



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

THURSDAY, 29TH MAY 2008, AT 2.00 P.M.

COUNCIL CHAMBER, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

MEMBERS: Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker, S. R. Colella, G. N. Denaro, Mrs. R. L. Dent, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., R. Hollingworth, Mrs. J. D. Luck, E. J. Murray, S. R. Peters, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, E. C. Tibby, P. J. Whittaker and C. J. K. Wilson

AGENDA

1. Election of Chairman for the Ensuing Municipal Year
2. Election of Vice-Chairman for the Ensuing Municipal Year
3. To receive apologies for absence
4. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 13th December 2007 (Pages 1 - 4)
5. Declarations of Interest
6. Regional Spatial Strategy Phase 2 Preferred Option Update and Phase 3 Launch (Pages 5 - 24)
7. Core Strategy Update (Pages 25 - 34)
8. Bromsgrove Town Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Consultation (Pages 35 - 104)
9. Rural Exception Housing Schemes (Pages 105 - 108)
10. New Planning Policies - Discussion Paper to include SPG7 - the 40% Rule, Granny Flats, Extensions to Nursing Homes, Two Storey Extensions and Affordable Housing Guidelines (to follow)

11. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

19th May 2008

Agenda Item 4

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

THURSDAY, 13TH DECEMBER, 2007 AT 2.00 PM

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E. (Chairman), Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor G. N. Denaro, Councillor Mrs. R. L. Dent, Councillor R. Hollingworth, Councillor E. J. Murray, Councillor E. C. Tibby and Councillor L. J. Turner

Officers: Mr. P. Street, Mr. M. Dunphy, Mr. A. Fulford, Ms. R. Williams, Ms. H. Pankhurst, and Ms. R. Cole.

12/07 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs. J. D. Luck, S. R. Peters, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey J.P. and C. J. K. Wilson.

13/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

14/07 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Local Development Framework Working Party held on 10th October 2007 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

15/07 ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT 2006-2007

The Working Party considered the Annual Monitoring Report covering the period 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007. The report reviewed the actual plan progress compared with the targets and milestones for Local Development Document preparation set out in the Local Development Scheme. Members asked a number of questions arising from the report in particular in relation to flooding issues. The 2001 Census figures quoted in the report in relation to housing issues were also queried and Officers were requested to report back to the next meeting regarding the basis on which these figures were calculated.

RESOLVED that the Annual Monitoring Report be submitted to the Government Office of the West Midlands.

16/07 **CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report summarising the responses to the Issues and Options consultations on the Core Strategy. The summary document comprised the consultation responses which had been received which addressed the key issues within the Bromsgrove District.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report "Executive Summary: Issues and Options" be noted and that the responses from the consultation process be used to develop preferred options for the Core Strategy.

17/07 **INTRODUCTION TO THE HABITAT INVENTORY**

The Working Party considered a report and received a brief presentation which introduced a new Geographic Information System tool entitled Habitat Inventory. The Inventory would assist in the creation of the Local Development Framework and also with the determination of planning applications which had implications in relation to the protection and enhancement of wildlife.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

18/07 **LONGBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

The Working Party considered a report on the latest position regarding the Longbridge Area Action Plan and on progress made since the previous report. It was now anticipated that the final Area Action Plan would be presented for approval early in 2008. Following discussion it was

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

19/07 **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2008-2011**

Consideration was given to a report on the revision of the Local Development Scheme including new timetables for the Development Plan Documents currently in preparation. The revision of the timetable for production of the Core Strategy was of particular significance in view of the indications arising from the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy. It was reported that the issue of the Council's response to the Regional Spatial Strategy requirement to meet the growth needs of Redditch within the district was addressed in a separate report. Following discussion it was

RECOMMENDED: that the revised Local Development Scheme be submitted to the Government Office West Midlands for approval.

20/07 **REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY PHASE 2 PREFERRED OPTION SUBMISSION**

The Working Party considered a report on the latest position regarding the revised Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The report also detailed the

consultation exercise being undertaken and the process by which representations to the submitted version of the RSS could be made.

There was detailed discussion regarding the level of housing allocated to Bromsgrove within the RSS, particularly with regard to the need for affordable housing in the district, together with the amount and location of Redditch related housing and employment growth proposed within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford District. Whilst this growth could be partially met by the use of brownfield sites within the district, the RSS was indicating it should be located adjacent to Redditch town which would require the release of green belt land. The possible implications for the Council should an objection be submitted were also considered.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that objections to the RSS be submitted in respect of the level of housing allocated to Bromsgrove and to the level of Redditch related housing and employment growth to be provided within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford in locations adjacent to Redditch town, when alternative more strategically viable sites within the district are available.
- (b) that the Portfolio Holder for Planning be requested to write to the appropriate Officers at the Government Office for the West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly together with the local MP, expressing concern over the decision making process at the Regional Planning Partnership on 22nd October 2007.

The meeting closed at 4.05 pm

Chairman

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Agenda Item 6

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

29 MAY 2008

REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY PHASE 2 PREFERRED OPTION UPDATE AND PHASE 3 LAUNCH

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report updates members on the current status of the revised Regional Spatial Strategy, the consultation exercise and the process of making representations to the submitted version of the strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the progress of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 2 Preferred Option and Phase 3 Project Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Regional Spatial Strategy was published in June 2004. At that time, the Secretary of State supported the principles of the strategy but suggested several issues that needed to be developed further. The Revision process is being undertaken by the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) in three phases.

Phase 1 – the Black Country study, this phase was formally adopted in January 2008.

Phase 2 – Covers housing figures, employment land, town and city centres, transport, and waste, the preferred option of this phase has been submitted.

Phase 3 – covers critical rural services, culture/recreational provision, various regionally significant environmental issues and the provision of a framework for Gypsy and Traveller sites, and was launched on 27th November 2007.

3.2 **Phase 2**

Members will recall that at the meeting of Local Development Framework Working party on 13th December 2007 a paper was presented outlining the implications of the Phase 2 Revisions to the RSS. Members made the following recommendations:

(a) That objections to the RSS be submitted in respect of the level of housing allocated to Bromsgrove and to the level of Redditch related housing and employment growth to be provided within Bromsgrove and/or Stratford in locations adjacent to Redditch town, when alternative more strategically viable sites within the district are available.

(b) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning be requested to write to the appropriate Officers at the Government Office for the West Midlands and the West Midlands Regional Assembly together with the local MP, expressing concern over the decision making process at the Regional Planning Partnership on 22nd October 2007.

3.3 The RSS phase 2 revision was formally submitted to the Secretary of State on 21st December 2007. The submission will be made up of the following documents,

- The Preferred Option
- An Overview Document
- Copies of all Background Technical Studies
- The Implementation Plan
- The Consultation Statement
- The Sustainability Appraisal Report
- The Habitat Regulations Assessment
- A Summary Leaflet
- A Submission Letter

3.4 Following this formal submission, the West Midlands Regional Assembly received a letter from Baroness Andrews, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State in the Department for Communities and Local Government. In her letter, dated 7th January 2008 (attached as appendix 1), the Minister expressed concern about the housing proposals put forward by the Assembly in light of the Government's agenda to increase housing building across the country. In view of this, the Minister has asked the Government Office for the West Midlands to commission further work to look at options which could deliver higher housing numbers and this will be considered as part of the Examination in Public.

3.5 Consultants Nathaniel Lichfield have been appointed to carry out this study and the aim is for the work to be completed by 7th October, 2008. It is also understood that the study will be undertaken in a number of stages, the first stage focussing on data gathering leading up to an initial seminar with stakeholders currently planned for 20th May 2008. The Government Office has indicated that it intends that the study should be undertaken in an open and transparent way and the purpose of this first seminar will be to explain

to stakeholders further details, including the methodology being adopted. It is anticipated that this will include reference to any formal advice to Government on housing provision emerging from the National Housing and Planning Unit should this become available by this time.

- 3.6 The time required to complete the study has had considerable implications on the consultation period. It was felt that a minimum of 8 weeks was required once Nathaniel Lichfield had published the study. The Regional Planning Executive therefore resolved to recommend to the Regional Planning Partnership that the consultation period should be extended to 8th December, 2008 (i.e. based on the assumption that the publication of the study would be on 7th October, 2008).
- 3.7 The delays in the RSS process has implications for the Council's Core Strategy. The uncertainty over the required levels of housing and employment land mean that the preferred option of the Core Strategy needs to be flexibly written to cater for different and potentially changing circumstances. Further delays to the Phase 2 Revision could also adversely affect the Core Strategy at submission stage. At this point the Core Strategy will need to fully conform with the RSS to ensure that it has the possibility of being found sound at the examination in public.

Phase 3

- 3.8 Work has now begun on the Phase Three Revision to WMRSS with the publication of a Project Plan. This outlines the areas that this revision will cover and timeframe over which it will be completed. The areas to be covered by this revision have been grouped under the five headings of Rural Renaissance, Communities for the Future, Culture, Sport and Tourism, Quality of the Environment, and Minerals Policy. It is important to remember that this is only a partial Revision of selected elements of the WMRSS – not a full review. The overall strategy and those elements of the WMRSS not covered in Phase Three are not subject to review and will continue to be in place.
- 3.9 **Rural Renaissance – Critical Rural Services**
The WMRSS Revision aims to identify the role of service provision in enhancing the sustainability of rural communities, whether particular services are critical to this process and whether the process itself, and consequently the policies required to address it, varies in different types of rural areas.
- 3.10 The WMRSS Revision will also aim to identify and prioritise those services that are critical to the sustainability of rural communities in different types of rural areas, especially to meet the needs of disadvantaged groups and communities.

- 3.11 Communities for the Future – Sites for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople**
Following developments in national policy on Gypsy and Traveller sites (ODPM Circular 01/2006) and Travelling Showpeople (CLG Circular 04/2007), the Phase Three Revision will address the accommodation and wider needs of these communities. Government policy stresses that all members of these communities have the same rights and responsibilities as every other citizen.
- 3.12 WMRA published an Interim Statement on Gypsy and Traveller Pitch Provision Policy in March 2007 and has prepared a Supplement to that Statement on Travelling Showpeople in October 2007. The Interim Statement highlighted a number of issues, beyond purely the accommodation of additional pitch numbers, which WMRSS Phase Three needs to consider, for example the diversity and complexity of the Gypsy and Traveller community and the need for both permanent and transit sites.
- 3.13 Culture Sport & Tourism**
The Phase Three Revision aims to strengthen WMRSS policy to meet cultural, sporting and tourism needs and through this support Urban and Rural Renaissance. Revised WMRSS policy will seek to improve the provision of, and access to, quality cultural and sports assets and provide opportunities to increase the rate of participation/attendance in cultural activities. Through this, revised WMRSS policy will also seek to ensure it maximises cultural and tourism opportunities across the Region to support Urban and Rural Renaissance objectives.
- 3.14 Quality of the Environment**
A number of environmental issues are proposed for Phase Three of the WMRSS Revision. Firstly the revision will be used to update and align the existing Quality of the Environment policies so as to ensure consistency with current national guidance and regional plans, strategies and initiatives. This will also include making appropriate links to other Phase Three topics such as culture, sport and tourism.
- 3.15 The Revision aims to develop a strategy for the protection, conservation, enhancement and management of regional environmental assets and resources, for their intrinsic value and wider social and economic benefits.
- 3.16 The WMRSS Revision will be used to consider the regional flood risk from all sources and set out a strategy for managing the risk and seek to promote the development of renewable energy and low carbon technology resources, subject to appropriate environmental and social safeguards.
- 3.17 A regionally-specific policy for the Green Belt will be considered, to define its regional and sub-regional roles and the specific uses that should be encouraged within it, in the context of national Green Belt policy.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst there are no direct implications of the RSS revision at the moment, the levels of income generated over longer periods could be affected depending on the levels of development taking place in the district. For example the future levels of housing in the district and the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) the Council receives, as funding is directly linked to the progress that the Strategic Planning section make on preparing the LDF. (See section 7 for a full explanation).

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The RSS is the responsibility of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and is being prepared under the regulations of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; the district council also has an obligation under the act to prepare a Local Development Documents in line with the Local Development Scheme.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The ability of the Council to deliver its objectives is affected by the status of the Local Development Framework (LDF). All documents produced as part of the LDF have to be in general conformity with the RSS, therefore the RSS will ultimately impact on these objectives and priorities. The table below indicates potential impacts.
- 6.2 The ability to implement the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy is also highly dependant of the Local Development Framework. Many of the areas covered by the Sustainable Community Strategy cannot be delivered without formal planning polices.

Council Objective (CO)	Regeneration (CO1)	Council Priority (CP)	A thriving market town (CP1)
Impacts			
Policies in the RSS support the development of centres across the region, including those not specifically named as major urban areas or, settlements of significant development, the ability to regenerate the town are not adversely effected by policies in the RSS			

Council Objective (CO)	Improvement (CO2)	Council Priority (CP)	Customer service (CP2)
Impacts			
No impact			

Council Objective (CO)	Sense of Community and Well Being	Council Priority (CP)	Sense of community
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	(CO3)		(CP3)
Impacts			
The RSS gives a strategic framework for planning across the region. Plans at a more local level can then create planning policies that provide developments which can enhance the sense of community and well being.			
Council Objective (CO)	Environment (CO4)	Council Priority (CP)	Housing (CP4) Clean streets and recycling (CP5)
Impacts			
The RSS guides the levels and distribution of housing development across the region. The ability of Bromsgrove to satisfy all of its affordable housing needs are significantly reduced by this emerging policy of housing restraint in districts which are not Major Urban Areas or, Settlements of Significant Development.			
In the Long term the RSS could help provide more waste management facilities in the district.			

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

- Inability to produce development plan documents which are judged to be sound by the planning inspectorate.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment
Key Objective Ref No: 6
Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic planning Service

7.3 Objecting to the RSS revision would prevent significant progress being made on the Core Strategy from a resource perspective and more importantly for planning policy reasons. If the Council has to produce a plan in accordance with members' wishes, in relation to

1. the location of development for Redditch related growth, and
2. the level of provision being put forward for Bromsgrove,

There is a significant risk of the final plan being found to be unsound. For a development plan document to be judged as sound it has to be in general conformity with policies and guidance in plans that sit above it in the chain

of conformity. To produce a plan which directs Redditch related growth to Bromsgrove town is currently not in conformity with emerging RSS. Similarly to allow development over and above the locally identified need for housing in Bromsgrove would also be in conflict with policies contained within the RSS.

- 7.4 The ability to produce a plan inline with the current Members wishes could only be done, if through the process of the representations and the Examination In Public (EIP) the WM Regional Assembly changed its policy stance and amended the RSS to reflect the views of Bromsgrove District Council. In my view this is unlikely. This approach could prevent any meaningful progress on Bromsgrove specific plans as we would have to wait for the outcome of the revision not due until early 2009, or run the considerable risk of producing draft polices which are not in conformity with the polices which sit above them and the consequent waste in financial resources that could occur if the plan is found to be unsound and it has to be started from scratch or indeed a plan is imposed on the authority.
- 7.5 Any development on Bromsgrove specific plans which could take place would be affected by the process of objecting to the RSS. Officer time will be directed away from plan production onto challenging the RSS both at consultation stage and at the EIP. Whilst the amount of work involved is hard to quantify it is likely to be considerable, and would need to be undertaken by one of the more senior members of the section. This diversion will mean the ability to prepare the Core Strategy and other development plan documents including the Town Centre AAP could be hampered due to lack of resources.
- 7.6 Progress on the LDF is monitored by the government through the Local Development Schemes and Annual Monitoring Reports produced by the Strategic Planning section. The progress on the Local Development Scheme is a key factor used to allocate Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. Failure to progress the LDF inline with the Local Development Scheme could have short term financial implications. Consistent failure to produce LDF documents specifically the Core Strategy could result in the GOWM taking the strategic planning function away from control of the council. In this case they would employ other planning professionals to prepare the core strategy on behalf of the GOWM and then impose it on the District Council, whilst also requesting that the district council pay the consultancy fees accrued in the process.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Endorsing the RSS at this stage will have no immediate direct implications to the council's customers.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The current review of the RSS is focussed on spatial planning at a strategic level and as such has no direct equalities and diversity.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The RSS is the Responsibility of the West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA) and is outside the control of Bromsgrove District Council. The funding is not met from this Council and therefore there are no associated costs in relation to the strategy.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	The policy decisions taken at a regional level directly effect the ability to generate local policies especially in relation to planning
Environmental	As stated above their will be implications to the environment over a long period of time, the exact effects are currently unknown.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects	Yes
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
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

Please list the appendices attached to the report as shown in the example below.

Appendix 1 Letter from Baroness Andrews

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Andrew Fulford
E Mail: a.fulford@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881323

Appendix 1



Councillor Rex Roberts
Chairman
Regional Planning Partnership
West Midlands Regional Assembly
Albert House
Quay Place
Edward Street
Birmingham
B1 2RA

Baroness Andrews OBE
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State

Department for Communities and Local Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London SW1E 5DU

Tel: 020 7944 3083
Fax: 020 7944 4538
E-Mail: baroness.andrews@communities.gsi.gov.uk

www.communities.gov.uk

07 JAN 2008

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rex Roberts".

WEST MIDLANDS RSS PHASE 2 REVISION

Thank you for the draft RSS revision submission which you submitted to Hazel Bleas on 21 December. I would like to thank everyone who has worked hard to ensure this submission has been produced in accordance with the programme.

I am sure that you understand from recent announcements that housing issues are now very high on the Government's agenda. Affordability is a major issue across the country and The Prime Minister himself is taking a keen interest in housing delivery. Improving performance is essential to the achievement of the wider social and economic objectives of the Government. The recent Housing Green Paper set down an ambitious challenge to review all RSSs by 2011 to reflect plans for 240,000 homes a year by 2016. The initial NHPAU Report also provides an indication of the levels of housing which will be required to impact on affordability in the region.

The Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands has a clear focus on the regeneration of the major urban areas. Clearly this is important as sustainable development will rely on the economic drivers associated with those areas. However, the draft RSS Phase 2 Revision does not even make provision for the levels of homes anticipated to be required by the 2004 based household projections.

Let me make it clear that we do not wish to fundamentally question the Spatial Strategy for the region in advance of the Public Examination, but we are concerned that the very rigid application of some of the principles may be unnecessarily constraining longer-term development. I have therefore asked the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) to commission some further work looking at options which could deliver higher housing numbers. The aim will be to provide the Examination Panel with options that could deliver housing numbers which will start to impact on affordability, whilst maintaining as many of the principles of the Spatial Strategy as possible.

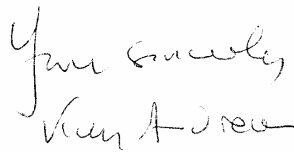
We intend to complete this further work by mid April and in order to provide an opportunity for consultees to consider this additional evidence when making responses on the draft RSS we consider it appropriate to extend the consultation period to the 23 May. I trust you

will find this acceptable.

