



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

WEDNESDAY 3RD JUNE 2009, AT 6.00 P.M.

COMMITTEE ROOM, THE COUNCIL HOUSE, BURCOT LANE, BROMSGROVE

AGENDA

MEMBERS: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Chairman), G. N. Denaro (Vice-Chairman), Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP, J. T. Duddy, Mrs. J. Dyer M.B.E., Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP, R. D. Smith, M. J. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

1. To receive apologies for absence
2. Declarations of Interest
3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 29th April 2009 (Pages 1 - 6)
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 28th April 2009 (Pages 7 - 10)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 18th May 2009 (Pages 11 - 14)
 - (a) To receive and note the minutes
 - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes
6. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership held on 7th April 2009 (Pages 15 - 18)
7. Minutes of the meeting of the Equality and Diversity Forum held on 9th April 2009 (Pages 19 - 60)
8. Minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 28th May 2009 (to follow)

9. Comprehensive Performance Assessment Report (Pages 61 - 96)
10. Customer First Strategy Review (Pages 97 - 182)
11. Preferred Planning Guidance (PPG) 17 - Outturn (Pages 183 - 208)
12. Sports Hub Provision (Pages 209 - 306)
13. Health and Safety Roles and Responsibilities for Elected Members (Pages 307 - 318)
14. Improvement Plan Exception Report (March 2009) (Pages 319 - 330)
15. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting
16. To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-

"RESOLVED: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

- | <u>Item No.</u> | <u>Paragraph</u> | " |
|-----------------|------------------|---|
| 17 | 3 | " |
17. Site at Sherwood Road (Pages 331 - 336)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

The Council House
Burcot Lane
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B60 1AA

21st May 2009

Agenda Item 3

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 29TH APRIL 2009 AT 4.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. Hollingworth (Leader), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths (Deputy Leader), G. N. Denaro, Mrs. M. A. Sherrey JP and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mr. M. Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. J. Godwin, Mr. D. Hammond, Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Mr. A. Coel, Ms. K. Sharp-Fisher and Ms. R. Cole

196/08 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dr. D. W. P. Booth JP and Mrs. J. Dyer M. B. E.

197/08 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

198/08 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 1st April 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

199/08 **SCRUTINY BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

200/08 **OVERVIEW BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview Board held on 31st March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be noted.

201/08 **SHARED SERVICES BOARD**

The minutes of the meeting of the Shared Services Board held on 30th March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the minutes be noted;
- (b) that the recommendations contained at Minute No 3 (o) relating to Internal Audit and the additional cost involved in the preparation of a full business case be approved.

202/08 **POLICY ON EARMARKED RESERVES AND PROVISIONS**

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed adoption of a formal policy in respect of earmarked reserves and provisions. It was recognised as best practice by both the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy and the Audit Commission that such a policy should be adopted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the policy on earmarked reserves and provisions as attached at appendix A to the report be approved and adopted; and
- (b) that the policy be implemented as part of the final accounts process for 2008/2009.

203/08 **COUNTYWIDE HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY AND KICK START EQUITY RELEASE SCHEME FOR HOME IMPROVEMENTS**

The Cabinet considered a report on the recommissioning of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) Services and the Implementation of Kickstart Services. It was proposed that the HIA recommissioning process would be based upon the current level of funding from this Authority which would be contributed into a new single Countywide HIA.

The report also proposed that this Authority participate in the Kickstart Scheme which currently operating within the West Midlands, which was now being rolled out to include Authorities within Worcestershire.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Council participate in the joint recommissioning of a new Countywide HIA and that the Head of Planning and Environment Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing, be granted delegated authority to finalise the necessary contractual arrangements for the commencement of the new service;
- (b) that the Council support the new HIA through the use of revenue and capital base budget contributions which are committed to the current service arrangements with the North Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency.
- (c) that the Council's participation in the Worcestershire Kickstart Scheme, as set out in section 5 of the report, be approved and that the financial and support services available to clients under the Kickstart scheme be noted.

204/08 **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report on the development of a separate Housing Strategy which related solely to activities within the private sector. It

was reported that the Audit Commission had recommended this approach in their re-inspection of the Strategic Housing Service in February 2008. It was noted that it was intended to review the Strategy in twelve months' time and that the Private Sector Assistance Policy, which had previously been approved by Cabinet, had been amended slightly and now formed part of the Strategy.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Private Sector Housing Strategy as set out in Appendix A to the report be approved;
- (b) that the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy and Action Plan as set out in appendices 1 and 2 to the Strategy be approved.

205/08 **BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report on the proposed introduction of a Business Continuity Plan. The plan was intended to minimise the impact of any emergency which may affect the Council's operations and to ensure the Council could quickly respond to and recover from such an emergency. It was noted that in the main this plan was intended to cover emergencies which were short term and modest in scale such as IT failure or short term severe weather problems.

It was reported that it was intended to produce further plans to cover specific emergencies such as pandemic flu. Individual departments would also produce specific service recovery plans.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Business Continuity Plan attached to the report be approved;
- (b) that separate plans be produced to cover specific emergencies such as pandemic flu; and
- (c) that individual service recovery plans be produced to cover specific service areas.

206/08 **GOVERNMENT CONNECT - CODE OF CONNECTION**

The Cabinet considered a report regarding the work undertaken to ensure compliance with the Government Connect Project and the associated Code of Connection.

It was reported that the Government Connect Project was designed to provide a secure network linking all local authorities in England and Wales to central government departments. The Code of Connection defined the minimum standards and processes with which a local authority must comply before being allowed to connect to the secure network and this Council had ensured the required controls were in place by the required date of 31st March 2009. It was reported however that some of the current procedures and processes in use within the organisation would require amendment to ensure continued compliance with the Code of Connection.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the required security measures to ensure compliance with the Code of Connection as set out in the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Head of E-Government and Customer Services be granted delegated authority to introduce new policies or to amend existing policies to ensure continued compliance with the Code of Connection.

207/08 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (FEBRUARY 2009)**

Consideration was given to the Improvement Plan Exception Report for February 2009, together with the corrective action being taken.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report together with the corrective actions being taken be noted and approved; and
- (b) that it be noted that for the 130 actions highlighted within the plan for February, 86.2 percent of the plan was on target (green), 2.3 percent was one month behind (amber) and 1.5 percent was over one month behind (red). 10 percent of actions had been reprogrammed with approval.

208/08 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

RESOLVED that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following minute on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so.

<u>Minute No</u>	<u>Paragraph</u>
209/08	4

209/08 **ELECTORAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY SHARED SERVICES**

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

Consideration was given to a report which set out the current position in relation to the shared services in Electoral Services and Community Safety.

RESOLVED that the progress made be noted

RECOMMENDED that the implementation timetable in relation to shared services in Electoral Services and Community Safety be approved.

210/08 **COUNCILLOR MRS. J. M. L. A. GRIFFITHS**

Councillor Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths stated that this was the last meeting of the Cabinet which she would be attending as she intended to step down as a Portfolio Holder. The Leader and other members of the Cabinet expressed

Cabinet
29th April 2009

their thanks to Councillor Mrs. Griffiths for her work and support over the past three years.

The meeting closed at 4.55 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY, 28TH APRIL 2009 AT 5.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors D. L. Pardoe (Chairman), S. P. Shannon (Vice-Chairman), Mrs. J. M. Boswell, C. B. Taylor (during Minute No's 27/08 to 30/08) and C. J. Tidmarsh

Invitees: Councillor Mrs. C. M. McDonald (during Minute No's 24/08 to 29/08)

Officers: Mr. T. Beirne, Mr. P. Street, Mr. M. Bell, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. R. Goundry, Mrs. S. Smith, Mrs. S. Sellers, Ms. L. Williams and Ms. P. Ross

24/08 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss D. H. Campbell JP and R. J. Deeming.

25/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest or whipping arrangements were received.

26/08 MINUTES

The minutes of the last meeting of the Scrutiny Board held on 24th March 2009 were received.

RESOLVED that the minutes be confirmed as a correct record.

27/08 AIR POLLUTION - STATIONARY VEHICLES WITH RUNNING ENGINES

During the last meeting of the Scrutiny Board in March 2009, Members had considered monitoring and enforcement issues relating to taxi drivers and bus drivers leaving their vehicle engines running unnecessarily and therefore impacting on air quality. It was decided that further information would be required from officers in order to provide expert advice before a decision could be taken on the recommendations set out in the initial report.

Mr. R. Goundry, Team Leader – Pollution and General explained the advice he had received from the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA). Their advice had been to target the worst offenders and that VOSA would act upon any information received and that qualified examiners would carry out vehicle emission checks. He suggested liaising with VOSA and using the service they offer as an existing Government Agency to tackle the worst offenders.

Mrs. S. Smith, Principal Licensing Officer briefly detailed information from the Bromsgrove District Council, Taxi Handbook, (adopted February 2009), on MOT and vehicle inspection specifically relating to the age of the vehicles. The Principal Licensing Officer confirmed the number of hackney carriage stands at Market Street Bus Station to be five and indicated that once Worcestershire County Council had amended the Traffic Regulation Orders, the local Police would be able to take any enforcement action against illegally parked vehicles waiting on the Stand that caused traffic problems in the area.

The Chairman invited questions from all Members to which Mr. Goundry and Mrs. Smith responded. During the discussion on air quality and emissions, the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects briefly informed Members of an initiative at Oxford City Council to introduce 'low emission zones' for buses. The Chairman thanked officers for their advice and information.

RESOLVED that the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects be tasked to provide further information on Oxford City Council low emissions zones to a future Scrutiny Board Meeting.

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the Cabinet be requested to consider and approve the following:
- (i) that the Licensing Section be requested to remind taxi drivers and operators on a regular basis (via a newsletter) not to leave their engines running when stationary, in accordance with the relevant legislation;
 - (ii) that when renewing or issuing new licenses for taxi drivers, the Licensing Section be requested to take the opportunity to encourage taxi drivers to help reduce air pollution by reminding them it is an offence to leave their engines running unnecessarily;
 - (iii) that the Assistant Chief Executive be requested to contact Worcestershire County Council to ask that they communicate with bus operators and drivers on this issue pointing out that it is an offence to leave their engines running unnecessarily and therefore to take heed of the sign located at Bromsgrove bus station; and
 - (iv) that, if in future there is evidence to suggest that taxi and bus drivers have ignored requests to turn off their engines (when appropriate) further investigation be considered in relation to the options for enforcement action that could be taken by the Council.

28/08 **ANNUAL REVIEW OF CALL IN PROCEDURE**

The Deputy Monitoring Officer, Mrs. Sellers, informed the Board that since the improvements to the call-in procedure no call-ins had been received and for these reasons the report made no recommendations for changes.

RESOLVED that the contents of the report be noted and that the operation of call-in be reviewed in 12 months' time forming part of the Scrutiny Board work programme for April 2010.

29/08 **SCRUTINY PROPOSAL**

The Board considered the overview and scrutiny proposal put forward by Councillor Mrs. C. M. McDonald relating to litter picking. Councillor Mrs. McDonald referred to information contained within the proposal form relating to litter picking being infrequent in certain areas and areas being frequently ignored and only cleaned after complaints were made.

All Members of the Board who were present commented on the proposal and a lengthy discussion followed. Several questions were raised on the process of dealing with litter and emergency response to reported incidents. The Head of Street Scene and Community, Mr. M. Bell explained the process as detailed in Bromsgrove District Council's Street Cleansing Policy on responding to areas requiring litter picking reported through the Customer Service Centre. All Members of the Board who were present considered the recommendations and a vote was taken. Under Council Procedure Rule 17.7 the Chairman requested that it be recorded that he abstained from voting on this item.

RESOLVED that no further action be taken.

30/08 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board Considered all the items included within its Work Programme. With reference to the summary of the Public Transport (Buses) Task Group Review, Members discussed the recommendation which had originated from the task group investigation.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the Scrutiny Board's Work Programme be noted and updated as necessary; and
- (b) that a presentation be made to a future meeting of the Scrutiny Board by representatives from Worcestershire County Council on the findings from an Accessibility Study and Bus Stop Audit and that all other Members of the Council be invited to attend.

RECOMMENDED that the Cabinet request the Leader and Acting Joint Chief Executive to approach Worcestershire County Council to request that the Task Group recommendation 1 (which related to implementing a new bus station for Bromsgrove and was approved by Cabinet in March 2008) be progressed as soon as possible and that funding be made available (from the County Council) for a full travel and transport assessment to be undertaken to identify the issues which need addressing which could be taken into account as part of the town centre redevelopment.

The meeting closed at 6.20 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

MONDAY, 18TH MAY 2009 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors Mrs. M. Bunker, Mrs. A. E. Doyle (during Minute No's 1/09 to 8/09), Mrs. J. M. L. A. Griffiths, Ms. H. J. Jones and C. B. Taylor

Officers: Mr. P. Street and Ms. R. Cole

1/09 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor C. B. Taylor be elected Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

2/09 **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs. M. Bunker be elected Vice-Chairman of the Board for the ensuing municipal year.

3/09 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S. R. Colella. It was noted that a nomination to the Board had not yet been received from the Labour Group.

4/09 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

5/09 **MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the Performance Management Board held on 17th March 2009 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes be approved as a correct record.

6/09 **CUSTOMER FIRST STRATEGY REVIEW**

The Board considered a report regarding the proposed adoption of a new Customer Access Strategy to replace the existing Customer First Strategy.

It was reported that the focus of the original Customer First Strategy had been to improve the Council's basic performance, particularly in terms of Best Value Performance Indicators, in order to achieve a "fair" rating from the Audit Commission. The Strategy had recognised however that the long term aim of the Council was to deliver both an excellent performance and an excellent customer experience.

Since the approval of the Strategy in March 2006, much had been achieved and considerable progress had been made. Despite these improvements however it was recognised that because the Council started from a low base, overall satisfaction with the Council and staff satisfaction remained low. Customer Access Focus Groups had taken place and these had indicated there was a need to become more responsive, to concentrate more on outcomes and to communicate more effectively. It was noted that the aim of the new Customer Access Strategy was to increase the focus on these areas over the next three years.

The Board noted that one of the key developments since the previous year was the launch of a new set of National Indicators, of particular relevance was National Indicator 14 which related to reducing avoidable Customer Contacts. It was noted that work was being undertaken on this issue and it was felt it would be useful to receive a further report evaluating the outcome of the investigations and considering what could be done to improve the results.

It was noted that within the Customer First Board Action Plan (action 86) there was a proposal to close the Cash Office at the Customer Service Centre at a later date. Members were concerned that this may have an impact on those customers who did not have easy access to alternative methods of payment and felt that this action should be reconsidered.

The Board queried the delay in undertaking training for middle managers to improve customer communication by ensuring all written correspondence is customer focused, clear and easy to understand (action 63). The Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects undertook seek clarification and to forward information on this matter to the Board.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the significant improvement in the Council's customer performance over the past three years, particularly at the Customer Service Centre, be noted;
- (b) that it be noted that whilst process times have generally significantly improved, customer satisfaction and staff satisfaction remain too low;
- (c) that the recommendation from the Comprehensive Performance Assessment report that "a culture of customer focus should be fully established at all levels within the Council" be noted;

RECOMMENDED:

- (a) that the proposed updated corporate customer standards as set out in section 5.22 of the Strategy be approved for inclusion in each Service Business Plan and for publishing to customers
- (b) that the Strategy's priorities for the year ahead be approved together with the detailed action plan to support the delivery of these priorities, subject to further consideration being given to the proposal to close the Cash Office;

- (c) that the Strategy scorecard 2009/2010, including the customer measures be approved and that the distance the Council still needs to travel in order to become an excellent Council be recognised.

7/09 **COMPARISON OF 2009/10 TARGETS WITH 2008/09 OUTTURNS**

The Board considered a report on forward targets for 2009/2010 as set out in the Council Plan 2009 - 12 compared to the outturns for 2008/09 together with a list of the National Indicators which apply at District level.

Members raised a number of issues in relation to the targets which had been set and the Executive Director – Partnerships and Projects undertook to ensure that the relevant information was sent to Members on:

- (a) Satisfaction measures for Disabled Facilities Grants and why no targets had been set;
- (b) Diversionary activities including a breakdown of how many users are attending each session and why the future targets have been set at this level;
- (c) Residual Waste per household and why the target remains the same for the next three years; and
- (d) the position regarding the National Indicators which are reported at District level and how information on these indicators may be reported back to the Board.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the comparison of targets and outturns as set out in Appendix 1 be noted, but that in the light of concerns as to whether the targets set demonstrate an appropriate level of ambition, further consideration be given to this matter; and
- (b) that the list of National Indicators as set out in Appendix 2 be noted .

8/09 **PERFORMANCE REPORTING (MARCH 2009)**

The Board considered a report on the Council's performance at 31st March 2009.

During the discussion Members raised the issue of sickness absence and requested that further information be provided to the next meeting as referred to in Minute No 101/08 of the meeting held on 17th March 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that it be noted that 50% of performance indicators were stable or improving;
- (b) that it be noted that 78% of performance indicators which have a target met their target at year end;
- (c) that the performance figures for March 2009 as set out in Appendix 2 be noted; and
- (d) that the summary of the year end position as set out in section 3.4 to 3.6 of the report be noted.

9/09 **IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT (MARCH 2009)**

The Board considered the Improvement Plan Exception Report for March 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (a) that the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report together with the corrective actions being taken be approved;
- (b) that it be noted that for the 102 actions highlighted for March within the plan 80.4% of the Improvement Plan was on target (green), 3.9% was one month behind (amber) and 2% was over one month behind (red). The actions which had been reprogrammed with approval reflected the reprogramming of the town centre actions as a result of issues relating to Parkside, together with the reprogramming of Human Resource actions as a result of Job Evaluation Implementation.

10/09 **QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

Consideration was given to a report which set out the progress of resolutions and recommendations made by the Board since May 2008.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

11/09 **WORK PROGRAMME 2009/2010**

Consideration was given to a report on the Board's proposed work programme for 2009/2010.

The Board felt additional training should be arranged where appropriate, particularly for Members who were new to the Board. In addition reference was made to future issues for consideration which had been discussed at the meeting on 17th March 2009 (Minute No 108/08), but which were not reflected at present in the Work Programme. The Chairman undertook to discuss with the Assistant Chief Executive the further development of the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the work programme 2009/2010 be approved, subject to the comments referred to above.

The meeting closed at 8.10 p.m.

Chairman



Bromsgrove Partnership Board

7 April 2009

MINUTES

Present:

Cllr	Hollingworth	Bromsgrove District Council (Chair)
Roger		
Hugh	Bennett	Bromsgrove District Council
Mike	Brown	Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Marie	Green	BDHT
Graeme	Anderson	BDHT
Rachel	Jones	Worcs. Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
Phil	Street	Bromsgrove District Council
Della	McCarthy	Bromsgrove District Council
Maggie	Bryan	Worcestershire County Council
Andy	Coel	Bromsgrove District Council
Cllr Ed	Moore	Worcestershire County Council
David	Shaw	West Mercia Police
Phil	Street	Bromsgrove District Council
John	Morgan	Small and Medium Businesses (Vice-Chair)

Item 1 APOLOGIES

Kevin	Dicks	Bromsgrove District Council
Ann	Sowton	Bromsgrove & Redditch Network
Mike	McCarthy	NEW College

ACTION

Item 2 WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS

RH welcomed all to the meeting and introductions were made.

Item 3 MINUTES OF MEETING 4 DECEMBER 2009 & MATTERS ARISING

Item 9 – It was clarified that JM would be Vice-Chair. It was agreed that RH will now take up role of Chair due to new legislation.

Matters Arising

Town Centre – RH explained that the Police and Fire Authority have agreed to move to the site behind David Lloyd Leisure Centre. This has been passed by the Police Authority Board, but is still waiting to go before the Fire Authority’s Board.

Town Centre Toilets - RH confirmed that the works on the proposed toilets in the Town Centre will commence in May and finished in June.

Tacking Areas of Highest Deprivation

They have decided not to reward Council's who have hit their target, but any money spare will be used in areas of highest deprivation.

