e.g. Sure Start Childrens Centres – these projects aimed at pre school children and families include parents and residents in their management structures.
Supporting independent community initiatives	Help communities to meet their own needs - perhaps within a framework of grants, advice and support provided by a resource holder.	Community management and ownership of buildings – e.g community organisations leasing community centres. Worcestershire Partnership Funding Portal – offers a single point for organisations to obtain funding advice. The Parish Lengthsman scheme – the County Council contracts with parish councils to carry out road maintainance tasks Grant aid / funding to voluntary organisations – this funding is levered in from a wide range of sources and enhances and supports quality of life across the county.

WORCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP

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WWW.WORCESTERSHIREPARTNERSHIP.ORG.UK

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3RD SEPTEMBER 2008

CUSTOMER PANEL SURVEY (3) - SATISFACTION

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mike Webb
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive
Non-Key Decision	

1. **SUMMARY**

1.1 To inform Cabinet of the key findings of the third Customer Panel survey (a satisfaction survey) which took place in May - June 2008 (full report attached as Appendix 1, with Historical Benchmarking attached as Appendix 2, Responses to open questions as Appendix 3 and results from self-selecting sample of DUG and E&D Forum members as Appendix 4).

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1 That Cabinet considers the attached report and other appendices and notes its findings.

2.2 That Cabinet pays particular attention to the results for questions repeated from last year's survey which track the Council's progress (as perceived by the public) since the Council last ran a satisfaction survey in June 2007 (see Appendix 2 – Historical Benchmarking).

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 The new Comprehensive Area Assessment framework is heavily focussed on perception measures rather the process/output measures of CPA. The reporting of results such as ones returned for this survey are becoming progressively more important as Councils and their partners place greater emphasis on the need to be 'intelligence-led' in their decision-making. Councils across England will also be required to run the new national Place Survey from September-December 2008 which CLG have introduced to replace the former triennial BVPI general satisfaction survey. The results of the satisfaction survey therefore provide a useful indication of the potential results of the Place survey, which Bromsgrove District Council will be delivering as part of a consortium of Worcestershire and for which results will be reported in February 2009.

3.2 The Council's first Customer Panel Survey was run in May 2007 and results were reported to Cabinet in September 2007. That report provided officers

and Members with in-depth information about residents' opinions on the Council's priorities and levels of satisfaction with Council services. In order to track progress, the satisfaction survey was repeated in May 2008, and its summary findings were briefly presented to CMT and members of Executive Cabinet by the Assistant Chief Executive at the Away Day on 11th July 2008.

3.3 The attached report (Appendix 1) details the findings of the survey, which has been run by SNAP Surveys Ltd, with whom the Council has a contract. The emphasis of this survey has once again been on residents' satisfaction with Council services and their agreement with Council priorities. Members of Leader's Group may also remember that a residents' Quality of Life survey (based on the LAA themes) was run by the same company on the Council's behalf in February – March 2008 with the results being reported to them in May 2008.

3.4 The satisfaction survey was sent out to 1500 households across the district in May 2008. One reminder letter was sent and 611 responses were received representing a response rate of 41%. The confidence interval was 3.96%[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 page 10 of Appendix 1.

3.5 The Assistant Chief Executive and Senior Policy and Performance Officer visited meetings of the Council's Disabled Users Group and Equality and Diversity Forum in June 2008 to seek their views on the Council's Customer Standards and on their experiences of accessing Council services. It was decided to provide members of these groups with copies of the survey to identify any diverging and similar viewpoints with the main sample (of which 25% considered themselves disabled, 51% were aged over 55 and 4% were not White British). Members of the two groups were provided with 40 copies of the survey (in large print and other formats where requested) and a freepost envelope so that their responses could be returned to Snap surveys for analysis alongside the main sample.

3.6 11 responses from the Council's Disabled Users Group and Equality and Diversity Forum were received: a base size too low to be statistically robust but useful nonetheless in identifying differences and similarities with the results of the main sample. The results from these groups are attached as

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[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 3.96% on either side of the stated result.

Appendix 4 and should be treated as indicative only, particularly as this sample was self-selecting. The results do however reveal interesting information on the priorities of these groups (including a desire to replace the 'Housing' priority with 'Improving the quality of life of Older people – which reflects the preferences of the main sample). The DUG and E&D sample also gave more favourable responses to getting in contact with, receiving communication from, and influencing the Council.

3.7 In addition to visiting the Disabled Users Group and Equality and Diversity Forum the Council has recently been running District-wide resident focus groups on Council's Customer Standards and accessing Council services, and the qualitative results of these will be reported in September, allowing comparison with the quantitative results contained in Appendix 1.

3.8 Key findings of the satisfaction survey:
- 83% of respondents were satisfied with the ease of getting in contact with the Council (this is up from 54% in 2007), and 70% were satisfied with the ease of getting hold of the right person to talk to.
- 73% would recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend, an improvement of 1% on the previous year and a high figure in absolute terms.
- 62% remembered receiving Together Bromsgrove (up from 41% in 2007) and 62% of those remembering the magazine found it useful.
- 80% remembered receiving the Council tax leaflet and 55% found it useful
- 61% of residents prefer using the phone to get in touch with the Council. 84% of respondents felt that phonecalls should be answered within 35 seconds or less whilst 48% would prefer calls to be answered within 20 seconds. This contrasts with the results from the DUG and E&D Forum where 45% were happy with the 35 second target and only 18% wanted calls to be answered within 20 seconds.
- Residents were consistently satisfied with all aspects of emailing the Council (results were typically over 80%).
- Of the respondents who use the Council's website 64% were satisfied with it (7% use it once a month or more and 19% use it once or twice a year).
- In terms of the Council's Customer Standards, 'being polite at all times', 'answering the phone within 6 rings', 'ensuring that services, offices and information are as accessible as possible', responding to letters within 10 working days' and 'ensuring a senior officer attends 85% of PACT meetings' all received high levels of satisfaction, which suggests that the Council's existing access channels are sufficient for the needs of residents. The lower satisfaction levels for responding to letters, voicemails in time and in appropriate detail indicates that more work needs to be done in ensuring the Council's good work is not tarnished by these reputation-critical issues.
- 38% of respondents were satisfied with the way the Council runs things (a slight improvement on the 2007 result of 36%).

- Just over 1 in 4 residents felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area which is a relatively low result. However, this may be explained in part by the fact that only 40% of respondents know who their local ward Councillor is.
- The residents of 'Urban 1' (the Bromsgrove local wards of Waseley, Beacon, Hillside, Catshill, Marlbrook, Linthurst, Norton, Sidemoor, St Johns, Whitford, Slideslow, Charford, Stoke Heath and Stoke Prior) were consistently more dissatisfied than residents from elsewhere in the district (see page 14 of Appendix 1). Interestingly, the residents from these wards were also most likely to read a local newspaper (57% of respondents who received a local paper felt that it influenced their views on the Council to some extent).
- Residents indicating they had no understanding of the choices that the Council has to make were more likely to say that they were very dissatisfied with the Council's performance in delivering on its priorities
- Residents were most satisfied with the Council's progress towards delivering the Clean Streets and Recycling priority (46%) and were least satisfied with regenerating Bromsgrove Town Centre (50%).
- 71% were satisfied with the refuse collection service and of those that were dissatisfied the main reasons were debris left behind in the street and collections not being frequent enough
- 91% of residents were against the decision to introduce a fee for green waste collections. This contrasts with the views of the Council's Budget Jury who are engaged in a 6 month programme of detailed information provision and consultation on setting the 2009-10 budget. One interpretation of this could be that residents who are more informed about the reason for the decision are more amenable to it. Street Scene and Community Services are consulting residents separately on this matter (and are providing more information on the rationale for it in the body of their survey) so it will be interesting to compare the result.
- Residents living in 'Urban 2' (Hollywood & Majors Green, Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath and Wythall South) were generally less positive about the Council's cultural and recreational offer than those living elsewhere although they were the most positive about the Bonfire Night event. This may indicate that the Council is not providing enough in their local areas

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 though the local media. Officers should take note of the 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	At Leader's Group
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	**No**

13. <u>**WARDS AFFECTED**</u>

All Wards

14. <u>**APPENDICES**</u>

Appendix 1   Satisfaction Survey Report
Appendix 2   Historical Benchmarking

15. <u>**BACKGROUND PAPERS**</u>

Customer Panel (1) Survey – report to Cabinet, 12th September 2007.
Customer Panel (2) Survey – report to Cabinet, 4th June 2008.

<u>**CONTACT OFFICER**</u>

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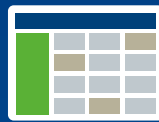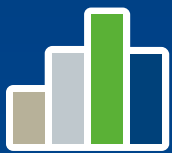
Bromsgrove District Council

Residents Survey

July 2008

Draft Report

CONTENTS

APPENDIX 1: Historical benchmarking

APPENDIX 2: Questionnaire

APPENDIX 3: Respondents' comments

APPENDIX 4: Data tabulations

1 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

RESPONDENT PROFILE:

The majority of respondents (56%) were aged 55 or over, 20% were aged 45-54, 15% were aged 35-44, 9% were aged 25-34 and only 1% (4 individuals), were aged 18-24. 25% of the sample said that they had children under the age of 18. Just over half the sample were female (53%), while the remaining 47% were male.

Around 1 in 4 respondents (26%) said that they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity. The majority of respondents (95%) described themselves as White British, while 1% described themselves as White Irish, 1% as White Other and 1% as Indian.

Nearly 7 in 10 respondents (69%) had internet access at home or at work (34% at home and work, 32% at home only, and 3% at work only). 7% read a local paper most days, 42% did so once or twice a week, 25% most weeks, and 26% read a local paper less frequently or never.

COUNCIL PRIORITIES:

When asked about satisfaction with the Council's performance towards achieving their priorities, 13% of respondents were satisfied with the regeneration of Bromsgrove town Centre (50% dissatisfied), 18% with increasing the availability of affordable housing (16% dissatisfied), and 26% with developing an increased sense of community (37% dissatisfied). 32% were satisfied with the Council's performance in improving customer services (22% dissatisfied), while 46% were satisfied with improvements to the cleanliness of streets and recycling (38% dissatisfied).

Residents were asked to say which of the Council's priorities they would replace if they could. 38% said that they would replace 'Increasing the availability of affordable housing', 25% said 'Regenerating Bromsgrove Town Centre' and 19% said 'Improving customer service'. Instead, respondents would like the Council to focus on 'Improving the lives of older people' (46%), a 'Greater focus on rural issues' (17%), and 'Redeveloping the Longbridge site' (11%).

CUSTOMER ACCESS:

63%) had contacted the Council in the last 12 months - 57% last made contact over the phone and 35% visited an office. The majority who made contact in the last 12 months (61%) said they would prefer to contact the Council over the phone, in person (23%) or via email (10%). The main reasons for contact were; to request information (27%), to register a complaint (24%) or to make an application (16%).

Those who had contact the Council were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with different aspects of their contact. 83% were satisfied with how easy it was to contact the Council (11% dissatisfied), 70% with how easy it was to get hold of the right person (20% dissatisfied), 77% with the helpfulness of staff (14% dissatisfied), 71% with the ability of staff to deal with their enquiry (24% dissatisfied), and 63% with the final outcome of their enquiry (29% dissatisfied).

The majority of respondents (84%) said that their call should be answered within 6 rings or less (35 seconds). 32% of respondents said that they had visited the Customer Service Centre (CSC) in Bromsgrove Town Centre in the last year, while 66% said that they had not and 2% were not sure.

Those who had visited the CSC were asked whether or not they would recommend it to a friend or relative. Nearly three quarters (73%) said that they would, while 11% said they would not. They asked to rate different elements of their experience with the CSC. The most positively rated elements were; the ease of getting through the door (60%), the availability of parking places (53%), the lighting (52%), the height of counters (49%), and the signs and display materials (49%).

Around 1 in 5 respondents (19%) said they were aware of the Council's customer service standards. Respondents were asked to think about their own experience of being in contact with the Council, and how satisfied they were that each of these Standards were met. The responses included a high proportions 'Don't know/ No opinion' responses, but if these are excluded the most positive responses were for; Being polite at all times (78% positive), Answering telephone within 6 rings (64% positive), and Ensuring that services, offices and information are accessible as possible to all customers (62% positive).

The highest proportions of negative responses (once 'Don't know /No opinion' codes are removed) were for: Providing a full response to customer complaints within 10 working days (41% negative), Acknowledging customer complaints within 3 working days (40% negative), Responding to voicemail messages within 2 working days (36% negative), and Responding to emails within 5 working days (35% negative).

When asked about negative experiences when contacting the council, respondents were most likely to say that they had had no reply to a voicemail (29%), no response to a letter (27%) or not got through to the Customer Service Centre (26%).

COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS:
Very few residents (7%) claimed to visit the Councils' website once a month or more, although a further a 19% claimed to visit once or twice a year. The main reason for visiting was to find information on the local area (52%), followed by information about the Council or Council services (51%).

Those who had used the website were asked about their experiences of it. 61% said that they could find the information they were looking for (18% could not), 20% said the information they found was out of date, (36% said that it was not), 67% said that they were able to understand the information on the website (while 11% could not), and 23% said that the layout was confusing, while 42% disagreed. Nearly two thirds of respondents (64%) said that they were satisfied with the website overall, while around 1 in 10 respondents were dissatisfied (9%).

62% of respondents said that they remember receiving Together Bromsgrove in the last four months, 62% of whom said it was useful, and 14% said it was not useful. 4 in 5 respondents (80%) said that they remembered receiving the most recent Council tax leaflet, 55% of whom described it as useful while 13% disagreed.

Respondents were asked the extent to which they feel that the local press influences their views of the Council. 35% said it influenced their views to some extent or to a great extent, 22% said the press influenced their views to a slight extent and 38% said that the local press does not influence their views at all.

STREET SCENE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS:

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the cleanliness of their street - 58% were satisfied, while 33% were dissatisfied. 53% were satisfied that areas of public land in the district are clean, while 33% were dissatisfied. Residents were then asked how much of a problem fly tipping is in their local area. 5% of residents said that in their area, fly tipping was a very big or fairly big problem (17%).

Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the refuse collection service. 71% said they were satisfied, while 24% were dissatisfied. Those who were dissatisfied were asked if they had experienced any problems with their refuse collection service. The main issues were debris left in the street (73%), and that collections were not frequent enough (58%).

Residents were told that Councillors have taken the decision to no longer provide free green waste collection across the District from April 2009. Around 9 in 10 respondents (91%) said that they were against this decision.

BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE:

Overall, 1 in 5 respondents (20%) said that they were satisfied with the retail and leisure facilities on offer in the town centre, while 45% were dissatisfied. 25% said that they were satisfied with transport links to and from the town centre, while the same proportion (25%) said that they were dissatisfied.

Respondents were asked whether they would be in favour of a number of steps to improve traffic safety. 81% were in favour of encouragement to use existing long stay and short stay car parks, 70% in favour of fines for illegal parking, and 68% were in favour of the introduction of designated on-street parking zones.

CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES:

Respondents were most likely to say that they were satisfied with parks and open spaces (67%), with libraries (61%), with nature trails, with country paths (48%), and with the Christmas lights (35%). They were least satisfied with outdoor sports facilities (22%) and with the range and quality of shops (18%).