GOWM will manage the work of the consultants and will involve officials from the Assembly together with other regional stakeholders, local authorities and other interested parties in the work as appropriate through the study.

I understand that this decision will cause you some concerns and I would like to reassure you that the decision has been given very serious consideration along with a range of alternative approaches. However, we consider that given the aspirations of the Housing Green Paper this approach will allow us to build on the work already done for the Revision and minimise the period of uncertainty for the region.

Like the Regional Assembly, we are determined that the West Midlands will benefit and thrive from sustainable growth and we are confident that we can continue to work in partnership with you to ensure that both national and regional objectives are satisfied.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Yours sincerely, Baroness Andrews".

BARONESS ANDREWS

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

29th MAY 2008

ADDITIONAL REDDITCH GROWTH STUDY

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report updates members on the current position in relation to the planning implications of Redditch growth as proposed in the RSS Phase 2 revision.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members note the report

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members have received a report elsewhere on this agenda which provides an update regarding progress on the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (WMRSS) Phase 2 revision. Members will recall that it is proposed that some of Redditch's growth (3300 dwellings and 32 ha of employment land) should be accommodated in the adjoining districts of Stratford-on-Avon and Bromsgrove.
- 3.2 The WMRSS does not identify how these requirements should be split between Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon Districts, which presents a challenge for the authorities in progressing their respective core strategies. The authorities need a clear way forward which will enable them to prepare core strategies which are in general conformity with the WMRSS, otherwise they run the risk of this DPD being found unsound at examination in public.
- 3.3 Members will also recall that a joint study, funded by Worcestershire County Council and the adjoining districts, was completed in December 2007 by White Young Green. This report examined the implications of development around Redditch, including site constraints and opportunities. It did not however determine a priority of sites to be developed nor examine the split of development between Bromsgrove and Stratford Districts. This work needs to be done to enable each district to develop appropriate policies within their respective core strategies.
- 3.4 A meeting was held on 19th May between the Leaders, Chief Executives and Planning Officers of all three Councils, together with representatives of Government Office for the West Midlands, the West Midlands Regional

Assembly and Worcestershire and Warwickshire County Councils. The primary purpose of the meeting was to discuss a way forward regarding the implications of the growth of Redditch proposed in the RSS phase 2 revision.

3.5 The options put forward are as follows;

<p>Option 1 – To prepare a joint Core Strategy for the whole of the administrative areas of Redditch Borough, Bromsgrove and Stratford-on-Avon District</p>	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides the robust mechanism required by GOWM • Ensures that the local authorities were able to determine the split themselves <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would require the re-alignment of our existing Core Strategies • Resources required to establish joint working arrangements at both officer and member level • Lack of functional relationships between the majority of Stratford District and Redditch (in many ways this is a peripheral issue)
<p>Option 2 – To commission a further technical study building on the work already undertaken by White Young Green. This would identify clearly the preferred areas for development.</p>	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides a robust technical evidence base which the authorities could present jointly at the RSS Examination in Public (EIP) • Provides the mechanism required by GOWM • Enables authorities to progress their Core Strategies <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional cost • EIP panel may not accept the findings.
<p>Option 3 – Undertake further analysis of the White Young Green Study ‘in-house’ and agree an informal position between the three authorities.</p>	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorities could present a joint case to the EIP • Provides the mechanism required by GOWM • Enables authorities to progress their Core Strategies • No / limited additional cost <p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical validity of the work will be challenged at the EIP • Lack of public involvement • EIP panel may not accept the findings.
<p>Option 4 – Each authority goes its own way and presents its own case to the EIP</p>	<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None (in pure planning terms) <p>Disadvantages</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EIP panel will determine the split or the Secretary of State may dictate the course of action we should take e.g. Joint Core Strategy • Core Strategies will not accord with the RSS and will be 'unsound' • Abortive work on Core Strategies • Vulnerability to planning by appeal
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3.5 The option agreed upon unanimously was option 2, to commission a further technical study to be jointly funded.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 It was estimated that the costs for carrying out such a study was likely to be in the region of £50,000 and contributors would be Worcestershire County Council, Stratford District Council, Redditch Borough Council, Bromsgrove District Council and the West Midlands Regional Assembly. At the meeting on the 19th May both the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive agreed to part fund this work to the sum of £10,000.

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The RSS is the responsibility of the West Midlands Regional Assembly and is being prepared under the regulations of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; the district council also has an obligation under the act to prepare a Local Development Documents in line with the Local Development Scheme.

6. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

6.1 The ability of the Council to deliver its objectives is affected by the status of the Local Development Framework (LDF). All documents produced as part of the LDF have to be in general conformity with the RSS, therefore the RSS will ultimately impact on these objectives and priorities. The table below indicates potential impacts.

6.2 The ability to implement the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy is also highly dependant of the Local Development Framework. Many of the areas covered by the Sustainable Community Strategy cannot be delivered without formal planning polices.

Council Objective (CO)	Regeneration (CO1)	Council Priority (CP)	A thriving market town (CP1)
Impacts			
Policies in the RSS support the development of centres across the region, including those not specifically named as major urban areas or, settlements of significant development, the ability to regenerate the town are not adversely effected by policies in the RSS			

Council Objective (CO)	Improvement (CO2)	Council Priority (CP)	Customer service (CP2)
Impacts			
No impact			

Council Objective (CO)	Sense of Community and Well Being (CO3)	Council Priority (CP)	Sense of community (CP3)
Impacts			
The RSS gives a strategic framework for planning across the region. Plans at a more local level can then create planning policies that provide developments which can enhance the sense of community and well being.			

Council Objective (CO)	Environment (CO4)	Council Priority (CP)	Housing (CP4) Clean streets and recycling (CP5)
Impacts			
The RSS guides the levels and distribution of housing development across the region. The ability of Bromsgrove to satisfy all of its affordable housing needs are significantly reduced by this emerging policy of housing restraint in districts which are not Major Urban Areas or, Settlements of Significant Development. In the Long term the RSS could help provide more waste management facilities in the district.			

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

- Inability to produce development plan documents which are judged to be sound by the planning inspectorate.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment
Key Objective Ref No: 6
Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic planning Service

7.3 Progress on the LDF is monitored by the government through the Local Development Schemes and Annual Monitoring Reports produced by the

Strategic Planning section. The progress on the Local Development Scheme is a key factor used to allocate Housing and Planning Delivery Grant. Failure to progress the LDF inline with the Local Development Scheme could have short term financial implications. Consistent failure to produce LDF documents specifically the Core Strategy could result in the GOWM taking the strategic planning function away from control of the council. In this case they would employ other planning professionals to prepare the core strategy on behalf of the GOWM and then impose it on the District Council, whilst also requesting that the district council pay the consultancy fees accrued in the process.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Endorsing the agreement to carry out a further technical study will have no direct implications on the council’s customers; however the implications of the work are likely to have a wide sub regional impact on customers as does the WMRSS.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 This study will form part of the evidence base to inform the Core Strategy. Consultation will be carried out with all sections of the community as the plan progresses.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The proposed study is to be jointly funded by a number of different bodies thereby distributing the costs.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	The policy decisions taken at a regional level directly effect the ability to generate local policies especially in relation to planning

Environmental	As stated above their will be implications to the environment over a long period of time, the exact effects are currently unknown.
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12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes
Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
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

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Rosemary Williams
E Mail: r.williams@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881316

PROPOSED CHANGES TO PLANNING POLICIES

The following proposals are being put forward for discussion in the light of the national projected figures for the number of elderly people requiring various categories of housing and care to the year 2030 and also because the government's plans to increase the school-leaving age to 18 years means that more young people will be obliged to continue living at home, but will inevitably require an element of independent living.

1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING : The following guidelines were agreed :

- Up to and including 4 dwellings - all new builds should pay a 106 contribution to affordable housing.
- Between 5 and 10 dwellings - 20% of the build should be affordable. Any part of an affordable dwelling should be paid as a 106 contribution to AH. There should be a 106 contribution to open space.
- The affordable build could be all affordable rental or shared ownership. Between 11 and 20 dwellings - 25% of the build should be affordable. Any part of an affordable dwelling should be paid as a contribution to AH. Open space to be provided on site.
- The AH should be a mixture of affordable rental (33%) and joint ownership (66%).
- 21 dwellings and over - 30% of the build should be affordable. Any part of an affordable dwelling should be paid as a 106 contribution to AH. Open space to be provided on site.
- The AH should be a mixture of affordable rental (up to 33%) and joint ownership (at least 66%). There should be a good mix of 1, 2 and 3 bedroom units.
- Any development within 300 metres should be classed as the same development and the above rules should apply. This should be immaterial of developer or owner.
- In developments of under 20 dwellings the affordable element should be of a design appropriate to the overall development of the site.
- We will consider all AH in the Green Belt to have very special circumstances if the site is sustainable and there is a demonstrated need. Any application on land that is classed as meeting the very special circumstances criteria.

2. CATEGORIES FOR CARE FOR THE ELDERLY :

- a. Extensions to existing nursing/care homes.
- b. "New build" that is proportionate to the area of the site.
- c. "Care at Hand" - a small collection of bungalows with care at hand when required.
- d. Care Villages, where they are sustainable.

All the above categories to be regarded as very special circumstances and exceptions to Green Belt policies.
 e. Extensions to private residences (granny/young people flats) : It was agreed that the following guidelines should be followed :

- Such extensions should include wider doorways for wheelchairs and stairways adaptable for chairlifts, if necessary.
- They should be designed to cater for living, sleeping and bathing, with a kitchenette to encourage a measure of independent living in the interest of physical and mental health, but with immediate access for the family.
- An SPG should allow such extensions to be up to 50% of the present building, but designed to make the "new build" an integral part of the family home, not capable of being separated to form a new dwelling, except via a full planning application.
- The "step down, step back" policy to be less rigidly imposed as long as the 45* rule is adhered to.

3.

THE 40% RULE :

The average floor area of a dwelling on which present policy is based is 140 sq.m. A new policy would propose that the floor area could be increased up to 240 sq.m., or by 40% of the floor area at 1st. January 2000 or at date of subsequent new build.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

29 MAY 2008

CORE STRATEGY UPDATE

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Councillor Mrs J Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond, Head of Planning & Environment Services

1. SUMMARY

1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Members on the current position regarding the preparation of the Preferred Options Core Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That Members note the progress made on the preparation of the Core Strategy preferred Options and approve the Spatial Vision for public consultation purposes.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 A key part of the new Local Development Framework (LDF) planning system is the requirement on the Council to produce a Core Strategy.

3.2 The Core Strategy is a strategic level document that provides the framework for subsequent Development Plan Documents. It will contain a spatial vision, strategic objectives for the area, together with core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework.

3.3 Members will recall at your last meeting in December 2007, the results of the Issues and Options consultation was reported back to you.

3.4 Since this time work has been progressing on building the evidence base to support policies within the core strategy. The existence of a robust and credible evidence base to support policies is vital to achieving a sound core strategy and indeed is one of the tests of soundness. Various studies have been identified as being required either as a requirement or to gather up to date information on the District. These studies and progress are detailed below:

3.5 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment

Consultants Royal Haskoning has been appointed to carry out a joint study on behalf of Bromsgrove and Redditch councils which is due to be completed by August 2008.

3.6 Water Cycle Study

Consultants Royal Haskoning has been appointed to carry out a joint study on behalf of Bromsgrove and Redditch councils which is due to be completed by August 2008.

3.7 PPG 17 Study

PMP have been appointed to carry out this study. It is being funded interdepartmentally between Planning and Environment Services and Culture and Community Services. Consultation commences on 19th May at Hagley, Rubery, Wythall and Alvechurch libraries and the study is due to be complete in August/ September.

3.8 Employment Land Review

Drivas Jonas has been appointed to carry out this study which is due to be completed by June.

3.9 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA)

This assessment will inform the Core Strategy on potential housing sites up to 2026 and is being carried out in house. The date for submission of potential housing sites by landowners/ agents expired at the beginning of May and submitted sites are currently being assessed for their suitability.

3.10 Appropriate Assessment (AA)

This assessment is a requirement of the 'Habitats Directive' (92/43/EEC) and examines the potential effects of a proposed plan on European sites of importance. This work is being carried out in-house and a draft report has been prepared, initial comments received from Natural England and a final version is currently being prepared.

3.11 Planning for Water in Worcestershire

This paper has been produced by Worcestershire County Council and brings together all issues and requirements in relation to water within the County. It will inform the Core Strategy and has recently been consulted upon.

3.12 Planning for Renewable Energy in Worcestershire

This document has been prepared in consultation with all the District Authorities and aims to ensure a consistent approach to renewable energy throughout the County.

3.13 Housing Market Assessment

This study has been procured by Strategic Planning, Strategic Housing and RSL Preferred Partners. It will provide a detailed study of the housing market in Bromsgrove and is due to be completed in the Autumn.

3.14 A Gypsy Traveller Accommodation Assessment of the South Housing Market Area

This assessment was carried out by an affordable housing consultant on behalf of the South Housing Market Partnership, which comprises 8 District Authorities and 2 County Councils. It provides information on accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers to set the appropriate number, type and distribution of additional pitches to be provided.

3.15 Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

This report was originally written in 2005 and has now been updated. At the time of writing responses from statutory consultees, Natural England, Environment Agency and English Nature are awaited. This 5 week consultation period expires on the 16th may and a verbal update will be available for your meeting.

3.16 Joint working is also underway between Bromsgrove DC, Stratford DC, Redditch BC and various service providers to discuss future infrastructure needs and cross boundary issues in this sub regional area up to 2026. Various meetings have been held with Transportation, Education, Utilities and Housing stakeholders with future meetings planned with Health and Emergency Services representatives.

4 NEXT STEPS

4.1 Work is also underway on drafting the Core Strategy Preferred Options document. The draft Spatial Vision is attached for comment. With your approval it is intended to consult on this vision at the forthcoming Town Hall meeting of the Bromsgrove Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership) on 9th July 2008.

Various items of work need to be completed as detailed below:

4.1 Green Infrastructure

The requirement to carry out this study is currently being assessed. However, it is unlikely that it could be completed in-house but is unlikely to be required for the preferred option consultation stage.

4.2 Sustainability Appraisal for Preferred Option

It is intended to carry out this appraisal in-house with the potential to have the final report verified by specialists . It is envisaged that this method would not only be cost effective but would have reciprocal benefit on the quality of the Core Strategy.

5. TIMESCALES

Preferred Option consultation	Oct/Nov 2008
Submission to Inspectorate	May 2009
EIP	Nov 2009
Receipt of Binding Report	April 2010
Adoption	June/July 2010

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A budget currently exists for progressing the Core Strategy. Whilst there are no direct implications of receiving this update or approving consultation on the spatial vision. However this report does highlight certain areas which may have financial implications such as verification of the Sustainability Appraisal by specialists and the potential preparation of the Green Infrastructure study.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Plan once adopted will become part of the statutory Development Plan for the District required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and prepared in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

8. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Council Objective (CO)	Regeneration (CO1)	Council Priority (CP)	A thriving market town (CP1) Housing (CP2)
Impacts			
The Core Strategy identifies the long term spatial vision for the district this includes key areas such as the regeneration of the town centre. Policies within the core strategy will direct where and when new housing should be built across the district up to 2026, it will also look at affordable housing and be supplemented by an Affordable Housing SPD which will look to maximise affordable housing provision across the district.			
Council Objective (CO)	Customer service (CP2)	Council Priority (CP)	Customer service (CP3)
Impacts			
The issues and options process has involved detailed consultation with the general public and the completed core strategy will be a publicly available document that identifies the spatial vision for the district.			
Council Objective (CO)	Sense of Community and Well Being (CO3)	Council Priority (CP)	Sense of community (CP4)
Impacts			
The core strategy sets out the long term spatial vision for the district and the strategic policies required in delivering that vision. The core strategy goes beyond identify land uses and attempts to tackle social and economic issues that effect make by the implementation of various policies.			
Council Objective (CO)	Environment (CO4)	Council Priority (CP)	Clean Streets and recycling (CP5)
Impacts			
The Core Strategy could contain policies which encourage recycling			

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

- Inability to produce development plan document which is judged to be sound by the planning inspectorate and therefore resulting in non legally compliant Strategic planning service

9.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment
Key Objective Ref No: 6
Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic
planning Service

10. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Endorsing progress made and approving the spatial vision for consultation purposes will have no direct implications on the council's customers.

11. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on the final submission version of the strategy, although attempts will be made to consult with all sections of society as the plan progresses towards completion.

12. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Value for money

Due to cross boundary issues in relation to water, it was decided to conduct a joint Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and Water Cycle Study with Redditch Borough Council. This enabled a very competitive price to be achieved, a discount to be secured but also meant that due to cost sharing the eventual cost to Bromsgrove was less than if we had 'gone it alone'.

12.2 Throughout the LDF process the baseline evidence that other Authorities throughout the country has been monitored, together with information on methods of working and the Consultants used if any. In many cases where resources and skills have allowed it has been possible to carry out studies in-house, where other Authorities have used external consultants.

12.3 Furthermore, the information contained in studies conducted by other departments, such as baseline work carried out on the Sustainable Community Strategy, air quality monitoring, housing needs, community safety or work carried out by other organisations, such as the County Council and the South Housing Market Assessment Area, will form part of Bromsgrove's LDF evidence base.

13. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None

Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	The core strategy forms an essential part of the LDF and the policies contained within the core strategy will shape future development.
Environmental	Core strategy will contain policies in relation to the environment.

14. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

15. WARDS AFFECTED

All wards.

16. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Spatial Vision

17. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CONTACT OFFICER

Name: Rosemary Williams
E Mail: r.williams@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Tel: (01527) 881316

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Core Strategy Spatial Vision



Local
Development
Framework



Help us to plan the future of Bromsgrove

Bromsgrove District Council is preparing a Local Development Framework (LDF) which will guide future growth and development in the District up to 2026.

This will affect everyone who lives in, works in or visits the District.

An important component of the LDF is the Core Strategy. This is a strategic level document that provides a framework for later documents. It will contain a spatial vision, strategic objectives for the area, together with core policies and a monitoring and implementation framework.

The draft spatial vision begins to set out the aspirations for what the District may be like in 2026. It needs to take on board the vision of other relevant plans and will apply to the whole of the LDF. We already have a vision in the Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy which states; **"We will make Bromsgrove a better place to work, live and visit by driving forward change"** and this is incorporated within the draft spatial vision.

Opposite is a summary of the full version which is detailed overleaf.

Do you think the draft spatial vision is a fair representation of what your aspirations would be for the District up to 2026 or are there other goals you feel should be included in it?

Email: ldf@bromsgrove.gov.uk

FAX: 01527 881313

POST: **Strategic Planning
Bromsgrove District Council
The Council House
Burcot Lane
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1AA**



Bromsgrove's LDF Vision

By 2026 Bromsgrove will have become a more sustainable, healthy, prosperous and accessible District, whilst the attractiveness of its landscape, built form and settlements will have been preserved and enhanced.