The reward grant for the next three years is £2,000,000 between 7 Councils.

CPA

MB congratulated BDC on the work in achieving a 'Fair' rating.

Item 4 **BDHT COMMUNITY STRATEGY**

Marie Green and Graeme Anderson gave a presentation entitled 'Our New Promises' and requested support from partners. The LSP agreed to support BDHT's promises.

Discussion took place on how customers should be reminded of accomplishments and handling consistent complainants.

Item 5 **"MARC" Update**

A document entitled 'Making a Difference Together' relating to the Pickersleigh Regeneration (Malvern Hills) was circulated and discussed. Consideration was also given to the Project Initiation Document for the LAA Deprivation Reward Grant Bid which had been drafted by HB. PS/HB

PS informed the Group on the project and the need to bring on board other partners.

BDHT are giving the property to the project which is worth £15,000 but will incur associated costs.

RH informed MB that funding has been put in place to cover these costs and explained future sustainability.

It was noted that it was likely that in the future this would be referred to as 'Redeveloping Neighbourhood Services' instead of 'MARC'.

Item 6 **PERFORMANCE UPDATES**

CDRP

DS - Informed the Group of general reductions in crime.

An Armed Response vehicle is patrolling the northern border, so now have extra PCs at no extra cost.

The market in the High Street is blocking the view of a CCTV camera.

Amanda Bott is no longer Chief Inspector due to restructure.

Better Environment

Plans regarding affordable warmth were discussed.

A Climate Change Officer will be working between Redditch and Bromsgrove. It was suggested that he be invited to the LSP meetings.

Thermal Imaging Project - £92,000 is to be shared within the District.

Discussed all work on heat loss.

Economic Success

Longbridge – Group was informed as to why no development was taking place at the moment.

Town Centre – Update on public toilets. Market on the High Street is considered a success and has increased trade.

Employability – Discussed the economic recovery summit and proposals put forward.

Children and Young People

Discussed ‘You Decide’ event and outcome of meeting and Call to be Health Project in Bromsgrove

Housing

The housing target has been achieved for the current year with 150 units completed. The recent housing assessment has indicated the district requires 4000 units of which 1200 will need to be affordable. Actions required to secure this level of units.

- Item 7** **FUNDAMENTAL REVIEW OF COMMUNITY STRATEGY**
HB gave a presentation on the “Sustainable Community Strategy Review”. It was stated that David Gallers from Learning to Deliver would be attending away days in June and September 2009. It was suggested that a discussion on the SCS review could take place on 22 June prior to the first away day on 26 June. HB/DM
- Item 8** **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**
It was mentioned that the Chair and Vice-Chair would be meeting with all Theme Groups in due course. RH/JM
- Item 9** **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**
Next meeting - 2pm 22 June 2009. It was noted a special meeting would also be arranged for May 2009 to discuss the refined proposal relating to the Redeveloping Neighbourhood Services (MARC) before it was submitted to Worcestershire LSP. HB

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Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

The Equality and Diversity Forum

Minutes of Meeting held on Thursday 9th April 2009

In attendance	
Sat Aggarwal	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Stuart Bray	Pinke.biz
Mr B K Chaudhari	Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
Mary Collett	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Anne Marie Darroch	Communications Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
Claire Felton	Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Nigel Godwin	Bromsgrove resident
Patricia Hackett	Mencap
Tracey Hodges	Day Services Manager, Padstone Day Centre, Worcestershire County Council
Sue Mould	Electoral Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users
Councillor David Pardoe	Independent Councillor for Sidemoor Ward
Councillor Stephen Peters	Diversity Champion for elected Members, Bromsgrove District Council
Trevor Rigg	Bromsgrove Resident and Forum Chair
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Jim Smith	North Worcestershire Disability Information and Advice Line
Phil Street	Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects, Bromsgrove District Council
John Tempest	Worcestershire Mental Health Network
Carol Tipping	Secretary, Bromsgrove Older People's Forum
Julie Wright	Community Support Officer, West Mercia Police
P C Mark Townsend	West Mercia Police

Apologies	
Hugh Bennett	Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Tony Beirne	Executive Director - Services, Bromsgrove District Council
Kevin Dicks	Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council and Acting Chief Executive Redditch Borough Council
Jeff Edwards	Bromsgrove Older People's Forum, Bromsgrove and District NHS Retirement Fellowship
Balbinder Kular-Taylor	Senior Positive Action Adviser, West Mercia Constabulary Head Quarters
Joan King	The Gender Trust
Kathleen Roche-Nagi	Approachable Coaching
	Primary Care Trust

1. Introductions and apologies

As Chair, **Trevor** welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. He asked everyone to introduce themselves and for those members who were attending for the first time, to say a bit about themselves.

Apologies – noted as above.

2. Minutes of meeting held on 12th February 2009

The minutes were proposed for acceptance by as a true and accurate record by **Councillor Stephen Peters** and seconded by **Sat Aggarwal**. Agreed.

3. Matters arising if not included on main agenda

Patricia Hackett asked for confirmation that the arrangements are being made for temporary toilet facilities in anticipation of the closure of the Town Centre toilet block for refurbishment. **Phil Street** confirmed. Arrangements are being made.

Stuart Bray asked whether the minutes could indicate what would be printed and available at the meeting and what would not to save paper. **Fiona Scott** agreed that this would be done in future.

Trevor Rigg raised the issue regarding gritting and falls.

Fiona reported that she had tried hard to obtain information from the **Primary Care Trust (PCT)** and had received some statistical information which was distributed to the meeting. This information required a representative from the **Primary Care Trust** to explain the detail but despite best efforts no-one was available for tonight's meeting.

Jim Smith advised that there was a countywide group meeting to discuss falls and health and well being and that this was part of the **Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)**. He suggested that a request be made for them to debate the issues in respect of gritting and falls.

Trevor expressed his concerns and asked **Fiona** to continue her pursuit of the **Primary Care Trust** for details but also to pass on the request that the **Local Strategic Partnership** look into the matter as an agenda item on their existing countywide health and well being group.

Mr Chaudhari expressed his concern at the extent of the issue in Bromsgrove.

Trevor advised that he had attended a Town Centre regeneration meeting and that he will be asking **Richard Savory** to attend a future meeting to advise on progress – this was welcomed by those attending the meeting.

Trevor advised that a discussion and presentation on Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-sexual issues is scheduled for the June meeting with guest speaker **Malcolm Johnson** from the Sexual Health Team of the **Primary Care Trust**. He suggested that the whole meeting be set aside for those issues. This was agreed.

4. Items from the Forum Chair

The Vice Chair of Forum previously was **Joe Scott**. **Joe** wrote a letter on 23rd February offering his resignation as Vice Chair and member of the Forum. **Trevor** read out the letter and the reply sent to **Joe** from **Trevor** and **Kevin Dicks**.

His grounds were that because he is employed by **Bromsgrove District Housing Trust** he felt that he may not be perceived to be independent in the eyes of other members of the Forum. Thanks for **Joe's** support and participation were duly noted by the meeting.

Trevor expressed his concern that age has not as yet been addressed as an equality issue in meetings of the Forum.

Claire Felton will inform the Overview exercise on older people.

5. Equality Highlight Report

Full copy of the report is appended at the end of these minutes.

5.1 The Gender Equality Scheme

The revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme was distributed to the meeting. The events held on International Women's Day were very popular with very positive comments on the evaluation forms. The books and information display received a lower level of interest but a number of people stopped to discuss some of the women and the issues of equality featured in the display.

5.2 The Equality and Diversity Forum

The revised Protocols showing the new closing time of the meeting are attached at the end of the Equality Highlight Report.

5.3 The 2009 Consultation Conference

Fiona and **Trevor** investigated various venues and considered whether a week day or Saturday would be best. The availability of other venues wasn't very good so they jointly made the decision to use the Council House facilities and choose a Saturday date – **26th September 2009** - for the benefit of those in work who other wise might not be able to attend.

Mencap has been added to the list of partners who will be invited.

5.4 The Disabled Users Group

The March meeting had a very productive discussion with **Jon Fraser** of the Highways Department, Worcestershire County Council going through a list of items submitted by the Group. Approximately £4-5 million was spent in Bromsgrove last year. This work included resurfacing of roads in Charford, Rubery, Hagley and Alvechurch. This year they are changing focus, subject to approval by the County Council's Executive Cabinet, to spend £3m on improvements to footways.

Jon Fraser was strongly urged to help with the road signage issues for the Changing Places facility in the refurbished town centre toilet block as the initial response from the Highways Department was that further traffic into Bromsgrove should be discouraged. He promised to take this back to his department for reconsideration.

The new facilities will be designated as “Changing Places” and this will be advertised as part of a national network on the Mencap website for those planning a long journey and want to know where they can stop if they have this need.

There will be some publicity in National Learning Disability Week which is 22nd to 28th June 2009. In early July there will be an opening ceremony and a Stakeholder’s meeting at the Council House with as many interested parties and users groups as possible attending. The facilities will be fully open by mid July. **Fiona** and **Patricia** are in a short term working group planning these arrangements.

There is a meeting of Key Partners on 30th April to agree roles and responsibilities in relation to the Changing Places facility. At this meeting we will establish the process for access to the facility as it is not open to everyone and will be accessed by a Key Code not a Radar Key. There will be an application and assessment process which will include the provision of training if needed.

Two car parking spaces will be designated for Changing Places in the Recreation Road car park and normal car parking charges will apply. A Changing Places badge will be issued to be displayed alongside the Blue Badge.

For anyone who needs to use the facility on a journey there will be contact details on the national Mencap website and details will be made available from Shopmobility.

It has been agreed that the preferred access to “disabled” toilet is a push button with automatic opening but there will be a handle as well in case of emergencies. There was some discussion about the needs of people changing a colostomy bag. This has been resolved with advice from the Colostomy and Ileostomy Associations. A shelf will be provided in all cubicles and a sanitary disposal bin will be provided in the men’s, women’s and disabled toilets.

5.5 The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group

The group was due to meet in April - agreed to defer this until May. **Fiona** will send out the latest list of completed Equality Impact Assessments to the members of the working group and find a date in May that suits as many people as possible.

5.6 Bromsgrove Black History Society

The action plan was agreed by the Society's supporters and partners at the first meeting of the Society on 6th April. The general principle is that all partners will take their actions away and work on them outside of meetings and report progress at the bi-monthly meetings of the Society.

5.7 Diwali

Fiona will arrange a meeting with the organisers as soon as possible.

5.8 Equalities e-consultation website

This was demonstrated to the meeting. So far only 3 community members and partners had accepted the invitation to join. A further electronic invitation was sent out on 8th April and it was agreed that everyone present would accept the invitation as, without at least 20 people the “Quick Reference Panel” would not have much success as a consultation method.

5.9 Being Different Together

The draft report is waiting to be signed off. Details will be made available to the June meeting.

The Peer Diversity Challenge to the Council’s Level 3 claim is going ahead on 23rd and 24th April and a group of volunteers offered to attend to meet as a Focus Group for the Equality and Diversity Forum. The result of the Challenge will be known at the end of the day on 24th April.

Trevor thanked the Forum for their support for this process.

5.10 Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme

As agreed a summary report will be produced in time for the Consultation Conference.

5.11 Community bids

Fiona will contact the accepted bidders and arrange to issue the money to them.

5.12 Community Transport

As stated.

5.13 Refurbishment of Town Centre Toilet Block including “Changing Places” facilities

As discussed above in **5.4 The Disabled Users Group**.

5.14 Interpreting and translation services

As stated. **Fiona** will report back to this group when the new service provider has been agreed in partnership with County Council.

6. Public perception safety in relation to equality – P C Mark Townsend, West Mercia Police

Mark gave a presentation on Community Safety and distributed Information Packs.

The context is the statement by the Home Office that

“ everybody has the right to feel safe as they go about their daily lives”

Mark answered various questions raised in the meeting

- **Jim Smith** asked why the Police booklet did not refer to the Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership (**BHIP**)? **Mark** agreed to take this back to the Police organisation.
- **Eileen Mulhall** asked about issues in King George Close, Sidemoor and the recreation grounds where problems arise with young people drinking and using motorbikes.
- **Nigel Godwin** asked whether the recreation ground could be made into an alcohol free zone.
- **Jim** suggested that **Partners and Communities Together** (**PACT**) meetings be held in the daytime
- **Councillor Pardoe** advised of the availability of advice surgeries in Sidemoor
- **Stuart Bray** said that he felt that the Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual and Trans-sexual community is not safe – **Mark Townsend** agreed to meet with **Stuart** to discuss this separately
- **Trevor** advised **Mark** that Race and Religion are still issues
- **Mr. Chaudhari** disagreed and felt that it was not a serious problem.

7. June elections – survey of voter experience – Sue Mould, Electoral Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

Sue Mould did a presentation on Electoral arrangements and the combined County Council and European elections on Thursday 4th June. She gave out an elections calendar and leaflet explaining postal voting and arrangements for the day.

Jim Smith asked about the accessibility of portable buildings for disabled people.

They are only ever used as a last resort and wherever possible we try to make all polling stations accessible. There is always a postal vote option for anyone who prefers this method.

Sue will be carrying out a voter experience survey to get feedback on whether voters have had their needs understood and met when attending polling stations to vote.

8. Council Communications - Anne Marie Darroch, Communications and Customer First Manager, Bromsgrove District Council

Anne Marie Darroch explained the nature of Council Communications.

Trevor thanked Anne Marie for her presentation and thanked **John Tempest** for making the request for the information regarding communications to be brought to the forum.

Nigel and **Eileen** had found that there is an issue of inaccessibility in the ticket number queuing system at the HUB for people with sight impairment.

Fiona will take this up with E Gov and Customer Services

9. Items from the Chief Executive – Phil Street, Executive Director of Services on behalf of Kevin Dicks

Phil gave a short message regarding the budget position during the credit crunch and the way in which the Council are attempting to make savings by sharing service with other Councils.

The improvement to the railway station has now got over all the obstacles subject to a formal sign off in the summer.

There was an Economic Recovery event held by Council in March in relation to any assistance or partnership working the Council can provide in current economic climate.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) was formally announced on 1st April – the Council received an overall rating of “Fair”. The Government Monitoring Board under whose guidance the Council has been operating has said that it no longer needs to met and it is likely that the Council will be finally coming out of voluntary engagement.

The new fitness suite has been opened and is accessible to all.

Market Hall not resident on High Street.

Green waste is now being collected and being charged for with more than 13,000 households having signed up for it.

Play areas have been upgraded through a £1 million spend and young people made bids securing £80,000 for projects developing in Bromsgrove.

Sponsorship signage on road islands has been agreed to draw in money to support service delivery.

The Town Centre regeneration continues throughout the prevailing economic climate and Richard Savory will give talk to the Forum at a later date.

The meeting closed at 8.10 pm

Time, date and place of next meeting –

6.30 pm Thursday 11th June 2009

The Committee Room



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

The Equality and Diversity Forum

Equality Highlight Report – 9th April 2009

1. The Gender Equality Scheme

The revised Draft Gender Equality Scheme was published on 6th March 2009 at the International Women's Day event in the Spadesbourne Suite. However, it has not yet been widely circulated due to the need to include language access information on the back cover. See item 14.

The Scheme commits the Council to a programme of Gender Equality awareness for staff during 2009 which will include Trans-issues.

At the International Women's Day event there was a small display of information about Council services and policies, including information and support services for women and men experiencing domestic violence.

There was a display of books with supplementary information by or about women of historical and international interest including lesbian and bisexual women. There was a general display about news items in relation to gender equality and equal pay.

The day time event was attended by about 100 people and the evening by 200 people and the evaluation shows that it was enjoyed by everyone who attended most of whom would recommend this event to friends.

2. The Equality and Diversity Forum

The 2009 programme of meetings and the operating Protocols have both been amended to show the new closing time of 8.30 pm

3. The 2009 Consultation Conference

The Conference will be on Saturday 26th September 2009 in the Civic Suite of Rooms at the Council House (The Council Chamber and associated rooms).

This will replace the October meetings of both the Forum (8th October) and the Disabled Users Group (2nd October).

Those who will be invited include

- Bromsgrove District Council – Senior Management Team, all Heads of Service and Equality Champions
- Representatives of all the political groups elected to the Council
- Parish Councillors
- County Council officers for
 - Highways
 - Transport
 - Customer Services
 - Supporting People
 - Equality and Diversity
- Main partners
 - The Equality and Diversity Forum
 - The Disabled Users Group
 - The Gender Equality Working Group
 - Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
 - Bromsgrove Indian Community Forum
 - Bromsgrove Black History Society
 - Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
 - Age Concern
 - North Worcestershire DIAL
 - Padstone Day Centre and Greenscope
 - West Mercia Police
 - BARN
 - Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue
 - Primary Care Trust
 - Mencap

There will be four main themes in the morning session :

- Town Centre including transport and parking
- Housing
- Sense of community including customer service
- Clean streets and climate change

The afternoon sessions will have six workshops themes based on the six strands of diversity.

- Race
- Religion
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation
- Age
- Disability

4. The Disabled Users Group

The minutes of their meetings are included for the December and March (re-arranged from February) meetings. The Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group minutes and the Council's reply are also included with the papers for the Equality and Diversity Forum.

The Disabled Users Group has had discussion on access to leisure services which resulted in the prospect of a disabled swimmers/ exercise session in the near future.

The Group has drawn up the list of Highways issues for their April meeting with Jon Fraser from the Highways Department, Worcestershire County Council.

Members of the groups have been involved in access needs discussions on the Railway Station redevelopment and Community Transport.

5. The Equality Impact Assessment Working Group

The Group is due to reconvene in April. The most recent list of completed Equality Impact Assessments will be sent to the Working Group members in due course to select their next set of Assessments.

6. Bromsgrove Black History Society

The overall write up of event for 2008 will be issued with the papers for the first meeting of the Society this year on 6th April 2009 at 6.00 pm in the Conference Room. The papers will be circulated on 1st April including a detailed action plan for discussion on the 6th.

7. Diwali

Diwali falls on Saturday 17th October 2009. The celebratory event will take place in the Spadesbourne Suite on Sunday 18th October. The working group overseeing the arrangements has yet to meet. A write up of 2008 was provided in the Equality Highlight report for 12th February 2009.

8. Equalities e-consultation website

The new version of this website is now in use but so far only 6 people have joined. A new invitation will be sent out just before the 9th April to those who have responded so far. The address of the website is

www.bdc-e-equalities.blogspot.com/

This website won't support attachments and documents but will allow an online discussion about items posted in the spaces available on the website pages.

9. Being Different Together

The draft report about Worcestershire Communities was ready at the end of March.

In accordance with the objectives of this project Bromsgrove District Council will be undergoing a "Peer Challenge" to our claim that we have reached Level 3 of the Equality Standard Local Government. There is a pre-site visit on 9th April when the Peers meet for the first time and make a provisional assessment of our evidence. They will decide on the day whether the Council is ready for the full challenge.

If so, the Challenge will take place on 23rd and 24th April and we will need a group of 8-10 community members to meet the Peers and be interviewed by them.

The Peers are

- Councillor Ian Ward – Birmingham City Council
- Kirsty Hopkins – Newcastle-upon-Tyne City Council
- Suranjana Lall – Warwickshire County Council
- Gill Elliot – Improvement and Development Agency for Local Government

If Bromsgrove achieves this objective of Level 3, our role under Being Different Together will be to help other District Councils in Worcestershire to move forward learning from the Bromsgrove experience.

10. Review of the Inclusive Equalities Scheme

The review is still in progress. The main points were included in the Equality Highlight report for the 12th February Forum meeting. It is intended that the full review be published in advance of the October Consultation Conference and that the main achievements for each equality grouping are given in handout format for use in the discussion groups.

11. Community Bids

The money will be available from 1st April 2009 – those groups concerned contact Fiona at the end of the meeting to arrange the handover of the monies. As discussed at previous meetings some feedback will be expected to this Forum over the next 12 months.