37% said that they were satisfied with the range of entertainment offered at the Artrix Centre, while 6% were dissatisfied and 47% did not know.

When asked whether the Council should continue to charge residents to attend the Bonfire night, 34% said that charging should continue, 31% said that it should not continue and 34% had no opinion.

CORPORATE:

When asked about the Council, 17% of the sample said that they had a full understanding of the choices that the Council has to make, 70% said that they had some understanding and 13% said that they had no understanding.

Overall, 38% were satisfied with the way that the Council runs things, 23% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 39% were dissatisfied. Just over a quarter of the respondents (28%) agreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, while 72% disagreed.

2   INTRODUCTION

Bromsgrove District Council commissioned Snap SurveyShop to conduct their 2008 resident survey. 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 15th May 2008, a reminder was sent to all non-respondents on 6th June 2008.   A total of 611 surveys were returned. This is a response rate of 41% and gives a margin of error of +/- 3.96% at the 95% level.

2.2   Sampling

The tenant database provided by the client contained a total of 37,936 records. Snap Surveys invited a stratified random sample of 1,500 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	396	42%
URBAN 2	4,889	195	79	41%
RURAL 1	5,504	210	69	33%
RURAL 2	3,583	150	56	37%
TOTAL	37,936	1,500	600 (+11)	41%

A total of 11 surveys were returned with the URN obscured or missing which means that we have been unable to link them to a particular area.

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 Z-tested at 95% confidence level. The Z-test is a statistical test which determines if the percentage difference between subgroups is large enough to be statistically significant or whether the difference is likely to have occurred by chance.

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; Beascon; 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

- Council priorities

- Customer Access

- Council Communications

- Street Scene and waste management

- Bromsgrove Town Centre

- Cultural & Recreational Activities

- Corporate

- Conclusions

3   RESPONDENT PROFILE

3.1   Introduction

This section of the report profiles respondents by demographics (gender, age, ethnicity and disability). It also looks at internet access, frequency of reading a local paper and whether or not the respondents have children under the age of 18.

3.2   Age, children and Gender

The majority of respondents (56%) were aged 55 or over, 20% were aged 45-54, 15% were aged 35-44, 9% were aged 25-34 and only 1% of respondents (4 individuals), were aged 18-24.

25% of the sample said that they had children under the age of 18. 53% of those aged under 34 had children under 18 , compared to 52% of those aged 35-54, and 3% of those aged over 55.

Age
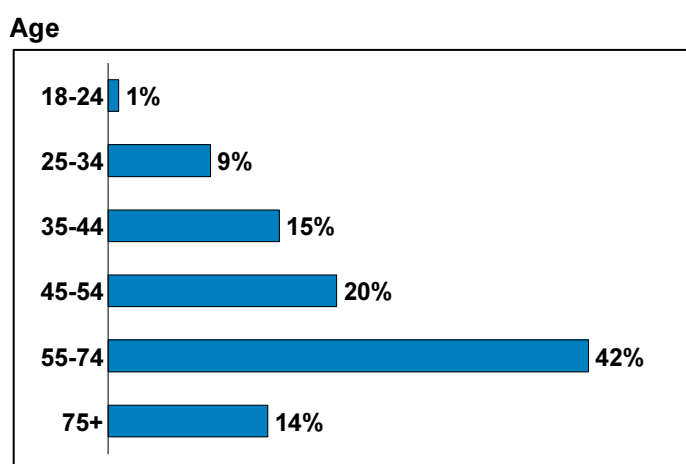
Base: All respondent (577)

Just over half the sample (53%) were female, while the remaining 47% were male.

3.3   Disability and ethnicity

Around 1 in 4 respondents (26%) said that they had a long standing illness, disability or infirmity.   As we would expect, there is a strong correlation with age, with older age groups more likely to have a disability; 18-34 (7% disabled), 35-54 (13%), 55-74 (32%), 75+ (54%).

The vast majority of respondents (95%) described themselves as White British, 1% described themselves as White Irish, 1% as White Other and 1% as Indian.
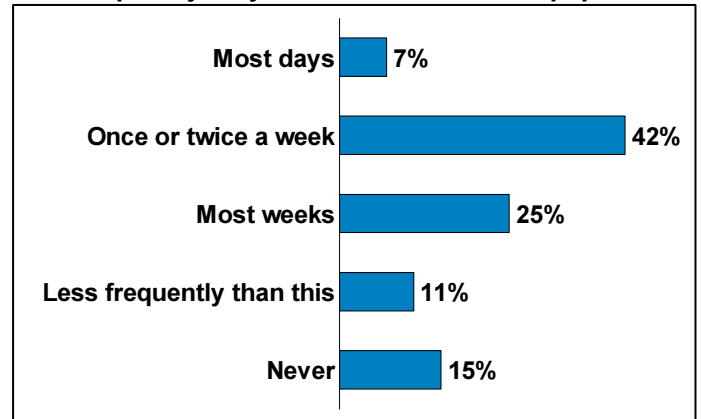
3.4 Internet access and the local newspaper

Nearly 7 in 10 respondents (69%) had internet access at home or at work. 34% had access at home and at work, 32% access at home only and 3% had access at work only. Older respondents were significantly less likely to have internet access.

Do you have internet access at home or work?

- I have internet access at home and work — 34%
- I have internet access at home only — 32%
- No, I do not have internet access — 31%
- I have internet access at work only — 3%
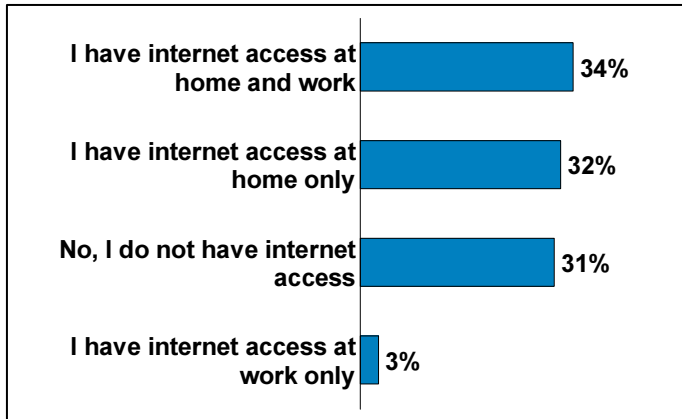
Base: All respondent (595)

How frequently do you read the local newspaper?

- Most days — 7%
- Once or twice a week — 42%
- Most weeks — 25%
- Less frequently than this — 11%
- Never — 15%

Base: All respondent (601)

7% read a local paper (such as the Bromsgrove Advertiser, Bromsgrove Messenger and Bromsgrove Standard) most days, 42% read a local paper once or twice a week, 25% read a local paper most weeks, and 26% read a local paper less frequently or never.

Those living in Urban 1 were the most likely to read a local paper.

# 4 COUNCIL PRIORITIES

4.1 Introduction

This section looks at satisfaction with the Council's performance towards achieving their priorities, which priority residents would most like to replace, and what they would want to replace it with.

4.2 Progress in meeting priorities

Residents were given a list of the Council's 5 priorities and were asked to state how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the Council's performance towards achieving each one. The results were mixed:

- 13% were satisfied with the Council's performance towards regenerating Bromsgrove town Centre (50% dissatisfied)

- 18% were satisfied with the Councils performance in increasing the availability of affordable housing (16% dissatisfied)

- 26% were satisfied with the Council's performance in developing an increased sense of community (e.g. through reducing crime and antisocial behaviour and promoting services for children and young people). 37% were dissatisfied.

- 32% were satisfied with the Council's performance in improving customer services (22% dissatisfied)

- 46% were satisfied with the Council's performance towards improving the cleanliness of streets and recycling (38% dissatisfied).

Satisfaction with the Council's performance towards achieving
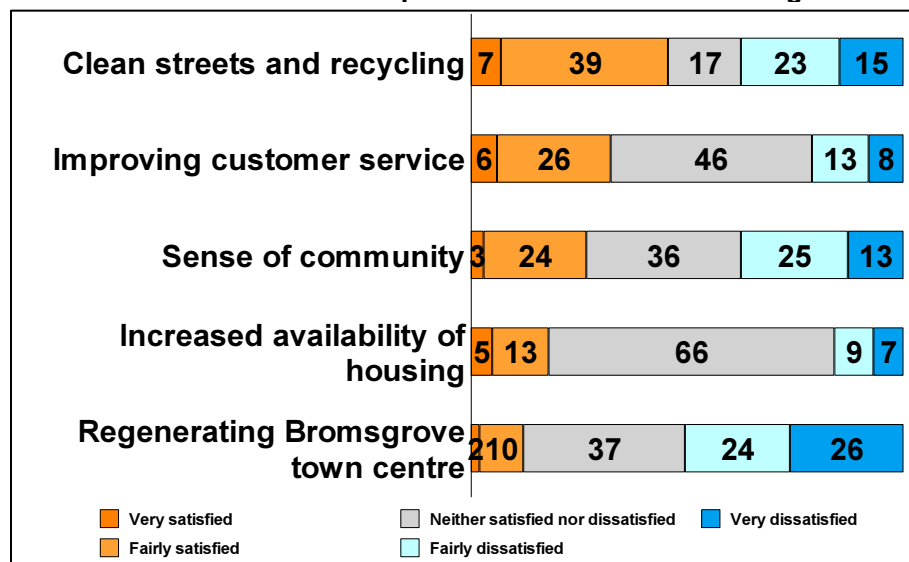
Base: All respondents (537~566)

There were relatively high proportions of people saying that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, notably for increasing the availability of affordable housing (66% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied) and improving customer service (46% neither satisfied nor dissatisfied).

Those giving a neutral response, may have done so because these areas are less important to them, or because they have no experience of them; e.g. those who are neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with the Council's performance in increasing the availability of affordable housing may not feel that it is an issue that is particularly relevant to them, perhaps because they own their own property.

The differences across different areas are shown in the table below. The figures highlighted in red show the area that is most dissatisfied with the Council's performance, while those in green show the most satisfied area. Urban 1 residents are consistently more dissatisfied than other areas:

	Urban 1		Urban 2		Rural 1		Rural 2	
	+ve	-ve	+ve	-ve	+ve	-ve	+ve	-ve
Regenerating Bromsgrove Town Centre	9%	66%	18%	2%	19%	21%	23%	17%
Increased availability of affordable housing	15%	19%	15%	9%	30%	10%	23%	10%
Improving customer services	30%	25%	39%	11%	31%	18%	38%	19%
Sense of community	23%	43%	45%	28%	31%	20%	26%	32%
Clean streets and recycling	46%	41%	42%	33%	45%	37%	50%	26%

Interestingly, those people that said that they had no understanding of the choices that the Council has to make, were more likely to say that they were very dissatisfied with the Councils' performance in delivering on its' priorities.

4.3 Improving the Councils priorities

Residents were asked to say which of the Council's priorities they would replace if they could replace one. 38% said that they would replace Increasing the availability of affordable housing, 25% said that they would replace Regenerating Bromsgrove Town Centre and 19% would replace Improving customer service.

If you were to replace a priority, which one would it be?
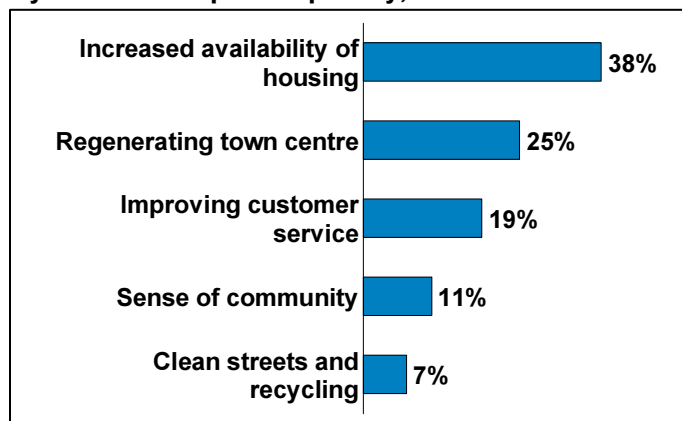
Base: All respondents (562)

There were few differences of note, but younger respondents were more likely than older respondents to say that they would like to replace increasing the availability of affordable housing; 50% of those aged 18-34 would replace affordable housing compared to 44% of those aged 35-54, 34% of those aged 55-74 and 22% of those aged over 75.

This is a surprising finding given the fact that affordable housing is often considered to be a young persons' issue. It would be interesting to know the motives behind why younger people felt that this was a less important issue for the Council to address, e.g. whether or not it is related to homeownership and fears over the impact that more housing may have on the value of their own property, or whether the motives are more altruistic.

The findings for different areas are shown below:

Which would you replace?	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Increased availability of affordable housing	40%	28%	42%	30%
Regenerating Bromsgrove Town Centre	23%	38%	30%	22%
Improving customer services	22%	13%	5%	20%
Sense of community	9%	13%	13%	19%
Clean streets and recycling	6%	9%	10%	9%

Respondents were then asked what priority they would like the Council to focus on instead of the one they wanted to replace, and were given a list of options. 46% chose Improving the lives of older people, 17% chose a Greater focus on rural issues, 11% chose Redeveloping the Longbridge site, 8% chose Reducing carbon emissions and 7% chose Encouraging biodiversity.

Which one of the following would you replace it with?
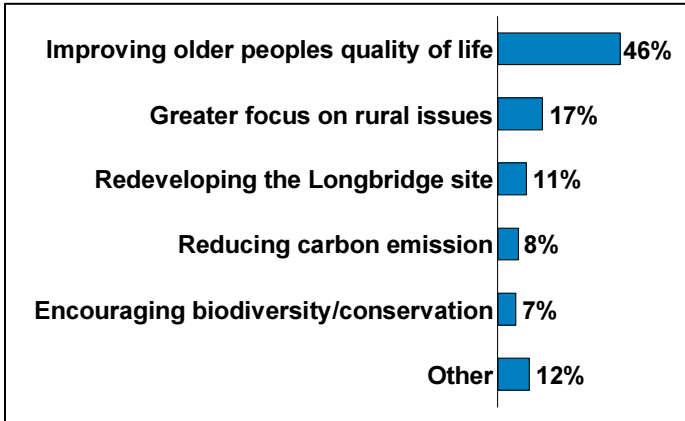
Base: All respondents (553)

As we would expect, older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to think that the Council should make Improving older peoples' quality of life a priority: 72% of those aged over 75 chose this option, compared to 58% of those aged 55-74, 28% of those aged 35-54 and 20% of those aged 18-34.

The figures for different areas are shown below:

What would you replace it with?	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Improving older people' quality of life	46%	42%	39%	54%
Greater focus on rural issues	11%	27%	40%	22%
Longbridge site	14%	7%	6%	4%
Reducing carbon emission	9%	6%	6%	2%
Encouraging biodiversity	7%	4%	5%	9%

Respondents were given the opportunity of suggesting other things that the Council should focus in instead of the existing priorities. A selection of these is shown below, and a full list can be found in the appendix.

> *"Condition of streets."*
>
> *"Encouraging business and employment opportunity."*
>
> *"Improve public transport, including parking at train station."*
>
> *"Making recycling more user friendly and more bin collections."*
>
> *"Providing activities/supervision centres, etc for local youths."*

5 CUSTOMER ACCESS

5.1 Introduction

This section looks at whether or not respondents have contacted the Council in the last 12 months, how they have contacted the Council, what they contacted the Council about, the quality of service received when contacting the Council, Bromsgrove Customer Service Centre (CSC) and the Council's Customer Service Standards.