Bromsgrove Town Centre will have been regenerated and become a thriving focus for mixed uses such as retail, leisure and commerce serving the needs of Bromsgrove's population and beyond.

People from all sections of society will have been provided with access to homes, jobs and services to meet their needs.

Commuting out of the District will have slowed and more of the District's younger population will have been retained. This process will have been assisted by improved rail links brought about by the potential New Bromsgrove Station which will provide an appropriate new gateway into the regenerated town centre and a wider pivotal rail focus for North Worcestershire. Sustainable accessibility will have been enhanced and new high technology employment growth in the Bromsgrove Technology Park stimulated.

Diversification of the Districts economy will be marked by the growth of innovative manufacturing, recycling, sustainable technologies and high technology.

Air quality will have been improved and the carbon footprint of the District will have significantly reduced, with a sustained increase of on site renewable energy being incorporated into new developments.

**Please let us
have your views by
18th July 2008.**



**Bromsgrove
District Council**
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



LDF Vision Full Version



Local Development Framework



By 2026 the attractiveness, vitality and prosperity of the countryside, towns and villages of Bromsgrove will have been enhanced. The LDF will take this agenda forward, providing a long term framework for district's sustainable development, building on its potential to overcome disadvantage.

The anticipated economic, cultural and social changes that will emerge in the next 15 years will have been addressed, taking full account of the views of Bromsgrove's public and stakeholders.

A regenerated Bromsgrove town centre will be the key centre for services in the District. The town centre will be transformed into a thriving town that provides a unique blend of old and new and it will have a diverse range of leisure facilities. There will be shopping facilities including popular high street retailers and specialised markets. A variety of pubs and restaurants will provide a lively, safe and varied leisure experience. The increase in people living in the Town will contribute to its prosperity, vitality and safety.

Local centres such as Hagley, Wythall and Barnt Green will continue to have a significant role to play in the lives of local people. A variety of services will continue to be provided to ensure the viability and vitality of local centres. This will enable people to utilise local facilities rather than travelling further by potentially unsustainable means of transport.

The new railway station will provide state of the art public transport interchange for travellers with excellent links to the regenerated town centre and it will provide a pivotal transport focus for North Worcestershire. The improved station will provide the opportunity for an increased number of trains from a wider range of destinations to stop in Bromsgrove. This will give the local population and people outside of the district greater mobility and access to the town centre in a more sustainable manner, whilst also enhancing the vitality of the town centre.

By 2026 Bromsgrove District will have delivered the required level of new housing to meet the needs of the local population and increased the provision of affordable housing across the district. Housing growth will have been primarily focussed in the most sustainable locations whilst recognising the needs for housing provision in rural locations. A mix of well designed homes of varying tenures will have created attractive streetscapes and balanced mixed communities.

Bromsgrove will maintain low levels of unemployment by providing a range of jobs in various sectors, with growth primarily focussed on knowledge based industries and high tech manufacturing situated on the Central Technology Belt that runs through the district. Providing a wider range of skilled occupations will have provided greater opportunity for residents to work locally and thus reduced the need to travel.

Development within the district will have been sensitively managed to preserve and enhance its attractive built and natural form. The high level of landscape quality will have been preserved in the District and access to it will have been sympathetically managed with promotion of opportunities for outdoor leisure activities that will benefit the health of the local population.

Bromsgrove District will tackle the key issues of climate change and sustainability. By 2026 the amount of energy produced from renewable sources will have increased as new developments will have provided a fixed percentage of energy from renewable sources. Through tackling issues such as waste management recycling will have greatly increased throughout the district, with an increased number of recycling centres and recycling becoming an integral part of new developments. This will have been achieved through the use of recycled building materials and facilities for rain water collection and composting facilities on new developments.

Sustainable development has many different interlinked facets many of which will have been innovatively incorporated into the lives of people within Bromsgrove by 2026. This will include development of brownfield sites and sites adjacent to existing settlements. Improvements to public transport including the new train station, more frequent buses, new bus routes and improved routes for cyclists and pedestrians will have modified the lifestyle of residents and reduced the number and length of car journeys in the district. Furthermore there will be increased levels of recycling and increased use of renewable energy.

Bromsgrove's communities will have become sustainable, prosperous, safe, healthy and vibrant. People from all sections of society will have been provided with access to homes, jobs and services and more of the District's younger population will have been retained and the needs of the elderly will have been better met.



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local Development Framework Working Party

29th May 2008

Bromsgrove Town Centre Area Action Plan Issues and Options Consultation

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond
Non Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The following report summarises the Issues and Options for the Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) and highlights the consultation steps to be undertaken.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Bromsgrove Town Centre AAP - Issues and Options is approved for public consultation between the 9th of June and the 18th July 2008.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will recall that at the meeting of the LDF Working Party on the 3rd August 2006 approval was given to instruct consultants to prepare an AAP for Bromsgrove Town Centre.
- 3.2 AAPs were introduced as part of the new planning system in September 2004 with the intention to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. A key feature of AAPs will be a greater focus on implementation. They should:
- Deliver planned growth areas;
 - Stimulate regeneration;
 - Protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
 - Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures; or
 - Focus the delivery of area based regeneration initiatives.
- 3.2 Urban Practitioners and CBRE have since been commissioned to advance work previously undertaken in 2003, and formalise it into the first stages of an AAP.

- 3.3 The Issues and Options AAP is attached at appendix 1, below is a summary of the main issues being consulted on, and methods being used to engage the public.
- 3.4 The AAP once adopted will outline how the council wishes to see the Town Centre develop over the next 10-15 years, this does not only include new development, but also will contain detailed policies to guide sympathetic development of existing properties and areas.
- 3.5 The issues and options stage of preparing an AAP is designed to give people the chance to tell us what they think about the Town Centre both positive and negative. In order to focus on the parts of the Town Centre the planning system can affect we have generated a number of significant issues, and then options which may help to overcome each issue. It will be the case that some of these options do not complement each other, but it is important to offer the choice to find out if the issues and options generated up to this point are shared by the rest of the community that use the Town Centre, or for those that don't use the Town Centre what are the issues which mean they go elsewhere. The plan at this stage also encourages people to suggest other options which we may or may not have included.
- 3.6 The plan has been split up into 6 specific themed sections as well as including a brief introduction, and description of the consultation undertaken in order to generate the issues and options. The rest of the plan then deals with the following issues

- Vision and Objectives
- Transport Movement and Accessibility
- Retailing
- Living and Working in Bromsgrove
- Environment and Open Spaces
- Opportunities for Change

3.7 Vision and Objectives

A vision for the Town Centre has been developed and is being consulted on to see if we have understood the aspirations of the people who use, live, and work in Bromsgrove Town centre, the vision is:

“Bromsgrove will develop into a thriving, vital and viable commercial centre; A place where people choose to shop for their local needs, and spend time to eat, drink and socialise. Visitors will enjoy an excellent range of shopping and leisure facilities provided within a high quality, pedestrian orientated and safe environment, new development must respond carefully and positively to the towns historical character.”

The four main sections of the report, Transport Movement and Accessibility, Retailing, Living and Working in Bromsgrove, and Environment and Open Spaces all stem from this one overall vision.

3.8 Transport Movement and Accessibility

This section deals how people currently access the Town Centre and once there how they get around it. It has options based around 4 main topics,

- Bromsgrove Train Station
- The Road network
- Buses, pedestrian, linkages and mobility,
- Car Parking

Some of the detailed options under the issues include introducing a one way road network, relocating the bus station, reducing or increasing the level of parking in the Town Centre.

3.9 Retailing

Retailing is the largest single use in the Town Centre ranging from supermarkets such as ASDA and Somerfield down to individual specialist shops and market stalls, the issues and options looks at three significant issues

- The Retail Offer
- The Market
- Evening Economy

The options which sit under these issues looks at attracting new high quality high street retailers into to the Town, or alternatively focussing on independent specialist retailers, it also considers the location and form of the Market, and the presence of evening economy operators.

3.10 Living and Working in Bromsgrove

The Town Centre not only operates as a retail Centre but also offers many of the leisure and community services expected in a Town the size of Bromsgrove, three main issues have been identified as,

- Housing
- Employment
- Leisure Provision
- Public Services
- Crime and Safety

These issues have options including increasing the opportunities for living and working in the town centre as well as refurbishing or replacing/relocating the Dolphin Centre, creating a campus to provide a number of key local services on one site, and improved efforts to ensure public safety in the town centre.

3.11 Environment and Open Space

Any regeneration must not only focus on new buildings but also on the spaces in between them, Bromsgrove Town Centre is rich in history, so much so that a large part of the Town Centre is a designated conservation

area, it is important that the conservation area and other key spaces within the Town Centre are included in any redevelopment schemes. The three main issues identified are.

- The Public Realm
- The Spadesbourne Brook
- The Recreation Ground

The specific options for dealing with the environment and open spaces within the Town Centre include repaving the high street, landscaping the Spadesbourne Brook and relocating the recreation ground.

3.12 Opportunities for Change

The final section of the plan highlights some of the potential development sites and the possibilities for redevelopment. It does not offer any firm suggestions as to which sites should be redeveloped or in which order, or indeed if they should be redeveloped at all. It demonstrates that we are considering attracting new, or moving existing uses within the Town Centre and there are sites with different levels of availability which may or may not serve the purpose.

3.14 Consultation

The Public consultation required for an AAP is one of continuous engagement until the more formal latter stages, with this in mind the consultation for the issues and options will be done in various different forms over the summer.

3.15 Section 3 of the AAP describes the consultation carried out to get to the issues and options stage, a number of different methods were used to engage with different chosen stakeholders, the next round of consultation will be much larger scale and all inclusive. The AAP and supporting documents will be hosted on the BDC website, as well as being displayed in the CSC and all the libraries around the district. Letters advertising the consultation will be sent out to a considerable number of people and organisations who are either required to see the AAP, or have expressed an interest in the AAP. It has been arranged for a stall to be used at the Farmers market on 14th June to advertise the consultation in the High Street, similarly it is also hoped to have a stall at the street theatre events later in the summer to do further consultation. Adverts will also be placed in the local press in order to reach as many people as possible. The official period for people to comment on the issues and options will run from the 9th June for 6 weeks to the 18th July, although in order to take into account the street theatre events in August we will be happy to consider representations received after the 18th July.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The budget in relation to the project management of the Town Centre development has been approved and has been used to fund the plan.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Plan once adopted will become part of the statutory Development Plan for the District required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, and prepared in accordance with The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1

Council Objective (CO)	Regeneration (CO1)	Council Priority (CP)	A thriving market Town (CP1) Housing (CP2)
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Impacts

The AAP is the main delivery tool for the regeneration of Bromsgrove Town Centre and the creation of a Thriving Market Town

The possibility for new housing in the Town Centre is being considered as part of a scheme of mixed use regeneration, its is essential that any new housing meets the local housing needs as much as is practical.

Council Objective (CO)	Improvement (CO2)	Council Priority (CP)	Customer service (CP3)
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Impacts

No impact

Council Objective (CO)	Sense of Community and Well Being (CO3)	Council Priority (CP)	Sense of community (CP4)
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Impacts

The potential exists within the Town Centre to provide new and enhanced community facilities, these options will be explored more as work progresses on drawing up firmer proposals.

Council Objective (CO)	Environment (CO4)	Council Priority (CP)	Clean streets and recycling (CP5)
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Impacts

No impact

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

The final AAP is found to be unsound by the Planning Inspectorate.

7.2 The risks will be managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment
Key Objective Ref No: 6
Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic
planning Service

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Public Consultation will be carried out as detailed above in section 3

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 An equalities impact assessment will be carried out on the final submission version of the report, although attempts will be made to consult with all sections of society as the plan progresses towards completion.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Urban Practitioners and CBRE have been procured to carry out much of the technical work due to the lack of resources in house. Initial work commissioned in 2003 was also done by these consultants if it was felt appropriate to re-commission them as they were familiar with the Town Centre and the issues surrounding its regeneration.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues	None
Personnel Implications	None
Governance/Performance Management	None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998	None
Policy	The Final version of the AAP will create the policy framework for the regeneration of Bromsgrove Town Centre
Environmental	The Final AAP will have a section which will undergo a sustainability appraisal to ensure all elements of the environment are considered.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director (Partnerships and Projects)	Yes
Executive Director (Services)	No
Assistant Chief Executive	No
Head of Service	Yes
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

St Johns - although the wider effects of the regeneration should be felt across the District.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Bromsgrove Town Centre AAP - Issues and Options

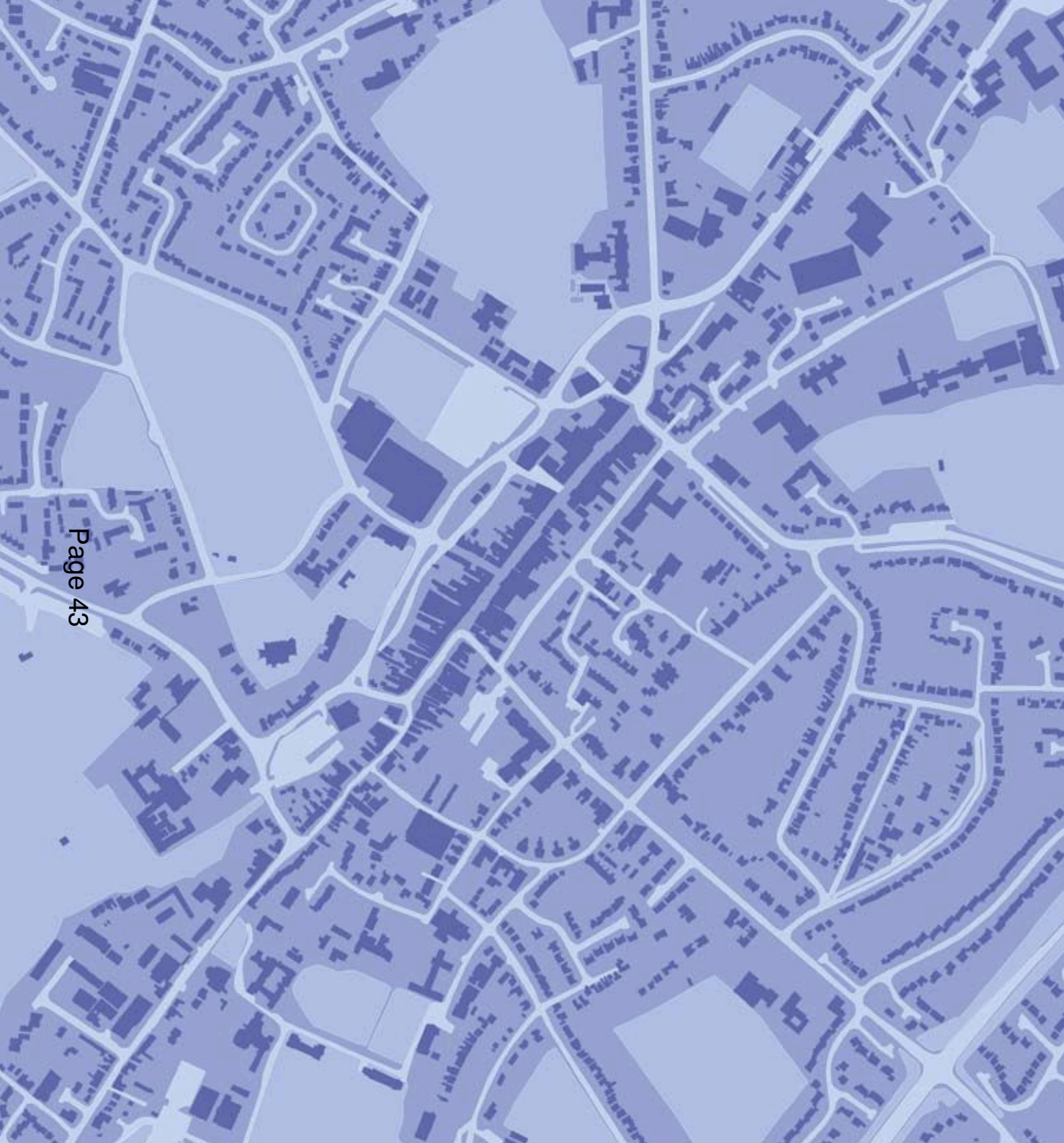
15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

CONTACT OFFICER

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

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Bromsgrove Area Action Plan

Issues and Options Report
May 2008



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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I. Introduction



Introduction

Urban Practitioners were commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council in the Autumn of 2007 to assist in the preparation of an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Bromsgrove Town Centre. As a Development Plan Document (DPD), the AAP will form part of Bromsgrove's Local Development Framework and form part of the statutory Development Plan. In doing so it will supplement the Bromsgrove Core Strategy, and will effectively implement the policies and proposals that are most relevant to Bromsgrove Town Centre. The AAP, alongside the Core Strategy and other DPD's currently being prepared by the Council, will remain in place for the lifetime of the Development Plan, until 2026.

This Issues and Options Report sets out a range of issues and options relevant to the town centre, which have been identified through consultation.

Bromsgrove Town Centre

Bromsgrove is an historic market town, which today acts as a major commuter centre for the West Midlands. As shown in Figure 1.1, the town is approximately ten miles south-west of Birmingham, strategically located near to the M5 and M42. The town was mentioned in the Domesday Book, and was the centre for the medieval wool trade. Bromsgrove still contains a number of historic and listed buildings.