- Finding a Voice
- Support Network for Disabled People
- Padstone/ Greenscope allotment project

The Community bids meeting for 2009 is planned for 10th September and next year's bids will need to be submitted by (date to be agreed).

12. Community Transport

There was a consultation event on 19th February which was attended by over 50 people and included individuals and groups with transport needs. The purpose of the meeting was to determine what vehicle to buy, which routes would be used and how much the fares would be. This information has all been taken back to the project manager (Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive). It was agreed that one second hand, wheelchair accessible mini bus will be purchased in the first instance and that weekly or fortnightly routes would be used, e.g. for shopping clubs. Individuals will be picked up on route if there is capacity in the minibus. It is expected that a service will start running in September 2009.

13. Refurbishment of Town Centre Toilet Block including “Changing Places” facilities

This project is now close to the start of the building works. A specification has been drawn up and expressions of interest received. Patricia Hackett on behalf of Mencap has agreed to help with some consultancy time on the finer details of access arrangements, training, risk assessments, signage and so on and the linking the Bromsgrove facilities to Mencap's national “Changing Places” network advertised on the Mencap website. County Council will be approached to arrange for the “Changing Places” logo to be on road network road signs.

It is intended that the new facilities will be open by mid to late June and publicity and marketing will be organised with various partners in the County and the District. We are looking to carry out an opening event perhaps with a celebrity and will be entering into the “Loo of the Year” competition.

14. Interpreting and Translation services

From 2006 to the end of March 2009, an interpreting service has been provided under contract by Worcester based Ethnic Access Link whose information appears on the back of all our publications. This service enabled the Council to meet its legal requirements and provide a route for accessing our services for those who need help with the English language.

The service provided by Ethnic Access Link included community support at grass roots level – befriending schemes, home tutoring in English, English as a second language courses, Polish clinics and Polish language classes.

Ethnic Access Link originally were due to close altogether on 31st December but have now gone into a partnership with another local organisation.

Bromsgrove District Council had to make a decision in mid December when Ethnic Access Link announced that they intended to shut down on 31st December. It was decided that the District Council would link with the arrangements of the County Council which will come into effect from 1st April onwards. However, the full details are not yet available and, will only be temporary for 6 months during which time the County will conduct a formal tendering and procurement exercise for interpreting and translation services for the County and probably for most, if not all of the Districts in Worcestershire.

Ethnic Access Link subsequently rescinded their notice of closure and their service continued under the current contract with them until the end of March 2009.





Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Bromsgrove District Council Equality and Diversity Forum

Protocols

To be effective the Forum agrees the following Protocols :-

- **The Forum will meet on Thursday evenings at bi-monthly intervals unless varied by agreement with the members of the Forum**
- **The Agenda, invitation and any associated papers for each meeting will be sent out 14 days before the date of the meeting**
- **The Agenda will refer by date to the minutes of the previous meeting**
- **The minutes of each meeting will be signed by the Chair at the following meeting**
- **The minutes of each meeting will be issued to members with the invitation for the following meeting**
- **The minutes of each meeting will be published on the Bromsgrove District Council's website after they have been accepted at the following meeting**
- **Agenda items for will be notified to the Chair or the Equality Officer by the Monday before the Invitation and papers are issued for that meeting**
- **The meetings will start at 6.30 pm with light refreshments served from 5.30 pm onwards**
- **The meetings will close at 8.30 pm**



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The Disabled Users Group

Meeting Friday 12th December 2008

**Held in the Conference Room at the Council House
Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove**

Present	
Ann Batchelor	Bromsgrove resident and carer
Mr and Mrs Briellat	Bromsgrove Disables Access Group
Mr and Mrs Crossland	Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Robin Edwards	Bromsgrove resident
Patricia Hackett	Mencap and Bromsgrove resident
Eileen Mulhall	Bromsgrove resident
Councillor Stephen Peters	Councillor for Hollywood and Majors Green
Phil Street (Chair)	Executive Director, Bromsgrove District Council
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Stephanie Sergeant	Rednal resident

Attending as guest speakers	
Emma Matthews	Supporting People, Worcestershire County Council
Hugh Bennett	Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council
Karen Shakespeare-Jones	Customer Service, Worcestershire County Council

Apologies	
Mary Collett	Bromsgrove resident
Jenny Lammas	Padstone Day Centre service user
Wayne Knighton	Bromsgrove resident
Margaret Norton	Bromsgrove resident
Claire Reynolds	Padstone Day Centre (staff)
Joe Scott	Bromsgrove resident
Granville Baker	Alvechurch resident

1. Minutes of meeting held on 10th October 2008

Agreed as accurate.

2. Matters arising

- (i) **Ann Batchelor** asked about the Shopmobility users town centre map. **Fiona** confirmed that this work is in progress and that she will get an estimate on completion date in time for the next meeting of the Disabled Users Group.
- (ii) **Patricia Hackett** reported that a meeting had taken place with Steve Martin about the location of the disabled bays in the New Road car park and an agreement had been reached that they will be moved at the first opportunity to do so.
- (iii) **Gwyneth Briellat** emphasized the dangerous nature of the dropped kerb at the end of Windsor Street where traffic turn in from the left by the tyre sales garage. It is a death trap as traffic coming down the hill cannot see people in mobility vehicles who are crossing the road there. **Phil Street** will have a word with **Steve Martin** about this.

Ann Sloan stated that from a driver's point of view, the person on the scooter can't always be seen.

- (iv) Regarding the refurbishments of the town centre toilet facilities, **Richard Savoury** is in charge of this project but unfortunately he has had a major car accident although he has recovered well. This has had the effect of delaying the project slightly. At the moment it is being costed by the quantity surveyors and it will be 3-4 weeks before it goes out to tender.
- (v) **Eileen Mulhall** reported that she and others use the Chadsgrove School heated swimming pool to develop their swimming skills and they are now ready to go up to a larger size pool for further tuition but the Dolphin Centre have refused to increase the temperature of the pool. **Ann Sloan** stated that there isn't a good rail to hold onto to get out of the pool.
- (vi) **Bromsgrove District Housing Trust** have had the introductory meeting of their **Aids and Adaptations Focus Group**.

3. Blue Badge Application Process and Eligibility Criteria Karen Shakespeare-Jones – Worcestershire County Council

Karen reported that finally had the feedback has come through from the long running consultation and the results of this cover very much the things put forward by this group.

There will be Blue Badge reform strategy over the next 5 years and there are a number of areas to be taken forward. These include dealing with Blue Badge applications and changes to the eligibility criteria.

The changes include extending the eligibility to :-

those with the most severe and disruptive mental problems,

those with temporary conditions lasting for more than one year in some specific circumstances will qualify for a Blue Badge for a limited period,

children under the age of 3 with specific medical problems including those who need bulky equipment,

those with specific war disablement entitlements for ex services personnel.

No dates have been set for these changes.

The 3 hour parking on yellow lines is not going to change. This will still be operated through Local Authorities.

There will be a lot more focus on extending the enforcement on the use of Blue Badges. Worcestershire didn't become a Centre of Excellence as they had hoped, mainly because they need to do more on enforcement. Birmingham and Coventry did get this recognition (which means they get money to support what they're doing) so they will take the lead and establish good practice.

Worcestershire however, had recognised that it needs to raise awareness of misuse and plans to do this over next 5 years. They will also be trying to get some consistency with other countries in Europe so that UK Blue Badge holders can be confident that they will be treated in the same way in other European countries.

The Blue Badge Scheme is to be extended for temporary conditions e.g. stroke/ or when a joint replacement is needed – before and after an operation.

Assessments for entitlement to Blue Badges will be done through a medical process. This will apply even where people may have already been assessed. However, this should be fairer as at present the discretionary award is made by non medical people.

The Blue Badge holder is likely to be fined if the Badge has been misused but if it's been stolen it should be reported to the police and a crime number allocated. In this case the holder will get a replacement and will not be liable for misuse.

It is common to see cars occupying Blue Badge spaces in supermarket car parks and this is not something that can be enforced. **Ann Sloan** thought that a supermarket would have to get permission from the Local Authority to be able to enforce this themselves. This was not clear – **Phil Street** explained that it depends on the status of the land – if its private land the Local Authority can't enforce anything.

There are some proposals to support the Retail Consortium in the application of Blue Badge scheme on private car parks.

Charging for the Blue Badge may increase from £2.00 which has been the same since 1983.

Stephanie Sergeant stated that Badge holders have to pay for the Blue Badge and questioned why they should have to pay for parking as well? **Eileen Mulhall** stated that the Badge holder also have to pay for the photograph although this is now held on file.

Karen went on to explain that there is now data sharing between Government Departments and Councils. This will only happen where it's relevant and important and will help stop fraud. There is now a note on the Blue Badge application form to say exactly what information will be shared.

Stephanie has received her Braille copy of the Blue Badge guidelines which has been really helpful to her.

Eileen asked why the Blue Badge can be awarded for children aged up to up to 3 years of age when, for example the students at Chadsgrove School are of all ages and obviously sufficiently disabled to qualify.

Karen explained that there are slightly different criteria and that children over the age of 3 are not excluded from the scheme.

Karen will be happy to answer any questions that this group still has in the future – they can be forwarded by Fiona to Karen who will reply.

Phil thanked **Karen** on behalf of the group.

4. Sheltered Housing Provision in Bromsgrove

Emma Matthews – Supporting People, Worcestershire County Council

There has been anxiety about the changes to sheltered housing provision and this group has had detailed discussions at two previous meetings.

Emma explained the “Supporting People Programme” in Worcestershire.

Central government give funding of approximately £14 million a year – this is used to support people with various needs – mental health, learning disability, homelessness, HIV amongst other things.

The money funds low level housing support. This helps people maintain a tenancy, stay in their own home and improve their lifestyle. The support is usually short term but they also traditionally fund low level support in sheltered housing on a longer term basis.

In the past, because of the way this funding has been tied up in contracts it hasn't been possible to fund support for people in their own homes. In addition, a large number of people living in sheltered housing were paying for something that they didn't want or need at the same time as other people had those needs in their own homes but the funding wasn't available to support them.

This is reason for changing to floating support which is not tied to a particular type of tenure. Previously, the amount of support available worked out at an average of 15 minutes per person. It is very difficult to achieve any outcomes in just 15 minutes. Under the new arrangements this allows an 1 hr of support up to a maximum of 3 hrs with flexibility for more support when it is need.

There will be more flexibility in the contract so that temporary needs e.g. a hospital discharge can be met for a short period of time. This will also give people a choice of provider. For example, where the support was provided by someone who is also your landlord it might be awkward for someone if they have debt problems.

It also means that more specialised needs can be supported e.g. alcohol abuse or mental health needs.

These changes have also made it easier for sheltered housing to be accessible to older people who don't need support and other people e.g. disabled people under the age of 65, who will also be able to access support from the sheltered housing provider. Approximately 1/3 of residents in some sheltered housing schemes in Worcestershire are under 65.

Some providers have chosen to no longer provide 24 hour support via the traditional, live-in warden model. The Supporting People Programme has never instructed providers to end this type of support, providers only need to demonstrate how support can best be delivered to cover everyone's needs and achieve the best outcomes. Everyone receiving support will be offered a community alarm.

Ann Sloan asked if the community alarm is available for people living in their own homes?

People living in their own homes will be able to access floating support as it is available regardless of tenure.

Ann Batchelor asked about the entitlement for someone aged under 65?

Emma confirmed that the decision will be based on housing benefit or pension credit. People who do not receive either of these benefits will still be able to access support but there will be a charge.

Emma emphasised that those receiving support will have a choice over who provides that support. Different providers will be more appropriate for different needs.

Bromsgrove District Housing Trust are contract to support people over 65 but they do in fact support people under this age.

Councillor Stephen Peters stated that people living in the Ward of Hollywood and Majors Green are still living in sheltered housing provided by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust and have expressed anxiety about the services.

Bromsgrove District Housing Trust is assessing people at the moment. Are there any other providers and how many? **Emma** confirmed that there will be other providers - Redditch Borough Council, Rooftop, Festival Housing, Wyre Forest Housing Trust and Worcester Community Housing who will be providing a floating support service.

This is still work in progress and the next stage is to work with the smaller providers. From next April there will be more choice and hopefully the range of choice will continue to grow. It was noted that residents don't seem to be getting this information.

Emma handed out a card that gave details of the provider directory. These cards are available in the Hub and the directory is on the Supporting People website.

Eileen asked whether the information will be available from the Hub and **Emma** confirmed that the Hubs can help you to access the directory and provide more information about the floating support services which will be available in April.

Ann Sloan asked for clarification of which benefits would enable someone to qualify. **Emma** confirmed that it will be those benefits that are awarded based on income, for example pension credit, housing benefit but not Disability Living Allowance. **Ann** further queried whether someone would be excluded from support services because they are not on those benefits? **Emma** confirmed that anyone can still access the services but they will have to pay a charge.

It was noted that accessing community alarms can be confusing.

Emma stated one of the next pieces of work for the supporting people team to do is to improve access to these services.

Cllr Peters asked whether it is worth residents joining Lifeline if this is to change? It was confirmed that yes, it is worth while joining as the service will continue.

Patricia Hackett asked if a provider for a community alarm could be based outside of Worcestershire. **Emma** responded that although the person who picks up the call may not be based in Worcestershire, the response service will be based in Worcestershire. It was noted that local knowledge is very useful for this type of service.

It was noted that there is still some anxiety about the wardens being withdrawn and the changes to the level of service.

Cllr Peters stated that some Housing Associations still employ wardens e.g. Housing W21 and they haven't told anyone that they have to get rid of their wardens.

Emma stated that if a provider feels a service can best be provided by wardens and if that service is funded by Supporting People and they can evidence that it achieves great outcomes, meets people's needs and is value for money then they are happy to continue to fund it.

It was agreed to have a future item on the Agenda on lifeline services.

5. Community Transport Working Group – Feedback

Hugh Bennett – Assistant Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Council

Hugh emphasised that the need for a community transport scheme originated from feedback from the Equality and Diversity Forum. Hugh's own experience during national volunteer week also brought home to him some of the problems disabled residents face with transport and access to services. This is why the Community Transport Working group was set up.

In relation to the bid for funds it has not been quite approved but we are almost there. It has gone through the Council's Executive Cabinet and will be heard by Full Council in January 2009.

The bid is for £75,000 capital. The bid was made as high as possible as we don't want to have to go back to Council for more money. This money is to buy a new vehicle that is fully wheelchair accessible and Hugh wants this Group to be involved in the decision as to what vehicle to buy. If it proves possible to buy a suitable second hand vehicle, Hugh will return the spare budget to the Council's balances.

There are associated costs. There is £25,000 to underwrite the scheme which will cover staff and fuel costs.

There is likely to be a charge of approximately £2.50 per journey, but further work with the WRVS and potential service users will be required to determine the exact fare structure. Hugh envisages that residents will not be able to ask for the service for free, as a concession, because the Council is already heavily subsidising the service through the £75,000 capital outlay and the £25,000 revenue funding to underwrite the scheme.

Legally, the proposed service is not allowed to run routes, as this would compete with private providers. Instead, it will operate a series of “clubs”, for example, the Thursday ASDA club and will pick up residents from their houses that want to go to ASDA on that date. Hugh is intending to hold an event with potential users, to work out what “clubs” are required. It will be a limited service as we can’t run a Dial Ride Service to Hagley or Wythall just to collect one person.

We are looking to run the service in partnership with WRVS but don’t want to compete with Rural Rides. WRVS will hopefully provide the drivers, Redditch Community Transport will maintain the vehicle and provide a back up vehicle if needed.

First stage of the project was to bid for the funding, the second stage is the implementation. Hugh needs the input of this group to agree the routes and be clear about what people want, plus the decision on which vehicle to purchase.

Eileen Mulhall suggested that **Mary Collett** would be a suitable person to test the appropriateness of the vehicle.

Ann Sloan asked where the service is it going to operate?

Hugh confirmed that we want to cover the whole District but don’t want to cross boundaries. We’ll start with what we know is needed in the District and develop the service as issues become identified.

Ann Batchelor confirmed that it is better to small and grow the service from there.

Cllr Peters thought there would be no problem with charging for a journey. We will need to make people aware of the service but also need to be quite strict.

What are the criteria for use of the service?

The service will be for anyone who is mobility impaired. Medical appointments are not likely to be included – there is a Red Cross service which can sometimes be accessed for that purpose.

Eileen asked whether there will be someone to ensure that wheelchair users are clamped in? This will be covered in the recruitment and training of the drivers.

Ann Sloan explained that she has a car and can usually drive but sometimes is too ill to drive but was excluded by Rural Rides because she has her own car.

How will the service be policed? This will be in accordance with a policy which will set out the criteria. We are likely to “borrow” Redditch’s policy. The drivers will “police” this policy.

Gwyneth Breillat knew of someone who wanted to get the Red Cross service but they couldn’t get a commitment in advance and as a result had to cancel a hospital appointment.

Eileen confirmed that Rural Rides also can’t confirm a journey in advance.

Hugh explained that no matter what we can offer through the new Community Transport service we can’t ever take out the need to use taxis, family and friends. Nevertheless this will be a big step forward.

Gwyneth said that she hoped that the vehicle won’t be left in the garage.

Hugh agreed, but felt this unlikely.

Cllr Peters asked whether there will be a user/ management group?

Hugh confirmed that we want to offer the service as a part of a range of options. Unlike the WRVS we will be paying the drivers.

It was agreed that the service will need a marketing campaign. **Hugh** has an income target and needs to generate use of the service.

Ann Sloan asked how many the vehicle will hold. It is likely to be 12 seats including wheelchair users. Redditch Community Transport will help with choosing the vehicle – they will be on the implementation group.

Gwyneth asked whether the bus would go out for one person in one area? This depends – this will have to be looked at. We need to offer as many routes as possible. 70% of the Redditch service is routes.

Will the Bromsgrove service include going into Redditch? No.

We still need to understand the nature of the demand more and this group will be asking **Hugh** to come back to a future meeting.

The service is due to start on 1st July 2009 (supplementary – the lead in time for the vehicle means this date is likely to be put back).

6. Dates and items for meeting 2009

It was agreed to defer the item on the Bromsgrove railway station development until further notice.

Jon Fraser has agreed to come to the April meeting so a full agenda item on Highways will be on the February meeting agenda so that the group can compile a list of issues to send to **Jon** for him to address at the April meeting.

Lifeline/ Telecare – **Rachel McAndrews** will be able to tell us more about this service including the security aspects.

The next meeting will also have an item on access to Leisure Services.

The group still wants an Agenda item for a guest speaker from Building Control.

7. Other items

Choice Based Lettings - there was a brief discussion about this service. If you want to move you have to bid for a property. This is now an item for a future meeting.

Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group – the minutes of the Group have been circulated for information. There are not many members now and they want more people to get involved.

Highway Code for Mobility Scooter Users – it was noted that this Code is guidance only and cannot be enforced. Members of the group commented that the issues are also about pedestrians and those driving on the main highway. Apparently in the United States of America, some people have been deliberately walking in front of mobility scooters in order to make a claim for compensation.

Just before the meeting closed **Eileen** stated how good these meetings are and how she feels very well informed as a result of attending. She thanked the Council for arranging these meetings and stated that she felt that we are really making progress.

The meeting closed at 12.00 pm.

Time, Date and Place of next meeting

10.00 am to 12.00 pm

Friday 6th February 2009

The Committee Room





The Disabled Users Group

Meeting Monday 9th March 2009

10.00 am to 12.00 pm

**in the Committee Room at The Council House
Burcot Lane, Bromsgrove**

Present	
Granville Baker	Alvechurch resident
Ann Batchelor	Bromsgrove resident and carer
Gwyneth Breillat	
Mary Collett	Worcestershire Association of Service Users and Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Lorraine Graham	Padstone Day Centre (staff)
Jenny Lammas	Bromsgrove resident and Padstone Day Centre service user
Eileen Mulhall	Worcestershire Association of Service Users and Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Patricia Hackett	Bromsgrove resident and Mencap
Councillor Stephen Peters	Councillor for Hollywood and Majors Green
Fiona Scott	Equality Officer, Bromsgrove District Council
Ann Sloan MBE	Bromsgrove resident
Phil Street (Chair)	Executive Director, Bromsgrove District Council
John Tempest	Worcestershire Association of Service Users and North Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership

Attending as guest speakers	
John Godwin	Acting Head of Culture and Community Services, Bromsgrove District Council

Apologies	
Kenneth Breillat	Bromsgrove resident and Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Mr and Mrs Crossland	Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
Robin Edwards	Bromsgrove resident
Wayne Knighton	Bromsgrove resident
Margaret Norton	Bromsgrove resident, Shenstone Court
Stephanie Sergeant	Rednal resident

1. Minutes of meeting 12th December 2008

Page 7 – paragraph 2nd from bottom of page.