5.2 Method of contact

Almost two thirds of the sample (63%) had contacted the Council in the last 12 months. Of those that had been in contact with the Council, 57% last made contact over the phone and 35% visited an office.

Females (63%) were more likely than males (49%) to have phoned, while males (42%) were more likely than females (29%) to have visited an office. Older respondents were also more likely to have visited an office in person than younger respondents, while younger respondents were more likely to have phoned.

How did you last contact the Council?

Phoned 57%
Visited office 35%
Emailed 4%
Wrote 4%
Other 1%
Can't remember 0%
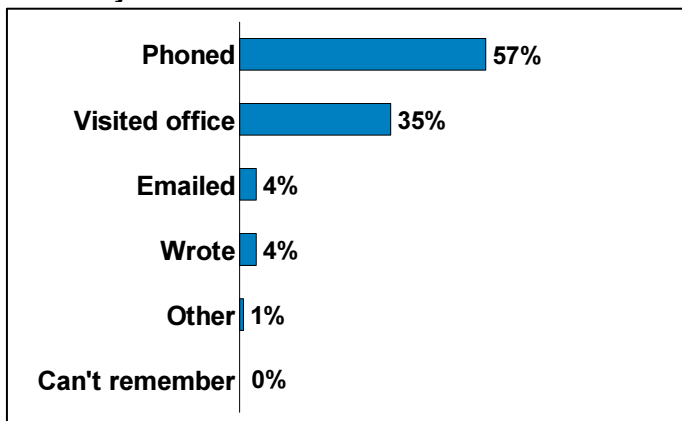
Base: All respondents who have contacted the Council in the last 12 months (353)

How would you prefer to contact the Council?

By phone 61%
In person 23%
By email 10%
Through the website 2%
By letter 2%
Other 2%
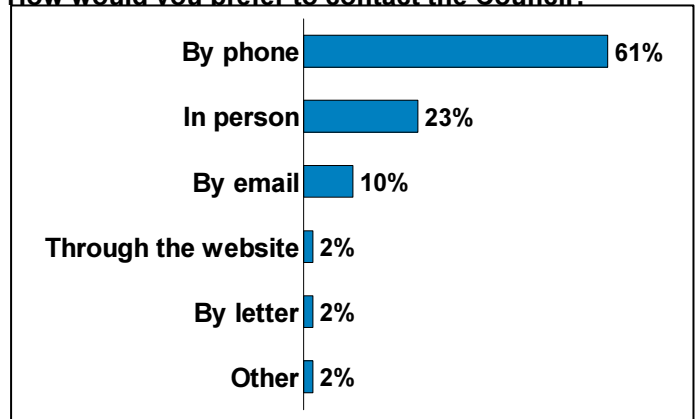
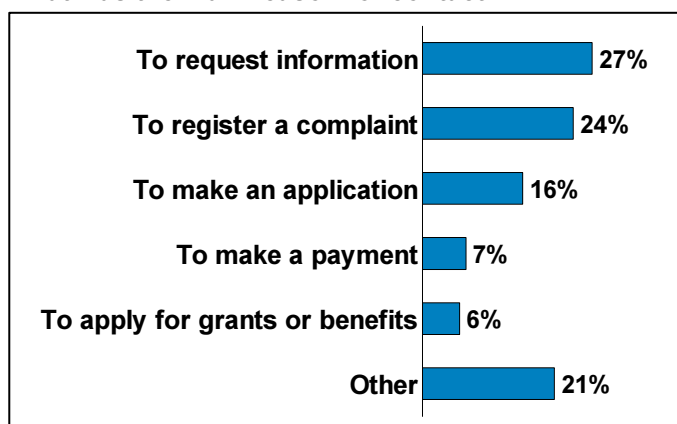Base: All respondents who have contacted the Council in the last 12 months (357)

Later on in the survey, respondents were asked how they would prefer to contact the Council. The response pattern is similar to that for the most recent contact, with the majority of respondents who made contact in the last 12 months (61%) saying they would prefer to contact the Council over the phone, followed by contacting the Council in person (23%) and emailing (10%).

However, 23% said that they would prefer to contact the Council in person, compared to 35% whose last contact with the Council was in person at an office. This may suggest, that some of the people who last visited an office would have preferred to have phoned, but did not. This may be due to the nature of their enquiry, to do with the phone system itself or the range of calls that telephone staff can handle.

5.3 Reason for contact

All those who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months were asked to state the main reason for their contact. The main reasons for contact were as follows: 27% had contacted the Council to request information, 24% to register a complaint and 16% to make an application.

What was the main reason for contact?

To request information   **27%**
To register a complaint   **24%**
To make an application   **16%**
To make a payment   **7%**
To apply for grants or benefits   **6%**
Other   **21%**

Base: All respondents who have contacted the Council in the last 12 months (361)

Those who were dissatisfied with the Council overall were more likely to have made contact to make a complaint (33%, compared to 17% of those who are satisfied).

The table below shows the main reason for contact broken down by the method of contact:

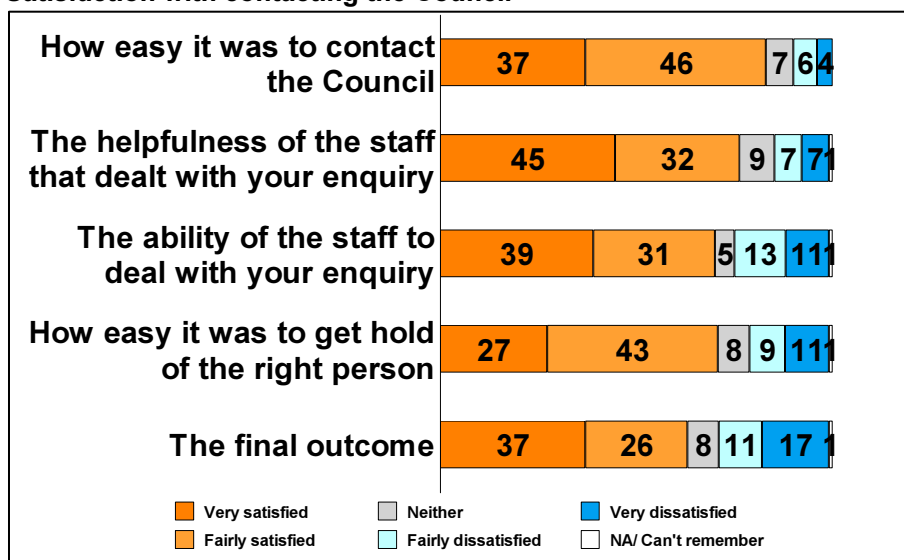| Method of contact/ reason for contact	Request info	Complaint	Apply for grant	Payment	Application	Other
Phone	68%	72%	27%	27%	33%	64%
Visit	25%	13%	68%	69%	62%	28%
Email	4%	7%	-	4%	-	3%
Letter	1%	6%	5%	-	4%	5%
Other	1%	1%	-	-	2%	-

Those who requested information or registered a complaint were significantly more likely to have done so over the phone rather than via other means, whilst those who applied for a grant, made a payment or made an application were more likely to have done so through visiting an office than using a phone.

5.4 Experience contacting the Council

Those who had contact were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with different aspects of their contact. Generally, the results were positive, although a relatively high proportion were dissatisfied with the ease of getting hold of the right person (20% dissatisfied), the ability of staff to deal with the problem (24%) and the final outcome (28%).

- 83% were satisfied with how easy it was to contact the Council (11% dissatisfied)

- 70% were satisfied with how easy it was to get hold of the right person (20% dissatisfied)

- 77% were satisfied with the helpfulness of staff (14% dissatisfied)

- 71% were satisfied with the ability of staff to deal with their enquiry (24% dissatisfied)

- 63% were satisfied with the final outcome of their enquiry (29% dissatisfied)

Satisfaction with contacting the Council

	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	NA/ Can't remember
How easy it was to contact the Council	37	46	7	6		4
The helpfulness of the staff that dealt with your enquiry	45	32	9	7	7	1
The ability of the staff to deal with your enquiry	39	31	5	13	11	1
How easy it was to get hold of the right person	27	43	8	9	11	1
The final outcome	37	26	8	11	17	1

Base: All respondents who have contacted the Council in the last 12 months (342~360)

Those who made a visit to the Council offices, and those who wrote, were generally less satisfied than those who emailed or phoned, (below).

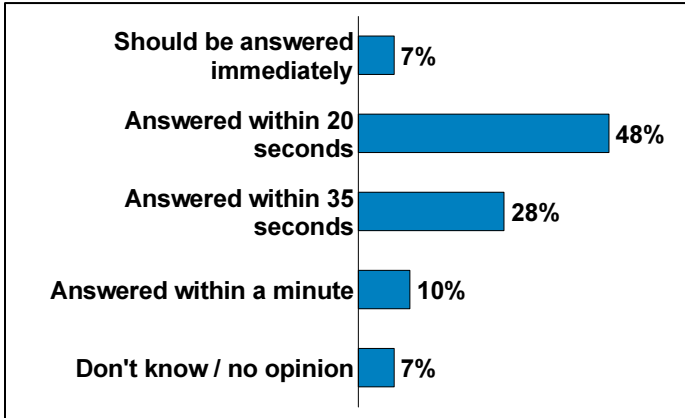|	Phoned	Visit	Email	Wrote
Ease of contacting Council	83%	77%	85%	70%
Ease of getting hold of the right person	70%	62%	75%	70%
The helpfulness of staff	75%	54%	88%	40%
The ability of staff to deal with the problem	67%	50%	85%	55%
The final outcome	57%	50%	80%	55%

The table below shows the proportion of people who were satisfied with each element, broken down by the reason that they contacted the Council. Those who contacted the Council to register a complaint were generally less satisfied than other respondents, whilst those who submitted an application tended to be more satisfied.

Method of contact/ reason for contact	Request info	Complaint	Apply for grant	Payment	Application	Other
Ease of contacting Council	82%	81%	80%	83%	83%	85%
Ease of getting hold of the right person	73%	57%	72%	67%	83%	73%
The helpfulness of staff	82%	58%	82%	79%	87%	81%
The ability of staff to deal with the problem	75%	42%	80%	83%	83%	79%
The final outcome	70%	29%	68%	83%	88%	65%

5.5 Length of time waiting when calling the Council

Respondents were asked what they felt was an acceptable length of time to wait before having their call answered when calling the Council. The majority (84%) said it should be answered within 6 rings or less (35 seconds).

What do you feel is an acceptable of time to wait before your call is answered?

Should be answered immediately	7%
Answered within 20 seconds	48%
Answered within 35 seconds	28%
Answered within a minute	10%
Don't know / no opinion	7%

Base: All respondents (589)

There were no significant differences between subgroups.

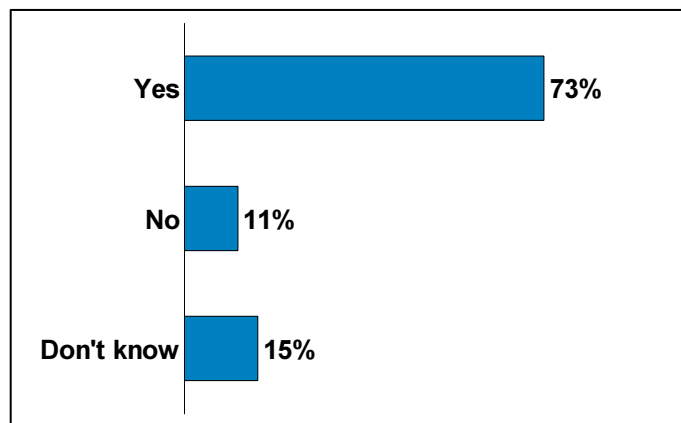## 5.6   The Customer Service Centre

Respondents were asked whether or not they had visited the Customer Service Centre (CSC) in Bromsgrove Town Centre in the last year. 32% said that they had, while 66% said that they had not and 2% were not sure. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to have visited the centre (22% of those aged 18-54 had visited the CSC, compared to 41% of those aged 55 or over).

Those who live in Urban 1 were more likely (36%) than those who live in Urban 2 (23%), Rural 1 (24%) or Rural 2 (21%) to have visited the CSC.

Those who had visited the CSC were asked whether or not they would recommend it to a friend or relative. Nearly three quarters (73%) said that they would, while 11% said they would not.

Most of those who said that they would not recommend the CSC were also dissatisfied with BDC and the way that it runs things. In addition, of the 22 people who said they would not recommend the CSC 20 lived in Urban 1.

Would you recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend?

Base: All respondents who have visited the CSC (202)

5.7 Experience of the Customer Service Centre

All those who had been to the CSC were asked to rate different elements of it as excellent, good, adequate, poor or very poor. Whilst proportions rating these elements as poor were generally low, there were relatively high proportions of 'adequate' ratings and high proportions as 'don't know':

- 53% rated the availability of parking places positively, (13% poor)

- 45% rated the size of parking places positively, (13% poor)

- 37% rated provision of ramps positively, (4% poor)

- 46% rated the ease of getting up the steps positively, (3% poor)

- 52% rated the lighting positively, (2% poor)

- 21% rated the availability of a hearing loop positively, (2% as poor)

- 49% rated the height of counters positively, (1% poor)

- 49% rated the signs and display materials positively, (12% poor)

- 60% rated the ease of getting through the door positively, (3% as poor)

There were no significant differences between subgroups.