According to recent population projections undertaken by Worcestershire County Council, the population of Bromsgrove is approximately 91,400 – similar in size

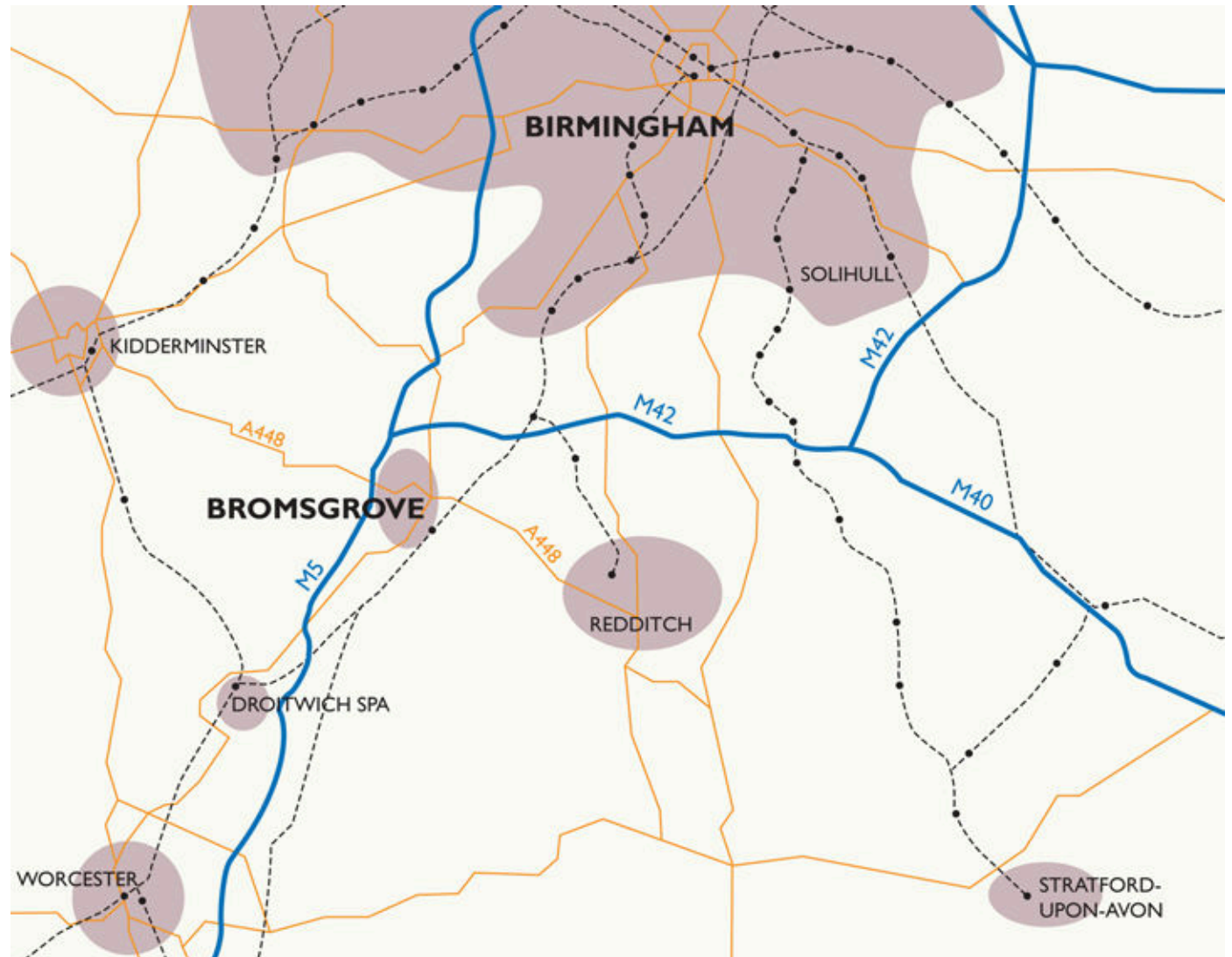


Figure 1.1: Bromsgrove Context Plan

and scale to the neighbouring towns of Kidderminster, Droitwich Spa, Worcester and Redditch. The M5 and M42 meet to the north of the town, offering good road links to the rest of the country, and the A38 and A448 offer good local access to the neighbouring towns. Bromsgrove train station is located approximately one mile outside the town centre, and provides services to a variety of destinations on the London Midland network, including Birmingham, Hereford and Worcester.

The AAP for Bromsgrove town centre provides an opportunity to create a coordinated framework for the future development of the town centre. This will ensure that new development and traffic improvements complement and enhance the centre's historic and environmental quality. The process involved in preparing the AAP will also provide a key opportunity for members of the local community and local stakeholders to have a significant input into the future of the town.

AAP Process

The process for developing and adopting an AAP is set out in PPS12, and involves considerable informal and formal public consultation and participation.

The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act, which came into force in September 2004, introduced a major reform to the planning system in England and Wales. The main aims of the legislation are to speed up the planning system, increase its flexibility and

enable greater community involvement in the planning process. The reform also changes the emphasis in development planning towards shorter, streamlined plans which will have a clear, strategic vision and a spatial dimension. Formulating spatial rather than purely land-use policies provides for a more holistic approach to planning.

AAP context

Area Action Plans should be used to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. AAPs can:

1. Deliver planned growth areas;
2. Stimulate regeneration;
3. Protect areas particularly sensitive to change;
4. Resolve conflicting objectives in areas subject to development pressures; or
5. Focus the delivery of area-based regeneration initiatives.

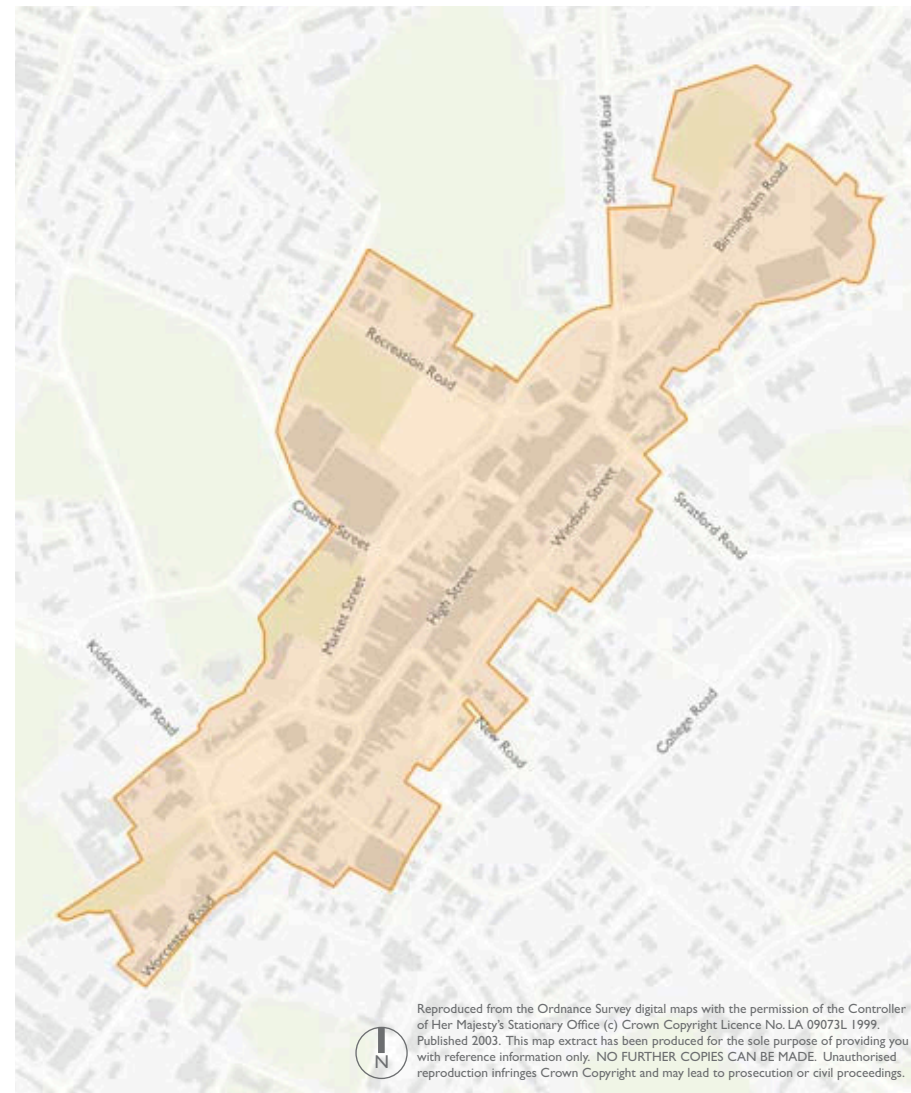


Figure 1.2: Existing Bromsgrove town centre boundary

Incorporating Sustainability

The new planning system places a statutory requirement on local authorities to undertake their planning functions with a view to contributing to the achievement of sustainable development. In order to ensure that plan preparation is based on principles of sustainable development, all Local Development Documents – statutory and supplementary – will be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SA will examine the environmental, economic and social impacts of each document. The findings of the SA will be a material consideration in determining the soundness of Development Plan Documents during the examination stage.

Bromsgrove LDF Sustainability Appraisal Scoping and Baseline Report

The report was completed by Bromsgrove District Council in March 2008, forming an important part of the Sustainability Appraisal for Local Development Documents, and has been subject to consultation in accordance with PPS12 and The Town and Country Planning (Local Development Framework) Regulations 2004.

The Sustainability Appraisal Process will run in parallel with the preparation of Local Development Documents. The Scoping Report covers Stage A of the process as outlined in Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents; Guidance for Regional Planning Bodies and Local Planning Authorities (ODPM, 2004) and as illustrated in Figure 1.3 below.

The Scoping Report sets the local context, establishes the baseline, and defines the sustainability objectives against which the policies and proposals contained in the Local Development will be appraised against.

The objectives and associated indicators will be used throughout the production of LDF documents to continually influence and assess the impact of future proposals and policies. Although the Scoping Report relates to the entire District, several of the objectives are particularly relevant to Bromsgrove town centre, and have therefore been used to appraise the sustainability of the Issues and Options report of this AAP.

Each of the objectives included within the Bromsgrove Town Centre AAP Issues and Options report have been appraised against the objectives contained in Table 1.1 below. A review of this appraisal is included as an appendix to the report.

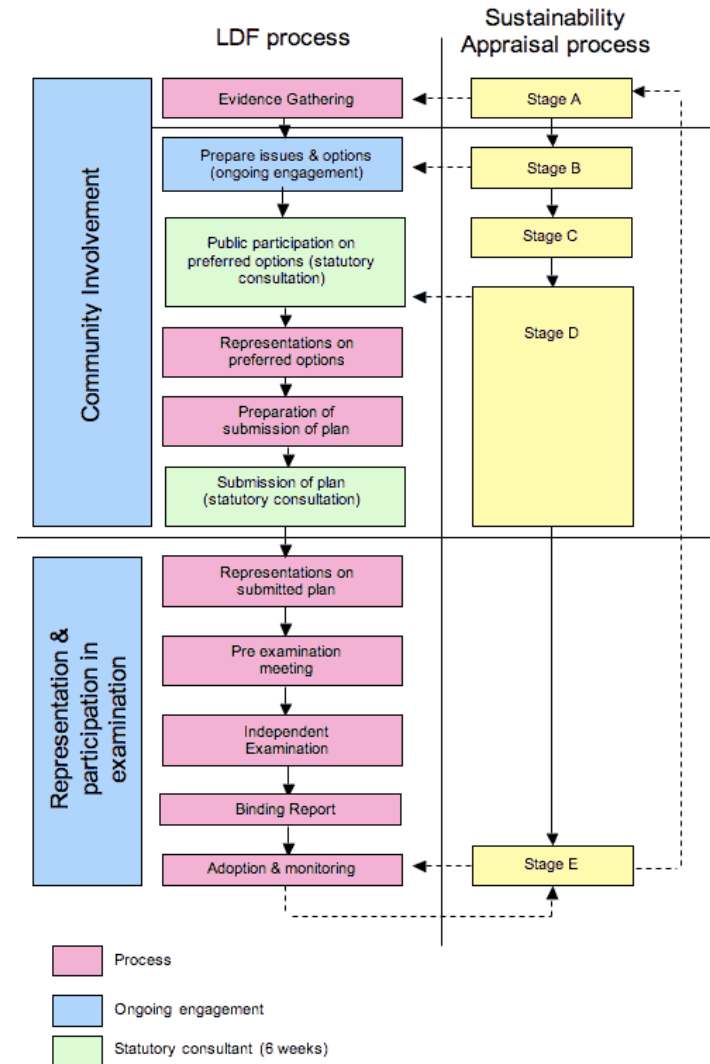


Figure 1.3: Programme and stages of assessment (ODPM, 2004)

<p>Social objectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide decent affordable housing for all, of the right quality and tenure and for local needs, in clean, safe and pleasant local environment 2. Improve the quality of and equitable access to local services and facilities regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, disability, socio economic status or educational attainment 3. Reduce crime, fear of crime and anti- social behaviour 4. Reduce need to travel and move towards more sustainable travel patterns 5. Provision of opportunities for communities to participate and contribute to decisions that affect their neighbourhood and quality of life, encouraging pride and social responsibility in the local community
<p>Environmental objectives</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Maximise previously developed land and reuse of vacant buildings where this is not detrimental to open space and biodiversity interest 7. Conserve and enhance the historic built environment heritage and seek well-designed, high quality built environment in new development proposals 8. Ensure inappropriate development does not occur in high risk flood prone areas and does not adversely contribute to fluvial flood risk or contribute to surface water flooding in all the areas. 9. Promote energy efficiency and energy generated from renewable energy and low carbon sources 10. Protect and enhance the quality of water, soil and air quality 11. Reduce causes of and adapt to the impacts of climate change
<p>Economic objectives:</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Develop a knowledge driven economy, the infrastructure and skills base whilst ensuring all share the benefits 13. Promote and support the development of new technologies of high value and low impact especially resource efficient technologies and environmental technology initiatives 14. Raise the skills levels and qualifications of workforce 15. Sustainable use and development of material assets

Table 1.1: Sustainability Objectives



Parkside Middle School, April 2008



Thomas Horton Solicitors, April 2008

Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010

The Bromsgrove Sustainable Community Strategy 2007-2010 (Bromsgrove Partnership, 2007) has been developed by the Local Strategic Partnership, covering a range of priorities including the town centre and regeneration. It is essential that the LDF maintains clear linkages with this strategy.

The Strategy aims to promote Bromsgrove as a thriving market town which will: "attract locals and visitors alike both for the shopping experience and the many other activities that the town will provide. As a thriving market town there will be regular activities like a street market, specialist markets, such as Easter markets, continental markets, farmers markets, antique fairs, the bonfire night, street theatre and so on... The town will be significantly regenerated to achieve this, with a new civic heart, perhaps relocating the Council House to the town centre, a new road layout and a community focal point."

Additionally a unique shopping environment, consisting of small specialist shops, high street accommodation, restaurants, cafes and a retail mix that reflects the growing affluence of the District is promoted by the strategy. It also aims to promote good accessibility for people with disabilities, good toilet facilities and encourage children and young people into the town centre. The evening economy should include a range of entertainment which caters for the young, families and the elderly. In terms of transport, the Strategy also supports the upgrade of Bromsgrove Station to provide an additional 300 car parking spaces,

longer platforms, better access and a bus interchange linking with the town centre.

The need for the Bromsgrove town centre Area Action Plan

Bromsgrove District Council has identified that a holistic approach to the redevelopment of the town centre is required, that takes into account the prime sites for regeneration, and includes a systematic consideration of other opportunities.

Issues and Options

The Bromsgrove town centre Area Action Plan will provide a comprehensive planning policy framework for the area, covering all the major planning policy issues of transport, urban design, employment and retail. The AAP will also provide site-specific guidelines for individual opportunity areas within the town centre.

The role of the Issues and Options report is to summarise the key issues for Bromsgrove town centre, as identified through baseline evidence gathering, and to provide a series of options for how policy might respond to each of these issues. In an attempt to make this document as open and accessible as possible, these issues and options have been clearly identified within each section.

Report Structure

The structure of this Issues and Options report is as follows:

- **Section 2** sets out an overarching vision for the town centre, and objectives which relate to each of the thematic sections included within the report;
- **Section 3** provides an outline of the consultation programme for the Bromsgrove town centre AAP, the key findings of the consultation carried out to date, and indicates the key priorities for the town centre, as suggested by consultees;
- **Section 4** sets out the issues and options which relate to transport, movement and accessibility;
- **Section 5** sets out the issues and options which relate to retailing;
- **Section 6** sets out the issues and options which relate to living and working in Bromsgrove;
- **Section 7** sets out the issues and options which relate to environment and open spaces; and,
- **Section 8** seeks your views on potential changes to the town centre boundary and identifies a number of sites within the town centre which potentially provide opportunities for change. Issues and options relevant to each of these sites are identified.

Your Views

At this stage, we would like your views on the issues and options put forward. We would like you to respond by identifying your preferred options for each of the issues raised. We would also like you to raise any additional issues together with views on how these additional issues might best be addressed in the emerging Area Action Plan for Bromsgrove town centre.

In thinking about the issues and options presented, it must be remembered that the preferred option may not be a single discrete option, but rather may be a combination of a range of options taking the best parts of each, or may be an option not yet put forward which emerges from public consultation.



Bromsgrove High Street, Jan 2008

2. Vision and Objectives



Vision

**BROMSGROVE WILL DEVELOP INTO A THRIVING,
VITAL AND VIABLE COMMERCIAL CENTRE;
A PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CHOOSE TO SHOP FOR THEIR
LOCAL NEEDS, AND SPEND TIME TO EAT, DRINK
AND SOCIALISE VISITORS WILL ENJOY
AN EXCELLENT RANGE OF SHOPPING AND
LEISURE FACILITIES PROVIDED WITHIN A HIGH
QUALITY, PEDESTRIAN ORIENTED
AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT. NEW DEVELOPMENT
MUST RESPOND CAREFULLY AND POSITIVELY TO THE TOWN'S
HISTORICAL CHARACTER**

Falling from this vision, the Council has identified a number of objectives for Bromsgrove town centre, which relate to the sections included within the report. These objectives have been identified through the preparatory work undertaken for the AAP and form the basis of the overall approach to the future of the town centre proposed by the Council.

At this stage, we would like you to let us know your views on the vision and objectives of the AAP. If you do not agree with the vision and objectives, please tell us how you think they should be changed.

Bromsgrove Town Centre AAP Objectives

Transport, movement and accessibility

- To improve pedestrian priority, linkages and mobility within and across the town centre;
- To improve pedestrian and cycle linkages between Bromsgrove Station and the town centre, and promoting shuttle bus services; and
- To improve the junction arrangement where Birmingham Road meets Stourbridge Road to benefit all users.



Retailing

- To improve the range and quality of the retail offer to enhance the viability of the town centre as a sustainable shopping destination and attract a major retail anchor for the Market Hall site;
- To promote the development of local shops and services where feasible;
- To improve the range and quality of the evening economy uses within the town centre to include a choice of bars, cafes and restaurants, in order to promote the vitality of the town centre; and
- To provide a regular outdoor market in the High Street.



Living and working in Bromsgrove

- To deliver high quality housing which provides a mix of unit sizes and tenure, in order to promote a sustainable community which contributes to the vitality and viability of the town centre;
- To ensure that residential unit numbers, densities and affordable housing provision is sufficient and appropriate for the local area;
- To improve the quality and efficiency of public service provision; and
- To ensure that crime is kept at a low level by extending CCTV coverage in the town centre and designing out crime where possible.



Environment and open spaces

- To radically improve the quality of the pedestrianised high street;
- Improve pedestrian linkages and accessibility between the High Street and town centre open spaces; and
- To improve and enhance the quality and value of open spaces in the town centre, particularly the Recreation Ground and Spadesbourne Brook.



3. Consultation



Consultation

Introduction

In preparing this report, the Council is looking to the community and stakeholders to tell us the following:

- What your opinions are on the issues and options presented;
- What options are your preferred options that you want the council to take forward; and
- Any issues or options we haven't considered that you would like us to consider.