Patricia Hackett asked that the reference to the provider of the community alarm service should state that the need is for a provider based in Worcestershire. Noted.

The minutes were otherwise agreed for accuracy.

2. Matters arising

Referring to Page 1, **Gwyneth Breillat** said that the issue of the dropped kerb at the end of Windsor Street has not been addressed. This has been brought up several times. The dropped kerb is behind the brick wall so mobility scooter and wheelchair users cannot be seen by traffic turning left into Windsor Street and this is very dangerous. It was agreed to discuss this under item 4. on the Agenda – Highways Issues.

As a general point of advice, **Councillor Peters** suggested that anyone would have a word with their County Councillor about highways issues.

3. Access to Leisure Services – John Godwin, Deputy Head of Street Scene and Community, Bromsgrove District Council

Phil introduced John as the Lead Officer for Leisure and Community services, a role to which John brings tremendous technical knowledge

The main issue is access opportunities for people with disability in terms of the facilities currently available. **Laura Kerrigan** is responsible for services for adults with disabilities. The aim is to make physical activity part of people's every day lives. For example, sessions have started at the Dolphin based on dance activities.

Previous meetings of this group have recorded comments particularly in relation to access to facilities and most of those comments have related to the Dolphin. The Dolphin centre was refurbished in 2005 in line with the Disability Discrimination Act regulations. The old centre layout was very disjointed. When the centre was originally built in the 1960s, it was on a steep bank. This resulted in treacherous stairs at the back of the building and meant amongst other things that there was a long walk from the changing rooms to the sports hall. When the Disability Discrimination Act came into force a decision was made to infill the L-shape of the building and create another structure on stilts and thereby include Disability Discrimination Act DDA compliant facilities.

The building standards document known as “Part M” sets a minimum standard for buildings which were met as well as additional facilities. There is a moveable hoist to lower people into the water.

Eileen Mulhall – some of the group members go to Chadsgrove School to use their heated pool.

It is accepted that the heating of the pool is important but it is difficult to compare because of the different size of the pool Chadsgrove with the Dolphin Centre as they are very different in size.

The water is 84° in main pool, the air temperature is about 86°. It is a multi use pool and the swimming club complain that this temperature is too hot, but disabled people complain that this temperature is too cold. Although the small pool is slightly warmer, the water is treated through the same system.

The industry standard is 82° but we’ve increased by 2 degrees for the benefit of the majority – increasing it by any more risks a failure of the heating machinery. The swimming club want 80° but have been told that they can’t have this.

To warm the water by 1° takes four and half hours. There is a 12 hour total turnover of the water. To increase it by 2° would take 24 hours because of the large volume of water. In that time other users could be complaining. It would then take twice that time to get this temperature back down to the original. It would be impossible to control that volume of water to suit the needs of different people.

Eileen asked why the Council can’t build a pool for the use of disabled people?

Chadsgrove School are in the process of widening community access to their heated pool with the support of Bromsgrove District Council.

There will be a new Dolphin centre at some point in the future and the new design would make use of two separate heating systems for separate pools but at the moment we cannot make the temperature changes happen.

Eileen pointed out that arising from the sessions at Chadsgrove, the coach there wants the users to go to the Dolphin centre to improve their swimming skills above and beyond what they can do at Chadsgrove.

Mary Collett said that disabled users are not asking for a therapy pool, they just want the ordinary pool slightly warmer.

Ann Batchelor confirmed that the Chadsgrove pool is a therapy pool, heated to 96°.

Gwyneth said that the small pool at the Dolphin is not accessible for disabled people. Couldn't disabled people have a fortnightly session following the mothers and toddlers session?

John (Godwin) is happy to look into providing a fortnightly session for disabled people. It would probably have to be on a Monday or a Friday and Liz Morgan from Chadsgrove School should be involved.

Gwyneth said that she had been to the Dolphin and had been lowered into the pool by the hoist but she was out of her depth and was petrified – she needs a rail to hold on to. She hasn't been to Bromsgrove baths since because she is frightened of the water.

Ann Sloan said that she understands that there would be costs for what the group is asking for but money was spent on the gymn but a rail at the side of the pool would cost little. **Ann** can't swim but goes in water to do some exercises.

If the Dolphin Centre is going to be rebuilt, hopefully disabled people will have some input to the design. Currently it is quite a long walk to the pool and for someone like **Ann (Sloan)** the height of showers is too high. It was accepted that when the Dolphin Centre was designed, there was less awareness of disability.

Mary Collett said that the hoist used to be able to go in the shallow end.

There are two points for accessing the pool with the hoist. The 3'4" water depth is no longer used as we have been told that people prefer the 4'6" depth because the pressure of the water helps them to move from the hoist into the water. Staff at the Dolphin spoke to the users they had at the time this was decided who said that they preferred to the 4'6" which is why only this one is now provided.

Gwyneth said that she was put right in the middle of the pool and **John (Godwin)** suggested that this was probably an operator error. **John** will personally arrange an appointment for **Gwyneth** to be re-introduced to the pool correctly and under supervision if she will contact him.

Ann Sloan asked if a rail could be installed. At the moment there is an indentation all round the side. This is known as the "scum channel" where the water flows from the top to the filtration system. The staff have to keep an eye open for children who work their way round from the shallow to the deep end holding onto the rim of the channel. A rail would be 12-18" above the water level and would be of no benefit. As the surface is tile not porcelain, it can't be drilled. Also there would be a health and safety problem as a rail could trap someone's arm or leg and could trap them in the water.

In a modern pool, water is pumped from the bottom upwards over the sides which filtrates the water. This brings the water level up to the top of the side of the pools so that you can just put your hands out on the side.

Gwyneth asked is whether there will be a walk in pool - she would be able to get in by sliding into the water. There are different styles – this would be a leisure pool rather than swimming pool. There is some thinking that we should go back to the Victorian principle of having changing rooms at the side of the pool.

Ann Sloan recognised that this group is trying to use a pool for activities that it wasn't designed for. Users in this group need equipment to use in the water – e.g. special types of floats and kick stools. **Ann** can do press ups in the water but not on land.

Some of the facilities talked about in this meeting have not been publicised. How many people know about the hoists? **Ann (Sloan)** only knew about it from the Health Service. People who can't swim can still benefit from the pool facilities.

Gwyneth said that everyone who works on roads and leisure facilities are able bodied and they don't think about what it's like to be disabled or having to manage with small children.

John (Godwin) agreed that there is some lack of awareness and lack of promotion. John has asked staff to look at more promotion and publicity and the Council is working with the Primary Care Trust on their health improvement programme and the exercise referral scheme from GPs.

Ann Sloan said that she didn't get her information from her doctor – it was the orthopaedic hospital in Birmingham. Although she had been told that there is no hydrotherapy pool in Worcestershire, in fact there is one at the Royal Worcester Hospital. However, Ann would have to buy her own equipment and take it backwards and forwards with her which would be difficult for her to do.

John (Godwin) will look into buying extra equipment if we can provide a list of items that members of this group want to use.

The new gymn facilities have got a lot of Inclusive Fitness Initiative equipment. **Patricia Hackett** has knowledge and experience of this Initiative and agreed with **John (Godwin)** to go and have a look at the new facilities.

It was agreed that a directory of facilities available for disabled people to use is needed. This could be something that would be for to Emma Barton to produce.

4. Highways issues for April meeting with Jon Fraser, Highways Department, Worcestershire County Council

As discussed Jon Fraser has agreed to attend the next meeting of this Group on 3rd April. The discussion today was to compile a list of items to send to him in advance of that meeting.

- **Chapel Street, Bromsgrove Town Centre** – terrible potholes which make it very difficult for those with mobility difficulties walking or when using a mobility scooter – this has been raised before when Windsor Street was resurfaced – the resurfacing went just round the corner into Chapel Street and then stopped.

- **Barley Mow Lane, Catshill** – the potholes have been mended but more more have appeared next to the repairs – the road is used by lorries on a regular basis – the camber of the pavement is too steep so **Mary** has to use the road in her electric wheelchair
- **Alvechurch, Bear Hill – Granville Baker** has been trying for 5 years to get the disabled parking bays right in Alvechurch – one on Bear Hill is used by anyone who is doing their shopping/unloading etc. – this space has been patched (very badly) and the markings have never been replaced - the row of spaces outside the Village Hall has one disabled space at the end at right angles to the road – this has a severe camber and driver vision problems as well as the triangular low level obstruction in the road surface - this space should moved to the top of the row where it would be parallel to the road and the traffic – other general parking spaces in the village square are not marked because the paint has worn off.
- Generally, repairs and actions to improve road and pavements surfaces are done without consultation.
- Disabled bays in the Council Car Park are too far from the Council House – can we have some more disabled bays near the council house? **Fiona** will make sure that for future meetings of this group a number of spaces will be coned off.
- **The dropped kerb at the end of Windsor Street (as mentioned before) is a priority.**
- Why can't dropped kerbs be done when the roads are resurfaced? roads – surely it is a more efficient way of doing things rather than coming back to do it the dropped kerb later
- **New Road car park** – the camber makes it difficult for disabled people to get in and out of their cars.
- Blue Badge parking spaces outside the Queen's Head are often abused by people without Blue Badges – can we draw the attention to the traffic wardens to regularly patrol?
- Disabled parking bays – the two outside Iceland were taken away and the 3 outside the Golden Cross were given over to taxis – why?

- **Patricia Hackett** asked whether the signs outside the Golden Cross could be “**disabled use daytime/ taxis at night**”?
- **Patricia** had contacted Fiona about the parking in Rigby Lane – cars park half on the pavement and half on the road.
- **Patricia** has emailed the County and has had no response – the road is cluttered with overflow parking from the station which obstructs parents with pushchairs and buggies and people in wheelchairs and mobility vehicles.
- This is a County Council matter and a Traffic order is needed.
- The cost of parking at the station is £3.00 a day – when the station is redeveloped there will be a massive car park – **Lorraine Graham** asked we could consider reducing costs to attract people to pay and save the costs that are incurred elsewhere because of the inconsiderate parking?
- The road is dangerous and the traffic flow is down to one lane and visibility is limited.
- **Rigby Lane** – schools coaches have difficulty parking.
- Possible need to consider residents only parking.
- **Ann Batchelor** asked about the Shopmobility town map which is needed to show routes around the town – need dropped kerbs outside **St Peter’s Church** to get into town.
- What about the estates e.g. Brook Court etc.? They need a route to get into town.
- Camber of pavements is a problem for people in wheelchairs and mobility vehicles – **Windsor Street is particularly bad**.
- **Lorraine** – Greenscope are campaigning for a dropped kerb for the use of service users from Green scope and visitors to Greenscope.
- **There are issues about the type of dropped kerb** – rough surfaces makes it harder for users of wheelchairs and mobility vehicles.

- **Gwyneth's** new scooter stops if it goes over a bump in the road.
- Are taxis parking on double yellow lines outside Iceland? If so, why aren't they being prosecuted? Some local authorities do their own enforcement and Bromsgrove is considering their position on this. Otherwise it is the police – they have one traffic warden for the whole of Bromsgrove District.
- When is Bromsgrove District Council responsible and when is the County Council responsible? **Jon - please explain exactly what Highways are responsible for?**
- Housing Associations have some responsibility for footpaths at their properties.
- It was noted that the County Council elections are on 6th June and if you want to contact your County Councillor about Highways issues contact Sue Mould to find out who your councillor is – elections@bromsgrove.gov.uk
- **Ann Sloan** has rung the Hub about this and other things and found them very helpful.
- **Lorraine** – Padstone and Greenscope are starting projects on travel training for adults with learning disabilities. In **Crabtree Lane**, the area free of parked cars is on a dangerous junction and needs at least a zebra crossing – this would give a focal point for those learning to enable them to use transport independently
- At the **Kings Head**, the crossing is worn out – it needs remarking - cars are coming round the corner they can't see that there is a crossing.
- In anticipation of the refurbishment of the toilet block by end of June 2009 at the latest, directional road signs for Bromsgrove should show the **Changing Places logo**.
- General issues of the attractiveness of the Town Centre – some people don't find it appealing enough to want to visit it – they prefer to go to Redditch.

- Pavements into town (Birmingham Road and Town Centre High Street generally uneven – makes it difficult for people in electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters.
- Recent road resurfacing work in Blackwell was done very well.

5. Other Items not on main agenda

5.1 Parking

The extra hour for Blue Badge holders has not been publicised. It has been in the newspapers and is mentioned in the Car Parks leaflet (circulated with the papers for today's meeting) but is not explained on the parking signs. **Fiona** to check.

5.2 Community Transport

There was a consultation meeting on 19th February which was attended by a number of people from this group. It is proposed that one wheelchair accessible minibus is purchased to start with. The Council is currently drawing up an agreement with WRVS. The minibus service will not affect the current Rural Rides provision. The new service is likely to be operating by September this year.

5.3 Railway Station development

The full funding has now been acquired. **Patricia Hackett** and **Eileen Mulhall** have been involved in the access issues for the new development. **Ann Sloan** would like some feedback about this. There will be lifts to enable access from one side of the station to the other. **Fiona** to invite Malcolm Richardson to a future meeting of this group.

5.4 Refurbishing of the town centre toilet block including a Changing Places facility

The project is now back on target with a likely opening towards the end of June this year. **Patricia** is now involved to ensure that the final design meets the requirements of the Mencap "Changing Places" standard. This will then mean that the Bromsgrove facility can be advertised in the Mencap national network of Changing Places and can carry the logo.

5.5 Dropped kerbs

The County Council wrote a reply to the Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group about the policy for installing dropped kerbs. See end of minutes for content of letter.

5.6 General comments

Eileen commented how much Bromsgrove is moving forward on things.

6. Items for meetings in 2009

**Bromsgrove Railway Development Project -
Malcolm Richardson, Network Rail – subject to his availability**

**Access to shops - Adrian Wyre, Building Control, Bromsgrove
District Council**

**Lifeline Service and Telecare - Rachel McAndrews,
Bromsgrove District Council**

**Results of Customer Standards Consultation and Customer
Satisfaction Survey - Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive,
Bromsgrove District Council**

**Social facilities in Bromsgrove in relation to reduction of Day
Care Services**

**Bromsgrove District Housing Trust – Aids and Adaptations
Working Group**

Hate Crime and Incidents Reporting System

7. Date, time and place of next meeting

**Friday 3rd April 2009, 10.00 to 12.00 pm, the Committee Room
at the Council House**





worcestershire
county council

Mrs A Crossland
Bromsgrove Disabled Access Group
49 Redland Close
Marlbrook
Bromsgrove
Worcestershire
B60 1DZ

27 January 2009

Dear Mrs Crossland

Request for Dropped kerbs

Thank you for your letter dated 17 January 2009 requesting dropped kerbs in Churchfields Road and informing us of the problems wheelchair users and mobility scooter users are experiencing with the dropped kerbs at the Stratford Road end of Windsor Street.

Due to the high number of requests and the limited amount of funding available, the budget for the current financial year has been allocated and there are no available funds for this financial year. However, I will be able to investigate your request for consideration in the next financial year.

On receipt of a request, a site visit is carried out to ascertain whether or not the scheme is feasible. The request is then scored against a number of criteria, including the potential to improve accessibility, the level of local support, and the potential for mode change. Once scored the request is placed in a table of desired infrastructure. The schemes with the highest scores and priorities are then taken forward for implementation. Unfeasible requests are also discounted.

Once all requests are scored the information is available for viewing on the Worcestershire County Council website (www.worcestershire.gov.uk/transport/walking).

Caren Stevens
Projects Officer
Sustainable Schemes
Worcestershire County
Council
County Hall Campus
Spetchley Road
WORCESTER
WR5 2NP
Tel: 0845 6072005
Website:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk

Yours sincerely

Caren Stevens
Project Officer



cc. Fiona Scott, Bromsgrove District Council

20090127 Broms Disabled Access group - Mrs A Crossland



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Agenda Item 9

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

EXECUTIVE CABINET

03 JUNE 2009

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT REPORT

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Roger Hollingworth, Leader of the Council
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive and Deb Poole, Head of E-Government and Customer Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report formally reports the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Report to Cabinet, in particular, the recommendations made by the Audit Commission and the planned actions in response to each of these.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:-

1. Notes the significant improvement in our rating, from Poor to Fair in under two years.
2. Recognises that Fair is average and our vision remains “working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services”; and therefore, we still have a considerable journey to take, in order to deliver our vision.
3. Notes the recommendations made by the Audit Commission and approves the steps being taken to deliver these improvements.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.4 The Audit Commission recommendations and our planned improvement actions are set out below:-

R1 A culture of customer focus should be fully established at all levels within the Council.

- Update of Customer First Strategy to June Cabinet which will include new section on customer access.
- Continued support for the Customer Service Centre and further service migration, in particular, the planning service.
- Employment of lean systems specialist.
- Evaluate neighbouring council’s pilot of Mosaic, a customer

insight tool, with a view to procuring or sharing a license for this software.

- Customer First Part 3 training for each team, which will involve a diagnostic of their customer satisfaction levels, customer experience, customer literature, complaints data, mystery shopping data etc., with individual customer improvement plans for each team.

R2 Strategies, contracts, project specifications and business plans and accompanying action plans need to have clearly identified outcomes that the public would recognise, to deliver the outcomes intended.

- Continued roll out of National Indicators.
- Adoption of Corporate Performance Management Strategy (March Cabinet), which includes a focus on new requirements of Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- Fundamental review of Community Strategy (although it has already been updated with the new LAA targets).
- Template changes to the Council Plan and Service Business Plans to increase focus on outcomes.
- Development of Inputs, Processes, Outputs and Outcomes matrix to ensure key deliverables have the full set of measures.

R3 Develop further its workforce planning by undertaking a comprehensive skills audit to identify and address any gaps.

- This project was suspended at the business planning stage for 2008/2009 in order to ensure sufficient capacity for the HR&OD team to deliver Single Status. A project plan is now in place and CMT started the process in early February.

R4 Undertake routine evaluation of all projects, initiatives and partnerships to ensure that the Council's resources make the most impact and deliver the best value for money. The Council has a clear project methodology, usage of which was audited by the Council's Internal Audit Team during 2008/2009. The recommendations have been implemented and a Programme Board established to oversee the Council's main projects. The Council was subject to an inspection of its project management arrangements in late January. Our arrangements were described as "sound" and "becoming increasingly embedded". The Council will need to consider how to improve the project management of partnership working, as part of the fundamental review of the LSP and community strategy this year.

- Training was undertaken for March and April for approximately 40 managers on the project management methodology and it should be a relatively straight forward task to encourage managers to complete lessons learnt and project closure reports, which include project evaluation.
- There is an issue of scale and the statement that "All" projects need this level of recording. The Audit Commission do need to

be cognisant of the fact that recording everything can slow an organisation down. A balance needs to be struck. Subsequent discussions with the Lead Inspector have confirmed our approach of concentrating on the major projects (20% of projects account for 80% activity is acceptable.

R5 Strengthen the scrutiny function to ensure robust and constructive challenge of performance, plans and decisions, including the direct and indirect consequences, so that priorities are delivered fully and not unintentionally undermined.

- The Council has recently changed its scrutiny arrangements, splitting the Scrutiny Steering Board into an Overview Board and a Scrutiny Board. The former has a focus on policy development and the forward plan, the latter on call ins and reviews of performance and decisions.
- Budget Full Council also agreed to a review of the scrutiny staffing structure and whether there is a need for an additional officer. More recently an enhanced role for PMB has been agreed.