Rating the Customer Service Centre
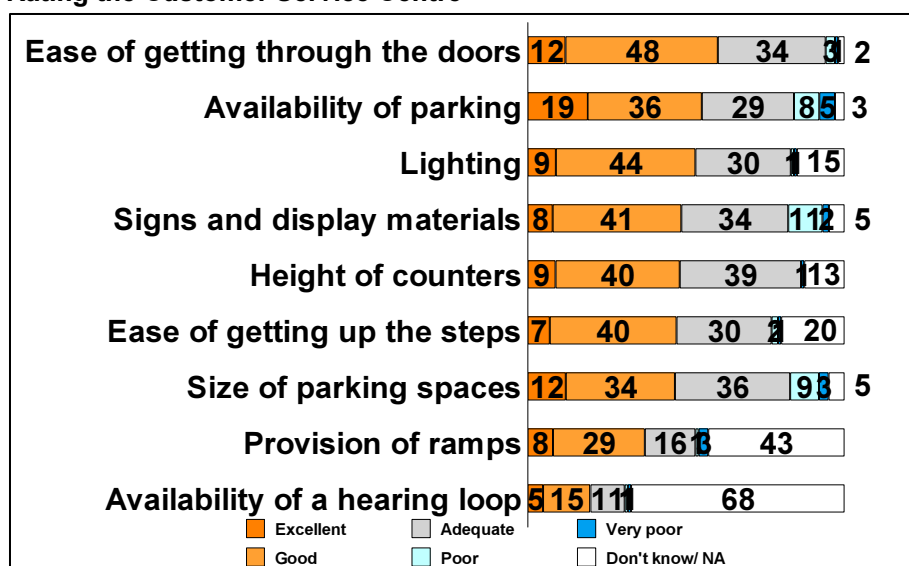
Base: All respondents (175~195)

The areas attracting the highest proportions of 'don't know' responses were those that were particularly focused towards accessibility for disabled people, in particular the availability of a hearing loop (68% don't know), the provision of ramps (43% don't know) and the ease of getting up the steps (20% don't know). For these factors the differences between disabled and non-disabled respondents were as follows:

- 36% of disabled respondents rated the ease of getting up the steps positively, compared to 52% of non-disabled respondents

- 26% of disabled respondents rated the availability of a hearing loop positively, compared to 18% of non-disabled respondents

Page 363

- 35% of disabled respondents rated the provision of ramps positively, compared to 36% of non-disabled respondents.
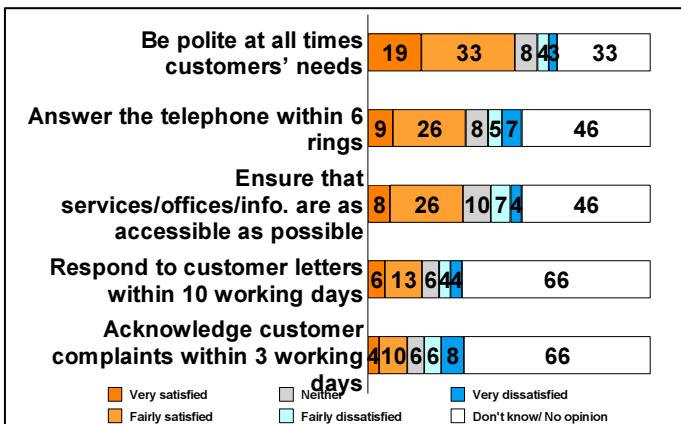
5.8 Customer standards

Respondents were asked whether or not they were aware of the Council's customer service standards. Around 1 in 5 respondents (19%) said that they were. Those who regularly read a local paper were more likely to be aware of the standards; 34% of those who read a local paper most days were familiar with the standards, compared to 25% of those who read a local paper once or twice a week, 15% of those who read a local paper most weeks and 11% of those who read a local paper less regularly.

29% of respondents who claimed to have a full understanding of the choices that the Council has to make were familiar with the Standards, compared to 19% of those who have some understanding and 9% of those who have no understanding of the choices that the Council has to make.

Respondents were then told what the Customer Standards are, and were asked to think about their own experience of being in contact with the Council by phone, letter, email or in person, and how satisfied they were that each of these Standards were met.
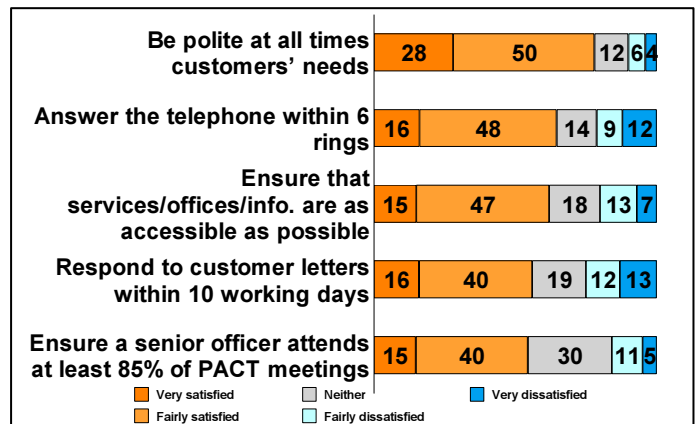
The responses included a high proportions 'Don't know/ No opinion' responses, so the charts below show the results including and excluding these results.

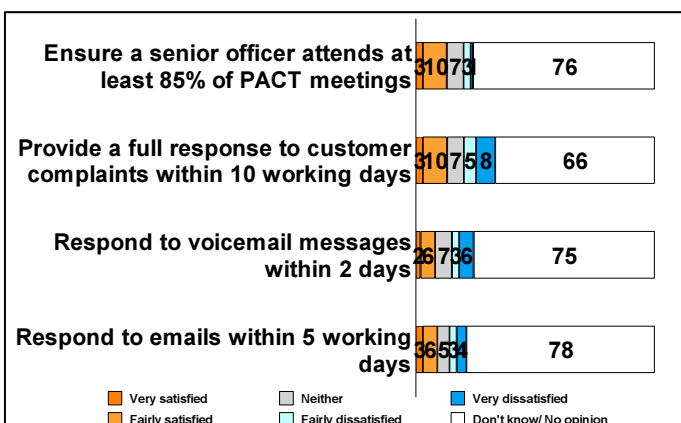**Attitudes towards the Customer Standards**

Base: All respondents (565~546)

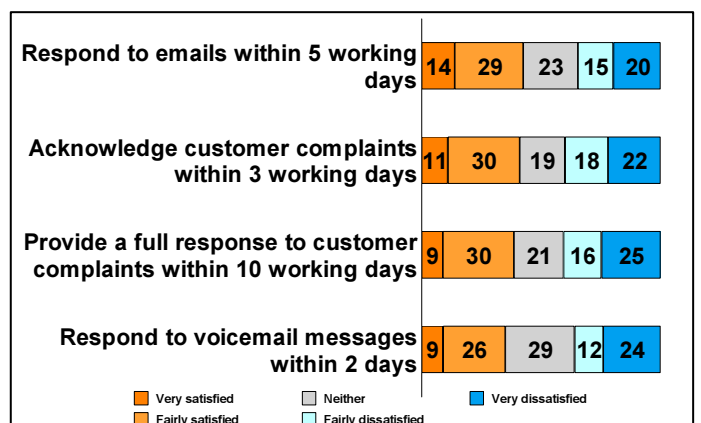**Attitudes towards the Customer Standards**

Base: All respondents – excluding 'no opinion' (296~378)

Attitudes towards the Customer Standards

Base: All respondents (532~529)

Attitudes towards the Customer Standards

Base: All respondents – excluding 'no opinion' (117~131)

As can be seen from the charts, interpretation of the data is complicated by the high proportions of respondents saying that they did not know/had no opinion. If these responses are excluded, the most positive responses are for:

- Being polite at all times, listen and understand customer needs: 78% positive

- Answer telephone within 6 rings: 64% positive

- Ensure that services, offices and information are accessible as possible to all customers: 62% positive

The highest proportions of negative responses (once 'Don't know /No opinion' codes are removed) were for:

- Provide a full response to customer complaints within 10 working days: 41% negative

- Acknowledge customer complaints within 3 working days: 40% negative

- Respond to voicemail messages within 2 working days: 36% negative

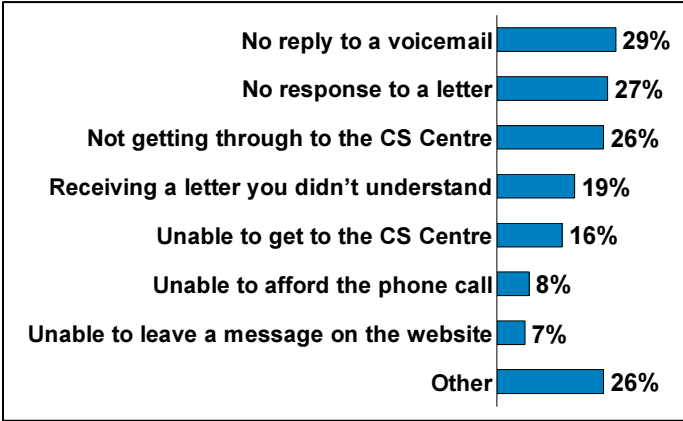- Respond to emails within 5 working days: 35% negative

Those respondents who said that they were aware of the customer Standards were more likely to say whether or not they were satisfied that the Council was meeting the Standards, while those who were not aware of the Standards were more likely to tick the 'Don't know/ No opinion' code.

5.9   Problems when contacting the Council

Respondents were then given a list of potential issues that they may have had when contacting/being contacted by the Council and were asked whether or not they had experienced any of them.

Only 210 people (34% of the sample) chose to respond to the question, which may imply that approximately two thirds of the sample had not experienced any of these issues. Of those who did respond, the main issues were; No reply to a voicemail (29%), No response to a letter (27%) and Not getting through the Customer Service Centre (26%).

**Did you experience any of the following problems
when contacting or being contacted by the Council?**

No reply to a voicemail	29%
No response to a letter	27%
Not getting through to the CS Centre	26%
Receiving a letter you didn't understand	19%
Unable to get to the CS Centre	16%
Unable to afford the phone call	8%
Unable to leave a message on the website	7%
Other	26%

Base: All respondents (210)

Respondents were given the option of writing down other problems that they may have had when contacting/being contacted by the Council. A selection of these are shown below, and a full list of responses is contained in the appendix.

> *"About Council Tax."*
>
> *"Bus pass."*
>
> *"Condition of roads in Hagley."*
>
> *"No reply to letter."*
>
> *"Pest control."*
>
> *"Repair work to drains."*
>
> *"To request additional recycling bins."*
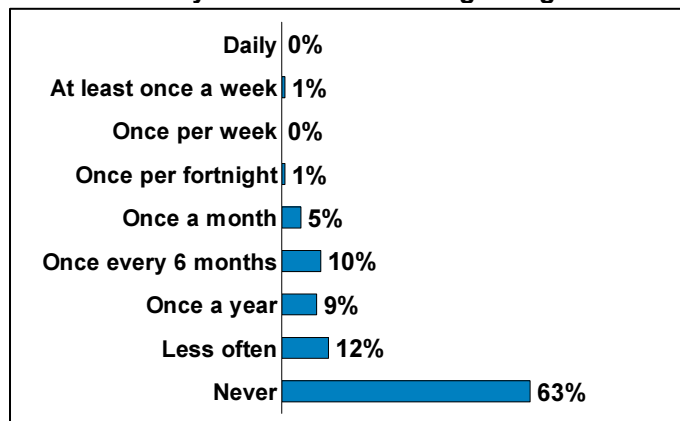
6 COUNCIL COMMUNICATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This section looks at the Council website, the Council magazine (Together Bromsgrove), the Council Tax leaflet and the whether or not respondents feel that the local press influences their views of the Council.

6.2 www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Very few residents (7%) claimed to visit the Councils' website once a month or more, although a further a 19% claimed to visit once or twice a year. Those who have the internet at home and at work were more likely to have visited the website.

How often do you visit www.bromsgrove.gov.uk?

Frequency	Percentage
Daily	0%
At least once a week	1%
Once per week	0%
Once per fortnight	1%
Once a month	5%
Once every 6 months	10%
Once a year	9%
Less often	12%
Never	63%

Base: All respondents (588)

Those who had visited in the last year were asked what prompted them to use the website. The main reason for visiting was to find information on the local area (52%), this was followed by looking for information about the Council or Council services (51%).

What prompted you to use the Councils website?

Reason	Percentage
Info. about the local area	52%
Info. about the Counci/services	51%
To make a request for a service	18%
To make a complaint/compliment	18%
Nothing in particular	8%
To make an application	8%
To pay a bill	8%
To chase progress on a query	6%
To book facilities or events	3%
To apply for grants or benefits	2%
Can't remember	1%
Other	7%
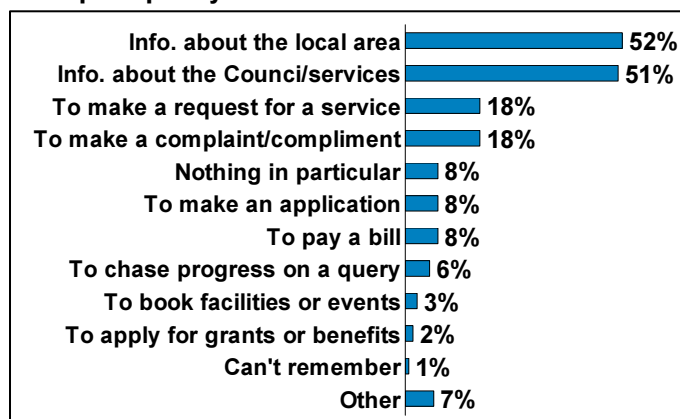
Base: All respondents who have visited the website in the last year (143)

7% of respondents said that there were other reasons for visiting the website. A selection of these reasons is shown below, and a full list is available in the appendix.

"Check progress of planning application."

"Jobs."

"Planning issues and the Council's meeting minutes."

"Response to Council survey on recycling."

"To view jobs."

6.3   Attitudes towards the website

Those who had used the website were asked about their experiences of it. Generally speaking the results were positive:

- 61% said that they could find the information they were looking for (18% could not)

- 20% said the information they found was out of date, while 36% said that it was not

- 67% said that they were able to understand the information on the website, while 11% could not

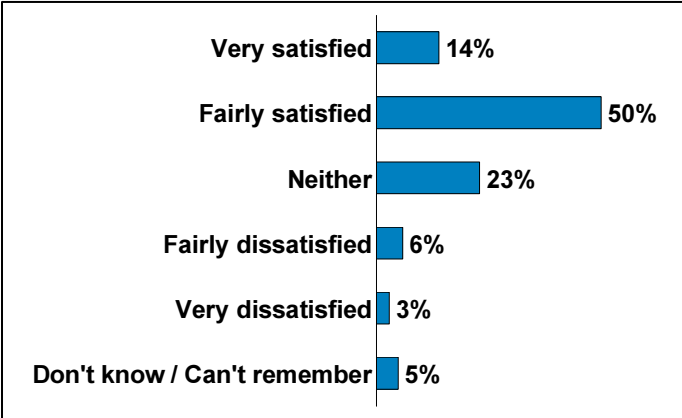- 23% said that the layout was confusing, while 42% said it was not confusing.

Experience of the website
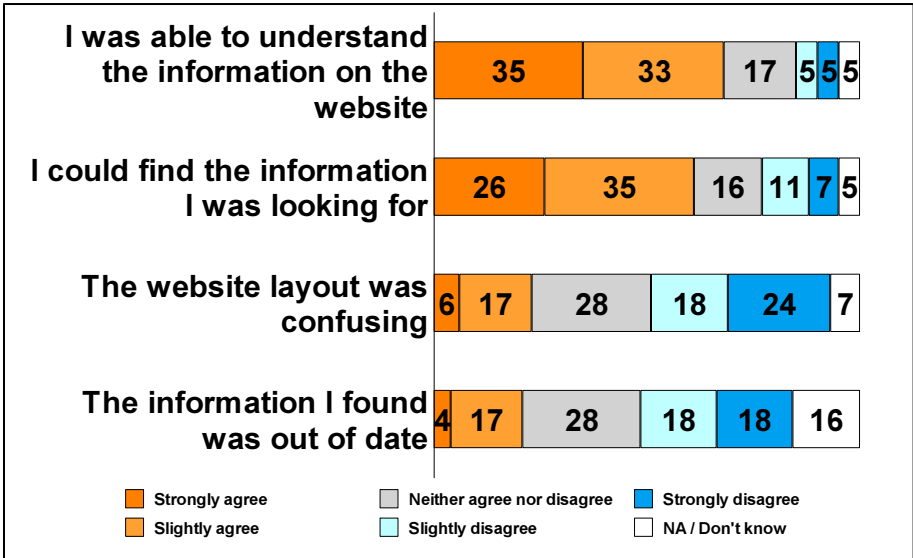
Base: All respondents who have visited the website in the last year (127~137)

Those who had used the website in the last year were asked whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with it overall. Nearly two thirds of respondents (64%) said that they were satisfied, while around 1 in 10 respondents said that they were dissatisfied (9%).