Consultation Programme

A significant amount of consultation has already taken place to inform this issues and options stage. In addition the Council have undertaken some early masterplanning work with the involvement of the community which has been very useful in defining the key issues and opportunities facing the town. Whilst not formally part of the AAP process, this earlier work was successful in engaging the community and involving them in scoping out and agreeing ideas to improve the environmental quality of the town centre.

This section provides a summary of this early consultation and that undertaken specifically for the Bromsgrove town centre AAP.

Early Consultation Work (2003)

Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategy Consultation

Urban Practitioners were commissioned by Bromsgrove District Council to produce the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategy in 2003. As part of the preparatory work for the strategy, a major consultation event was held on the 27th November 2003 at the District Council offices. The purpose of this event was to provide an opportunity for local residents, businesses, community groups and relevant organisations to express their opinions on the key issues and opportunities relevant to the future of Bromsgrove. The event was attended by over 80 local representatives.

The consultation event was structured into three parts: a walking audit of the town centre; a 'dreams' workshop; and a 'solutions' workshop.

During the walking audit, participants were encouraged to write on post-it notes what they considered to be the area's issues and dreams. Following the walking audit, issues and dreams were collected and read out to the whole group. Post-it notes were then divided into themes and placed on a large display board. Finally, participants were divided into seven workshop groups to identify practical solutions and priorities for the town centre. At the end of the session, each group made a short presentation of their findings and ideas to the meeting.

Key findings were as follows:

Townscape

- Concern with the unattractive, run-down appearance of the town, and poor appearance of the areas to the rear of the High Street
- Concern with the deterioration of historic buildings
- Need for a town centre focal point
- Redevelopment of the 'Iceland', Blockbuster video, and KSH and Flooring sites would be desirable
- Mill Lane in need of improvement
- Protection of views of St John's Church required

Environment and Safety

- Concern over poor appearance and condition of Spadesbourne Brook. It should be cleaned and highlighted as a prime feature for the town
- Lack of open space
- Poor lighting
- Increase in landscaping and planting required across the town centre

Facilities / activities

- Poor quality and limited variety of shops. Improved retail offer required
- Concern over empty and neglected town centre properties
- Public conveniences in need of refurbishment
- Encourage people to live in the town centre

- New or expanded library a priority for the town centre
- Arts Centre would improve range of town centre facilities

Legibility / signage

- Signage uncoordinated and insensitive to the character of the town
- Shopfronts do not all complement historic architecture
- Too much street clutter
- Poor first impression of town when entering from Stourbridge Road
- Interesting shopfronts could be encouraged on High Street, and clearer guidance on paintwork and signage should be available
- Profile of historic buildings in the area should be raised

Streetscape

- Poor quality of paving in the town centre
- The illumination of the Housman statue required
- Reduction in litter desirable

Traffic and movement

- Parking provision inadequate and bus station in need of refurbishment
- Links between Market Hall and the High Street considered to be poor
- Bus station could be covered and enclosed or transformed into proper public space
- Improved pedestrian access from ASDA to the High Street desirable

High Street

- High Street run-down and lacking in character
- Rear of High Street too industrial
- Development at the rear of the High Street properties to provide frontage onto Market Street and Crown Close desirable
- High Street could be covered to create a precinct
- Increased routes linking the High Street to the surrounding roads

The Market Hall

- Market Hall building unattractive with poor frontage
- Alternative use could be found for site
- Town square or focal point could be created either on the site or in front of it
- Adjacent car park suitable for multi-storey car park and new retail development
- Redevelopment should incorporate the Spadesbourne Brook



2003 consultation and report covers

AAP Consultation Events (2007-08)

One-to-one meetings with key stakeholders

A number of meetings have taken place at an early stage in the preparation of the Bromsgrove town centre AAP, in order to identify the key issues and alternative options for the town. Meetings have been held with:

- Mark Weaver, Chair LSP
- Councillor George Lord
- Chief Inspector Tony Love
- Alan Stokes, Property Services, Worcestershire County Council
- Dave Hammond, Planning, Bromsgrove District Council
- Jim Griffiths, Bromsgrove Society
- Councillor Ted Tibby
- Councillor Rita Dent
- Kevin Dicks, CEO, Bromsgrove District Council
- Matthew Horton, Managing Director, Thomas Horton LLP
- Mike Brown, Chief Executive and John Morgan, Board Chairman, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust

Focus Groups

The following focus groups have been held to identify a range of views from individuals and organisations:

- Traders' - 17th January 6-7.30pm
- Simone Maury - Shiny
 - Martin Connellan - Bromsgrove Cobbler
 - Simon Cuppitt - Cuppitts
 - Karen Phillips - The Clothes Rail
 - Bryan Pearce - Tools for Cooks
 - Sue Pearce - Tools for Cooks
 - Russell Martin - Scruples
 - Kaul Hegenbank - KSH Flooring
 - Linda Hegenbank - KSH Flooring
 - Dennis Norton - Holt House
 - Myra Walters - Perry Lane Pharmacy
 - Simon Greaves - Le Savon
 - Dean Reilly - Bromsgrove Sports
 - Adrian Kriss - Adrian Kriss & Associates
 - Keith Hitchinson - Subway
 - Christina Hitchinson - Subway
 - James Sommerville - Thomas Horton LLP
 - Joan Holland - Thomas Horton LLP

Council Officers and Representatives of the Disability Users Group - 17th January 10-12pm

- Celia Biolcati - Conservation Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
- Andy Coel – Housing Manager
- Mary Collet - Disability Users Group
- Mrs Breillat – Disability Users Group

- Mr Breillat - Disability Users Group
- Sarah Coller - Assistant Equalities Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
- Ray Crossland - Bromsgrove Access Committee, Disabled Access Group
- John Godwin - Leisure and Community Services, Bromsgrove District Council

Disability Users Group meeting – 8th February 11-12pm

- Ray Crossland - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
- Anne Crossland - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
- Gwyneth Breillat - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
- Kenneth Breillat - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
- Fiona Scott - Equality Officer Bromsgrove District Council
- Ann Batchelor - Bromsgrove resident
- Joe Scott - Bromsgrove resident
- Margaret Norton - Bromsgrove resident
- Mary Collett - North Worcester S.P.I.N
- Eileen Mulhall - North Worcester S.P.I.N
- Robin Edwards - Bromsgrove resident
- Sarah Kelsey - Equalities Assistant Bromsgrove District Council
- Paula Bullock - Padstone Day Centre service user
- Anjela Tsang - Padstone Day Centre staff

Workshops

A workshop was held with a number of Council members and officers on the 7th November 2007, in order to understand their priorities for the town. Representatives from Worcestershire County Council and other organisations were also present at the workshop.



Bromsgrove traders' workshop, Jan 2008

Key findings

All of the consultation meetings and exercises were structured around the following four themes, which encapsulate the main issues relating to the town centre:

- Transport, movement and accessibility;
- Retailing;
- Leisure and community services; and
- Environment and open spaces.

Therefore, this section identifies the findings for each of these four themes in turn. Please note this section reflects the most frequently stated opinions, and in some instances key findings were contradictory.

Transport, movement and accessibility

Bromsgrove Station

- Station is too remote from the town centre
- Station car parking is poor
- Regular shuttle service needed between the station and the town centre
- Pedestrian and cycle route needs improving between the station and the town centre.

Buses

- Current location of bus station should be retained
- Buses are not accessible to those in wheelchairs
- Dial-a-ride bus service required
- Coordinated provision of school buses required.

Road Network

- Junction of Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road is often congested and needs improving
- Transport problems discourage shoppers and visitors to the town centre
- Gridlock occurs when motorway is jammed
- The road network is constrained by a number of physical limitations, including trees in the town centre and the Horton building

- A new bypass for the town centre should be considered, and there is a need to stop people using the town as a through route (for example, between Kidderminster and Redditch)
- A survey of traffic flows and the road network generally is required for the town centre
- Market Street should be closed to enable the High Street to be opened out to the west and better link ASDA with the town centre.

Car Parking

- Car parking charges restrict trade in the town centre. However, car parking charges provide an important source of revenue for the council
- Parking should be free in the evenings and on Sundays
- Pay and display car parking should be replaced by pay on return car parking
- More short stay car parking is required to service the town centre shops
- More disabled parking spaces required to service the town centre shops, and shop-mobility
- Car parking strategy required.

Taxis

- Additional taxi rank is required in the town centre near the evening economy uses. This has been successfully trialed and is currently being implemented.

Retailing

Range of Retail and Vitality

- There is a need to increase the quality and the range of the retail offer
- There is a need to attract a quality convenience food store, preferably to the Market Hall site
- An anchor tenant is required in the High Street
- Once a new ‘anchor’ retailer has been attracted, a focus to the High Street is required, such as the provision of niche and boutique shops
- The number of fast food takeaways should be reduced
- A food store is required in the High Street
- Redeveloping the Market Hall site would be beneficial for the town centre and town centre businesses
- Town centre improvements are likely to have a positive impact on town centre retail
- Need to encourage more independent retailers to the town centre

Evening Economy Uses

- Increase in the provision of restaurants and cafés required. This could be linked to the open spaces adjacent to the town centre (such as the Market hall site, the brook and Market Street)

Market

- Occasional themed markets and farmers markets would have a positive impact on the town centre
- An outdoor market in the High Street is traditional, and may help to stimulate further town centre activity.
- ASDA car park could accommodate the market
- The town centre should no longer accommodate a market, as the town needs to modernise, and poor quality market stalls create a negative perception of the town centre. Additionally, an outdoor market would create an increase in litter, and cause an obstruction to movements, reducing accessibility in the High Street

Leisure and community services

Dolphin Centre

- The Dolphin Centre should be improved or replaced. Opinion is split as to whether the centre should be redeveloped on the same site, elsewhere in the town centre or relocated to an edge of centre location
- The range of facilities at the Dolphin Centre should be expanded.

Range and Quality of Facilities

- Leisure and community facilities must be accessible to disabled users
- A bowling alley and cinema should be provided in the town
- New Primary Care facility should be developed on part of the grounds of Parkside School.

Re-location and Improvements to Services

- It may be possible to co-locate a number of public services, such as the police and fire services, in order to increase efficiency in providing new facilities for these services
- The Police and Fire services should be relocated to new premises outside of the town centre
- The library requires redevelopment or relocation
- The Victoria Ground is adequate for the current requirements of Bromsgrove Rovers Football Club
- The relocation of the District Council offices should be considered, either to

a building within the town centre or to an alternative location outside the town centre.

Crime and Safety

- Ensure that CCTV coverage of the High Street is comprehensive
- Design out crime on new developments, and improve safety of existing areas which are poorly lit and have limited natural surveillance.

Housing

- Consider the potential to increase town centre housing provision as part of new mixed use development schemes, and improvements to the evening economy.



High Street, Jan 2008



Church Street, Jan 2008



High Street, Jan 2008



High Street, Jan 2008

Environment and open spaces

Public Realm

- The quality of the public realm in the High Street needs to be improved
- The pedestrianised part of the High Street should be improved to look more attractive and reduce uneven surfaces (cobblestones should be removed)
- The local community should be involved in making improvements to the High Street and local schools could provide public art
- A regular maintenance programme is required for the High Street
- Some shop fronts are poorly maintained and require improvement
- There is too much street clutter in the High Street
- Street cafés should be encouraged, in order to develop a café culture. This could potentially be to the west of the High Street, in association with the option to close Market Street (see Transport, Movement and Accessibility).

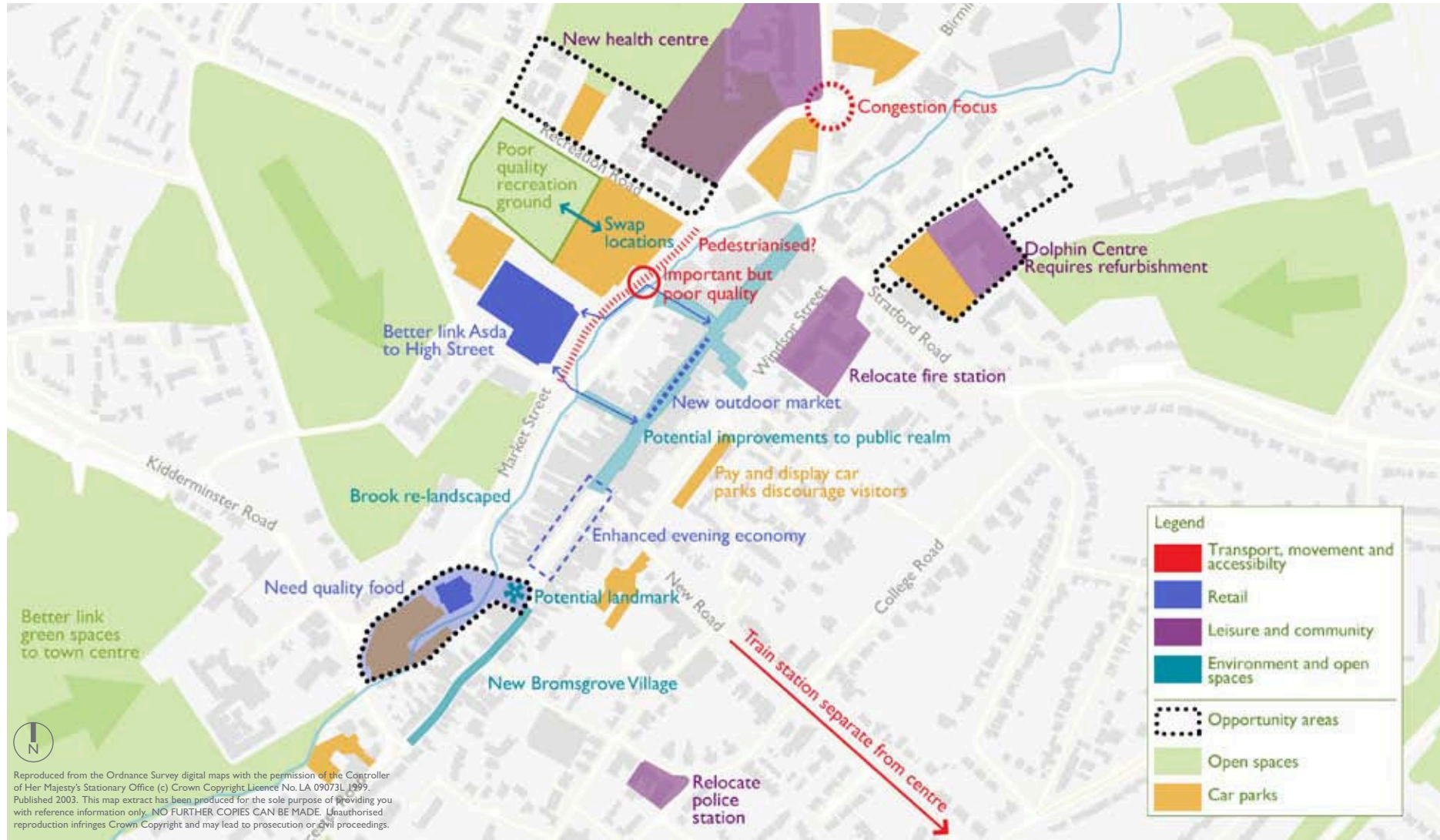
Open Spaces

- Increased seating required in churchyard and areas of open space in town centre
- Recreation ground is under-utilised and should either be improved with a regular amenity function or redeveloped for alternative uses. The opportunity may exist to swap the current open space with the adjacent car park to bring the open space closer to the town centre

- The Brook should be re-landscaped
- The Brook should be culverted
- Linkages between the town centre and open spaces need to be improved.

Areas of Character

- The Blockbusters building on the High Street should be demolished and replaced with a new landmark building which is suitable for this 'gateway' location
- Worcester Road should be promoted as 'Bromsgrove Village'
- Future development of the Market Hall site and other future developments need to be sympathetic to the character of the town.



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Figure 3.1: Consultation summary plan

4. Transport, Movement and Accessibility



Transport, Movement and Accessibility



Town centre pedestrian signage, Jan 2008



Stratford Road, Jan 2008

Context

Bromsgrove benefits from a strong strategic location with very good vehicular access to the UK motorway network. The motorway network in the Bromsgrove area has experienced major improvements in recent years, with the extension and completion of the M42 and M40 motorways, and the widening of the M5. However, road congestion is an increasing problem for Bromsgrove, particularly during rush hour and when traffic attempting to avoid motorway congestion diverts to local roads.

Bromsgrove experiences high levels of private car ownership and car usage, reflecting the relative prosperity of the local population, good access to the strategic road network, and limitations to public transportation. According to Network Rail's Strategic Business Plan (Network Rail, October 2007) growth in usage of the rail service in Bromsgrove is being suppressed, principally by the inadequate station, car parking facilities and infrequent service levels. Proposals are in place to upgrade capacity at Bromsgrove Station, and to increase the service frequency. However, the current station location poses fundamental difficulties in terms of accessing the town centre. As a result the role of the station in promoting town centre regeneration is limited at present.

Bromsgrove Station is located approximately one mile from the town centre, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, and pedestrian, cycle and bus linkages are poor between the town centre and the station. Accessibility to the station platforms is restricted as one of the

platforms can only be accessed via steps and a footbridge.

Bus services are able to penetrate into the town centre, and the bus stops located between Market Street and the High Street offer a convenient location for shoppers. However, there are problems with accessibility, both in terms of wheelchair access to the buses and in pedestrian accessibility to the bus stops from ASDA on the other side of Market Street.

The overall quantity of car parking is generally adequate for the town centre. However there are issues relating to car parking charges, methods of operation, and the quantity of short stay and disabled parking spaces close to shops and services.

Relevant Planning Policy

Planning Policy Guidance Note 13 (PPG13) provides the following national planning policy guidance for transport:

“Our quality of life depends on transport...;we need a safe, efficient and integrated transport system to support a strong and prosperous economy. But the way we travel and the continued growth in road traffic is damaging our towns, harming our countryside and contributing to global warming”.

Land use planning has a key role to play in promoting more sustainable travel by shaping the patterns of development and influencing the location, scale, density and mix of land uses.

As PPG13 states; *“Planning can help reduce the need to travel, reduce the length of journeys and make it safer and easier for people to access jobs, shopping, leisure facilities and services by public transport, walking and cycling”.*

Within the West Midlands, the Regional Transport Strategy is incorporated into the Regional Spatial Strategy. In respect of Bromsgrove, the strategy seeks to improve accessibility and mobility so that more sustainable modes of travel are encouraged and local regeneration initiatives are supported. This is combined with the need to encourage behavioural change, such as reducing the need to travel, across the entire Region. Policies in the Transport Strategy should not be viewed in isolation from the rest of the Regional Spatial Strategy with the importance of transport reflected in planning policies throughout the Spatial Strategy which guide developments to appropriate locations and seek to minimise the impact of transport on the environment.