R6 Improve external communication by regularly checking that the community understands the Council's messages and information. This will help the public know what services are offered by the Council and allow the Council to highlight what it has achieved.

- The Council has made considerable efforts over the last 18 months to improve the quality and level of community engagement. The report comments favourably on this. This forward focus has meant less focus on evaluation and feedback of community engagement exercises. This should not be difficult to address and probably require a small process change in the Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team to ensure this happens.

R7 Improve external communication by providing, clear and regular information updates on progress, especially for longer term projects such as the town centre.

- Again, the Council has improved in this area, but linking projects to the communications team remains problematic. The Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance team is currently being restructured (within its existing budget) to bring new skills into the team, to help address this recommendation.
- In addition, communications will now be a standing item for major project agenda meetings and a member of the Communications Team attend for that item.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Some of the proposed actions will require business cases and budget bids for the 2010/2011 budget cycle.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 CPA has now been replaced by Comprehensive Area Assessment under the Local Government and Involvement in Health Act (2008).

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 All objectives and priorities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The Corporate Risk Register (KO17) includes:

- Ensure the Council achieves at least a CPA fair rating and is prepared for CAA.
- Responsibility: CEO and Assistant CEO

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Delivery of new improvement plan (July Cabinet).
- Away day for CMT (08 May) to consider process of delivering excellence.
- Away day for Cabinet/CMT (July).

8 CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 A key recommendation in the report is to put the customer at the heart of what we do. See separate report on Customer Access Strategy.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Equalities and Diversity are an integral part of the Council's approach to customer service and delivering excellence.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Value for Money will be critical to delivering our Vision, in particular, the need to recycle savings into improved services for our customers.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues: No.
Personnel Issues: Yes, workforce planning.
Governance/Performance Management: Yes, scrutiny, Member behaviour.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act 1988:

No.
Policy: No.
Environmental: Climate change is now a priority of the Council and one we need to improve on most.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	At CMT.
Chief Executive	At CMT.
Executive Director (Partnerships & Projects)	At CMT.
Executive Director (Services)	At CMT.
Assistant Chief Executive	Author
Head of Financial Services	At CMT.
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services	At CMT.
Head of Organisational Development & HR	At CMT.
Corporate Procurement Team	No.

13. WARDS AFFECTED

'All Wards'.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Bromsgrove District Council, CPA Report, Audit Commission (March 2009).

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Bromsgrove District Council, CPA Report, Audit Commission (March 2007).

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Comprehensive Performance Assessment

Bromsgrove District Council

March 2009



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Introduction

- 1 Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) is the means by which the Audit Commission fulfils its statutory duty under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003 to make an assessment, and report on the performance, of local authorities. Corporate assessment is one element in the overall assessment that leads to a CPA score and category.
- 2 The purpose of the corporate assessment is to assess how well the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities. It seeks to answer three headline questions which are underpinned by five specific themes.

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

- Ambition
- Prioritisation

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

- Capacity
- Performance management

What has been achieved?

- Achievement

Executive summary

- 3 In early 2007 Bromsgrove District Council underwent its first comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) where it was judged to be 'poor'. Since then the Council has achieved much, often from a very low base, and its overall performance is now 'fair'.
- 4 Since the last CPA, the Council has made significant progress in addressing the weakness previously identified. Much of the work has focused on putting the processes and 'building blocks' in place that were absent in early 2007 and these are now starting to make an impact. Clear political and managerial leadership and stronger management have led to a greater focus on improvement and priorities and these changes are recognised and valued by the community and partners.
- 5 The Council, together with its partners, now has clear ambitions for the community which are informed by community needs and aspirations. The overarching vision for the district is 'Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services.' A framework of plans is in place linking local and county wide ambitions and these are underpinned by business plans, team plans and individual personal appraisals to ensure a greater focus on delivery. External communication, whilst improved, is not always effective in ensuring messages are received and understood and feedback on decisions and results of consultation is inconsistent.
- 6 The key priorities underpinning the vision have been refined and now better reflect customer, stakeholder and staff ambitions. Consultation and engagement has included work with a wide range of stakeholders including minority and vulnerable individuals and groups. The five 2007/08 priorities have been further refined and made more specific for 2008/09. The 2008/09 priorities are: a thriving market town and housing; improved customer service; a sense of community; and clean streets and recycling. Resource allocation is linked to priorities. The Council is clear that any service area that does not contribute to the delivery of the priorities is a non-priority and will be required to find savings or have resources taken away and redirected to areas supporting delivery of priorities.
- 7 Political and managerial leadership is strong and gaining respect from the community and partners. This is leading to more effective partnership working. The internal working of the Council has improved with codes of conduct to clarify roles and responsibilities and there is a greater level of trust between councillors and officers. An adequate level of financial management is now in place. However, some improvements are new and it is too early to see the impact - for example in ICT. Comprehensive workforce planning is not in place and job evaluation and delays caused by external factors, in resolving single status is having some adverse impact on capacity. Whilst the culture of the Council has changed there does however remain the strong external perception that a small minority of councillors are behaving in a disruptive or confrontational manner. This behaviour does not help the Council change and improve its external image and reputation and is undermining work with partners and external organisations.

Executive summary

- 8** Improved management of performance and service delivery is securing improvement in services. Regular integrated reporting of performance and financial information is now in place. Risks are now considered and reported. However, since much of the Council's effort since the last CPA has been on putting in place and embedding internal processes, much of the focus of the performance management system has been on outputs rather than outcomes that the public would recognise. Scrutiny has limited impact with an absence of a robust and constructive challenge by councillors of performance and decisions. Project evaluation and the analysis of complaints are not fully effective.
- 9** Improvement in performance is notable but this has, in many instances, been from a very low base and overall performance remains below that of other councils. Audited performance indicator (PI) data for 2007/08 shows that between 2006/07 and 2007/08 79 per cent of PIs improved. The Council has 25 per cent of PIs in the best 25 per cent in the country which is below the district council average of 33 per cent. More recent unaudited data provided by the Council indicates that performance in many areas has been maintained or continued to improve - in October 2008 74 per cent of PIs were stable or improving. In 2006/07, customer satisfaction was below average but more recent unaudited data suggests satisfaction levels for street cleanliness and recycling facilities have risen.
- 10** Plans to regenerate the town centre are at an early stage and there are few outcomes that the public would recognise. Most of the focus to date has been on developing an area action plan and an issues and options paper is currently out to consultation. The Council's strategic housing service has improved and a variety of initiatives are helping to deliver housing to meet local needs. Customer service has been improved with the opening of a customer service centre known as the Worcestershire 'hub' which is operated jointly by the Council and Worcestershire County Council, and some services are tailored to meet the specific needs of users. However, some services still do not give enough attention to customer service.
- 11** Improved working with partners and local people is enhancing the sense of community. An effective crime and disorder reduction partnership has helped reduce crime levels and a number of initiatives are effectively addressing concerns about the fear of crime. The needs of young people are being addressed but it is less clear what has been delivered to meet the needs of the significant and increasing number of older people. High recycling rates are being sustained. The Council exceeded its statutory recycling and composting target but the overall amount of household waste collected per person remains relatively high, as do collection costs. Street cleanliness has improved and recent unaudited figures indicate improved satisfaction rates.

Areas for improvement

- 12** The Council should strengthen its customer focus so that its actions meet the needs of its community:
- a culture of customer focus should be fully established at all levels within the council.
 - strategies, contracts, project specifications and business plans and accompanying action plans need to have clearly identified outcomes that the public would recognise, to deliver the outcomes intended.
- 13** To ensure the Council maintains its improvement journey and to make the best use of resources and ensure a focus on priorities, the Council should:
- develop further its workforce planning by undertaking a comprehensive skills audit to identify and address any gaps;
 - undertake routine evaluation of all projects, initiatives and partnerships to ensure that the Council's resources make the most impact and deliver the best value for money; and
 - strengthen the scrutiny function to ensure robust and constructive challenge of performance, plans and decisions, including their direct and indirect consequences, so that priorities are delivered fully and not unintentionally undermined.
- 14** Improve external communication by:
- regularly checking that the community understands the Council's messages and information. This will help the public know what services are offered by the Council and allow the Council to highlight what it has achieved.
 - providing clear and regular information updates on progress, especially for longer term projects such as the town centre.

Summary of assessment scores

Headline questions	Theme	Score*	Weighted score
What is the Council, together with its partners trying to achieve?	Ambition	2	4
	Prioritisation	3	6
What is the capacity of the Council, including its work with partners, to deliver what it is trying to achieve?	Capacity	2	4
	Performance Management	2	4
What has been achieved?	Achievement	2	14
Weighted score			32
Overall Corporate Assessment Score **			Fair
* Key to scores			
1 – below minimum requirements – inadequate performance			
2 – at only minimum requirements – adequate performance			
3 – consistently above minimum requirements – performing well			
4 – well above minimum requirements – performing strongly			

**** Banding thresholds determining the overall CPA category**

Category	Required score
Excellent	45-60
Good	36-44
Fair	28-35
Weak	21-27
Poor	20 or less

Context

The locality

- 15** Bromsgrove District is in north Worcestershire, covering a large area of approximately 83.9 square miles. Ninety per cent of the District is greenbelt which poses issues for regeneration and housing policy. Despite its predominantly rural nature, road and rail transport routes are good. This contributes to a net commute out of the district of 9,469 people, primarily into Birmingham and local towns.
- 16** The population of the district is 92,050 and is predicted to increase by 15.3 per cent to 106,134 in 2029. The black and minority ethnic population (BME) is 3.3 per cent, which is low for the region and low nationally. The proportion of older people is expected to rise with the over 80s population estimated to increase by 123 per cent by 2029. There are 39,000 households in the district; over a quarter of these are single, older person households. An estimated 6,964 households in the district have one or more members with identified special needs (primarily physical disability or frail elderly) which is well above the national average.
- 17** The economic picture of the district has been generally very positive although, like elsewhere, is now being affected by the current economic climate. The district ranks 299th out of 354 councils on the national index of multiple deprivation (2004) making the district one of the least deprived nationally. It has no wards in the top 20 per cent most deprived in England. Four thousand and fifty households are in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in the district, one of the lowest figures in Worcestershire. The mean household income is £36,906 which is the highest in the county. The closure of the Longbridge car plant in April 2005 resulted in the loss of 5,850 jobs and contributed to increased unemployment levels in the district but these subsequently returned to a very low level of 1.7 per cent. More recently unemployment rates have risen but still remain comparatively low - between September and December 2008 they rose from 1.8 to 2.2 per cent.
- 18** There are two major areas of economic challenge within the district: the redevelopment of the Longbridge site and Bromsgrove town centre. Bromsgrove and Birmingham Councils are working together and have prepared an area action plan for the former MG Rover site. Local residents feel that Bromsgrove town centre needs a major overhaul to encourage local shopping and compete with neighbouring shopping centres. The number of VAT registered businesses in the district has also fallen in recent years although the Council is supporting new small business development.
- 19** Eighty three per cent of households are owner occupied, the 11th highest figure in England and Wales. The average house price in 2007/08 was £237,849 which is higher than the regional or national average. The provision of sufficient affordable housing is a key challenge for the Council. For the last three years the Council has been operating a planning moratorium on new housing development with only new affordable housing developments being built. It has a target of 80 units of affordable housing a year for the next five years.

- 20** Generally, the district's population is healthier than the regional average. Levels of crime are generally reducing. Ninety seven per cent of residents feel safe during daytime and 70 per cent after dark. Drug offences are low.

The Council

- 21** Bromsgrove District Council has been a 'poor' council for some time. It recognised that it was not providing the service to the public that it should and that it needed support and assistance rather than inspection. On this basis, in 2004, it was given a comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) rating of 'poor' and entered into voluntary engagement with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). In 2006 it requested a CPA against the new 2006 framework in order to validate the improvement plan and to identify further areas of improvement. The CPA 2007 rated the Council as 'poor' but did acknowledge that the Council had made considerable progress. Engagement with DCLG has continued.
- 22** The Council has had a history of frequent changes in senior management and political leadership. A new Leader was appointed in October 2005 and the Council has a majority Conservative administration, with 26 Conservatives, 6 Labour, 5 Independents, and 2 Wythall Residents' Association. The Council operates a modernised political structure with the Leader/Cabinet model; supported by three non-executive boards - the audit board, scrutiny steering board and performance management board - as well as standards and licensing committees. It also has a corporate management team (CMT), with a new Chief Executive appointed in March 2007. Since August 2008 the Council's Chief Executive has been Acting Joint Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council.
- 23** The Council has a net revenue budget of £11.733 million (2008/09) and a government grant of £4.858 million. The Council employs 348 staff. The District Council's element of the Band D council tax for 2008/09 was £180.13 which is higher than the shire district average.
- 24** This CPA examines the progress and achievements made since the last CPA in early 2007.

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

Ambition

- 25** The Council is performing adequately in this area. Strategies and policies clearly link to county wide strategies and policies and to those of partners. It has a clear vision based on community need and aspirations informed by community consultation and engagement. External communication, whilst improved, is not always effective in ensuring messages are received and understood and feedback on decisions and results of consultation is inconsistent.
- 26** Community ambitions link well with and support county wide ambitions. The County and District Councils in Worcestershire signed a local area agreement (LAA) in 2006. The LAA committed the Council and its partners to work to deliver targeted improvements in quality of life for local people, including raising educational attainment, reducing crime and disorder, and improving public health. The Council and its partners negotiated a new LAA with the government during 2008. The new LAA covers similar areas to the previous one, but also includes targets on reducing the risks from flooding, improving access to benefits for older people, and reducing bullying in schools. Although the county wide LAA does not show explicit or specific links to Bromsgrove's ambitions and priorities, it is relevant to the needs of Bromsgrove district, for example town centre regeneration and Longbridge redevelopment. Sharing ambitions with partners helps to ensure that organisations work towards the same goals of improving local quality of life.
- 27** The Council and its partners have clear and long-term ambitions for the district over ten years and beyond. The sustainable community strategy (SCS) 2007 to 2010 'Your district your future' developed by the Council and the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) clearly links to the county wide LAA. Its vision is: 'We will make Bromsgrove District a better place to work, live and visit by driving forward change'. Five themes or values underpin the vision: excellent customer service; community leadership; equality; value for money (VfM); and partnership. The SCS has clear action plans with measurable milestones and outcomes. It was updated in October 2008, and now has a sharper focus on effective community engagement and consultation. As part of its community influence framework, the Council funded two pilot area committee schemes during 2007/08 and allocated £ 4,000 to each of the area committees. As a result local people are able to influence better what is prioritised in their local area.

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

- 28** The Council and its partners have an effective means of communicating their long-term vision. The SCS gives a narrative picture of what the district might look like in ten years' time. For example, it defines what it means in this area to have a thriving town centre; what sort of housing will be provided for the potential mix of population - older and younger, affluent and less well off; what community leadership will deliver; and how value for money and partnership will be ensured. As a result, the clarity of the vision is strong and is translated well, allowing citizens to measure success over time.
- 29** The Council's corporate plan (or 'council plan') for 2008 to 2011 has clear objectives. It provides an overarching vision and set of ambitions for the area which address identified needs. Targets are measurable and provide an appropriate framework for achieving the ambitions. For 2007/08 and for 2008/09 the priorities were regeneration; improvement; sense of community and well being; and environment. Each Council objective and priority has a reference number and these are tracked into departmental service business plans, team plans and individual personal development reviews, to create a golden thread. The three year council plan is supported each year by an annual improvement plan. The plan gives clarity to targets and objectives and enables the focus on outcomes. As a result the council plan acts as a high level map for the business of the Council in delivering its ambitions.
- 30** The Council's community leadership is developing well. It has strengthened its community engagement and consultation. For example senior officers routinely attend partners and communities together (PACT) meetings. During the last 18 months 68 PACT meetings have been held, allowing local people to discuss and prioritise their concerns at a local level. The Council funded two pilot area committee schemes or local neighbourhood partnerships (LNP) during 2007/08, and allocated £4,000 to each. During 2008/09 this has been increased to £15,000 each. A third LNP is proposed for the Hagley and Rural area. Achievements to date as a result of the LNP include improved appearance of the local area, Halloween activities for young people, and a greater degree of civic pride in the two areas.
- 31** Ambitions are based on a good understanding of community needs. The Council has an effective approach to consulting with local communities. For example it carried out a residents' survey in 2008, and ran its first children and young people's convention in 2007. It uses a community bidding approach for the equalities and diversity forum, and is running a budget jury, enabling local people to decide how delegated money should be spent. Key issues to emerge from involving the equalities and diversity forum are the regeneration of the town centre with suitable disabled access, extended hours of the shop mobility service, the need for a community transport scheme and the redevelopment of the railway station, which is currently not compliant with requirements relating to disability access. By engaging with local people the Council is better able to ensure that its priorities meet residents' needs.

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

- 32** The Council's communication with the public is adequate. It is now better at presenting the Council to the press and there are fewer disagreements between councillors within the letters pages. One of the local newspapers recently carried an article on Council success stories and the Leader writes a monthly column. However, the Council does not consistently evaluate its external communications and whether local people understand the messages. Similarly, the Council does not consistently evaluate the impact of its public consultation and engagement activity, and does not always feed back the results of consultations to those taking part. Without this final part of communication, the Council will not always know if its investments are working and the public will not be clear what difference their contribution has made.
- 33** Relations with the voluntary and community sector are much improved. Key staff members have brought their own experience of voluntary sector organisations to the Council. The Council has put in place a service level agreement to provide a small grant to the voluntary sector infrastructure organisation so they can attend the LSP and chair one of the LSP theme groups. As a result there is now an effective involvement in procurement procedures. Twenty senior staff recently spent time on volunteer work with the voluntary sector, improving understanding on both sides of each other's priorities and challenges. This activity has increased the Council's focus and understanding for working with key partners.

Prioritisation

- 34** The Council is performing well in this area. It has a sound strategic framework for planning its priorities, supported by robust business planning. It actively engages the public in identifying priorities, and has an effective approach to engaging its diverse communities and understanding their concerns. The Council is clear about what is a priority and what is not a priority, and it moves resources accordingly. It makes difficult decisions but it does not always think through and consider their impacts on overall objectives.
- 35** The Council has a sound strategic framework for delivering priorities. The strategic priorities are set out in the council plan which is a rolling three year plan, and this in turn drives the service planning process and the annual improvement plan. The Council and its partners on the LSP agreed to give particular focus between 2007 and 2010 to three priorities: Bromsgrove town centre redevelopment; Longbridge regeneration; and affordable housing. As a result the Council has clarity and focus for its work.

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

- 36** The Council has a clear set of specific and focused priorities based on customers', stakeholders' and staff's ambitions. The SCS sets the longer term context. The annual business cycle sets the appropriate priorities and these drive investment decisions. For 2007/08 these were regeneration with the priorities of town centre, Longbridge and housing; improvement and its priorities of performance, reputation and customer service; sense of community and wellbeing with the priorities of community influence and community events; and environment with its priorities of clean district and planning. As part of the budget planning process for 2008/09 the Cabinet proposed a streamlined set of five priorities against the Council's objectives to ensure the focus of resources, reflecting increased and effective consultation and engagement of both customers and staff. Consequently, for 2008/09, priorities became more specific and more focused: a thriving market town; housing; a sense of community; and street scene with sustainability. As a result the Council put resources in to providing more play spaces, CCTV funding and keeping streets clean, while reducing the number of council posts by 35. By regularly refreshing its priorities the Council ensures that it is focusing on things that matter to local people
- 37** The Council is clear about what is not a priority and it moves resources away from these areas into its priorities. Service areas that fall outside the delivery of priorities are the areas required to find the savings targets in any given year (subject to consideration of the impact any efficiencies or service cuts have on the wider workings of the Council). This approach has resulted in the movement of £1.6 million of funding in 2008/09 into customer priorities. The Council has also made some difficult decisions such as closing a museum, proposed charging for green waste, increasing car parking charges, and removing concessionary parking passes for the over 60s. However, on a few occasions, the Council has not always fully considered the consequences of these decisions. For example, it is not clear how the changes to parking charges impact on its objectives of town centre regeneration. There is a tension between raising car park charges and trying to attract people in to the town centre.
- 38** The Council actively engages with local people to plan the delivery of priorities. As part of its community engagement strategy the Council uses a variety of methods to promote engagement and inform the development and delivery of its services. Facilitated community engagement activities include an equalities and diversity forum budget bidding process and democracy workshops in local schools to promote local democracy week. In 2008 the Council ran facilitated public focus groups on the quality of life of older people in the district, customer access and customer standards, and satisfaction surveys for services such as street scene and community services. The Council also runs on-line consultations on its budget. Actions resulting from public feedback include an £850,000 investment to improve the Dolphin Centre gym facility, £175,000 investment in improving town centre toilets, and £70,000 for community transport.
- 39** The Council engages positively with black and minority ethnic groups (BME) and vulnerable groups. Input from the equalities and diversity forum has led to an effective focus on addressing some of their needs. The Council is at Level 2 of the local government Equality Standard and the Council's plans include reference to ensuring that the needs of BME and vulnerable groups are considered. As a result of a focus on this area the Council has a better understanding of the specific needs of these groups.