Satisfaction with the Council's website

Very satisfied	14%
Fairly satisfied	50%
Neither	23%
Fairly dissatisfied	6%
Very dissatisfied	3%
Don't know / Can't remember	5%

Base: All respondents who had used the website in the last 12 months (140)

6.4 'Together Bromsgrove'

Around 6 in 10 (62%) respondents said that they remember receiving Together Bromsgrove (TB) in the last four months. Older respondents were more likely than younger respondents to remember receiving TB (76% of those aged over 75, 65% of those aged 55-74, 57% of those aged 35-54, 48% of those aged 18-34).

Those who read a local paper regularly were also more likely than those who do not regularly read a local paper to remember receiving TB.

Those who remembered receiving TB in the last 4 months were asked how useful they found the publication. 62% said it was useful, while 14% said it was not useful.

How useful did you find the magazine?

|	
Very useful	11%
Useful	50%
Neither	24%
Not useful	9%
Not at all useful	6%
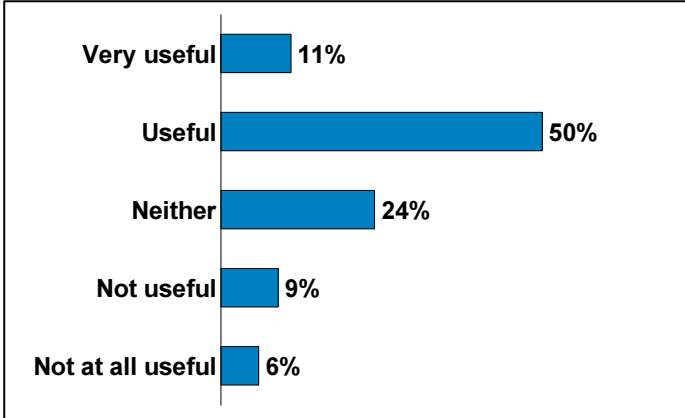
Base: All respondents who received the magazine (361)

Those who said that they had no understanding of the choices that the Council has to make (37%) were less likely than those who had some understanding (65%) or a full understanding (also 65%) to say that TB was useful.

6.5 The Council Tax leaflet

4 in 5 respondents (80%) said that they remembered receiving the most recent Council tax leaflet. Those that did remember receiving it were asked how useful it was; 55% described it as useful while 13% described it as not useful. There were no significant differences between subgroups.

How useful did you find the Council Tax leaflet

Very useful	6%
Useful	49%
Neither	32%
Not useful	8%
Not at all useful	5%
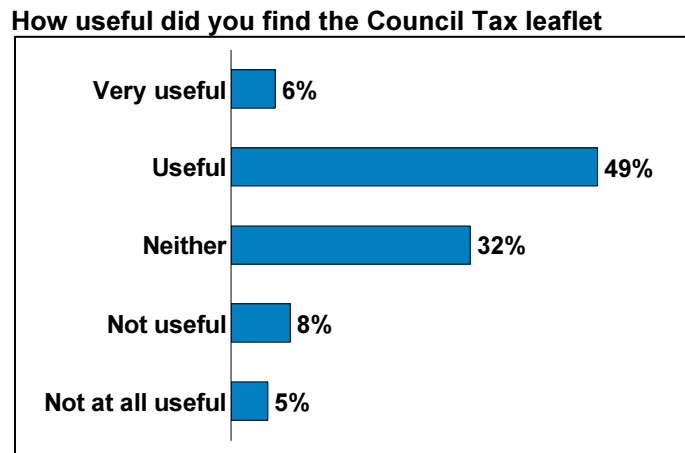
Base: All respondents who received the leaflet (472)

6.6 The influence of the local press

As a final question in this section, respondents were asked the extent to which they feel that the local press influences their views of the Council. 35% said it influenced their views to some extent or to a great extent, while 22% said the press influenced their views to a slight extent and 38% said that the local press does not influence their views at all.

To what extent does the local press influence your view of the Council?

A great extent	7%
Some extent	28%
A slight extent	22%
Not at all	38%
Don't know	5%
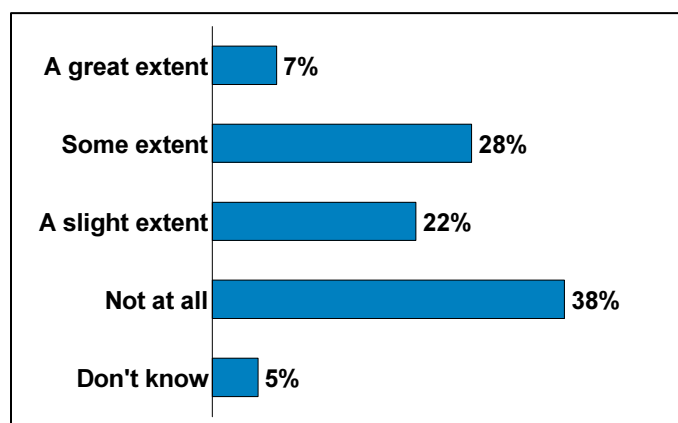
Base: All respondents (589)

Those who regularly read a local paper were more likely to say that the local press influences their views:

- 53% of those who read a local paper most days said that the local press influences their views of the Council to a great or some extent

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- 46% of those that read a local paper once or twice a week said that the local press influences their views to a great extent or to some extent

- 32% of those that read a local paper most weeks said that the local press influences their views of the Council to a great extent or to some extent

- 15% of those that read a local paper less frequently said that the local press influences their views of the Council to a great extent or to some extent.

7   STREET SCENE AND WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

7.1   Introduction

This section looks at how satisfied or dissatisfied residents were with the cleanliness of their street, public open spaces and the refuse collection service. It also looks at fly tipping and charging for green waste collection.

7.2   Satisfaction with street cleanliness

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the cleanliness of their street. 58% were satisfied, while 33% were dissatisfied.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the cleanliness of your street?
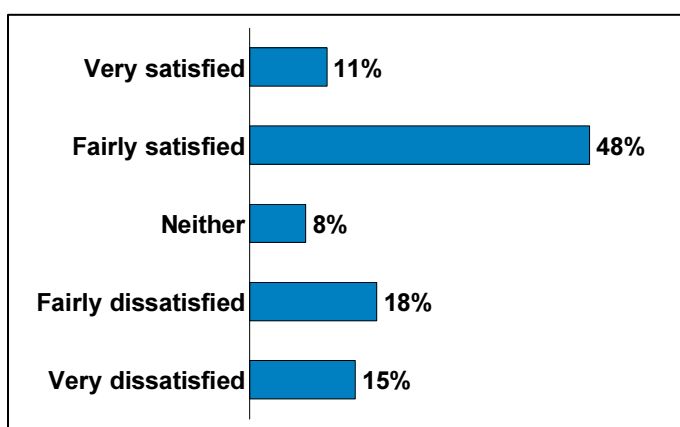
Base: All respondents (607)

There were few differences between subgroups. The data for the different areas is shown in the table below.

Satisfaction with cleanliness of your street	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very satisfied	8%	17%	13%	15%
Fairly satisfied	49%	44%	39%	49%
Neither	8%	9%	10%	7%
Fairly dissatisfied	19%	19%	14%	20%
Very dissatisfied	15%	12%	23%	9%

7.3 Fly tipping and public open space

Respondents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are that areas of public land in the district are clean. 53% said that they were satisfied, while 33% were dissatisfied.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you that the areas of public open space within the District are clean?
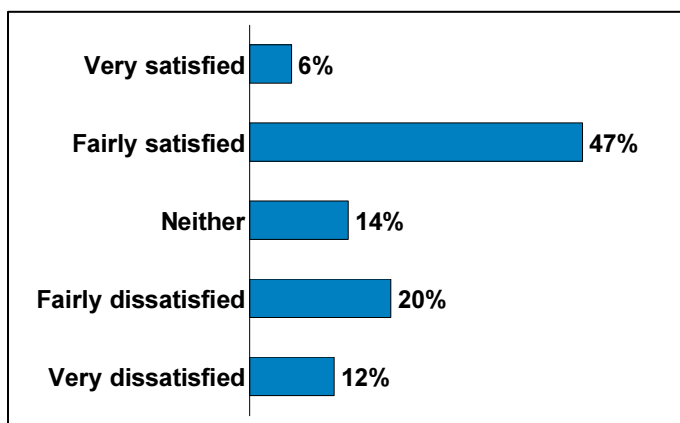
Base: All respondents (597)

There were few differences between subgroups. The data for different areas is shown below.

Satisfaction with cleanliness of public land	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very satisfied	5%	11%	3%	7%
Fairly satisfied	47%	43%	53%	49%
Neither	13%	19%	13%	16%
Fairly dissatisfied	21%	19%	21%	18%
Very dissatisfied	14%	7%	10%	9%

Residents were then asked how much of a problem fly tipping is in their local area. 5% said it was a very big problem and 17% said it was a fairly big problem. There were few significant differences of note between subgroups.

How much of a problem is fly tipping in your local area?
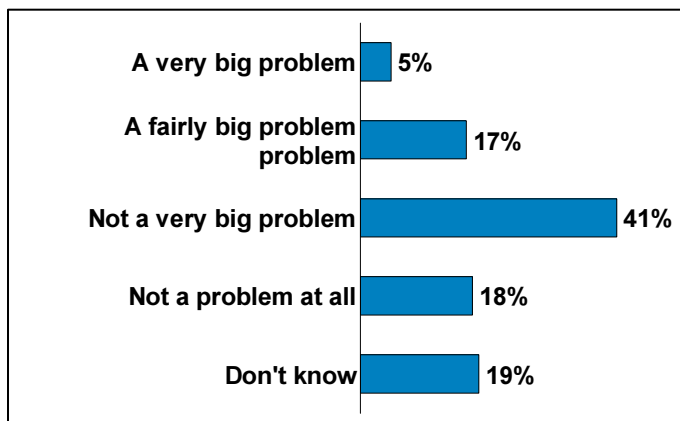
Base: All respondents (604)

The findings for different areas are shown in the table below. Generally speaking, respondents who live in Rural 1 and Rural 2 were more likely than those living in urban areas to say that fly tipping was a problem in their area.

	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very big problem	4%	5%	9%	9%
Fairly big problem	15%	17%	25%	21%
Not a very big problem	40%	44%	40%	48%
Not a problem at all	21%	9%	13%	13%
Don't know	20%	26%	13%	9%

Respondents were asked how promptly fly-tipping is removed when reported to the Council. The majority of respondents (75%) said that they did not know, as they had never reported it, while 6% said it was removed promptly, 11% said it was removed after a short delay, 5% said it was removed after a long delay and 2% said it was never removed.

7.4 The refuse collection service

Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the refuse collection service. 71% said they were satisfied, while 24% were dissatisfied. Older respondents tended to be more satisfied than younger respondents:

- 60% of 18-34 year olds were satisfied

- 61% of 35-54 year olds were satisfied

- 75% of 55-74 year olds were satisfied

- 92% of those aged 75 or over were satisfied.

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the refuse collection service in general?
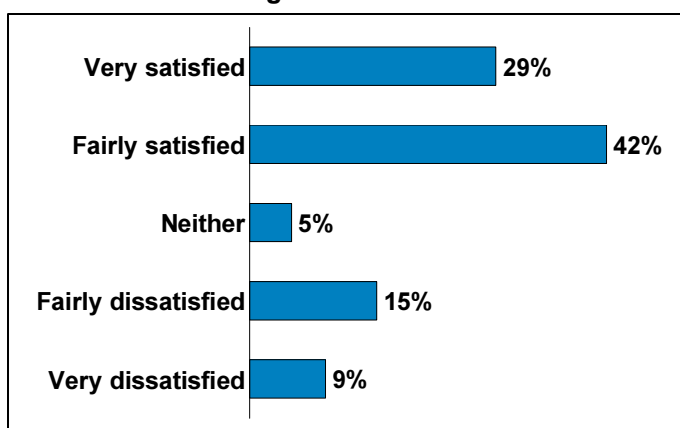
Base: All respondents (603)

The findings for different areas are shown in the table below. The differences are not statistically significant.

Satisfaction with refuse collection service	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very satisfied	27%	34%	25%	36%
Fairly satisfied	44%	37%	43%	34%
Neither	5%	4%	6%	7%
Fairly dissatisfied	16%	19%	10%	14%
Very dissatisfied	8%	6%	15%	9%

Respondents who were dissatisfied with the refuse collection service were asked if they had experienced any problems with their refuse collection service, and were given a list of possible issues to choose from.

The main issue was debris left in the street (73%), although 58% felt that collections were not frequent enough. There were few differences between subgroups, with the exception of respondents in Urban 1 being significantly more likely than residents in Urban 2 to say that they have had debris left behind in the street (82% of Urban 1 compared to 47% of Urban 2).

Have you ever experienced any of the following issues with your refuse collection service?
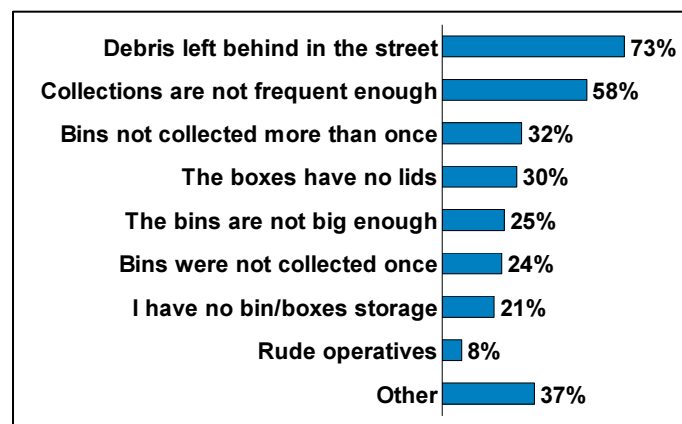
Base: All respondents who are dissatisfied with the refuse collection service (142)

Respondents were given the opportunity to list other problems that they may have experienced with the refuse collection service. A selection of these are shown below, and a full list can be found in the appendix.

> *"7 a.m. on Saturdays!"*
>
> *"Bins and boxes left blocking pavement and driveways."*
>
> *"Bins missed on more than 15 occasions - we give up! My husband takes waste to commercial bins himself. Any chance of reduction in Council Tax?"*
>
> *"Insufficient recycling, no cardboard, metal, etc."*
>
> *"Other people's wheelie bins left in my drive."*
>
> *"Recycling should be weekly."*
>
> *"Recycling boxes not big enough."*
>
> *"The bins advertise that they take textiles, but textiles left behind."*
>
> *"This service is generally very poor, it needs dynamic improvement."*

Residents were told that Councillors have taken the decision to no longer provide free green waste collection across the District from April 2009. And that residents wishing to continue this service will be asked to pay a fee of around £30 for 8 collections. They were then asked whether or not they were in favour of this decision.

Around 9 in 10 respondents (91%) said that they were against the decision. There were no notable differences between subgroups.

How do you feel about the decision to pay a fee for the green waste collection?