Bromsgrove District Local Plan (Bromsgrove District Council, 2004) contains several policies relating to transport, movement and accessibility in Bromsgrove town centre. Policy TR13 encouraged applications which promote the use of a variety of transport, and policy TR15 encouraged increased use of rail services, by enhancing car parking at Bromsgrove Station. Policy TR16 aimed to pursue opportunities to improve/provide cycle facilities in the District and to develop a network of cycle routes.

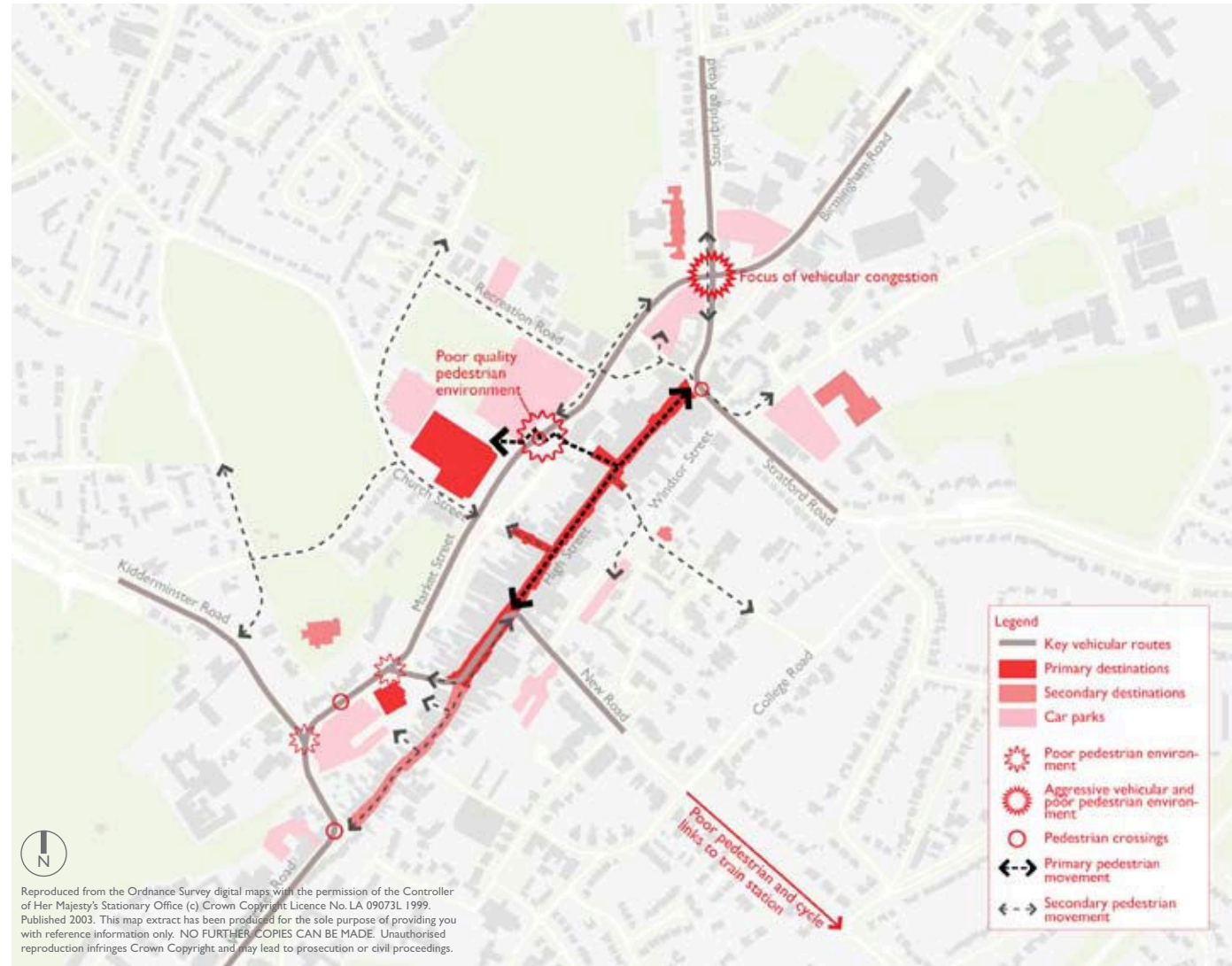
Additionally, the Plan promoted the further pedestrianisation of the southern section of

the High Street and Worcester Road, in order to improve the pedestrian environment, and stated that the Council will explore alternative routes for cross-town movement of traffic. This could involve the re-routing of traffic around the existing network using traffic management measures or if feasible the construction of a new link between New Road and Station Street.

We welcome your feedback on whether or not you think that these Local Plan policies are still relevant to Bromsgrove town centre, or whether they need to be updated through the AAP process.

Consultation on the Core Strategy Issues and Options suggested that transport problems for the disabled and those with mobility difficulties should be addressed, by providing access to trains at the station, wheelchair accessible taxis and help fund community transport. Other issues raised included the distance from the train station to the town centre and the poor quality of Bromsgrove Bus Station.

The Local Transport Plan for Worcestershire is currently under review and will, when published, form the basis for future transport development in the County. New documents produced as part of the Local Development Framework will need to link to the Transport Plan to try and reduce the need to travel and promote more sustainable means of transportation.



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Figure 4.1: Transport, movement and accessibility summary plan



Town centre signage to station, Jan 2008

Issue BRI – Bromsgrove Station

Options

BRIA - Introduce a new regular shuttle bus link between the town centre and the station

A regular shuttle bus service taking visitors to and from the bus stops adjacent to the High Street and Market Street would enable visitors to reach Bromsgrove town centre using the train service, rather than private car. This may also encourage new visitors and shoppers to the town centre, who would previously have travelled to other town centres that were easier to reach by train. Any reduction in private car usage would have the added benefit of reducing town centre congestion, and promoting the use of public transportation encourages the development of more sustainable travel patterns. A bus link would also enable those living close to the town centre and commuting elsewhere to use the train rather than the car; providing the train serves their destination.

BRIB - Improve signage between the town centre and the station

This would help to improve pedestrian accessibility between Bromsgrove Station and the town centre, and therefore promote the use of sustainable modes of transportation. This may encourage an increase in visitors and shoppers to the town centre, and reduce reliance on the private car.

However, limitations with the current train service may limit the extent of the impact, and improvements in accessibility may encourage people to shop elsewhere. Additionally, improving signage will only help to improve accessibility to the station for the more mobile sections of the population, and does not reduce the distance or journey time involved.

BRIC - Improve cycle and pedestrian routes between the station and the town centre

This would help to improve accessibility between the station and the town centre for cyclists and pedestrians, and would therefore promote the use of sustainable modes of transportation. This may encourage an increase in visitors and shoppers to the town centre, and reduce reliance on the private car.

Physical measures to improve cycle and pedestrian routes could include looking at opportunities to widen pavements to improve lighting to implement dedicated cycle lanes, and to give greater pedestrian and cycle priority at key junctions. These measures would be complemented by physical improvements at the station itself (see BRIE).

Issue BR2 – Road Network

Options

BR2A – Alter the road network to introduce a one-way system which includes the widening of Windsor Street

The objective of introducing a one-way system around the town centre would be to reduce congestion, particularly at current problem areas such as the junctions of Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road. This could also improve the pedestrian environment in the vicinity of the High Street and Market Street by creating a larger pedestrianised area. A section of Market Street could become pedestrianised, with the potential for bus access to remain. This would enable the potential for new development and for significant environmental improvements to the Market Street area and Spadesbourne Brook.

However, the changes would be likely to necessitate a change in location for the bus stops, which would result in a reduced bus penetration into the town centre. Although a one-way system may act to reduce congestion, there may also be increased journey distances and times for those travelling through the town centre, for example from New Road to Stourbridge Road.

As illustrated by Figure 4.2 relocating the bus stops to the site of the Windsor Street car park would enable the development of improved bus linkages with Bromsgrove Station. However, this would necessitate the

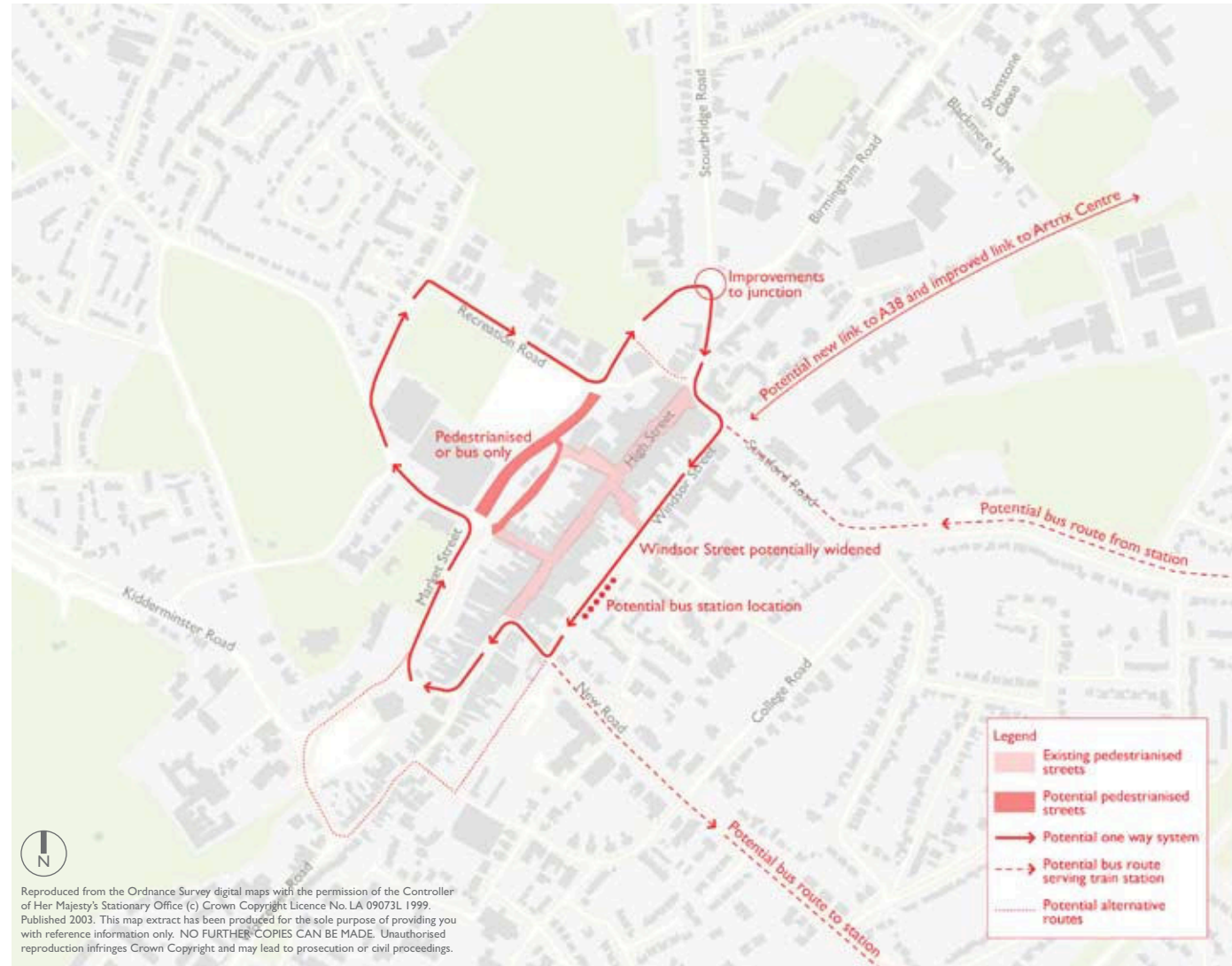


Figure 4.2: Potential road network alterations

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The Strand, Jan 2008



High Street, Jan 2008

loss of some or all of the car parking facilities at Windsor Street, which would reduce the number of car parking spaces available in the town centre. The alterations would also necessitate the widening of Windsor Street, and vastly increase the amount of traffic using the street. This may impact negatively on surrounding business and residential areas, and could potentially be detrimental to the character of the town centre.

As illustrated on Figure 3.2, the potential exists for a new link road between the A38 and Bromsgrove town centre, expanding the existing School Drive to the east of the town centre. This would enable improved access between the town centre and the A38, and would improve accessibility to the facilities and amenities on route, including the Dolphin Centre, the Artrix Centre and David Lloyd centre. However, this would necessitate the development of a new section of road which dissects the recently developed Artrix Centre car park. Ideally, a physical link (pedestrian or vehicular) would also be constructed between School Drive and Birmingham Road to the east of the town centre to reduce the physical impermeability of the block. This could potentially connect Blackmore Lane and Shenstone Close with School Drive. However, recent planning consents may restrict the possibility to achieve such a link.

BR2B - Introduce improvements to the junction of Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road

The introduction of a roundabout at the junction of Stourbridge Road and Birmingham Road may help to improve vehicular flows at this junction.

BR2C - Reduce Barriers to Mobility

The possibility exists to either pedestrianise or make Market Street bus only between the junctions of Crabtree Lane and Recreation Road. This would enable the potential for new development and for significant environmental improvements to the Market Street area and Spadesbourne Brook. Additionally, it would improve the integration and accessibility between town centre uses on either side of Market Street.

However, this would necessitate vehicular traffic to be diverted along alternative routes, which would increase journey times and distances, and could potentially lead to an increase in traffic congestion.

Issue BR3 – Buses, pedestrian linkages and mobility

Options

BR3A - Bus stops should be retained in their current location

The current location of bus stops provides a high degree of penetration into the town centre. Consultation with local residents and business reveals that people are generally satisfied with the location of the bus station, along Market Street, as it provides good levels of accessibility to the High Street environment and the range of shops and services it provides, as well as ASDA on the other side of Market Street.

BR3B - Bus stops should be relocated to Windsor Street car park

Relocating the bus stops to Windsor Street car park would enable the bus stops to retain a town centre location, and provide the potential to promote bus linkages with Bromsgrove Station. However, this would require the loss of some or all of the car parking spaces currently available at Windsor Street car park, and would not provide such convenient access to town centre businesses at the northern end of the High Street and Market Street, including ASDA and Shop Mobility.

BR3C – Reduce barriers to mobility

At present, less mobile users of the town centre find using bus services difficult or impossible. Therefore, buses should ensure that they provide suitable wheelchair access, and bus stops should be convenient for all town centre uses.

Improvements are required to pedestrian linkages to the west of the High Street, and there is a need to reduce the physical and visual barriers currently presented by Market Street. There is a particular need to improve pedestrian crossing facilities between ASDA, the bus stops and the High Street and the footpath along Market Street to the north of the bus stops (behind Iceland). This path dramatically narrows as it cross over the Brook at this point and this cause congestion for pedestrians and problems for the elderly, those in wheelchairs or with pushchairs.

There should be an increase in the number of disabled car parking spaces in the town centre, particularly at Shop Mobility. The provision of a dial-a-ride facility would enable the mobility impaired to access to the town centre more easily.

Barriers to mobility should be removed throughout the town centre, by ensuring that dropped kerbs and ramps are consistently provided, pedestrian crossings are fully functional and easy to use, and paving is even.

Issue BR4 – Car Parking

Options

BR4A - Increase the provision of short stay car parking spaces in the town centre

An increase in the number of short stay car parking spaces available in close proximity to the High Street would enable shoppers to more easily pick up or drop off goods, and provide a boost to town centre businesses. However, providing short stay car parking in close proximity to the High Street may increase town centre congestion, as large numbers of motorists may be tempted to search for a relatively small number of spaces, leading to waiting and cruising for spaces.

BR4B - Car parking charges should be reviewed

Many local residents, businesses and visitors to the town centre express concern about the cost of car parking, long hours of operation for car park charging, and the pay and display method for collecting car parking revenue. Reducing car parking charges may encourage a greater number of visitors to the town centre, both during the day and in the evening. Additionally, pay on foot car parking would provide greater flexibility to those parking their cars in the town centre, as they would no longer be restricted to a time period specified on arrival.

However, reducing car parking charges would encourage greater use of private cars in and around the town, rather than promoting use of sustainable modes of transportation. Additionally, encouraging an increase in parking is likely to increase town centre congestion.

BR4C - Reduce the overall number of car parking spaces in the town centre

Reducing the overall number of car parking spaces in Bromsgrove town centre would encourage greater use of sustainable modes of transportation, such as buses, trains, cycling and walking. However, the current provision of public transportation in the town is unlikely to provide a viable alternative for private car usage for the majority of visitors and residents. Therefore, any significant reduction in the overall number of car parking spaces without any accompanying improvement in the provision of public transportation would be likely to have a detrimental impact of businesses in Bromsgrove town centre.



Mill Lane, Jan 2008



Mill Lane, Jan 2008

5. Retailing



Retailing



George House, Jan 2008



Market Hall, Jan 2008

Context

Bromsgrove town centre remains the main retail destination within the District. However, not all local residents use Bromsgrove town centre as their primary shopping destination, and other nearby competing centres offer types of stores not currently available.

Within Bromsgrove town centre there is a significant representation of comparison retailers along the High Street, including a number of national chain stores, such as Argos, WHSmith, Superdrug and Woolworths. There is also a small cluster of larger warehouse retail units to the east of the town centre on Birmingham Road, which includes Lush furniture store.

The major convenience retail offer is provided by ASDA, located to the western side of Market Street. However, there are currently aspirations to improve the range and quantity of the convenience retail offer within the town.

An indoor market is provided inside the Market Hall building at the western end of the High Street. However, this is already recognised by the Council as a major opportunity site and work, in parallel to the Core Strategy and AAP for Bromsgrove Town Centre, is underway to assist in promoting this key site for redevelopment, with the market potentially relocated outside along High Street.

The shop accommodation in the town centre

is mixed, and many small and independent businesses occupy small premises that do not lend themselves to redevelopment. As a result, there is a shortage of suitable larger retail accommodation that suits modern retailing needs.

According to the Bromsgrove Town Centre Retail Capacity Analysis Update (CBRE, December 2007) there is a quantitative need for additional comparison and convenience retail over the study period up to 2022.

Bromsgrove town centre includes relatively few evening economy uses. However, those that do exist are generally clustered at the western end of the High Street and on Worcester Road.

Relevant Planning Policy

National planning policy for town centres and retail development is set out in PPS6 'Planning for Town Centres'. The Government's key objective for town centres is to promote their vitality and viability by:

- planning for the growth and development of existing centres;
- promoting and enhancing existing centres, by focusing development in such centres; and,
- encouraging a wide range of services in a good environment, accessible to all.

To achieve this the Government wants to see enhanced consumer choice by making

provision for a range of shopping, leisure and local services, which allow genuine choice to meet the needs of the entire community. They also want to see improved accessibility, ensuring that existing or new development is, or will be, accessible and well-served by a choice of means of transport. While the town centre is still seen as the primary place for new retail development, opportunities must be found for large-format retailers such as DIY stores and electrical appliance retailers, especially those who sell white goods like fridges and washing machines. The Government want these to be located if possible on edge-of-centre sites which could combine retail, leisure and mixed-use development. This is so large format stores don't compete with town centres but instead support them.