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

- 40** The Council has robust action plans for delivering its priorities. Business plans clearly state lead responsibilities, resource requirements, milestones, and targets, as well as the contributions expected from organisations, services, and staff. All business plans follow the same template and give a clear outline of links to corporate priorities and contribution to corporate objectives. Key deliverables and outputs are clearly described, as well as budget bids and savings. Key consultations are listed and planned. Customer standards and equalities action plans are included. Staff actively contribute to the development of business plans. The Council can show how its priorities are linked to resources and how its actions deliver the priorities.

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

Capacity

- 41** The Council is performing adequately in this area. Political and managerial leadership is clear and senior management and staff capacity has been enhanced. The roles and responsibilities of councillors are clearer and there is greater awareness of the ethical code. Financial management and the approach to value for money are adequate. Improvements in procurement and investment in ICT is starting to have an impact and partnership working is now more effective. The organisational culture of the Council has improved but elements of the 'old' culture remain and there is still a strong external perception that the behaviour of a small minority of councillors is damaging the reputation of the Council and has an adverse impact on its external relationships. Comprehensive workforce planning is not yet in place.
- 42** The Council is well led. The Leader and Chief Executive provide clear political and managerial leadership which is recognised by staff and partners. There is greater openness and willingness to listen and learn, leading to the Council playing a more positive role in local and regional partnerships from which it was previously absent. For example the Council is now leading a group of councils to agree a single approach to negotiating with the new Homes and Communities Agency in respect of future housing provision and expenditure. The very recent appointment of the Council's Chief Executive as Acting Joint Chief Executive of Bromsgrove and Redditch has not impacted on leadership or capacity at Bromsgrove. It is too early to see the anticipated outcomes for Bromsgrove, including those arising from proposed shared services. The Council has a greater sense of purpose and this has increased the willingness of partners to work with it.

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

- 43** Senior management and staff capacity have been enhanced, leading to greater effectiveness and focus on priorities. The Council sought help from SOLACE (Society of local authority chief executives) to strengthen and recruit to the corporate management team (CMT). An additional executive director has been recruited and CMT and the Cabinet have worked together on two Top Team programmes run by the IDeA (Improvement and development agency). The appointment of an operational development manager, use of a £200,000 corporate training budget and a managers' training programme have all led to improved customer focus and service delivery. For example all officers, including frontline staff such as those carrying out waste collections, have received Customer First training leading to an improved quality of service and fewer complaints.
- 44** The Council has invested effectively in strengthening councillor capacity. All councillors have had induction training and it is now mandatory for councillors sitting on planning, scrutiny, and audit committees to attend more specific training relevant to their responsibilities. The Leader and some portfolio holders have undertaken IDeA leadership training or been supported by external mentors. The Council has a greater business focus resulting from the recent election of councillors with relevant expertise. Roles and responsibilities have been made clearer through a review of the Council's constitution and scheme of delegation, leading to a greater political focus on strategic and policy decisions rather than operational detail. There is a greater level of trust between councillors and officers, with regular meetings between portfolio holders and officers. The strengthened councillor capacity has led to a greater focus on addressing previous weaknesses and improving services.
- 45** Behaviours are generally positive and constructive, but there remains a concern about the damaging behaviours of a small minority of councillors. Councillors have a greater awareness of responsibilities set out by the ethical governance framework - all councillors have been trained on their ethical responsibilities, and the recommendations of an independent review undertaken in 2007 by the IDeA have been implemented. The standards committee is chaired by an independent councillor and is now actively tackling breaches of the ethical code - for example a councillor was recently suspended for not declaring their interests. Whilst there is more constructive political debate, there remains a strong external perception that a small minority of councillors behave in a disruptive or confrontational manner. This does not help the Council change and improve its external reputation and undermines work with partners and external organisations.

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

- 46** Financial management is now adequate. A three year medium-term financial plan is in place which includes revenue and capital budget requirements up until 2011/12. It includes allocations for priorities and identifies areas for disinvestment - some of which relate to councillor development (£8,000) and corporate training (£50,000 representing 25 per cent of original budget)) in 2009/10 which could undermine further improvements in officer and staff capacity although the Council expects less training will be needed in the future. Financial savings are based, as in the previous year, on more efficient working practices and alternative methods of service delivery (estimated to save £131,000 in 2009/10) which are at the early stages of exploration but include some restructuring and deletion of posts. Shared services are being actively explored with Redditch - for example electoral services. Some savings have already been secured through the joint chief executive arrangement and provision of procurement services for Redditch and Wychavon Councils. Plans for the longer term are not in place and there is no systematic approach to securing external funding - although due to its low overall deprivation level the Council is excluded from bidding for many sources of money. Sound financial management is necessary if the Council is to address its priorities and the needs of the community.
- 47** The approach to securing value for money is adequate. A sound framework is now in place providing a greater focus on value for money although improvement in delivery of value for money is not yet evident. Costs are at or above average whilst performance, albeit improved, remains below average. Performance and cost reporting are integrated. A revised value for money strategy and action plan was adopted in 2008 and the Council has undertaken reviews of some services to identify ways to secure improvements. For example, a review of waste collection where costs are high found that the cost of operating and maintaining the vehicles was significantly higher than in other councils. This was due to the Council's vehicles being different to those used by all other councils in the country thereby increasing the costs of servicing and parts. As a result of the review the Council is now investigating replacement vehicles. By strengthening its approach to value for money the Council is better placed to ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently.
- 48** A sound approach to procurement is now in place and some savings delivered. The new procurement strategy 2008/11 seeks to balance risk, cost and environmental considerations using nine criteria to appraise options, and the Council is involved in the West Midlands Centre of Excellence. Savings delivered include those from agency contracting, stationary and graphics design. However, the strategy indicates that a number of challenges remain including the need for training, a review of suppliers and the elimination of inconsistent purchasing practices across the Council. Effective procurement ensures money spent delivers services and goods that meet the needs of the community.

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

- 49** Investment in ICT and implementation of the Spatial Project is beginning to enhance capacity. Use of ICT is starting to enhance customer service and capacity although the level of benefits arising from the business spatial project (an ICT rationalisation programme) still remains unclear. The Council has invested £4.2 million in the spatial project and infrastructure. Phase one of the project has been implemented with eleven new software packages which will integrate and eventually link to the customer services centre. Whilst the speed and quality of customer service have improved, it is not always clear what improvements users and the Council can expect from the project. For example, the spatial project business plan makes general reference to 'providing a system that is flexible to citizen requirements' and 'being at the forefront of service delivery' but there are no specific outcomes included that can be measured against to ensure delivery.
- 50** Effective partnership working is adding to capacity. In the past partnership working was ineffective and others have been reluctant to work with the Council but this has now changed. Streamlining the services offered to clients in partnership with Bromsgrove and District CAB and Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) has delivered improved outcomes for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Work with Bromsgrove Youth Homeless Forum to extend the specialist support and preventative services available to young people aged 16 to 25 has resulted in Bromsgrove being recognised by the Government as the West Midlands regional centre of excellence for youth homelessness. Partnership working is now helping the council meet the needs of the community.
- 51** The culture of the organisation has moved from being bureaucratic and silo based towards being more proactive and 'can do' although pockets of the old culture still remain below the heads of service level. Capacity and morale are, however, being adversely affected by single status and job evaluation which still remain unresolved. The Council has lost a number of experienced officers, for example in planning and benefits, and it has found it difficult to appoint replacements leading to a decline in some services such as benefits. The Council is aware that delays in resolving single status, which has been partly caused by external events nationally including a recent court case, are impacting on capacity and morale. It agreed to a 90 day consultation process to achieve an agreement with the unions or to dismiss and reappoint so as to bring the matter to a close. The improved organisational culture is helping to improve the image, reputation and quality of service provided although this has been limited by a lack of progress to resolve single status and job evaluation.

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

- 52** Comprehensive workforce planning is not in place. The Council has not carried out a full skills audit so it does not know what skills it has available and what are currently needed. New disciplinary, anti-bullying and capability processes are in place as is sickness monitoring but sickness absence continues to be a challenge - it is higher than the national average with levels recently rising and is adversely affecting some services such as benefits. Capacity in some areas, such as the customer service centre, appears fragile - holidays and sickness are reported to have adversely impacted on performance. However, Investors in People accreditation has been secured and personal development reviews (PDRs) are undertaken for all staff and the people strategy supports staff development - for example in management techniques. A comprehensive understanding of the skills available and required, supported by effective training and development, enable an organisation to know that it has the workforce it needs to deliver its objectives.

Performance management

- 53** The Council is performing adequately in this area. A robust performance management framework is in place which has led to some service improvements. The Council's strategic partnerships are managing performance effectively. Risks are considered and reported, although the action taken to manage them is not always adequately evaluated. Whilst the performance management framework is sound, the Council does not consistently focus on outcomes, nor does it actively learn from customer complaints. Scrutiny is not effectively challenging performance and holding the executive to account, which will be key to sustaining improvement in future.
- 54** A good performance management framework is now in place and this had led to improvements in service delivery. During engagement with DCLG there has been a strong focus on performance management and the establishment of a performance champions group and data quality and performance management strategies have led to improvements. There is regular performance monitoring and reporting of progress against the sustainable community strategy, council plan, MTFP, improvement plan and service plans. Reports are clear and focused and include integrated financial and performance reporting leading to the allocation of resources to priorities such as affordable housing and customer services which has led to some improved service delivery and performance. There are monthly meetings between the portfolio holders and heads of service. Challenge is provided by the corporate management team and the performance management board. A sound staff appraisal system is in place. However the importance of performance management is not fully understood and accepted at all levels of the Council. For example, minutes of the performance champions group (a group of middle managers) indicate some problems with the submission and quality of monthly performance data suggesting that not all managers accept the importance of robust performance management. Reporting of performance linked to specific sections of the community, for example BME and other communities at risk of disadvantage, is not being undertaken.

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

- 55** Effective performance management is in place for major partnerships but is less effective for some other forms of partnership working. The LSP and crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) have effective performance management arrangements in place, allowing the Council and other partners to identify progress. However where the Council has worked with smaller organisations robust performance management arrangements are not in place. For example the Council provides £120,000 per year to the Artrix Centre but there is no service level agreement in place to ensure that the Council's money is being used to deliver identified outcomes. Without effective performance arrangements in place the Council cannot be sure that its resources are being used to deliver outcomes that the public would recognise.
- 56** The Council is not consistently focused on outcomes. Whilst there is a sound framework of strategies in place, the Council's focus to date has been largely on outputs rather than on outcomes that residents would notice. Outcomes are about what the Council is trying to achieve for local residents, which local residents will recognise and which can be measured. Following the findings of the previous CPA much of the Council's focus has been to embed plans and processes. Reporting of achievements relating to priorities is not always clear since it tends to focus on actions taken rather than outcomes the public would notice. SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, resourced and time bound) measures and outcomes are not consistently in place. For example targets in service plans are often generalised, with a lack of context in terms of comparative performance so that it is unclear what level of improvement is being sought and whether it is challenging. Many of these targets do not propose any improvement. Other actions have targets identified for 2011 but with no intermediate targets allowing progress to be checked and action taken to ensure delivery, for example in the street scene and waste management service plan. As a result the Council cannot always be sure whether it is achieving its intended outcomes for local people.
- 57** Scrutiny is not yet effective. The scrutiny steering board is chaired by an independent councillor and has undertaken a number of task group reviews such as anti social behaviour, air quality and public transport. However whilst there has been debate, there has been no clear focus on the Council's priorities and what the Council can do. Scrutiny is not adequately challenging the executive. The role of councillors in challenging performance and decisions is still underdeveloped which risks undermining a sustained focus on performance and improvement once DCLG disengages. In the past year it did not call in any decisions nor did it consider or review potentially contentious decisions such as the proposed introduction of charges for green waste collections to identify the consequential impacts of such a decision. The Council has recognised that the scrutiny function has not been effective and in October 2008 it created separate overview and scrutiny boards to examine future and recent decisions respectively but it is too early to see any impact of this. Unless the Council ensures constructive internal challenge it cannot be sure that it is achieving its intended outcomes.

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

- 58** Risks are routinely considered and reported although actions to ensure minimisation of risks are less clear. The corporate risk register is updated quarterly and reported to corporate risk management board, steering board and audit board. Each service has its own risk register. Whilst the corporate risk register identifies 12 (out of 18) key objectives rated as red (high) risk it is less clear how they are to be actively reduced. Most of the key controls cited in the corporate risk register refer to putting strategies or processes in place with no further actions to check that they reduce the risk. However the Council is actively managing the risks associated with the acting joint chief executive appointment - for example through increasing senior management capacity. Unless the Council evaluates the effectiveness of its actions it cannot always be sure that risks are being minimised.
- 59** The Council is not systematically analysing and learning from complaints. Complaints are monitored and reported but there is an absence of systematic analysis and actions taken to improve. A complaints and customer feedback system was introduced in January 2008 and customer satisfaction data is collected regularly through surveys and the customer panel. Complaint figures are supplied monthly to the corporate management team and Cabinet with an annual trend analysis. However, there is limited analysis of the types and frequency of complaints to ensure action is taken to prevent future reoccurrence. Without the systematic analysis of all complaints and actions the Council may miss opportunities to take action to improve service delivery.
- 60** Evaluation of major projects and initiatives is effective but there is no routine evaluation of smaller projects or initiatives. The programme management board considers project documentation and delivery against timescales. For example, a joint County Council/District Council project board for the town centre has been established and a town centre project manager now coordinates activities to ensure progress. However, to date, not all smaller or one off projects and initiatives have been routinely evaluated to ensure that stated outcomes have actually been delivered and that resources are directed to where they make the most impact.
- 61** The Council is learning from others to improve itself. The performance management system was developed from learning from Rotherham and Derby Councils. The town centre redevelopment has been informed by the experiences of Warwickshire County Council and Bracknell Forest Council. However, the Council is not maximising opportunities to learn - for example cost benchmarking and use of mystery shopping by all services are not being used to aid improvement. As a result the Council is missing opportunities which would help it improve further.

What has been achieved?

- 62 The Council is performing adequately in this area.
- 63 There has been notable improvement in performance but this has, in many instances, been from a very low base and overall performance remains below that of other councils. Audited PI data for 2007/08 shows that between 2006/07 and 2007/08, 79 per cent of PIs improved. The Council has 25 per cent of PIs in the best 25 per cent in the country which is below the district council average of 33 per cent. More recent unaudited data provided by the Council indicates that performance in many areas has been maintained or continued to improve. In October 2008 74 per cent of PIs were stable or improving.
- 64 Customer satisfaction remains low although it has improved. The 2006/07 data shows overall satisfaction with the Council and satisfaction with complaint handling is below average and improved only slightly since the last survey in 2003/04. Other satisfaction levels remain low. More recent unaudited data from the Council indicates some satisfaction levels, such as street cleanliness and recycling facilities, have risen.
- 65 Out of necessity there has been much focus on implementing the improvement plan and putting in place internal processes and plans which were absent at the time of the previous CPA. Many of these improvements and 'building blocks' have yet to deliver outcomes the public would recognise. Also, some of the priorities such as the town centre and Longbridge will take many years to deliver, although the plans for Longbridge are further advanced.

Achievement - Objective One: Regeneration with a thriving market town and housing as its priorities.

- 66 Plans to regenerate the town centre are at an early stage and there are few outcomes that the public would recognise. Most of the focus to date has been on developing an area action plan and an issues and options paper is currently out to consultation. A joint County and District Council Project Board has been established for the town centre and a town centre project manager appointed. Negotiations to relocate the various emergency services to a new site thus freeing up sites in the town centre are underway. County Council funding for asset investment and an accessibility study to reduce traffic and increase footfall has been secured. The shop mobility scheme opening hours have been extended and the building of a new toilet block with a high dependency unit for people with disabilities is imminent. However, a recent decision to increase car parking charges appears, from comments received from a range of local stakeholders, to be driving people away from the town, especially in the evening. It appears that the decision was based on the need to increase income with the consequential impact on the town centre not taken fully into account. Plans to regenerate Longbridge are progressing well - an area action plan has been prepared in association with Birmingham City and the County Council but again it is too early to see redevelopment of the site.

- 67** The Council's strategic housing service has improved. A re-inspection undertaken in 2008 scored the service as 'fair' with 'promising prospects for improvement'. District-wide housing needs data has recently been updated which will inform future housing and planning policies. The Longbridge area action plan already contains a provision for 35 per cent of the proposed 1,450 new homes to be affordable. The Council is seeking to increase its current proposed regional strategic housing allocation, which it believes will not help Bromsgrove, by engaging with the West Midlands Regional Assembly and Government Office West Midlands. However, until this matter is resolved the Council is not in a position to lift the moratorium on new housing development which is limiting the delivery of affordable housing.
- 68** The Council is pursuing effectively a variety of initiatives to secure future housing provision to meet local needs. The supply of affordable housing has increased (96 units in 2007/08) but the gap between supply and demand remains. The Council is using its own resources to assist the delivery of affordable housing - it has discounted or gifted land to support housing development and provides £350,000 per year to grant fund BDHT. Local housing needs surveys have led to the provision of rural affordable housing schemes such as the 15 units in Belbroughton. It is also investigating options to purchase new flats which are not selling in the current economic climate.
- 69** The housing needs of the more vulnerable sections of the community are being addressed successfully. Victims of domestic violence now have increased access to housing through joint working with the supporting people team. This has led to the planned closure of the refuge and the provision of five units of self-contained accommodation, with an extended floating support service to increase service provision. This is supplemented by a sanctuary scheme. The Council has invested £1 million in the provision of extra care units - an additional 27 units are currently being built in Charford.

Achievement - Objective Two: Improvement with customer service being a priority

- 70** Customer service improved with the opening of the customer service centre (CSC), part of the Worcestershire wide 'hub' which is operated jointly by the Council and Worcestershire County Council. Data provided by the Council for August 2008 indicates that the average call waiting time has fallen from 55 to 22 seconds between August 2007 and 2008. The percentage of failed calls has reduced from 33 to 6 per cent. Resolution of enquiries at first point of contact is high (98 per cent) but this excludes any call that needs to be transferred and the CSC does not deal with some specific service enquiries, such as planning, which are still directed to the individual service. A recent customer survey showed that 71 per cent of people found accessing the Customer Service Centre easy.
- 71** Use of ICT has also improved the customer experience. The Council's website has been updated and now allows some transactions to be carried out electronically. For example, reporting of issues such as fly-tipping, online payments of council tax and excess payments, and the submission of planning applications. However some tasks still require the downloading of forms which need to be printed and then submitted - for example car parking season tickets.

What has been achieved?