Response	Percentage
Strongly in favour	1%
In favour	3%
No opinion	3%
Against	12%
Strongly against	79%
Don't know	2%
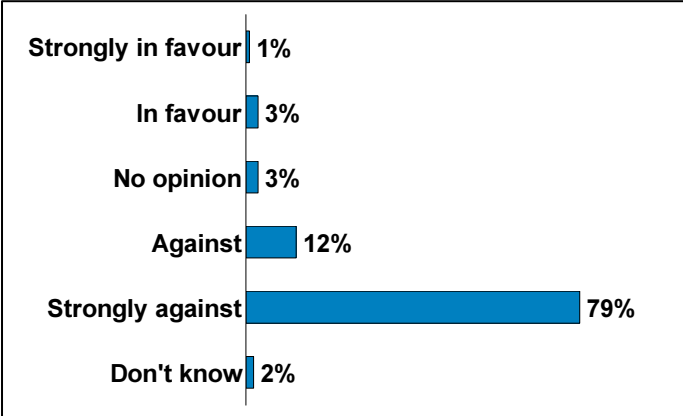
Base: All respondents (602)

8 BROMSGROVE TOWN CENTRE

8.1 Introduction

This section looks at attitudes towards Bromsgrove Town Centre in terms of the leisure and recreational facilities that are available and transport links. It also reviews attitudes towards the Councils review of parking restrictions in the District.

8.2 Attitudes towards the services in Bromsgrove town centre

Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with the retail and leisure facilities on offer in the town centre. Overall, 1 in 5 respondents (20%) said that they were satisfied, while 45% were dissatisfied. 23% gave no opinion and 12% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.

Males (15%) were less likely to be satisfied than females (24%).

Satisfaction with the retail and leisure facilities in Bromsgrove town centre
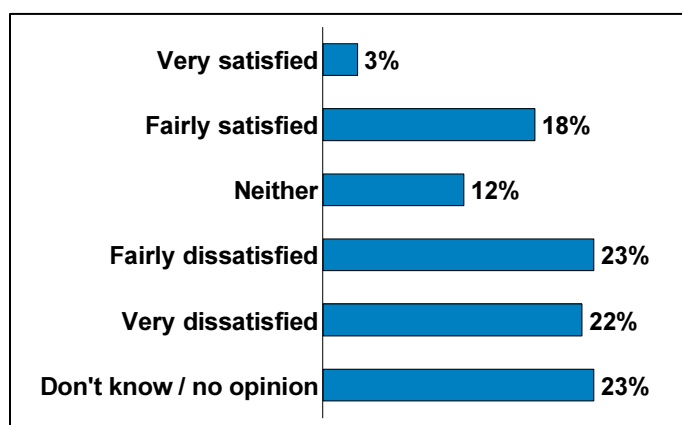
Base: All respondents (588)

The findings for different areas are shown below. Those living in rural areas were more satisfied than those living in urban areas, those living in Urban 2 were the least satisfied overall.

Satisfaction retail and leisure in Bromsgrove	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very satisfied	2%	4%	3%	4%
Fairly satisfied	18%	6%	25%	25%
Neither	13%	13%	11%	11%
Fairly dissatisfied	30%	6%	9%	11%
Very dissatisfied	29%	-	8%	11%
Don't know/ No opinion	9%	72%	45%	38%

Residents were then asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with transport links to and from the town centre. In total 25% said that they were satisfied while the same proportion (25%) said that they were dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the transport links to and from Bromsgrove town centre
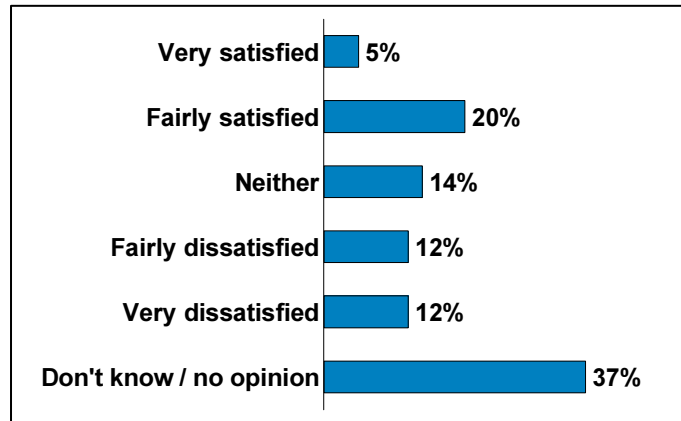
Base: All respondents (593)

There were few significant differences between subgroups, although those aged over 55 were more likely to be satisfied (31%) than those aged 18-54 (17%). The findings for different areas are shown below. Residents who live in Urban 1 and Rural 2 were the most positive:

Satisfaction transport links to and from town centre	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very satisfied	6%	-	5%	2%
Fairly satisfied	24%	11%	8%	20%
Neither	16%	4%	14%	12%
Fairly dissatisfied	13%	10%	9%	13%
Very dissatisfied	10%	13%	18%	16%
Don't know/ No opinion	30%	63%	47%	38%

8.3 Improving traffic safety and keeping streets clearer of traffic

The Council is considering a number of steps to improve traffic safety and to keep the streets in Bromsgrove town centre clearer of traffic. A number of these were shown to respondents, and they were asked whether they would be in favour or against each of them.

- 81% were in favour of encouragement to use existing long stay and short stay car parks

- 70% were in favour of fines for illegal parking

- 68% were in favour of the introduction of designated on-street parking zones

- 62% were in favour of encouragement to use local transport links

- 61% were in favour of the introduction of double yellow lines in some areas

- 52% were in favour of shorter on-street parking times to improve parking flow

- 42% were in favour of a greater uniformed warden presence in the street.

Would you be in favour or against each of the following?

	In favour	Against	Don't know
Encouragement to use car parks	81	6	13
Fines for illegal parking	70	18	12
Designated on-street parking zones	68	15	16
Encouragement to use local transport links	62	12	25
Bring in double yellow lines	61	21	18
Shorter on-street parking times	52	29	19
Greater uniformed warden street presence	42	38	20

Base: All respondents (525~542)

The main differences were observed when comparing the proportions of respondents who are against the initiatives in different areas, in particular when comparing Urban 1 residents with other residents:

- Urban 1 (43%) and Rural 1 residents (42%) were significantly more likely than Urban 2 residents (14%) to be against a greater uniformed warden presence

- Urban 1 residents (21%) were significantly more likely than Urban 2 residents (3%) to be against fines for illegal parking

- Urban 1 residents (18%) were significantly more likely than Urban 2 residents (3%) to be against designated on-street parking zones

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The data is shown on the following table:

% Against	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Encouragement to use existing car parks	8%	-	2%	6%
Fines for illegal parking	21%	3%	18%	10%
Introduction of on-street parking zones	18%	3%	12%	12%
Encouragement to use local transport	12%	10%	16%	18%
Double yellow lines in some areas	23%	9%	18%	22%
Shorter on-street parking times	30%	24%	24%	29%
Uniformed warden presence in the street	43%	14%	42%	26%

9 CULTURAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

9.1 Introduction

This section looks at satisfaction with cultural and recreational activities, facilities and events on offer in the District. It also looks at satisfaction with the range of entertainment offered at the Artrix Centre and charging for the Bonfire Night.

9.2 Attitudes towards the cultural and recreational activities in the District

Residents were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they are with some of the cultural and recreational activities, facilities and events. The findings were mixed:

- 67% were satisfied with parks and open spaces (11% dissatisfied)

- 61% were satisfied with the libraries (7% dissatisfied)

- 48% were satisfied with nature trails and country paths (13% dissatisfied)

- 35% were satisfied with the Christmas lights (30% dissatisfied)

- 34% were satisfied with the bandstand (7% dissatisfied)

- 29% were satisfied with street theatre (6% dissatisfied)

- 26% were satisfied with indoor sports facilities (17% dissatisfied)

- 23% were satisfied with the bonfire night (24% dissatisfied)

- 22% were satisfied with outdoor sports facilities (17% dissatisfied)

- 18% were satisfied with the range and quality of shops (65% dissatisfied)

- 28% were satisfied with cultural and recreational facilities overall (27% dissatisfied).

Satisfaction with the cultural and recreational activities
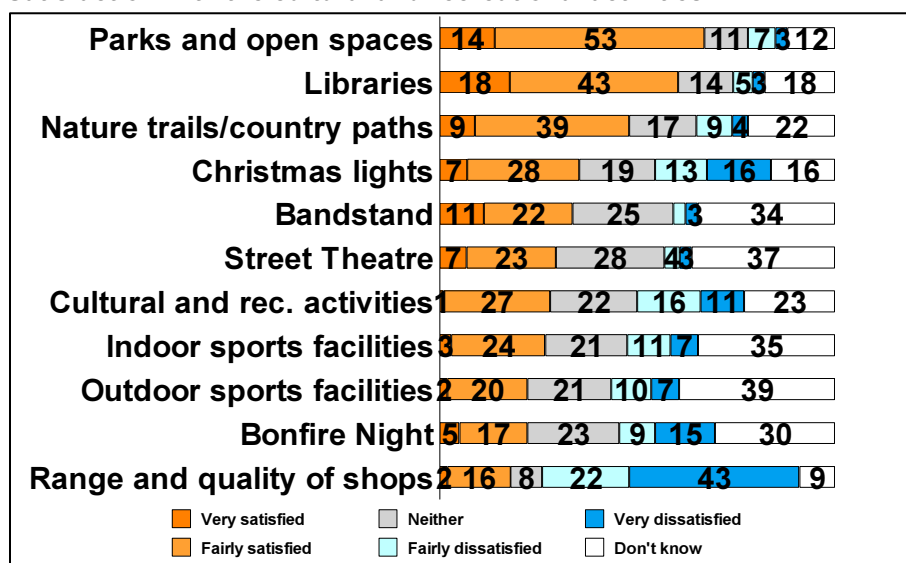
Base: All respondents (548~571)

The table below shows the proportion of people satisfied with each element split by area. We have colour coded the area with the highest satisfaction (green) and the lowest satisfaction (red). As the table shows, those in Urban 2 were generally less positive about cultural and recreational facilities activities and events than those who live in other areas.

% Satisfied	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Parks and open spaces	73%	43%	61%	60%
Libraries	62%	52%	59%	66%
Nature trails and country paths	50%	35%	61%	43%
Christmas lights	36%	16%	41%	43%
Bandstand	39%	8%	22%	32%
Street theatre	36%	7%	18%	21%
Indoor sports facilities	27%	16%	29%	34%
Bonfire night	22%	30%	18%	21%
Outdoor sports facilities	21%	27%	21%	27%
Range and quality of shops	11%	23%	41%	38%
Cultural and recreational facilities overall	27%	21%	34%	35%

9.3 The entertainment available at the Artrix Centre

Respondents were then asked specifically whether they were satisfied or dissatisfied with the range of entertainment offered at the Artrix Centre. 37% said that they were satisfied, while 6% were dissatisfied and 47% did not know.

Satisfaction with the entertainment offered at Bromsgrove's Artrix Centre
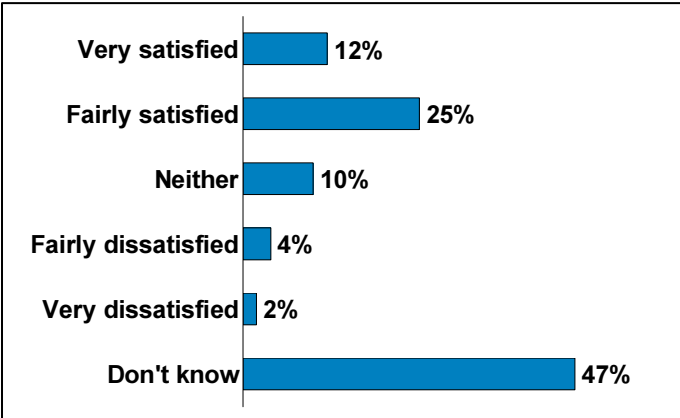
Base: All respondent s (593)

Responses were most positive from Urban 1 residents (47%), while 84% of Urban 2 residents chose the 'Don't know' option.

9.4 The Bonfire Night in Bromsgrove

Residents were told that the Council took the decision to charge residents to attend the Bonfire night as a result of feedback, and were asked whether or not charging should continue. The results were very mixed; 34% said that charging should continue, 31% said that charging should not continue and 34% had no opinion.

10 CORPORATE

10.1 Introduction

At the end of the survey, a number of general questions relating to corporate issues were included. This section of the report looks at the findings to these questions on how much understanding the respondents have of the choices that the Council has to make, overall satisfaction with the Council, the extent to which residents feel that they can influence decision making and whether or not they know who their ward Councillor is.

10.2 The Council

17% of the sample said that they had a full understanding of the choices that the Council has to make, 70% said that they had some understanding and 13% said that they had no understanding.

Overall, 38% were satisfied with the way that the Council runs things, 23% were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied and 39% were dissatisfied.

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things
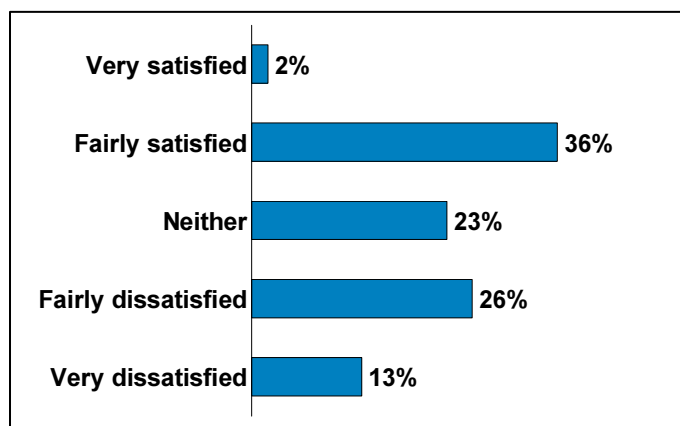
Base: All respondents (602)

Generally speaking, those people who live in Urban 1 were less likely to be satisfied (31%) than those who live in Urban 2 (50%), Rural 1 (50%) or Rural 2 (54%). The data is shown in the table below.

% Satisfied	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Very satisfied	1%	8%	3%	5%
Fairly satisfied	30%	42%	47%	48%
Neither	22%	28%	19%	25%
Fairly dissatisfied	30%	13%	28%	16%
Very dissatisfied	16%	9%	3%	5%

There was also some indication that those who read a local paper are less likely to be satisfied with the Council overall than those who do not. 47% of those who read a local paper less frequently than most weeks were satisfied with the Council overall. This

compares to 36% of those who read a local paper most days being satisfied, 35% of those who read a local paper once or twice a week and 34% of those who read a paper most weeks.

10.3 Local democracy

Just over a quarter of the sample (28%) agreed that they could influence decisions affecting their local area, while 72% disagreed. Those who were dissatisfied with the Council overall were significantly more likely to disagree (92%) than those who were satisfied with the Council overall (48%).

To what extent do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?
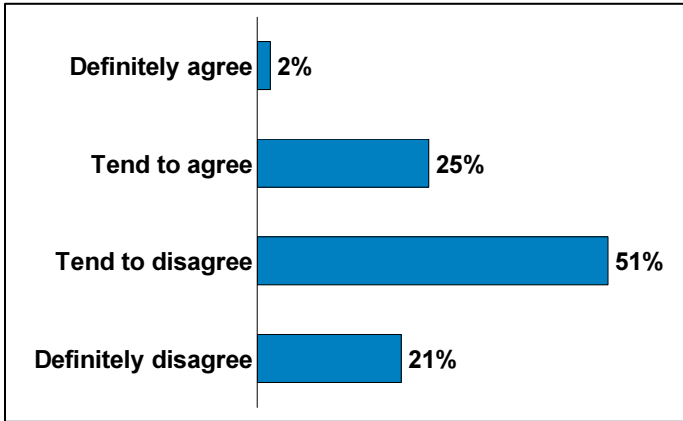
Base: All respondents (578)

The findings for the different areas are shown below, and suggest that those in Rural 2 (40%) and Urban 2 (38%) are more likely than those in Rural 1 (28%) and Urban 1 (23%) to agree that they can influence decisions affecting their local area.