Policy UR3 of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requires that strategies are developed to maintain and enhance the underpinning of all centres to serve their local communities in terms of retail provision, access to services and cultural and leisure facilities. The role of Bromsgrove Town Centre is not to provide retailing facilities for those from other districts but to serve the needs of the Town's population and nearby rural settlements.

The Bromsgrove District Local Plan (Bromsgrove District Council, 2004) aimed to retain Bromsgrove town centre as the main location for general shopping facilities in the District, and sought to strengthen Bromsgrove's shopping role in order to better compete with neighbouring centres (policy S20). The plan proposed primary

and secondary shopping areas within the town centre in order to achieve a balance between different categories of shopping provision. Within Bromsgrove town centre, primary shopping areas have been defined as the pedestrianised High Street, the east side of the Strand, the retailing outlets to the north of Market Place, the north part of Worcester Road including access to Market Hall, and the pedestrianised Church Street, Mill Lane and Chapel Street. These frontages form the commercial core of the town centre and contain the main concentration of Class A1 retail outlets. The remaining section of Worcester Road within the conservation area has been designated as a secondary shopping street, along with the north side of Strand and the south side of Birmingham Road. The secondary shopping area contains a wider range of retail and related uses than the primary shopping area.

Within the primary shopping area the District Council will normally allow proposals for retail development at ground floor level and retail, office or residential use at upper floor level (BROM13). Within the secondary shopping area retail uses at ground floor level will be acceptable. Retail, residential or office use may also be considered as appropriate in these locations (BROM14).

The Plan also included policies which seek to enhance the overall shopfront and architectural quality, and to retain and enhance the character of main shopping areas (policies S23, S24, S26 and S27). Policy BROM16 also stipulates that the Council wishes to retain small scale shop units in



Figure 5.1: Summary of retail options



High Street, Jan 2008



Chapel Street, Jan 2008

the pedestrian streets and within the town courts and alleyways of the town centre. SPG2 'Shopfronts and Advertisements Design Guide' (Bromsgrove District Council, 1995) includes further detailed guidance.

We welcome your feedback on whether or not you think that these Local Plan policies are still relevant to Bromsgrove town centre, or whether they need to be updated through the AAP process.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation has identified that policies should ensure that proposals for the town centre foster a range of uses, including leisure uses as a means of stimulating the evening economy and residential development to support the regeneration of the town centre.

Issue BR6 – Retail Offer

Options

BR6A - Attempt to attract a high quality anchor store for the Market Hall site

Attracting a high quality anchor store to the Market Hall site would increase the range and improve the quality of the retail offer within the town. The site has the ability to offer a defining visual and retail anchor store to the western end of the High Street, which could attract a greater number of shoppers to the town centre.

It is vital that any new high quality anchor store be integrated into the wider town centre environment, and acts to complement existing businesses by generating further town centre activity. Visibility of the site along the High Street axis will depend on whether the site currently occupied by the Blockbuster store is included in any development plans.

BR6B – Seek to encourage more independent and niche retailers to the town centre

A strategy to promote the town centre as an attractive location for independent and niche retailers could help to improve the vitality of the town centre retail offer, and would add to the character of the town centre environment. This approach would align well against the current planning policy of seeking to retain small scale shop units in the town

centre under the currently adopted policy BROM16.

However, such retailers may be more susceptible to unfavourable market conditions than larger multiple retailers. It should also be noted that the town is considered to already be relatively well served by small, independent retailers, as was evident during the traders' workshop. Views were expressed at that workshop that more should be done to promote the town and a managed programme of events and street markets would help support the smaller independent traders in the centre.

BR6C – Seek to more tightly control the mix and range of retail units in the town centre

During the consultation and workshops with retailers already trading in the town, concerns were expressed regarding the need to protect and promote the market town character of the town centre. One effective way of achieving this is the controls the planning system is able to use in determining the mix of shopping uses in the town centre. The currently adopted Local Plan distinguishes between primary and secondary shopping streets although no distinction within primary shopping streets is made between any of the A-class land uses. Introducing tighter and clearer controls on the mix of uses within the A-class in Bromsgrove town centre could help in protecting and enhancing the town's core retail function. See also Issue BR8 below.

Issue BR7 – Market

Options

BR7A - Provide an outdoor street market in the town centre

Provision of an outdoor street market on the High Street could help to encourage visitors and shoppers to the town centre. However, the quality of the market could potentially define the perception of quality of retail offer and quality of town centre environment. Therefore, it will be important to ensure that the appearance of the street market has a positive contribution to the town centre. An outdoor street market would require increased street maintenance.

An outdoor street market would need to be suitably sited to ensure that it does not present a barrier to pedestrian accessibility, but at the same time helps to stimulate increased town centre activity. Potential sites for the market include the pedestrianised section of the High Street, Crown Close / Market Street, Windsor Street, Mill Lane or Church Street.

BR7B - Do not provide a street market in the town centre

The likely future redevelopment of the Market Hall site means that the market will lose its home. Although Bromsgrove is traditionally a market town, the nature of the town has changed significantly over the years. Therefore, the question has been raised as

to whether a market should be retained at all within the town centre, particularly given the need to respond to market conditions in order to promote the vitality and viability of the town.

Should the regular street market not be provided, the town centre could provide occasional themed markets and farmers markets.

Issue BR8 – Evening Economy

Options

BR8A - Promote the provision of cafes and restaurants in the town centre, in association with an increased residential population, in order to stimulate the evening economy

Accompanying an increase in the town centre population with the provision of additional evening economy uses, either through new mixed-use development, or by the provision of separate residential and evening economy functions, could potentially stimulate the town centre evening economy. It would be easier to attract an increase in residential population to the town centre if the evening economy uses are present, and the evening economy uses would benefit from a permanent residential town centre presence.

The stimulation of the evening economy would help to increase the vibrancy of the High Street and surrounding roads into the evening, where at present activity tends to stop after the shops and businesses close during the late afternoon. Increased activity in the evening may stimulate the town centre economy by encouraging longer opening hours for shops, and the increased presence of people in the evening would provide added safety.

Conversely, however, town centre activity in the evening may require an increase in policing, and greater security measures for local shops and businesses, particularly if the

evening economy uses are not contained in a specific area of the town centre.

Possible locations for the evolution of a cluster of evening economy uses include the Strand area and the north-eastern end of the High Street, the lower end of High Street between New Road and Worcester Road and Worcester Road itself where there is already something of a cluster of evening economy uses.

BR8B - Maintain evening economy uses at their present level at the western end of the High Street

Worcester Road currently represents a small cluster of evening economy uses in the town being the location of the town's main night club. The present level of evening economy uses does not present any significant crime or disorder problems for the town centre. However, the range and quality of evening economy uses is relatively limited.

6. Living and Working in Bromsgrove



Living and Working in Bromsgrove



St John's Church, Jan 2008



Artrix Centre, Jan 2008

Context

Within Bromsgrove District the resident population reflects national characteristics with reducing household sizes and an increasing elderly population. At present there is a range of housing types within Bromsgrove town centre, which includes sheltered accommodation for the elderly and market housing of different sizes and tenures. The Regional Housing Strategy characterises southern districts such as Bromsgrove as having a predominance of moderate to high priced neighbourhood zones and a lack of social housing provision within settlements.

The majority of employment in Bromsgrove town centre is retail or service sector related. However, there are also a small number of manufacturing and light industrial firms within the town centre. In terms of individual employers, Bromsgrove School and Bromsgrove District Council are the largest single employers within the town centre area.

Following the trends of the wider district, there is an imbalance between the type of jobs and pay available in Bromsgrove compared to the average wages of its population. Industries with higher paid jobs need to be encouraged to stay or locate in or around the town centre to reduce the daily flow of the population to other employment centres and promote more sustainable working and commuting patterns. New business parks located adjacent to the A38, such as Bromsgrove Technology Park, Aston Fields and Buntsford Gate reflect new high technology and office related uses located in

close proximity to the town centre, and offer opportunities for expansion.

The Artrix Art Centre, the Dolphin Leisure Centre, the David Lloyd Leisure Centre and the Victoria Ground (home of Bromsgrove Rovers Football Club) are located within, or in close proximity to the town centre. The Artrix Centre was opened in 2005, and consists of a 320 seat theatre which showcases music, theatre, dance and film productions, a rehearsal studio and a number of multi functional rooms. The Dolphin Centre was constructed in the 1960's and consists of a swimming pool, sports hall and fitness suite. The facility underwent a substantial renovation approximately three years ago, however the design and structure of the Dolphin Centre means that it is in need of replacement. The David Lloyd Leisure Centre is a private leisure facility.

The Victoria Ground is located to the north east of the town centre, on the Birmingham Road. Bromsgrove Rovers FC are one of the oldest football clubs in England, formed in 1885. The club have been located at the Victoria Ground, which has a capacity of approximately 5,000, since 1910. The ground is likely to remain adequate for the club for the foreseeable future.

The principal library for the district is situated within the town centre. Although the library is located within the town centre, it is located on Stratford Road, rather than the High Street. The building is also of poor quality and no longer considered particularly fit for purpose. The replacement of the library is currently under consideration.

The police and fire services are also located within the town centre, at the Crescent and Windsor Street respectively. However, the relocation of these services to new sites outside of the town centre is also currently under consideration. Consultation on the future of the potential relocation of the Fire Station is due to commence during the summer of 2008, in association with the Fire Service's Integrated Risk Management Plan 2008.

Figure 5.1 illustrates the potential to relocate a number of leisure and community facilities under County Council ownership to alternative sites in and around the town centre. These proposals are being promoted by Worcestershire County Council, with the aims of providing improved facilities in more appropriate locations, and co-locating services where possible to maximise efficiency and encourage resource sharing.

Relevant planning policy

Government guidance states that plans should encourage mixed and balanced communities, with policies that cater for single person households and avoid the creation of large areas of housing of similar characteristics in new housing developments. The Government is committed to ensuring the maximum and efficient use of land. One of its key objectives is that as much new housing is built on previously developed land or 'brownfield' sites.

The West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy Phase Two Revision Draft (presented to the

Secretary of State by the West Midlands Regional Assembly in December 2007) seeks to retain a strong emphasis on urban renaissance and the concentration of new housing development within the Major Urban Areas. At the same time, new housing provision will need to be made in other parts of the Region to meet housing demand. For Bromsgrove town centre, no specific housing allocations are made, however, the RSS allocates an indicative annual average of 105 new homes for Bromsgrove from 2006-2026. Policy UR3 relates to enhancing the role of City, Town and District Centres. As a Town Centre, Bromsgrove Town should be encouraging more people to live in or close to the town centre through the reuse of sites, development of mixed-use schemes, the conversion of property and initiatives such as "living over the shop".

Policy PA1 of the Regional Spatial Strategy promotes economic growth in market towns where it can help to create more sustainable communities through providing a better balance between housing and employment. In order to encourage the diversification of the regional economy, three High Technology Corridors (HTC) are identified, which link to the Region's critical research and development capabilities and advanced technologies. Bromsgrove is within the Central Technology Belt. The District is also required to maintain a portfolio of available employment land to meet the needs of the local economy and businesses wanting to relocate to Bromsgrove. A range of sites must be provided to suit the needs of different types and size of business.

In respect of the tourist and cultural economy the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) requires that Development Plans should generally encourage both the improvement of existing provision as well as the creation of new facilities, subject to the capacity of infrastructure and the environment to accommodate new facilities and visitors associated with them.

In terms of housing allocations, the Worcestershire Structure Plan contains housing requirements for the District to 2011. It also contains a phasing target to 2006. The District has exceeded the phasing requirement and has enough dwellings with permission to significantly exceed the 2011 requirement. As such the District does not need to allow any further housing to meet its housing requirements as set out in the Structure Plan. Supplementary Planning Guidance was adopted in 2003 which has effectively placed a moratorium on the granting of permission for new general market housing proposals. As existing housing supply decreases as properties are built, the Council may have to begin to allow targeted proposals so as to maintain a constant supply of housing for the District. The Structure Plan also includes the employment land allocations targets.

Allocations for new employment land will be released through an 'Allocations' plan. This plan will be produced once new housing and employment figures are released through the Regional Spatial Strategy, probably in late 2008. As the Council has already identified employment land to meet its current requirements within the District to 2011, as

taken from the County Structure Plan, there is no pressing need to allocate further land until new requirements are known.

The existing Local Plan (Bromsgrove District Council, 2004) aimed to retain and provide new or enhanced community facilities where possible (Policy S28). Proposals that result in the loss of playing fields were discouraged, unless the alternative provision could be made and the provision of playing fields to Council standards would still be met, or the scheme would lead to an improvement in the facilities available elsewhere on the site (policy S32).

The Plan did not contain any policies on crime prevention. However, the Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership have produced a Community Safety Strategy called 'Keeping Bromsgrove Safe'. The Local Development Framework and initially the Core Strategy will have regard to the priorities of this document. The strategy identified 5 key priorities; reducing crime; keeping communities feeling safe; achieve cleaner, greener and safer public spaces; reduce the harm of drugs and alcohol; and realise the potential of our young people.

We welcome your feedback on whether or not you think that these Local Plan policies are still relevant to Bromsgrove town centre, or whether they need to be updated through the AAP process.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options consultation has identified that 'town trails' should be developed to encourage people into Bromsgrove town centre as part of a leisure experience.



St John's Church, Jan 2008

Issue BR9 – Town Centre Housing Provision

Options

BR9A – Seek to increase the town centre population through the provision of mixed-use developments on brownfield sites and housing above shops and businesses

The potential exists to incorporate further housing within mixed-use town centre developments on 'brownfield' sites, and above existing town centre shops and businesses. Any new housing provided would need to represent a range of tenures and costs. However, new town centre housing, particularly above shops in the High Street, would offer an opportunity to increase the provision of affordable housing units. This may also contribute towards the vitality and viability of the town centre, particularly in tandem with improvements to the evening economy.

The inclusion of housing uses in town centre developments is in accordance with national, regional and local planning policy. Town centres are accessible locations being well served by public transport services and residents would have easy access to a good range of shops and services. Therefore, town centres are considered to be sustainable locations for new residential developments.

Through the provision of town centre housing in both new mixed-use developments and above shops, Bromsgrove town centre can play an important role in meeting regional housing allocations put forward by the West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy.

BR9B – Retain the current town centre housing stock, and do not plan for any increase in the size of the town centre population

The Regional Spatial Strategy does not include any specific housing targets for Bromsgrove town centre, and the targets for Bromsgrove District contained in the Structure Plan have already been met. Additionally, there are only a limited number of brownfield sites likely to be available offering opportunities for new mixed use development.

Whilst it is understood that housing is an appropriate land use in town centres, it is not the principal land use of the majority of town centre redevelopment proposals. The viability of including housing in town centre redevelopments will vary over time with changing market conditions. Applications are always determined on their own merits and a policy approach could be taken under this option whereby far greater emphasis is placed on commercial land uses in town centre redevelopment proposals. There would be no requirement to provide housing uses in town centre redevelopment proposals although there may still be a role for housing uses in enabling some sites to come forward.

Issue BR10 – Future Employment Strategy for Bromsgrove Town Centre

Options

BR10A - Encourage small scale employment uses in town centre as part of new mixed use developments.

It may be possible to incorporate a variety of B1 (offices/business) small enterprises within mixed-use town centre development opportunities which come forward over the lifetime of the plan. Such uses could complement larger businesses locating in the nearby A38 business parks, such as Bromsgrove Technology Park. However, at present there are only a limited number of suitable sites for mixed-use development within the town centre (see section 7).

BR10B – Designate larger sites for employment uses within the town centre

It may be considered to be more appropriate to designate sites within the town centre for other employment uses (B1), general industrial (B2) or storage / distribution (B8) employment uses. This would place emphasis on promoting local job creation but the local office market is not well developed and industrial uses are unlikely to be able to afford the land values associated with town centre sites. Bromsgrove District Council is itself one of the largest employers in the town and their offices are currently located just beyond the town centre boundary.

Should the opportunity arise to relocate the Council office to a town centre location, depending on its location, such a development could contribute significantly to the viability of the commercial centre.

BRI 10C – Retain the existing balance of employment uses within the town centre, or consolidate employment provision to enable the creation of further retail and housing development opportunities

Retaining the current level and mix of employment provision within the town centre may be considered appropriate, particularly given the scale of out-commuting to Birmingham and other nearby urban areas. The consolidation of employment land within the town centre may enable the creation of mixed-use development opportunities potentially for higher value land uses, such as housing and retail.

Issue BRI 1 – Leisure Provision

BRI 1A – Replace Dolphin Centre with new leisure facility on the existing site

The Dolphin Centre is well located in the town. Whilst not currently formally falling within the town centre boundary, the site is within a short walk of the High Street and is served by a large pay and display car park. Whilst the building is on a large site, it is likely that redevelopment and replacement of the centre in its current location would involve a period during construction when the services provided within the facility would not be available. However, redevelopment on the existing site would provide the opportunity to improve the range and quality of services and facilities provided at the centre.

Issues relevant to the consideration of the most appropriate location for replacement leisure facilities in the town revolve around the aspirations to improve the range and quality of other complementary community services in the town. For example, if a new public leisure centre was redeveloped on the site of the existing Dolphin Centre, in addition to the continuity of service issues that would arise, the site could no longer be considered as a potential alternative location for the District Council offices or a site for a replacement library. There are, therefore, a number of interlinked issues relating to community service provision in the town which need to be considered in the round and not in isolation.

BRI 1B – Retain and refurbish the Dolphin Centre

Further more detailed feasibility work will be required, but this option may be cheaper and is more likely to be able to offer some form of limited continuous service for local people. However, the facility has recently already undergone a substantial renovation and the design and structure of the facility is considered to be outdated. The pool is based on a structure on stilts and overall the building is considered to be inefficient in terms of its use of space and energy.

BRI 1C – Reprovide a public leisure facility on an alternative site in the town centre

Town centres are considered by the government to be the most appropriate locations for retail and leisure uses. Identifying an alternative town centre location for a replacement leisure facility is therefore an appropriate strategy. However, identifying a site for a facility of this scale in an historic market town the size of Bromsgrove is not a straightforward task. There are, however, a number of known opportunity sites within and immediately adjacent to the town centre which might be considered suitable for a new replacement leisure facility – these are set out in Section 8 below.

We would particularly welcome your views on the appropriateness of the existing Library and Fire Station site on the junction of Stratford Road and Windsor Street as a potential alternative site. However, if an alternative site is to be sought and agreed,



Existing town centre housing, April 2008



Existing town centre housing, April 2008

much will depend on the existing use of that site and any particular issues of phasing and continuity of service associated with that existing use.