- 72** Customer focus is not embedded throughout the Council. All officers have attended 'Customer First' courses but the Council has recognised it still needs to improve the back office responsiveness to customers; enhance electronic service delivery and move from the professional or practitioner focus to a customer culture. Customer service standards are in place. There are corporate standards relating to response times for letters, emails and voice mail and service standards for various activities although some key ones, for example the time to approve planning conditions, are not included. The service standards are new and it is unclear if they are monitored and where they are reported. Anecdotal evidence from users suggests that the level of service is variable and is occasionally poor. Customer, resident and partner benefits from the spatial project are not yet evident or explicitly stated so as to ensure delivery.
- 73** The specific needs of customers are not being met consistently by all services. The Council has just started taking its benefits service out to various locations in the borough and the waste collection service offers assisted collections to those who require help. It has increased engagement with the local community to inform service delivery and plans. The partners and communities together (PACT) neighbourhood meetings, and the disabled user group and the equalities forum have been used to inform the town centre plans and led to an increase in shop mobility opening hours and the proposed new toilets. An outreach worker works with people with disabilities to find out their needs, and 22 centres for reporting hate crime have been set up across the district. However, the time taken to process benefit claims continues to increase which adversely impacts on a vulnerable section of the community.
- 74** External communication about the services offered is not consistently effective. The Council undertakes a range of initiatives to advertise services and events but many stakeholders and residents remain unaware of the services now offered by the Council, for example the text messaging service and community events being held in the area. This means that the community is not able to access or fully benefit from services provided.

Achievement - Objective Three: Sense of community and well being, with sense of community being a priority

- 75** Improved working with partners and the community is enhancing the sense of wellbeing. The Council's 2008 quality of life survey indicates that 64 per cent of residents felt Bromsgrove was a nice place to live with only 10 per cent reporting they felt they did not belong to their local area.
- 76** The crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) is effective and this has led to reductions in crime levels in the borough. Despite this, concerns about fear of crime remain - the 2007/08 crime data for the whole of the West Mercia Police area indicates that the fear of crime is increasing for most indicators although the level is still lower than the regional or national figures. The Council with the police have undertaken a number of initiatives to address this. The Council has provided funding for CCTV in the town centre leading to a drop in car crime. Alcohol free zones in areas such as Alvechurch and Rubery and use of high visibility policing, community wardens and police community support officers have led to a decrease in crime in areas such as Waseley. The Council is currently seeking to increase the powers of wardens and community support officers so that they can issue fixed penalty notices.

- 77** Better working with the voluntary sector and other partners is starting to enhance the capacity of the Council to improve the health of the community. Work with the PCT (Primary Care Trust) has improved, leading to recognition by the Council that health and wellbeing are issues that the Council needs to tackle. The Council and its partners have secured external funding to set up a number of initiatives including a sports network. The voluntary sector reported that the Council is now more willing to listen and engage with it; 17 officers have spent time with the voluntary sector to learn from it. In 2008, for the first time, the Council has given funding to support three voluntary organisations.
- 78** The Council is addressing the needs of young people well. Through working with young people a number of initiatives have been undertaken to meet their needs, including diversionary activities which have also led to decreases in anti social behaviour. For example money from the Worcestershire County Council's children's fund has been used to provide multi-use games areas (MUGA) in Charford and Sidemoor. Use of developer contributions from new developments has also been used to refurbish and update play provision including the provision of skate board ramps. The range of sporting activities available and participation rates have increased.
- 79** Limited action has been taken to address the needs of older people. The borough has a significant and increasing elderly population and whilst older people may have participated in the range of Council run community engagement activities, work specifically focused on meeting the needs of this group is more limited. Actions include running mobility classes and the introduction of free swimming. The Council funds and has a service level agreement with the Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN), a local voluntary sector infrastructure organisation which is part of the LSP and chairs the Older Persons Theme Group. It plans to use the LSP's Older People Project Group to provide a dialogue with older people, to feed their information into the Council and to provide a mechanism for departments to consult with older people. The Council is also working with the voluntary sector to improve community transport but outcomes that meet this sector of the population's needs are not evident. Consideration is being given to undertaking a scrutiny exercise relating to older people which could help raise awareness this sectors needs to inform and improve future service delivery.

What has been achieved?

Achievement - Objective Four: Environment, with clean streets and the recycling being a priority

- 80** The audited 2007/08 PIs show that 70 per cent of environment-related indicators improved since 2006/07 but the Council has only 14 per cent of such PIs in the best 25 per cent in the country which is below the district average of 35 per cent. The Council has improved cleanliness and sustained consistently high rates of recycling. The Council exceeded its statutory recycling and composting target of 20 per cent by recycling or composting 43 per cent of household waste. However, the overall amount of household waste collected per person remains relatively high (430 kg per head compared to 374 kg for the best performers) as do collection costs (£70.66 per household compared to £44.52 for the best performers). The Council operates a fortnightly waste collection and a green waste collection although the latter will cease being a free service early next year. 2007/08 PIs indicate 94 per cent of the population is served by kerbside recycling which is in the bottom 25 per cent in the country. Four new bring banks have been opened including the ability to recycle tetra packs. Action is being taken to raise the awareness of recycling. Initiatives include waste stop shops providing information; visits to ten schools by the 'Recycler'- a hip hop rapping robot to promote the three Rs of recycling; and visits to villages by the recycling bus. The Council's 2008 quality of life survey indicated that 81 per cent of residents use the Council's recycling facilities and 84 per cent are satisfied with the recycling service.
- 81** Street cleanliness has improved. The 2007/08 PIs indicate 11 per cent of land was littered and 5 per cent of land had unacceptable levels of visible graffiti - both below average. Action taken includes the introduction of 'hit squads', investment in new equipment; work with the probation service to clear alleys in Rubery and changes to grass cutting and litter picking practices. 2006/07 PIs show satisfaction has improved but remains in the bottom 25 per cent in the country. The Council's customer panel data indicates that satisfaction has since risen.
- 82** The Council is starting to consider its own environmental impacts and carbon emissions, although it is too early to see the impact. The Council is a signatory of the Nottingham Agreement and Worcestershire Climate Pledge and the Local Strategic Partnership's Better Environment Group has a number of projects underway aiming to reduce the area's carbon footprint, help conserve and enhance biodiversity and reduce pollution. The Council funds and works with the Worcestershire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre and it provides grants for vulnerable people to insulate their homes. In addition, the Council's website provides advice on saving energy. It is too early to see the impact of such actions and the Council recognises it still has much to do to meet the LAA targets, in particular flood alleviation and carbon emissions, and it is preparing a carbon reduction strategy.

Appendix 1 – Framework for Corporate Assessment

- 1 This corporate assessment was carried out under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, under which the Audit Commission has power to inspect local authorities' arrangements for securing continuous improvement. The results of the corporate assessment contribute to the determination of the overall CPA category for an authority, which the Audit Commission is required to assess and report on under Section 99 of the Local Government Act 2003.
- 2 The Council's self assessment provided a key resource in focusing the assessment activity which included consideration of:
 - key documentation, including the Council's improvement plan;
 - updated performance indicators and performance data; and
 - interviews and meetings attended.
- 3 The assessment for Bromsgrove District Council was undertaken by a team from the Audit Commission and took place over the period from 10 to 14 November 2008
- 4 This report has been discussed with the Council, which has been given the opportunity to examine the Audit Commission's assessment. This report will be used as the basis for improvement planning by the Council.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

03 JUNE 2009

CUSTOMER FIRST STRATEGY REVIEW

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Mike Webb, Portfolio for Community and Customer Engagement and Community Safety
Responsible Head of Service	Hugh Bennett, Assistant Chief Executive and Deb Poole, Head of E-Government and Customer Services

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report recommends the adoption of a new Customer Access Strategy to replace the existing Customer First Strategy.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:-

1. Notes the significant improvement to the Council's customer performance over the last three years, in particular, the Customer Service Centre (5.41 Appendix 1).
2. Notes that while our process times are generally much improved, customer satisfaction (5.3 Table 2 Appendix 1) and staff satisfaction remain too low.
3. Agrees the proposed updated corporate customer standards (5.22 Appendix 1), which will be published later in the year to customers and inserted into each service business plan;
4. Notes the March 2009 CPA report recommendation, that a "culture of customer focus should be fully established at all levels within the Council" (6.4 Appendix 1);
5. Agrees the Strategy's priorities for the year ahead (9.1) and approve the detailed action plan to support the delivery of these priorities (11. Appendix 1); and
6. Agrees the Strategy scorecard 2009/2010 (10. Appendix 1), in particular, the customer measures and recognises the distance we still need to travel in order to become an excellent Council.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In March 2006 the Cabinet approved a Customer First Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council. At the time the primary focus of the Council had been to improve its basic performance, in particular, its Best Value performance indicators, which were critical to achieving a rating of "Fair" from the Audit Commission, when the Council is re-inspected in the Autumn of 2008; nevertheless, the Strategy recognised that the long term ambition of the Council is to deliver both excellent performance, but also an excellent customer experience, comparable to the best in the private sector.
- 3.2 The Strategy took a holistic approach, based on international private sector best practice, and looked to ensure there were actions designed to improve the customer service and culture of the Council across 12 themes (now 13, as we have added customer access on the advice of the Audit Commission).
- 3.4 The Council has made considerable progress since March 2006 including:-
- Customer First being one of the Council's four values and also one of the Council's five priorities;
 - Improved performance at the Customer Service Centre, including a call resolution at the first point of contact now above 90% (November 2007).
 - 73% of CSC customer would recommend the CSC to a friend (Customer Panel July 2007);
 - CSC answer times being consistently below 20 seconds;
 - a re-launched Council website;
 - Customer First training for all staff (with a third wave taking place in February and March 2008);
 - the roll out of complaints software across the Council;
 - the introduction of a Customer Manual for all staff;
 - the launch of the Council's All Inclusive Equalities Scheme, Equalities and Diversity Forum and Disabled User Group;
 - staff recognition for customer service and improvement;
 - senior management attendance at PACT meetings and the piloting of two area committees;
 - a budget aligned to feedback received from residents;

- performance for our Best Value performance indicators now being around the average for an English district council; and
- a CPA rating of Fair.

3.5 Despite these improvements, we started from a low base and overall satisfaction with the Council remains low (as does staff satisfaction).

3.6 Customer access focus groups undertaken in the Summer of 2008 indicated that our customers are happy with the existing access channels, but are not happy with basics like letter writing (for example, receiving multiple responses to their letters), answering voicemails, the style of letters, general responsiveness etc. We need to become more responsive, empathic, focused on outcomes and communicate better (including feedback). These are largely behavioural issues. The aim of the new Customer Access Strategy is to increase our focus on these areas over the next three years.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Some of the proposed actions will require business cases and budget bids for the 2010/2011 budget cycle. These include making the Improvement Manager a permanent appointment and additional funding for marketing activity e.g. a magazine aimed specifically at children and young people.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 A new “duty to involve” has applied from 01 April 2009.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 Council Objective – Improvement and Council Value – Customer Service.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:
(list by bullet points up to a maximum of 3 as per the following example)

- Delivery of benefits and savings from Spatial Project.
- Successful roll out of complaints software.
- Responding to requirements of new regulatory framework for local government and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Delivery of benefits and savings from Spatial Project.

Risk Register: E-Government and Customer Services
Key Objective Ref No: 1
Key Objective: Spatial Project

- Successful roll out of complaints software.

Risk Register: Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance

Key Objective Ref No: 2

Key Objective: Effective Customer First Strategy

- Responding to requirements of new regulatory framework for local government and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007:

Risk Register: *Corporate*

Key Objective Ref No:17

Key Objective: Ensure the Council achieves at least a CPA fair rating and is prepared for CAA.

- 7.3 The third risk is not currently included in the Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance risk register and needs to be added and cross checked to the corporate risk register.

8 CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The Strategy is designed to improve customer service and care to our customers.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Equalities and Diversity are an integral part of the Council's approach to customer service and the Strategy includes a number of actions to improve our customer service in this respect.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The Strategy is consistent with the Council's VFM Strategy, in particular:-
- The Customer Panel will offer services increasing amounts of data on customer satisfaction which needs to be taken into account in any assessment of value for money; and
 - Business cases will be required for a number of proposals in the Strategy e.g. community transport links, expansion of area committees.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues: Yes, community transport and future Customer Panel contract.
Personnel Issues: Yes, making the recruitment process more orientated to recruiting employees with a customer service aptitude.
Governance/Performance Management: Yes, more customer service measures in the corporate performance indicator set.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime & Disorder Act 1988: Yes, continued support for PACT and potential expansion of area committees.
Policy: None.
Environmental: Community transport is more environmentally friendly than individual taxis.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

13. WARDS AFFECTED

'All Wards'.

14. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Customer Access Strategy for Bromsgrove District, June 2009.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

See bibliography in Strategy (14.)

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Customer Access Strategy

Customer Access Strategy Review

June 2009



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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1. Foreword by Councillor Mike Webb, Portfolio for Community and Customer Engagement and Community Safety

Excellent customer service is one of the Council's four values.

Since the original Customer First Strategy was agreed in March 2006, the Council has come a long way on its journey to deliver this priority. The Council's is now rated "Fair" as a result of its second Comprehensive Performance Assessment. I am particularly pleased that the average speed of answering at our customer service centre is now consistently below 20 seconds and that over 95% of calls are resolved at the first point of contact (this is a very high level of customer service and one that is clearly valued by our customers). This is down to the hard work of the managers and staff at the Council. I am also really pleased to see senior officer commitment to the PACT process, to Local Neighbourhood Partnerships, "back to the floor" and "walking the wards". It is really important that both Members and officers really understand the District and residents we serve and provide leadership to the rest of the organisation.

2008 was a critical year in the Council's journey towards excellent customer service. In January, we launched our customer feedback system, customer manual for staff and customer standards. We put all staff through a second wave of customer first training and in October we completed the implementation of the spatial project which has seen the introduction of eleven new integrated IT systems. These systems will deliver financial savings, put us at the forefront of the Government's drive for electronic government, but most importantly deliver improved services to our customers. We also saw the Council starting to deliver equalities outcomes, like the agreed funding for the community transport scheme and funding for the refurbishment of the town centre toilets.

With so much going on, I was disappointed by the feedback in the Housing Inspection regarding the need for a customer access strategy, but have addressed this through an expanded customer access section in this Strategy, with a focus on, equalities monitoring and customer insight software, which are two key areas of development for the Audit Commission. I still contend that the focus should be on improving the customers' experience. This is what our own research points to and differs from the Audit Commission's focus on access.

This review and updated strategic action plan sets out in detail the actions we intend to take across 13 themes. As the 13 themes suggest, there is no single solution to achieving excellent customer service. We need to be ambitious, but also understand that this is about forming new and positive habits, about changing the psychology of the Council, something we cannot achieve overnight.

I look forward to reporting further progress to you in a year's time.

Councillor Mike Webb
Portfolio for Community and Customer Engagement and Community Safety

2. Introduction

- 2.1 In March 2006 the Cabinet approved a Customer First Strategy for Bromsgrove District Council. At the time the primary focus of the Council was to improve our basic performance, in particular, our Best Value performance indicators, which were critical to achieving a rating of “Fair” from the Audit Commission. Despite this focus on CPA, the Strategy has always recognised that the long term ambition of the Council is to deliver excellent performance and an excellent customer experience, comparable to the best in the private sector. The scale of this task should not be underestimated, given an often hostile media.
- 2.2 The Strategy took a holistic approach, based on international private sector best practice, and looked to ensure there were actions designed to improve the customer service and culture of the Council across 12 themes. On the advice of the I&DeA Peer Review and the 2008 Housing Inspection we have added a thirteenth theme, customer access:-
- ✚ organisational strategy and a compelling vision;
 - ✚ customer need research (listen to our customers);
 - ✚ organisation structure;
 - ✚ service delivery process;
 - ✚ management practices;
 - ✚ measurements;
 - ✚ training and management development;
 - ✚ internal team building;
 - ✚ customer education;
 - ✚ customer environment;
 - ✚ communications (internal and external) and community engagement;
 - ✚ managing the change; and
 - ✚ customer access.
- 2.3 A Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timebound (SMART) strategic action plan was agreed by Cabinet for these 13 themes. Progress against the action plan is reviewed in section 8. Besides progress against the action plan there have been a number of national developments since the Strategy was introduced, significantly, from April 2009, the Council will be subject to a new inspection framework – Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The impact of CAA is covered in more detail in section 4 below.

Fig 1 – Customer First Programme (13 Themes)

See separate attachment.

3. Customer Vision

- 3.1 The 2008 Housing Inspection identified the need for a clear customer vision. To be meaningful, we felt the Council needed more than a couple of lines and more of a picture of what customer service will look like in the future at the Council. The following vision was approved by 02 July 2008 Council.

Purpose

- 3.2 The Customer First Strategy sets out a detailed action plan for improving the customer service given by the Council. The purpose of this section is to articulate what all these actions will deliver, in effect, what the vision for customer service at the Council is.

A Compelling Vision

- 3.3 The Vision for the Council is:-

" Working together to build a District where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services".

- 3.4 Our vision for customer first is to be a world class deliverer of customer service. This is not dependent on size, in fact, our relatively small size should make achieving this easier than a big less responsive organisation. To deliver it, we need to ensure that customer first flows through everything that we do, that the moment a member of staff starts for the Council, they are aware the customer is at the heart of what we do. It should be the first consideration in all that we do, above value for money, above performance and above technology. The first question should always be: what is right for the customer? As a result of the need to rebuild its management processes the Council still has quite an internal dynamic, but this is changing, as we come out of voluntary engagement, achieved a "Fair" CPA rating and started to deliver our Vision.
- 3.5 Achieving a customer first culture in any organisation is difficult, but for a local authority where there is no profit incentive to do so and a national focus on achieving quality of life outcome targets, this is doubly so; and yet, our customers expect an excellent customer experience. Our customers are comparing us with world class private sector providers in customer service, whose service is quick and easy and fits around people's increasingly fast lives.

- 3.6 We have defined customer first as follows:-

Who are our customers?

Everyone we come into contact with.

What is our vision for customer service?

To exceed expectations and delight our customers.

We will do this by:-

- Treating customers as individuals.
- Listening carefully to our customers.
- Taking ownership of problems.
- Doing the little things, because they matter!

- 3.7 We could spend a lot of time trying to define exactly who our customers are, for example, is someone captured offending on CCTV a customer? However, we have simply defined our customers as everyone we come into contact with, because everyone we come into contact with experiences the Council and will take away a view of the Council, based on that experience; so, whether we are dealing with a resident, someone who works in the District, an Audit Commission inspector, a councillor, a fellow member of staff, we should treat them as customers and ensure their experience of dealing with the Council is a good one; in fact, because many people have a negative perception of councils, we need to work even harder than some organisations and exceed our customer expectations and delight them! Is it possible to do this when we are giving bad news to a resident, for example, that they have lost their hedge dispute with their neighbour, or been unsuccessful in their planning application? We believe so. Even when we have to do difficult parts of our customer service, we should surprise our customers with the level of care and attention, consideration and empathy for them, so that they are surprised and delighted.
- 3.8 Our customer first poster sets out four behaviours which will help us delight our customers. 1) Treating them as individuals. By this we mean being attuned and empathic to their particular needs. It means taking the time to understand our customers, whether this is through undertaking large scale research to understand our customer base or something more immediate like ensuring we meet someone's dietary requirements at a lunch. 2) Linked to the first behaviour is our second one of listening. Tesco's believe their success is based on really listening and understanding their customers. We need to develop this. Too often, decisions in local government are still taken by a small group of people, without sufficient research into what the customer really wants. Whether as Members or officers, we assume we know and have not truly listened. Listening is hard, as it takes time and can be painful, as it requires change as a result. If you are not changing your service and not finding this difficult, you are probably not listening. 3) Taking ownership of problems is about leadership. We want everyone in the Council to act as the customer's advocate. This means chasing things up for them, owning the phone call, sticking with the complaint until it is resolved. 4) When we describe really good customer service we receive in our private lives, it is often the small things, the attention to detail, going the extra mile that we remember and marks out an average customer experience from a really great one. We want to do the same. It demonstrates we really care about our customer and makes them feel valued.