Influence decisions affecting your local area	Urban 1	Urban 2	Rural 1	Rural 2
Definitely agree	3%	1%	1%	4%
Tend to agree	21%	36%	26%	36%
Tend to disagree	55%	41%	49%	44%
Definitely disagree	22%	22%	24%	16%

4 in 10 respondents knew who their Ward Councillor was. The main differences between subgroups were observed when comparing age groups, with 18% of 18-34 year olds, 29% of 35-54 year olds, 49% of 55-74 year olds and 53% of those aged 75 or over knowing who their ward Councillor is.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 Introduction
The client will have their own interpretation of the data and will be able to put it in the context of other anecdotal, operation and performance indicator to help give a broader picture of the findings.   We have identified a number of thoughts below.

11.2 Priorities
There were high proportions of respondents saying that they did not know how satisfied or dissatisfied they are the with the Council's performance in meeting their priorities. Whilst we might expect this to be the case (as they are strategic in nature, and many residents may not be familiar with them), the Council should look towards increasing awareness of the smaller 'tactical' or operational schemes that are being implemented to make improvements.

Also, there were high proportions of dissatisfaction with the Council's performance in meeting these priorities. Again, this is to be expected- the Council should be focussing on areas that are weaker- but it is important to note that this survey sets a benchmark, and that the Council should look for improved results in future waves.

The Council has selected the priorities for good reason.   The fact that 38% of respondents said that if they could replace one of the priorities, it would be Increasing the availability of affordable housing, is not necessarily sufficient justification for doing so.   Some of the Council's priorities and responsibilities are focussed towards smaller, more vulnerable groups of the population, and so a populist approach to setting priorities is not necessarily a sensible one.

Instead the Council should communicate the reasons why increasing affordable housing is important and also focus less public attention on what it is doing in this area- instead communications should focus on the issues that resident think are more important or relevant to them; such as the work that is being undertaken to improve the quality of life of older people.

11.3 Contact with the Council
Those contacting the Council to register a complaint were less satisfied than those who contacted the Council for other reasons. This may be due to the outcome as opposed to the way that the complaint was handled. It is important that staff who handle complaints are fully trained and able to clearly communicate how complaints are being delat with, when they will be resolved and how the complaints process works.   If deemed appropriate the Council may wish to review the complaints policy to enable more complaints to be escalated so that those making a complaint feel that it is being dealt with and can expect some sort of outcome.

The main problems that people experience when contacting or being contacted by the Council were; No reply to a voicemail (29%) and no response to a letter (27%). Again, staff training should focus on the importance of responding to contact from residents; this should be implemented in all teams- not just those that work in call centres or in other frontline roles

The Council has scheduled a series of focus groups on customer access, and the findings from the customer access questions in this survey could be further explored when these are undertaken.

11.4 Council communications

Outward communications in the form of the Council Tax leaflet and Together Bromsgrove were received by the majority, and were generally considered useful. The website, as a more passive from of communication did not reach as many respondents- although it should be noted that the sample was predominantly made up of older respondents who may not turn to the internet as their first point of call for information. Despite this, the majority of those that had used the website were satisfied with it.

11.5 Street scene and waste management

Appendix 1 contains the data from the previous survey, and shows a slight improvement in satisfaction with the waste collection service.

The findings here were generally positive, however, residents typically feel that waste services are a core responsibility of a Council, and improvements are normally welcomed. In particular, attention should be paid to ensuring that debris is not left on the street, and also communicating the reason behind the frequency of collections.

The decision to charge for green waste collection appears to be an unpopular one- however, it is worth noting that the question was asked outside of the context of other budget decisions that the council makes. It is important that those who do use the green waste collection service are clearly explained the reasons for the decisions to introduce charging.

11.6 Bromsgrove Town Centre

This section of the survey included questions on a very particular area of the District, and it was unsurprising to find and high proportions of 'Don't know / No opinion' responses, and that views of residents varied depending on where they live.

Generally speaking respondents appeared supportive of the plans to improve traffic safety- but again there were significant differences between residents from different areas that should be taken into account before making any final decisions. Even if 95% of residents were in favour of, for example, on-street parking zones, there may still be 5% against, who's views need to be carefully considered.

11.7 Cultural and recreational activities

The findings suggested low satisfaction ratings among residents in the Urban 2 area. It is possible that some activities could tour the area, and that more could be done to improve access to or awareness of the activities that are available in the area.

11.8 Corporate

Overall satisfaction with the authority is low at 38%, but shows a slight improvement compared to 2007, (Appendix 1). The survey found that those who were dissatisfied with the authority overall were consistently less satisfied and less positive about elements of the service provided. However, further analysis of the data is possible to try

to explore where the differences are the greatest. This will help to identify some of the key drivers of satisfaction.

The new Place Survey will be focusing more on satisfaction with the area as opposed to satisfaction with the local authority, however it will be interesting to continue asking this question in future waves to track how perceptions of the authority are changing.

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APPENDIX 2
HISTORICAL BENCHMARKING

Satisfaction with the Council's performance against priorities				
	2008 **% Positive**	2007 % Positive	**2008** **%Negative**	2007 % Negative
Clean Streets and Recycling (2008) **Clean District (2007)**	**46**	30	**38**	36
Improving customer service	**32**	36	**21**	19
Sense of community	**27**	n/a	**38**	n/a
Increased availability of housing	**18**	27	**16**	17
Regenerating Bromsgrove town centre	**12**	18	**50**	39

Satisfaction with contacting the Council				
	2008 **% Positive**	2007 % Positive	**2008** **% Negative**	2007 % Negative
How easy it was to contact the Council	**83**	54	**10**	15

1

Would you recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend?		
	2008	2007
Yes	**73%**	72%
No	**11%**	28%
Don't know	**15%**	n/a

How often do you visit www.bromsgrove.gov.uk?		
	2008	2007
Daily	**0%**	0%
At least once a week	**1%**	1%
Once per week	**0%**	n/a
Once per fortnight	**1%**	1%
Once a month	**5%**	7%
Once every 6 months	**10%**	16%
Once a year	**9%**	8%
Less often	**12%**	8%
Never	**63%**	59%

What prompted you to use the Council's website?		
	2008	2007
Info. about the local area	**52%**	34%
Info. About the Council/services	**51%**	51%
To make a request for a service	**18%**	18%
To make a complaint/compliment	**18%**	10%
Nothing in particular	**8%**	n/a
To make an application	**8%**	6%
To pay a bill	**8%**	n/a
To chase progress on a query	**6%**	10%
To book facilities or events	**3%**	1%
To apply for grants or benefits	**2%**	1%
Can't remember	**1%**	n/a
Other	**7%**	20%

3

How useful did you find Together Bromsgrove?		
	2008	2007
Very useful	**11%**	4%
Useful	**50%**	37%
Neither	**24%**	19%
Not useful	**9%**	7%
Not at all useful	**6%**	2%
Did not read/receive	**n/a**	32%

How useful did you find the Council Tax Leaflet?		
	2008	2007
Very useful	**6%**	3%
Useful	**49%**	48%
Neither	**32%**	23%
Not useful	**8%**	4%
Not at all useful	**5%**	2%
Did not read/receive	**n/a**	20%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the refuse collection service in general?		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	**29%**	27%
Fairly satisfied	**42%**	41%
Neither	**5%**	6%
Fairly dissatisfied	**15%**	`18%
Very dissatisfied	**9%**	7%

Satisfaction with entertainment offered at Bromsgrove's Artrix Centre		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	12%	13%
Fairly satisfied	25%	33%
Neither	10%	47%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%	4%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
Don't know	47%	n/a

5

Satisfaction with cultural and recreational activities				
	2008 **% Positive**	2007 % Positive	**2008** **% Negative**	2007 % Negative
Parks and Open spaces	**67**	71	**10**	7
Libraries	**61**	69	**8**	6
Nature trails/country paths	**48**	60	**13**	8
Christmas Lights	**35**	49	**29**	9
Bandstand	**33**	36	**5**	3
Street Theatre	**30**	32	**7**	2
Cultural & rec. activities	**28**	n/a	**27**	n/a
Indoor sports facilities	**27**	34	**18**	12
Outdoor sports facilities	**22**	26	**17**	12
Bonfire Night	**22**	36	**24**	5
Range and Quality of Shops	**18**	n/a	**65**	n/a

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	**2%**	2%
Fairly satisfied	**36%**	34%
Neither	**23%**	36%
Fairly dissatisfied	**26%**	19%
Very dissatisfied	**13%**	9%

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APPENDIX 3
RESIDENTS' COMMENTS

Q3. And which of the following would you like to replace it with? - Other

"A fairer focus on Rubery."

"Auditing and streamlining council activities to cut waste and mismanagement - invest to save."

"Better recreational facilities and road repairs in areas such as Wythal, which seems to be totally ignored."

"Better waste disposal/recycling collection, including green collection all year."

"Bromsgrove Centre has had enough, Hollywood hasn't even got a park."

"Condition of streets."

"Congestion and roadworks sharing."

"Consideration for outlying areas who seem to be neglected areas on boundary."

"Council should be more cost effective and listen to Bromsgrove resident needs."

"Decrease car park charges."

"Developing Hagley."

"Developing social/sporting venues."

"Don't want to replace it, current one is good."

"Double efforts on town regeneration."

"Encouraging business and employment opportunity."

"Encouraging business back into Bromsgrove."

"Encouraging shopping and parking/market town."

"Focus more on regenerating town centre and transport links."

"Free green waste bin (garden)."

"Getting some new shops in High Street (its nearly dead)."

"Greater evidence of council activity in my area."

"Highway maintenance."

"Improve on the other four, especially bin collections, clean streets."

"Improve public transport, including parking at train station."

"Improved Birmingham transport links."

"Improved public transport from Alvechurch to Bromsgrove and sack the manager in charge of car parking charges."

"Improving common areas, e.g. cut grass before it gets too long. Bromsgrove would never get a 'best kept town' award."

"Improving infrastructure, congestion, etc., then can increase housing."

"Improving road surfaces."

"Improving roads in rural areas."

"Improving the quality of life of younger people."

"Increase bus service, i.e., evenings during week."

"Increasing access for young people to sports/leisure facilities."

"Increasing availability of places at Fristall First School."

"Making recycling more user friendly and more bin collections."

"More accommodation ready for homeless people."

"More attention to upkeep of highways."

"More facilities for youths."

"More green space areas."

"No good shops left, rent is too high, nothing appeals to bring in visitors."

"None."

"Opening more subjects to discussion, before action."

"Parking issues."

"Pride in the town."

"Problem people in nice areas."

"Providing activities/supervision centres, etc for local youths."

"Providing better value for money."

"Recycling very limited."

"Reducing bureaucracy and expenditure."

"Remove car parking fees."

"Repairing roads and pavements."

"Return Bromsgrove to be a quality town that it used to be."

"Road maintenance."

"Roads (quality/layout) and parking (costs)."

"Roads/footpath maintenance."

"Separate sense of community into two categories, tackling crime and ASB, and improving facilities for children and young people."

"Something for children and young people."

"Sorting out crime. Dealing with young drivers zooming around town."

"Staff that offer excellent performance for less money, starting at the top."

"State of the roads, i.e. Holes."

"Tidy up green areas, i.e. decent grass cutting."

"Vastly improve road surfaces, remove litter from rural lanes. These lanes flood to easily due to blocked ditches and drains."

"We want better amenities."

Q6. What was the main reason that you last contacted the Council?

"About Council Tax."

"Because my new bus pass, hadn't arrived."

"Bin collection."

"Bus pass, upset no longer have car pass; 2008 stopped."

"Bus pass."

"Bus pass."

"Bus pass."

"Change of address."

"Chase up bus pass."

"Condition of roads in Hagley."

"Council Tax enquiry."

"Enquire about garage door."

"Enquire why rubbish not collected."

"For bus pass beginning March. They lost my photo, I have sent another and am still waiting."

"Get travel pass."

"Highways regarding overgrown embankment."

"House move, Council Tax."

"I wrote to ask why all the tenants in Beacon Close had tarmac drives and I had not."

"Inform of change of tenancy in flat."

"Light repair."

"Local tip, could not get access."

"Locked out."

"My bin was missed being emptied."

"My recycle boxes were stolen from the curb side, I needed replacements."

"New bus pass for 60 plus."

"No reply to letter."

"Pest control."

"Re: Council Tax."

"Recycling collections."

"Regarding accommodation for myself as I am recently in Hamilton House, which has closed down."

"Removal of white goods."

"Renew car park permit."

"Repair request."

"Repair work to drains."

"Repairs."

"Replacement bus pass."

"Replacement of recycling bin."

"Report broken road furniture."

"Report road defect."

"Request for repairs."

"Request grey bin collection, which had been forgotten!"

"Request of wheelie bin."

"Request replacement and recycling box."

"Request replacement grey bins as ours was broken."

"Rubbish lying in verges, dog dirt on pavements, needle in verge and manhole still broken."

"Terminate allotment lease."

"To advise of a plague of rats in a nearby field."

"To apply for bus pass."

"To ask about the Council Tax on my father's house after he died."

"To ask for a new green bin lid."

"To ask when I would get my bus pass (May 2008)."

"To collect a new household waste permit."

"To consult a tree officer."

"To draw attention to consistent dangerous parking on New Road."

"To enquire about rubbish removed from back of my house."

"To get new bus pass which had not arrived when my husband's did."

"To have our green bin removed, we do not wish to pay."

"To inform you that my mother had passed away."

"To make a payment and order recycling boxes."

"To make a payment and septic tank emptying."

"To obtain O.A.P. £30/year parking pass."

"To obtain refund of council tax."

"To pay the 12 month car park."

"To provide information required."

"To query council tax bill."

"To register a complaint and report pot holes in road."

"To renew the blue badge."

"To repair the road, Bromsgrove Road, Romsley."

"To report change of circumstances."

"To request additional recycling bins."

"To request information & I phoned the environment dept., re: a gypsy development in Billesley Lane."

"To request new recycling boxes."

"To request new wheelie bin."

"To resist an unjust parking charge (accepted)."

"To sort out a change in Council Tax."

"To speak to allotment officer."

"To try to re-new my £30 parking concession expired on 5th March 08 - not allowed."

Q8. How would you prefer to contact the Council

"Any way that is convenient for me, so any of the above."

"Depends on circumstances."

"Depends on reason for contacting. Could be any of 5."

"Free phone."

"No preference as long as there is a speedy response."

"Not bother at all, waste of time."

"Not bothered."

"Wouldn't really."

Q15 Can you remember experiencing any of the following problems when contacting or being contacted by the council? - Other

"Answering telephone within 6 rings isn't satisfactory, when get a recorded message saying ""all our operators are busy"" for a further 5 mins."