Dolphin Centre, Jan 2008

BR11D – Reprovide a public leisure facility on an alternative site outside the town centre

It may be that, when looked at sequentially, there are no town centre sites that offer a viable alternative for the development of a replacement leisure facility. In this case, it may be appropriate to relocate the services currently provided at the Dolphin Centre to an out of centre location that is still considered to be accessible to the local community. In informal discussions and consultations during the preparation of these issues and options for Bromsgrove town centre, some stakeholders expressed a desire to see the leisure centre relocated to a site in the vicinity of the Artrix Centre and Bromsgrove College. Whilst it may be perceived that this location is some distance from the town centre, School Drive provides potentially direct access to this cluster of community, education and leisure uses.



Bromsgrove library, Jan 2008

Issue BR12 – Public Services

Options

BR12A - Re-locate a number of public services, including the police service and library to co-locate services and improve efficiency

As described above, Worcestershire County Council is examining the potential to relocate publicly owned public service facilities in Bromsgrove in order to provide more modern and efficient services. However, any relocation of services would be largely dependent on each other. The danger exists that a delay in the relocation of one service or facility could result in a delay in the service or facility that is dependent on relocating to that particular site, and therefore that the chain could collapse. There would be a need for a detailed phasing approach.

Consideration is currently being given to the possibility of forming a cluster of community service uses adjacent to the proposed new health centre on the site of the former Parkside Middle School on Stourbridge Road. Potential partners for this initiative could include the Ambulance Service and the Police Service. Such an initiative would free up key town centre sites for redevelopment for other uses. However, given the need for continuity of these essential community services, there are likely to be complicated phasing requirements. However, it is considered that these issues are not insurmountable. The result would be a concentration of essential front line community services located in new premises

on the edge of Bromsgrove town centre and the Council would be keen to hear from local people, businesses and other stakeholders whether this would be a welcome approach.

BR12B - Relocate District Council offices to a town centre location

The potential exists for Bromsgrove District Council to relocate from its existing location on Burcot Lane, either to a town centre location, or to an alternative site outside of Bromsgrove town centre. The existing offices are not considered to provide a suitable facility for the future, and the dated design of the buildings may restrict the capacity to suitably refurbish.

Providing District Council offices in a town centre location may have added regenerative effects for Bromsgrove town centre, as it would ensure that Council staff would have access to town centre shops and facilities. Additionally, a town centre location may offer a more prestigious address for the District Council, and the release of the current site either for housing or mixed-use development would enable the Council to raise significant funds. However, a town centre location may contribute to further town centre congestion, and finding suitable car parking facilities in the absence of adequate public transport provision could prove to be problematic. Depending on the future of the Dolphin Leisure Centre, given that this site is already the site of the Worcestershire Hub service point, it may be considered that this site is the most appropriate site on which to relocate the District Council offices.

Issue BR13 – Crime & Safety

Options

BR13A - Ensure that CCTV coverage is comprehensive in the High Street

Although crime and disorder is not a major problem in Bromsgrove town centre, it may be desirable to extend the CCTV coverage to ensure that the entirety of the High Street and Worcester Road is monitored.

BR13B - Design out crime on new developments, and improve the safety of existing areas which are poorly lit and have limited natural surveillance

The provision of an additional taxi rank at the western end of the High Street is likely to reduce crime and the perception of crime in Bromsgrove town centre. However, there are some areas in the town centre where it may be possible to improve safety either by improving lighting, or ensuring that there is a greater degree of natural surveillance. This may be particularly important during the evening and late at night, when the town centre is quiet. Potentially problematic areas include Windsor Street, the southern end of the High Street / Worcester Road and Market Street / Crown Close which suffers from a lack of frontage and activity. It may be, given the secondary nature of these locations, that the introduction of residential uses might have a significant part to play in providing activity and natural surveillance.



Figure 6.1: Summary of leisure and community services

7. Environment and Open Spaces



Environment and Open Spaces



New Road, Jan 2008



Worcester Road, Jan 2008

Context

Bromsgrove town centre includes many buildings of considerable architectural merit. There are numerous listed buildings in the centre and particularly along High Street and the majority of the town falls within a conservation area. Bromsgrove town centre is not considered to be a tourist destination, but the potential exists to promote heritage opportunities, particularly in terms of the architectural value of some town centre buildings above the shop fronts.

Partial pedestrianisation of the High Street occurred over twenty years ago. However, the pedestrianised area is now considered to be unattractive, with a range of street furniture and an uneven paved surface, which has been inadequately maintained. Therefore, it is considered that the High Street would benefit from environmental enhancement.

The town centre contains few open spaces. However, the opportunity exists to improve the overall quality and amenity value of existing spaces, and access to them. Existing spaces include the Recreation Ground, and land surrounding Spadesbourne Brook and St John's Church. At present the Recreation Ground provides only limited value to the local population, and has few amenity functions. However, the space is used by the Council to host several fairs and festivals throughout the year.

Relevant planning policy

National planning policy guidance on open spaces, sport and recreation is contained in PPG17. The Local Development Framework must ensure that adequate land is allocated for organised sport and informal recreation, and the Council are required to resist pressures for development of open space which conflict with the wider public interest.

Planning Policy Statement 1 (PPS1), 'Delivering Sustainable Development', requires that Development plans promote development that creates socially inclusive communities including supporting the promotion of health and well being by making provision for physical activity. Additionally, PPS1 requires that development plans should promote development that creates socially inclusive communities and deliver safe, healthy and attractive places to live. Hence it is a requirement for all policies produced as part of the Core Strategy and subsequent Local Development Framework documents to take account of their impact on community safety and the design of our built environment.

PPS9 'Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' contains the objectives to:

- promote sustainable development by ensuring that biological and geological diversity are conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development;
- conserve, enhance and restore the diversity of England's wildlife and geology; and
- contribute to rural renewal and urban

renaissance by enhancing biodiversity in green spaces and among developments and ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity in supporting economic diversification and contributing to a high quality environment.

The Regional Spatial Strategy requires that plans produced by the Council identify, protect, conserve and enhance the Region's diverse historic environment and manage change in such a way that respects local character and distinctiveness (Policy QE5). Of particular significance for Bromsgrove is the Spatial Strategy's identification of historic rural landscapes and their settlement patterns, listed buildings, scheduled ancient monuments, conservation areas and historic parks in the West Midlands. Additionally, the Regional Spatial Strategy requires that local authorities ensure the highest standards of design, building on the existing character and identity of areas. Policy QE3 specifically requires that plan documents produced by the local authority secure a high quality townscape, urban form, building design and urban spaces, through the use of architecture, urban design and landscape design, which respects regional and local character, culture and history. Particular attention should also be given to the creation of safer environments which discourage crime and promote community safety.

The Bromsgrove District Local Plan (Bromsgrove District Council, 2004) sought to retain and enhance all public and privately owned open space of recreational and amenity value. Development of open space



Figure 7.1: Summary of environment and open spaces

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Spadesbourne Brook, Jan 2008

will only be considered where it can be clearly demonstrated that there is unlikely to be any long-term need to retain it for either recreational or amenity purposes (policy RAT4). Additionally, the Council encouraged the further pedestrianisation of the High Street and Worcester Road in order to improve the shopping environment, and existing landowners on Worcester Road to the east of the Market Hall site were encouraged to undertake appropriate works to enhance the town centre's attractiveness to shoppers (BROM 17 and 18).

We welcome your feedback on whether or not you think that these Local Plan policies are still relevant to Bromsgrove town centre, or whether they need to be updated through the AAP process.

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation has identified that the distinctive character of Bromsgrove town centre should be retained and enhanced.

Issue BR12 – Public Realm

Options

BR12A - Make improvements to the public realm in the High Street, including improving the quality of the paving in the pedestrianised area, improving the quality of shop fronts and reducing street clutter

Improving the public realm in the High Street will help to improve the overall perception, and help to attract more visitors and shoppers to the town centre. Additionally, improving the quality of the paving and reducing street furniture would improve accessibility, particularly for those with mobility difficulties.

BR12B - Involve the local community in town centre public realm improvements

Involving the local community in improving the town centre could help to foster civic pride, and would be more likely to ensure that measures to improve the town centre are endorsed by local people and businesses.

BR12C - Implement a regular maintenance programme for the High Street

This could ensure that the quality of the public realm is maintained to higher standards, which is likely to improve the perception of the town centre. A higher quality public realm is likely to attract an increased number of visitors and shoppers to the town centre, and encourage them to stay longer.

Issue BR13 – Spadesbourne Brook

Options

BR13A - Re-landscape the brook and improve the environmental quality of the surrounding area

Improving the quality of the Brook and surrounding open space would enable the area to become more of a feature for the town centre. However, regular maintenance would be required following any environmental improvements in order to ensure that the quality of the improvements are maintained.

BR13B - Culvert the brook

The Spadesbourne Brook is considered by some to be too small to warrant making it a town centre feature. Additionally, the regular maintenance required makes it resource intensive, and therefore it may be better to culvert it so that it runs underground.

BR13C – Restore the natural habitat of the brook as much as possible in order to enhance biodiversity

Spadesbourne Brook is one of the key natural features within the town centre. Enhancing the natural habitat and biodiversity of the brook could help to contribute to the urban renaissance of the town centre.

Issue BR14 – Recreation Ground

Options

BR14A - Improve Recreation Ground facilities and linkages to the town centre

The Recreation Ground currently has little amenity value to the town. However, it could include more amenity functions, and the overall environmental quality could be improved. In addition, improving linkages through from the Recreation Ground to the town centre could help to attract a greater number of visitors and users.

BR14B - Make the Recreation Ground more accessible to the town centre by ‘swapping’ the space with the adjacent car park

The Recreation Ground open space could be swapped with the Recreation Road car park (see figure 6.1). This would bring the open space much closer to the town centre and provide a direct link to open space from the east side of Market Street. Accessibility to the open space would be drastically improved. However, this would have the impact of moving the car park further away from the town centre, which would inconvenience car users.



Statue of Alfred Edward Housman in the High Street, erected in 1985, Jan 2008

8. Opportunities for Change



Opportunities for Change

Introduction

The following section seeks your views on the town centre boundary and a range of sites which potentially offer opportunities for development within Bromsgrove town centre. The identification of opportunity sites within the town centre is important, as these sites can provide opportunities for change and for new development.

Town Centre Boundary

One overriding issue for the AAP to address will be the town centre boundary. This is an important designation because it defines the limit of town centre activity, and therefore the extent of the area which is considered appropriate for town centre uses.

Figure 8.1 illustrates potential alterations to the town centre boundary, to include sites particularly relevant to this AAP, including the Dolphin Centre, Bromsgrove Library and Parkside School. We welcome your feedback on these proposed alterations to the town centre boundary, as part of the AAP process.



Figure 8.1: Potential to extend town centre boundary

Opportunity Sites and Site Schedule

Figure 8.2 identifies potential development opportunity sites, but does not provide any policy detail at this stage. The purpose of the plan is to depict the extent of the sites, which are considered to be potential development sites. The accompanying site schedule describes the current status of the sites, identifies likely ownership and land assembly constraints, and provides a brief overview of indicative issues and options relating to each site.



Figure 8.2: Town Centre AAP proposals map



St John's Church, Jan 2008

Possible Opportunity	Status	Ownership	Issues and Options
1. Station Street	Several areas of under utilised land exist around Station Street to the south west of the town centre. The site includes a mixture of car related uses and under utilised land.	Mixed private ownership	The site could present a medium to long term opportunity for mixed-use development on the edge of the town centre.
2. Market Hall and George House	The market is soon to be relocated to an outdoor location, with the intention of releasing the Market Hall site, potentially for development of a quality food store. There are currently no proposals for George House (which is located adjacent to the Market Hall site), and the intentions of the occupants (including Blockbusters at ground floor level) is currently unknown.	Market Hall site is owned by Bromsgrove District Council, and the 'Blockbusters' building is in private ownership	Site provides opportunity to develop a landmark building at the western gateway to the High Street, and could aim to attract a high quality retailer, environmental improvements and associated car parking. The Blockbuster site plays a very important townscape role in terminating the High Street vista.
3. Police Station	The police are actively seeking to relocate from their current site on The Crescent.	Worcestershire County Council	Should the police relocate to an alternative location, this site may become available for mixed-use development. The existing police station site is not located within the town centre boundary.
4. 27-29 High St (formerly McDonalds)	The former McDonalds store at the western end of the High Street is currently vacant. There are no known proposals for this site at present.	Unknown private ownership	Due to its location at the western end of the High Street, in close proximity to existing town centre evening economy uses and in context of the most recent land use associated with the site, this building may provide a suitable location for a restaurant or bar. Probably too small a site to be specifically allocated in the AAP, it is the frontage policy that is likely to control how the site is used in planning terms.
5. Crown Close	The car parking areas to the rear of High Street properties are currently under utilised and create a poor frontage environment to Crown Close.	Mixed private ownership	This area presents little in the way of positive frontage or activity to Crown Close or Market Street. The land may present a retail/cafe or office development opportunity. Much will depend on access and parking requirements associated with the High Street units served from the rear.



Market Hall, Jan 2008



Fire Station, Jan 2008

6. Fire Station and Library	The Fire Station and adjoining Library building are located on Windsor Street. The relocation of the Fire Station to a more suitable building and location is currently under consideration, and the Library is in need of refurbishment or relocation.	Worcestershire County Council	Should the fire service and library relocate, this site may provide significant mixed-use development opportunities, particularly to increase the provision of town centre housing. The Stratford Road frontage of the current Library site is compromised by a pair of semi-detached properties. This will be an issue when considering the appropriate scale of any redevelopment scheme on this site. The site would be suitable for a variety of commercial town centre uses. In the context of the potential relocation of the Dolphin Centre, this site may provide a suitable alternative.
7. Recreation Road	Some of the land to the east of Recreation Road opposite the Recreation Ground and Recreation Road car park is currently under utilised for a town centre location. There are no known proposals for this site at present.	Mixed private ownership	This site may offer opportunities to expand the retail offer of the town centre to the north. Small to medium sized units could potentially be developed. Car parking would be provided by existing facilities in the adjacent Recreation Road car park.
8. Corner of High Street and the Strand (end unit) vacancy	This small unit is currently vacant. There are no known proposals for this unit at present.	Unknown private ownership	Retail or café opportunity
9. Dolphin Centre	The Council are currently considering the longer term future of the Dolphin Centre. However, no decisions have been made regarding the facility's future.	Bromsgrove District Council	Should the Dolphin Centre be relocated, this site could provide an opportunity to develop public and community facilities, such as a civic centre, library and hub, or alternatively mixed-use development. A critical issue in bringing the site forward for redevelopment will be agreeing an approach to the reprovision of the leisure services currently provided in the building. Where should these sites be reprovided in the Borough? In a town centre site or an edge/out of centre location such as land adjacent to the Artrix Centre.

<p>10. Birmingham Road Retail units</p>	<p>The large retail units on the Birmingham Road and associated car parking provide a substantial site on the fringe of the town centre.</p>	<p>Unknown private ownership</p>	<p>Potential exists to consolidate the existing retail units and provide a single more substantial retail offer which compliments that already provided in the town centre.</p> <p>Car trip generation will be a key issue in considering the redevelopment of the site.</p> <p>In light of the current use of the site, continued retail uses are likely to be considered appropriate together with office and potentially some housing.</p> <p>There would appear to be an opportunity to create a physical linkage through to School Drive. This could potentially deliver significant improvements to local routes and the movement network.</p>
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Other sites

The following two sites are located in close proximity to Bromsgrove Town Centre, and are of direct relevance to the AAP.

<p>District Council Offices</p>	<p>As outlined above, the Council are currently considering relocating from their existing site on Burcot Lane.</p>	<p>Bromsgrove District Council</p>	<p>This site presents the opportunity for significant residential development on the edge of the town centre. This is not a town centre site and will not be included in the Town Centre AAP proposals map, but it is of relevance to the AAP in that the relocation of the Council offices to a town centre location is a possibility currently being considered.</p>
<p>Bromsgrove Station</p>	<p>A site is identified for car parking purposes adjacent to Bromsgrove Railway Station in the Local Plan and identified on the proposals map (BROM31)</p>	<p>Unknown private ownership / Network Rail?</p>	<p>This is not a town centre site and therefore will not be shown as a potential development opportunity on Figure 7.1. However, efforts to improve the quality of connections between the town centre and the station area are being considered (Park and Ride) and this is an important issue for the town and therefore relevant to the AAP.</p>



High Street, Jan 2008



Hanover Street, Jan 2008



Bromsgrove High Street, Jan 2008

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK WORKING PARTY

29 MAY 2008

RURAL EXCEPTION HOUSING SCHEMES

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Jill Dyer
Responsible Head of Service	Dave Hammond
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report provides members with details about the important role rural exception sites have in delivering affordable and the evolving policy background.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The report is for information and discussion at the LDFWP meeting.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since the creation of the Bromsgrove District Local Plan the key policy used to inform decisions about rural exception schemes is Policy S16, and PPG3 Housing. The policy combines the issues of affordable housing in the Green Belt and rural exception schemes. PPG3 has now been replaced with PPS3.
- 3.2 Circular 06/98 and PPG3 noted that rural exception sites can provide a small but important additional source of housing within or adjoining villages. Rural exception site policies are for locations where normally development would not be allowed for instance in the green belt. It recommended that the release of such sites is a matter of local judgement based on identified housing needs.
- 3.3 PPS3 provides greater clarity on the provision of affordable housing within rural communities. There should be an aim to deliver high quality housing that contributes to the creation and maintenance of sustainable rural communities in market towns and villages. Where viable and practical, Local Planning Authorities should consider allocating and releasing sites solely for affordable housing, including using a Rural Exception Site Policy. PPS3 states the use of a Rural Exception Site Policy should mean the use of small sites specifically for affordable housing in small rural communities. The housing should address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection.

- 3.4 It will be necessary for Bromsgrove through the core strategy to develop a policy in line with PPS3 that clearly defines which settlements are deemed to be appropriate for Rural Exception Schemes. Such schemes should be small scale and only for identified local needs.
- 3.5 Over recent years a number of sites have been put forward as rural exception schemes on the periphery of some of the larger settlements within the district most notably Bromsgrove, Catshill, Alvechurch and Wythall. These sites whilst often small scale are not currently seen to be exception sites due to their proximity to large urban areas. Consideration needs to be given as to what areas in future will be deemed as rural for the purposes of providing much needed affordable housing in smaller communities.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Council Objective (CO)	Regeneration (CO1)	Council Priority (CP)	Housing (CP2)
Impacts			
The direction the council wishes to take in formulating a rural exceptions policy will impact on the ability of the district to meet its affordable needs and targets			

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

The final AAP is found to be unsound by the Planning Inspectorate.

- 7.2 The risks will be managed as follows:

Risk Register: Planning and Environment
 Key Objective Ref No: 6
 Key Objective: Effective, efficient, and legally compliant Strategic planning Service

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 None

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

13. WARDS AFFECTED

All Wards

14. APPENDICES

None

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

CONTACT OFFICER

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