"Assessed as eligible for small grey wheelie bin, but never received one despite repeat requests."

"Being as we only have a phone (have no website or email) the few times of contact has been satisfactory."

"Being hung up on three times."

"Being passed around until getting the right contact."

"Blind, problems all around, especially when needing to go to office although staff good. (See questionnaire)."

"Can't comment."

"Complaint was registered, but no feedback."

"Council representative couldn't give a damn about my query."

"Dispute over hedgerow."

"Getting a good response from various officers in the Council."

"Getting through to the correct member of staff."

"Had no problems."

"Have had no need to contact the Council."

"Have not contacted the Council and therefore, do not know."

"Having spoken to the correct person and action agreed nothing happens, so had to call again and again."

"I have no problems in dealing with the Council."

"Insurance claims against Council for damage caused, not dealt with in proper manner."

"It took the Council Revenues Dept. eight weeks to deal with the letter."

"Lack of information and very poor excuses."

"Never contact the Council."

"No problem."

"No problems whatsoever."

"No problems."

"No reason for contact."

"No response to complaint."

"Not being able to speak to person to deal with my complaint."

"Not being able to speak to the department I want."

"Not contacted the Council."

"Not even letting me know they had lost my photo for my bus pass."

"Not having phone calls returned, having spoken to someone who is supposed to pass a message on to relevant person."

"Not helpful at all."

"Not replying to letter I sent."

"Not sending me my travel permit."

"Not used."

"Our grey bin went missing. Rang the Council and was told we would have one the next day, four phone calls and three weeks later it arrived."

"People to speak clearly on phone, I have a hearing problem."

"Person never called back when said they would."

"Promised a response to a complaint by a manager, still waiting after three months."

"Promises of a response not being followed."

"Too many Customer Service staff on leave in Easter holidays week, resulting in long wait at Customer Service Centre."

"Two application forms (both different) lost in system."

"Unsatisfactory response."

"Very rarely contact the Council."

"We live fifteen miles away, no bus service."

"Website never seems to have the information I require, or it is there but I don't know where to look?"

"When changing address filled out an electoral form, even an idiot would have understood. Still missed voting, could vote in my old address."

Q17 If you have visited the Council's website in the last year, what prompted you to use it? - Other

"Check progress of planning application."

"Check recycling dates."

"Checking right of way and requesting action and job search."

"Jobs available and advice on bonfires."

"Jobs."

"Jobs."

"Pay 12 month car park fee."

"Planning issues and the Council's meeting minutes."

"Planning, local bonfire restrictions."

"Response to council survey on recycling."

"To view jobs."

Q31. **If you are dissatisfied with the refuse collection service, please indicate whether you have ever experienced any of the following issues with your refuse collections – Other**

"7 a.m. on Saturdays!"

"Appalling service for both grey and green bin collection."

"Bin collections can be a day or more late."

"Bins and boxes left blocking pavement and driveways."

"Bins are always left haphazardly on footpaths causing extreme life threatening situations for the elderly, disabled and young children."

"Bins are not left outside my property, always left further up the road and not even left tidily or with consideration for other path users."

"Bins are not left outside your house."

"Bins collected after 4 p.m. and not always on the correct day. You never know why or when."

"Bins left all over the place. White marks painted on bins and I do not know why."

"Bins left because not exactly in right place. We are not encouraged to recycle by charging us and give small boxes, emptied fortnightly."

"Bins left far away from property or blocking driveways."

"Bins missed on more than 15 occasions - we give up! My husband takes waste to commercial bins himself. Any chance of reduction in Council Tax?"

"Bins routinely left obstructing the pavement, hazard for motorized buggy users and mothers with small children. If a car is parked on the pavement, I understand it is an offence. What about bins?"

"Blocked pavements, having to walk in road but advised that the Council have insurances in case we are injured."

"Boxes are no good on windy days, have to keep putting boxes back, they blow over. When at work all day this causes recycling to be blown around."

"Boxes are not big enough."

"Boxes frequently broken and scattered around the street by the bin men."

"Boxes not big enough (consider small bins)."

"Boxes not big enough, need more boxes."

"Broken boxes (council damage) are not replaced."

"Completely unreliable, kerbside bins and boxes obstruct pavement."

"Difficulty putting out heavy bins when ill or infirm."

"Grey bins and boxes STINK in warm weather."

"Have not been issued with a wheelie bin, birds frequently getting into black bin bags."

"I am not offered any recycling service, refuse only permitted to be 'household' waste. No definition given. Refuse left without explanation at the time."

"I do not appreciate walking up and down the length of our road looking for our bin."

"I have two people in this house using incontinence pads, so the bins smell awful at the end of two weeks, even if wrapped up."

"I live next to bin cupboards, we have flies and it smells."

"I take all my own waste to the tip - we live too far from the end of the lane where the collection takes place. Bins are now making all areas look scruffy."

"If bin is a little overfilled, not emptied at all, so yet another two weeks to wait."

"If windy, empty boxes and bins being blown I road could cause an accident."

"Insufficient recycling, no cardboard, metal, etc."

"Introduction of green bin fee is disgraceful."

"Lorries block the road and don't pull over so you can pass."

"Losing the green bin collection within Council Tax payment."

"Need back door collection, bins on pavement are a hazard for wheelchairs, pushchairs, blind people, etc."

"Neighbours putting out waste the day before collection and local children spreading it around the area. Also, some neighbours not collecting their bins/boxes for anything from a few days to a week."

"No chance to recycle as there is no collection."

"No consistency with collections."

"No opportunity to recycle."

"Often away meaning bin left out drawing attention to an empty house."

"Operatives sometimes do not return bin. I am registered for assistance."

"Other people's wheelie bins left in my drive."

"Papers left in bottom of red box."

"Recycle bins for paper, tins and plastic, etc., are not big enough. Also, our driveway is on a slope so when it's windy the bins are blown down the driveway to the road."

"Recycle capable items being left behind!"

"Recycling boxes not big enough."

"Recycling should be weekly."

"Selective operators who decide what to collect and what not to collect."

"The bins advertise that they take textiles, but textiles left behind."

"The recycle bins are inadequate & unwieldy. Our drive is over 50 metres long & because we are conscientious at recycling, we have 8 boxes to manoeuvre. This is ergonomically unsafe, need wheelie bin."

"They leave stuff behind."

"This service is generally very poor, it needs dynamic improvement."

"Too fussy about what is recycled and don't take enough."

"When my bins were not collected I was unable to speak to anyone about it, my phone calls were not returned and rubbish was not collected, which meant 1 month before collection. This is not acceptable."

Appendix 4 - Comparison of results received from random sample and self selecting Equalities and Diversity Forum / Disabled Users Group

NB:
Group A = Those from the Random sample (611 responses in total)
Group B = Those from the E&D Forum and DUG (11 responses in total)

Council priorities

Q1. Those from group A were generally less satisfied than those from group B in terms of the council's performance in delivering on its priorities:

Satisfaction with priorities	% Satisfied	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Regenerating Bromsgrove town centre	12%	45%
Increased availability of affordable housing	18%	36%
Improving customer service	31%	55%
Sense of community	26%	27%
Clean streets and recycling	46%	55%

Q2. Both Groups were most keen to replace Increased Availability of Housing as a priority.

Priority Replacement	% Keen to replace as a priority	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Increased Availability of Housing	37%	50%
Regenerating Bromsgrove town centre	26%	10%
Improving customer service	19%	30%
Sense of community	11%	-
Clean streets and recycling	7%	10%

Q3. Both groups were most keen to introduce 'Improving older people's quality of life' as a priority.

Replaced with…	% who would replace it with the following	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Improving older peoples quality of life	45%	70%
Greater focus on rural issues	17%	-
Redeveloping the Longbridge site	11%	10%
Reducing carbon emission	8%	10%
Encouraging biodiversity/conservation	7%	10%
Other	12%	-

Customer Access

Q4. 62% of people in Group A had contacted the Council in the last 12 months in comparison to 73% of Group B

Q5. Of those who had contacted the Council in the last 12 months, the majority of both Groups had contacted them over the phone, with 57% of people in both groups using this method.

Q6. Reasons for contacting the Council for those who had made contact from Group A and B.

	% of people contacting for this reason	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
To request information	27%	25%
To register a complaint	24%	25%
To make an application	16%	13%
To make a payment	7%	-
To apply for grants or benefits	5%	25%
Other	22%	13%

Q7. Satisfaction with aspects of Council contact fro Groups A and B:

	% Satisfied	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
How easy it was to contact the Council	83%	88%
How easy it was to get hold of the right person	70%	88%
The helpfulness of the staff that dealt enquiry	77%	88%
The ability of staff to deal with enquiry	70%	88%
The final outcome	63%	63%

Q8. Both groups preferred to contact the Council over the phone

Preferred Contact Method	%	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
By phone	63%	40%
In person	19%	30%
By Email	10%	10%
By Letter	3%	20%
Through the website	3%	-
Other	1%	-

Q9. Those from Group A generally thought calls should be answered within 20 seconds whereas those from Group B were less demanding:

Acceptable length of time for calls to be answered	%	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Should be answered immediately	7%	9%
Answered within 20 seconds	48%	18%
Answered within 35 seconds	28%	45%
Answered within a minute	10%	18%
Don't know/No opinion	7%	9%

Q10. Those from Group A were significantly less likely than those from Group B to have visited the Council's Customer Service Centre in Bromsgrove with 31% of Group A saying they had visited the CSC compared to 91% of Group B.

Q11 Those in Group A and Group B who had visited the Customer Service Centre, were asked to rate the following factors of the CSC:

	% Positive	
	Group A	Group B
Availability of parking	55%	50%
Size of parking spaces	46%	50%
Provision of ramps	37%	56%
Ease of getting up the steps	47%	40%
Lighting	52%	70%
Availability of a hearing loop	20%	20%
Height of counters	48%	60%
Signs and display materials	49%	50%
Ease of getting through the doors	61%	60%

Q12. Of those who had visited the CSC the number of those who would recommend the centre to a friend were similar in both groups, with 73% in Group A saying that they would recommend the CSC and 70% in Group B.

Q13. 19% of respondents in Group A were aware of the Council's customer standards in comparison to 50% of those in Group B

Q14. Of those who were aware of the Council's Customer Standards, the satisfaction for the standards being met is shown below

	% Satisfied	
	GROUPA	GROUP B
Respond to customer letter within 10 working days	18%	55%
Acknowledge customer complaints within 3 working days	13%	64%
Provide a full response to customer complaints within 10 working days	12%	55%
Respond to emails within 5 working days	8%	55%
Answer the telephone within 6 rings	35%	45%
Respond to voicemail messages within 2 days	8%	45%
Be polite at all times customers' needs	51%	91%
Ensure that services/offices/info. are as accessible as possible	33%	64%
Ensure a senior officer attends at least 85% of PACT meetings	12%	45%

Q15. Negative experiences when being contacted by the Council:

	% Experienced	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
No reply to a voicemail	28%	43%
No response to a letter	27%	14%
Not getting through to the CS centre	24%	71%
Receiving a letter you didn't understand	18%	43%
Unable to get to the CS centre	16%	14%
Unable to afford the phone call	7%	14%
Unable to leave a message on the website	7%	14%
Other	26%	14%

Council Communications

Q16. The majority of both groups of respondents had never visited the Council's website

Frequency of visit to website	%	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Daily	-	9%
At least once a week	1%	-
Once per week	0%	-
Once per fortnight	1%	9%
Once a month	5%	-
Once every 6 months	10%	18%
Once a year	9%	-
Less often	12%	9%
Never	63%	55%

Q17-19. Not enough members of either group had visited the website enough for it to be viable to analyse these three questions.

Q20. 61% of those in Group A had said they had remembered receiving the Together Bromsgrove magazine in comparison to 82% of those in Group B

Q21. Of those who had remembered receiving the magazine, 100% of Group B members gave a positive response towards it and 61% of Group A.

Q22. Of those in Group A, 80% had remembered receiving the Council Tax leaflet and 91% of those in Group B

Q23. A higher proportion of members of Group B than those in Group A gave a positive response in relation to whether or not the Council Tax Leaflet was useful.
- 55% of Group A gave a positive response
- 80% of Group B gave a positive response

Q24. Those in Group A (34%) were less likely than those in Group B (73%) to say that the local press influenced their view of the Council

Street scene and Waste Management Services

Q25. For Group A, 58% were satisfied with the cleanliness of their street this is lower than Group B (73%).

Q26. Of those in Group A, 53% were satisfied with the areas of public open space within the District area are clean and 64% in Group B

Q27. In terms of fly tipping in the local area being a problem, the results from both groups were broadly similar: 22% of Group A had a negative opinion and 27% of Group B had a negative opinion.

Q28. 6% of Group A had a positive view on the promptness of fly-tipping being removed when reported, compared to 18% of Group B

Q29. The majority of both groups were strongly against the idea of paying a fee to continue using the free waste collection service with only 4% positive in group A and 9% positive in group B.

Opinion on waste collection service charges	%	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Strongly in Favour	1%	-
In favour	3%	9%
No opinion	3%	-
Against	12%	27%
Strongly Against	79%	64%
Don't know	2%	-

Q30. Both groups were satisfied with the refuse collection service in general with 71% of Group A being satisfied and 73% of Group B.

Q31. The number of respondents from Group B that answered this question were not significant enough in order to analyse this question.

Bromsgrove Town Centre

Q32. The number of people satisfied with the leisure facilities on offer in Bromsgrove Town Centre was higher in Group A (20%) than in Group B (9%).

Q33. 25% of Group A and 18% of Group B were satisfied with the transport links to and from the town centre

Q34. The differences in the ways that Group A and B responded to the proposals for parking enforcement are shown below:

	% In favour	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Greater uniformed warden street presence	42%	55%
Fines for illegal parking	70%	64%
Designated on-street parking zones	68%	82%
Bring in double yellow lines	61%	50%

	81%	90%
Encouragement to use car parks	81%	90%
Encouragement to use local transport links	62%	100%
Shorter on-street parking times	53%	50%

Cultural and Recreational Activities
Q35.

	% Satisfied	
	GROUP A	GROUP B
Outdoor sports facilities	22%	9%
Indoor sports facilities	26%	27%
Nature trails/country paths	49%	20%
Parks and open spaces	66%	73%
Libraries	61%	80%
Bonfire night	22%	45%
Street Theatre	29%	36%
Bandstand	33%	45%
Christmas Lights	35%	45%
Range and quality of shops	18%	0%
Cultural and rec. activities	28%	18%

Q36. 55% of Group B and 36% of Group A were satisfied with the overall range of entertainment offered at Bromsgrove's Artrix Centre

Q37. 34% of Group A and 36% of Group B said they would be prepared to see charging continue at the annual bonfire event night.

Finally

Q38. In terms of the respondents understanding of the choices the Council has to make, members of Group B had a marginally better understanding than Group A with 27% against 17%. The majority of both groups had some understanding of the Council's choices.

Q39. Overall, 55% of members of Group B were satisfied with the way the Council runs things, this was less in Group A with 38% being satisfied.

Q40. Those in Group A were less likely than those in Group B to believe that they could influence decisions affecting their local area
   - 27% of Group A were positive
   - 55% of Group B were positive

Q41. Members of Group A were less likely than those in Group B to know who their Ward Councillor was
   - 39% in Group A said they knew
   - 55% in Group B said they knew

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