Leadership and Organisational Strategy

- 3.9 Achieving this vision of exceeding our customer's expectations and delighting them is going to be difficult and will not be achieved overnight, it may take 5 to 10 years of constantly going after customer first to really turn the Council into a truly world class organisation. Delivering this then is going to require strong and consistent leadership, starting at the top of the Council. The Customer First Board is chaired by the Executive Director Services, which indicates the importance placed on customer first. The Chief Executive undertakes a programme of ward visits with councillors and a "Chat with the Chief" programme of speaking to any group within the District that wishes to invite him, for example: Rotary, residents groups, charities etc. This approach is supported by Corporate Management Team who undertake "back to the floor" days and attend Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings and Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs). Our vision for customer first sees the expansion of LNPs to all parts of the District. They will provide a forum for elected members from each of the three tiers of local government, along with interested local residents and our partners to work together to solve the particular issues in their area. Ideally, we would like these LNPs centred on each community, but we are unlikely to have the capacity to support this, so will work along the lines of the parish boundaries. The Council is also investing in its neighbourhood warden scheme, so that residents can see a human face representing the Council in their patch.
- 3.10 The Council is already unusual in the level of senior officer commitment it gives to these meetings. They help provide a focus on what are resident's immediate concerns and prevents a "head office" culture developing. As the new Chief Executive of Sainsbury's pointed out, head office was not the business centre, each store is, and similarly, our business centres are the wards and communities within which we deliver services.
- 3.11 Finally, we have a comprehensive customer first strategy, but we will keep reviewing progress formally at Cabinet each year and update the Strategy as we progress towards our vision.

Customer Needs Research (listening to our customers)

- 3.12 PACTs, LNPs, walking the wards and neighbourhood wardens will provide us with regular local feedback on resident's issues, but we need to support this with more formal research, what the private sector would call market research. We will develop a strong annual business cycle that our customers become familiar with, so they know how to engage with the Council. We will run a customer satisfaction survey every year, checking we have the right priorities and tracking our customer's satisfaction. We will mirror this, with surveys of our internal customers, Members and stakeholders, so that we are getting regular, statistically sound information from our customers. Every year we will engage residents in our budget setting process through: a budget jury, bids from the Equalities and Diversity Forum, bids from the LNPs, an annual children and young people's conference, a "town hall" meeting and the older person's forum. We will also undertake a regular "quality of life" survey to find out about our customer's lifestyles and build this information into our thinking about customer service.
- 3.13 These will be our regular ways of listening, but we will also undertake specific consultations through a corporate consultation programme. We will consult both users and non-users on issues of customer access, customer standards and

issues affecting the future of the District like the town centre, the train station, future housing provision etc.

- 3.14 We will ensure the parish councils have a formal opportunity to present their plans to the Local Strategic Partnership Board and ensure we respond to their issues.
- 3.15 Gradually, we will move the Council away from consultations towards involvement and dialogue, so that over time our residents become confident that can access the Council and make their views known before decisions are taken. We will be close to our customers and known in their communities.

Customer Access

- 3.16 We want all of our customers to be able to access the Council's services and for this access to be quick and easy (intuitive), so we will need to develop and deliver a customer access action plan. Customer access is not made easy in our District, as a result of us not being a tight urban conurbation. We are spread out, with many communities not seeing Bromsgrove town, as their natural hub, instead looking to Solihull, Redditch and Stourbridge.



- 3.17 Data suggests that 16,643 people travel into the District for work, with 26,112 (29%) of the population travelling out, a net commute out of 9,469. For our residents who travel out of the District every day, we need to ensure they can access our services through the use of ICT, in particular, the Customer Service Centre (CSC) and the Council's Internet. The level of service at the CSC is already very good in many respects: customers get straight through to a customer service operative, but we currently lose too many calls, so part of improving access will be to reduce demand, ensuring we exceed the industry standard for calls answered and waiting times. We have a particular problem when calls are passed through to the "back office". Our existing technology does not allow us to track what has happened to these calls. We will need to develop manual systems and in the longer term ICT solutions that allow to track these calls and make sure the "back office" delivers the standard of service provided by the CSC. Similarly, we have improved our Internet through using the County

Council's platform, but the diversity of what we deliver makes it more difficult to use than a site like First Direct's or Easy Jets. We will need to work with our customers to understand how they think when using our Internet site, so that it works around them. We will also move to more self serve, particularly payments and the tracking of planning applications, to enable residents who wish to access our services in this way to do so. We will need to understand that while these efficient methods may work for some of our customers, other groups, particularly, our ageing population, increasing migrant workers and people with disabilities may not wish to access our services in this way, preferring face to face contact.

- 3.18 We already have a walk in CSC, shopmobility, DDA compliant buildings, an interpreter service and hard of hearing links, but we will need to do more to ensure we deliver the level of customer access our customers expect. Our vision includes a community transport service, improved public transport across the District, including a new bus interchange at both the town centre and train station and a new train station. We will need to research the need for longer opening hours and rural hubs (Shropshire use video links). In the longer term we will re-connect the Council House and CSC in a new civic quarter. The Council House will also provide offices for our main partners, particularly the voluntary sector, so our Council House becomes a community hub in the heart of our new town centre.
- 3.19 We have introduced customer standards, which we will review each year, in consultation with our customers, and update. By publishing these we will also let our customers know the level of service they can expect when accessing our services.

Service Delivery Processes

- 3.20 Underpinning our customer access strategy will be world class service delivery processes that ensure services are delivered in the most effective way and are right first time. Much of this improvement will centre on the better use of ICT, but should not be driven by ICT, but by customer need identifying an ICT solution as the right approach. The Council has caught up on years of under investment in ICT and delivered the spatial project, which has seen the introduction of 11 software solutions, primarily in the Planning and Environment Department. Many of these are web enabled, allowing the customer to self serve and track their issue on our website. The Council has also recently introduced an electronic customer feedback system. This will play an important role in providing us with proper statistical data on where we get most complaints and about what.
- 3.21 Once we have delivered the Spatial Project, the Council will move onto to look at issues like the use of new hand held technology to ensure we can work off site, in customer's homes (benefits) or out on the highways (chipped bins linked into driver's cabs and back to the Depot).
- 3.22 All of this work will involve re-engineering existing customer processes and solid programme and project management. The Council will support this through the Improvement Manager's post.

Customer Environment

- 3.24 Currently our customer environment is not at the level required. Like the best in the private sector, we want modern premises which work for our customers. The Spadesbourne Suite and Council Chamber are just two examples of rooms that do not send out an image of a modern council or ones that are conducive to our customers wanting to spend time in these buildings. A new Council House, in the town centre connected to the CSC should resolve the majority of these issues. This will be addressed as part of the town centre regeneration masterplanning.

Communications

- 3.25 Our external communications will be consistent in style, through the roll out of our style guide (brand) and the Council will develop a consistent, empathic, plain English tone to its communications. The Council will communicate in a planned manner; ensuring customers can easily access our communications and get the information they need when they need it.
- 3.26 We will keep staff fully informed about customer performance and about new issues, recognising they are the Council's ambassadors, making them proud to work for the Council
- 3.27 We will also use communications to educate our customers, so that they consume with a social responsibility that helps the Council achieve its outcomes, for example, recycling, improved diet, exercise etc. We will run campaigns that support the delivery of these outcomes.

Organisation Structure

- 3.28 Our structures will be kept under review and driven by what is right for the customer – effective, rather than just efficient. We will explore opportunities for joint working, particularly with Redditch BC, market testing and other forms of delivery, so long as they enhance the service to our customer and deliver VFM. The Redditch CSC is an area on which we will focus, given the proximity of some of our residents to Redditch and their likely preference to visit this CSC rather than the one in Bromsgrove.

Management

- 3.29 Lastly, we will underpin all our customer delivery with management processes that support customer first. We will provide annual training for all our staff on customer first; ensure our performance management system is suitably populated with customer metrics, particularly around customer satisfaction for each service, tracked annually through the customer panel. We will encourage strong teams through team building, ensure change is properly managed through a corporate programme management approach and consider how we further incentivise staff to deliver customer first and improved performance.

4. National Developments

- 4.1 Since the last update in February 2008, there have been a range of developments, building on some of the areas that were emerging last year. The changes since last year are set out in paragraphs 4.3, 4.9, 4.14, 4.15, 4.17 and 4.21.

Comprehensive Area Assessment

- 4.2 The key national development is the planned replacement of Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), with Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). The new approach to regulating the work of local authorities started on 01 April 2009. The Council will in future receive an annual organisational assessment, made up of the annual Use of Resources assessment and a Managing Performance Assessment. The whole area i.e. Worcestershire will receive an area assessment. CAA will have a significant impact on the Customer First Strategy, as it represents a major shift in government thinking, away from the measurement of processes and outputs towards a more customer centric view of service delivery, which is to be welcomed. The key changes in thinking (which in many ways is much more important than the regulatory process) are set out below:-

- ✚ There is going to be a much stronger emphasis on *customer access*. This is going to require improved monitoring systems, so that we know who is and who is not accessing services and when a customer group is identified as not accessing a service, that we improve our marketing to that group. Equalities monitoring is going to be key to this area.
- ✚ Linked to the above point, the Government are stressing the importance of *customer insight* software like Mosaic and Acorn. These software packages segments customers into groups e.g. Group A “empty nester”. They are common in the private sector and enable companies to market specific products to particular households with lifestyles that suggest they will buy the product. The Government wants us to use this type of software to market to non-users, for example, marketing affordable warmth grants to households that might be eligible.
- ✚ A much stronger emphasis on delivering *outcomes*, rather than outputs and processes, so for example, nationally crime levels (output) might be falling, but the fear of crime is increasing (outcome). Excellent communications are key to this and if the Council is going to be able to respond this agenda, it needs to consider an increased capacity
- ✚ Linked to the above point, this move towards outcomes has been supported by a new *National Indicators set*, which replaces the existing Best Value performance indicators. This set includes a lot more measures of satisfaction and perception through surveys like the Place Survey, business survey and third sector survey.
- ✚ An increased emphasis on *community engagement* particularly with the more vulnerable in our communities. Community engagement is

envisaged as a stage on from consultation, involving customers in the decision making process. Good community engagement should ensure we prioritise our communities' aspirations which should increase satisfaction levels. Evidence also suggests that the very process of engagement increases satisfaction, as customers' increase their understanding of what things cost and what the Council has the capacity to deliver.

- ✚ There will be more room for councils to use local performance measures, but the Audit Commission will expect an increased emphasis on *data quality* (the Council is improving in this area and has recently moved its score from 1 out of 4 to 2 out of 4).

- 4.3 A key development since last year is the launch of a new set of National Indicators. As predicted, these are much more about perceptions and outcomes. What we did not see coming was National Indicator 14 – reducing avoidable contact: minimising the proportion of customer contact that is of low or no value to the customer. The intention of this indicator, as the name suggests, is to capture all customer contacts to the Council and determine whether they were necessary, so for example, someone phoning up about a missed bin, or a letter they have not understood, would be considered an avoidable contact, which is waste. By identifying these types of contacts, it is hoped that councils can re-engineer their customer interactions and service delivery to improve services and reduce waste and save money at the same time. Service teams will need help with this work. Good change management envisages a three pronged approach, linking corporate strategy, with programme management and operations. A key role is a business change manager who makes a link between the business and the required change, effectively supporting the business through periods of change. This is the role envisaged by the Improvement Manager post, which has been extended by 6 months, but in the view of this Strategy needs to become a permanent fixture for the business, to facilitate change within the Council. The re-engineering of processes, based on NI14, would typically be done through techniques like business process re-engineering and lean systems, which the current manager is trained in. The Council is currently undertaking a significant amount of change, particularly with the Joint CEO project, so for 2009/2010, the Strategy has identified three pilots for lean systems, with support from RIEP. We can learn from these and take this thinking forward into the Joint CEO project during 2010/2011.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

- 4.4 In terms of this Act's impact on the Council's approach to Customer First, the clue is very much in the title. The word "involvement" is a step change from the previous focus in the Local Government Act 1999, which used the term "consultation". Under the Act, the Council will have a specific "duty to involve". The Government is concerned that the current levels of consultation and civic participation are not bringing about a sufficient understanding of the difficulties politicians face in balancing the competing needs of communities and this is driving an increasing dissatisfaction with public services at a time when they are actually improving.

- ✚ There will be a “duty to cooperate” placed on all key public bodies in an area, so this will add some much needed statutory teeth to the Local Strategic Partnership

4.5 The new duty came into force on 01 April 2009. The duty is likely to impact on the Customer First Strategy as follows:-

- ✚ Consultation will need to provide “genuine opportunities” for people to be involved, so councils will want to draw on widespread evidence of what constitutes good practice in consultation. The Council undertook a number of benchmarking visits on performance management during 2007, which have benefited the Council. In 2008 we will need to undertake similar visits on “involvement” in order to sharpen up our practice.
- ✚ An expectation that we undertake “participatory budgeting” and “citizen juries”. The Assistant Chief Executive attended a course on these earlier in the year, which has given the Council a number of best practice examples. Such approaches are designed to increase dialogue and understanding on the issues the Council faces. They are resource intensive.
- ✚ The co-design of services i.e. where local people play an active role in the commissioning of services. The town centre redevelopment offers such an opportunity, while the work on transport e.g. community transport and railway station also offer possibilities.
- ✚ Co-produce or carry out some aspects of customer delivery for themselves. The Act particularly focuses on the transfer of assets and community centres. The Artrix is such an example. This part of the Act is unlikely to have much impact on the Council due to the low level of buildings we own.
- ✚ Residents work with Council on assessing services e.g. citizens acting as mystery shoppers. A local RSL recently won the public sector award for customer service with The Times newspaper. The RSL used this approach. It has been something the Council has discussed before. Such an approach does involve resource and at this stage, we are still rectifying basic performance and customer service issues; however, we should look to adopt such an approach in the medium term, perhaps in 2009.

4.6 The Council’s support for PACT, two LNPs, “Chats with the Chief”, investment in the Customer Panel and establishment of the Equalities and Diversity Forum means the Council is comparatively well placed to respond to this agenda.

4.7 The Statutory Guidance on the “duty to involve” clearly states (2.22, page 25) that:-

“authorities should consider the predicted benefits of informing, consulting and/or involving against the costs of that involvement”.

- 4.8 So, the Council should look to build the “duty to involve” into the Customer First Strategy, but consider carefully the resource implications. The strategic action plan for the Strategy has been updated accordingly.
- 4.9 Since the last Strategy, the Council has launched a Community Engagement Strategy to respond to the Strong and Prosperous Communities agenda and has undertaken a range of new initiatives like the Budget Jury, U Decide event, expansion of the Local Neighbourhood Partnerships agenda and involving residents in the community transport and train station projects. This involvement needs to be taken through the organisation to ensure the increasing use of more innovative engagement techniques. The Senior Policy and Performance Officer (Community Engagement) remains a priority post, in order to respond to this expanding agenda.

Varney Report

- 4.10 Plans to transform services are supported by the December 2006 Service Transformation Report (Sir David Varney) – the key themes of which have been incorporated into this our approach to telephony, face to face and e-government access channel design. The Spatial Project is critical to delivering this vision for local government.

Local Area Agreement

- 4.11 A new Local Area Agreement for Worcestershire was agreed in June 2008. Most of the targets focus around service outcomes e.g. reduced crime, reduced CO2 emissions, but one target does relate to this Strategy:-
- Empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery.
- 4.12 The key to delivering this target will be the County wide Community Engagement Strategy, supported by our Community Engagement Strategy and the various engagement tools we use: PACT, LNPs and the proposed review of the need for community transport, working alongside the Equalities and Diversity Forum and Disabled Users Group.
- 4.13 Since the last Strategy update, the Council has updated its own Community Strategy to align it to the new LAA. With regard to the above target, the key action for the Council is to align its own Community Engagement Strategy with Worcestershire County Council’s. This should not pose any problem and the two councils have recently undertaken some excellent partnership working around the U Decide event.

Communities in Control White Paper

- 4.14 A major change since the last Strategy update is the publication of the “Communities in Control” White Paper. This paper is aimed at improving local democracy and increasing participation in civic life, so it is not strictly about customer service and customer access; however, as per the diagram in Fig. 1, it underpins decisions about service delivery, customer service and can have a dramatic impact on customer satisfaction levels. A very good example of this is

the feedback we received from the Customer Panel (Customer Satisfaction Survey) last summer. The results from the Equalities and Diversity Forum and DUG were significantly higher than the rest of the population and while the Budget Jury were not surveyed in this way, anecdotal feedback strongly suggests the same was true for this group, in other words, increasing participation significantly increases customer satisfaction, not because we have necessarily delivered more, but because there is an increased understanding from the public about what we can and cannot do. This is a very important point; whilst we do need to deliver better services and improved outcomes, their impact on improving customer satisfaction will be reduced if we do not engage properly in dialogue throughout the process of service design.

- 4.15 The Community Engagement Strategy sets out how we will respond to this new White Paper, we do not need to go into the details here, with the exception of Chapter 3 Access to Information. This chapter makes a link between low levels of customer satisfaction and the quality of information provided by local authorities. For example, in 2006/2007, barely half of local authority residents felt their council kept them very or fairly well informed about services and benefits provided. The White Paper sets out a number of points for improving information. These include: the use of plain English campaigns, the use of customised websites that are built around a web users usage pattern (what is referred to as Web 2.0 services), extensive use of on-line consultations, for example Redbridge LBC had 2,500 responses to its e-consultation on the Council's priorities and budget (we had 19 for the 2009/10 budget round), a liberal policy on the re-use of council materials, so they can be used by social networks like MySociety. The White Paper acknowledges that e-information is not everyone's favoured access channels and gives examples of other innovations like key fact cards and fridge magnets. The Paper also points to information becoming "truly local" and being at a neighbourhood level, supporting existing neighbourhood projects like PACT and LNPs. Charters, like the new Policing Pledge and Charters for Independent Living are also seen as positive steps
- 4.16 Before we embark on delivering all of these innovations, we need to consider our capacity to do so; cross reference to the feedback we are receiving at a local level and prioritise what will have the biggest impact.

Audit Commission Discussion Paper "In the Know"

- 4.17 This Audit Commission paper was published in February 2008. It provides a useful overview for Members and managers. Table 1, page 14 of the White Paper provides a particularly useful summary of the types of information required by the strategic, scrutiny, management and engagement with users, parts of the organisations. It stresses the importance of good data quality for informed decision making. The Council has a Data Quality Strategy, but still needs to improve in this area, particularly, middle management understanding of outcomes and outputs. The Paper provides some excellent examples of companies of the use of information by private sector companies, particularly, around analysing customer behaviour, through club cards and spending patterns. The Audit Commission envisage this as a key development for CAA and customer access. The generally held view is that councils will not be able to deliver the CAA customer access agenda, without using some form of customer insight tool like Mosaic.

- 4.18 Mosaic involves developing a deep understanding of a council's customers. Mosaic apportions every single household into 11 groups and 61 types. Customers are segmented, information about their satisfaction, service consumption and channel preference developed for each preference, so that customer access and service delivery to each segment can be more focused and improved.
- 4.19 There is no doubt that companies like Tesco have benefited from such software; however, there is a concern about applicability to a District of 87,000, compared to national companies like Tesco. Wychavon DC have decided to pilot the use of Mosaic and have agreed to share their learning, so that we can make a decision during the 2010/2011 budget round on whether to purchase this software. As a pre-cursor to this development, the Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team is being restructured (within its existing budget), so create a Graduate Marketing Officer post, to improve the Council's marketing of services and access channels.

Customer Service Excellence

- 4.20 During 2008 the Government introduced a new Government standard "Customer Service Excellence". This does appear to be a useful standard, covering five criteria:-
- Customer insight.
 - The Culture of the organisation.
 - Information and Access.
 - Delivery.
 - Timeliness and Quality of Service.
- 4.21 The Standard clearly overlaps with much of the thinking behind CAA. The Standard includes a web based self assessment tool. It would be a useful first step to complete this assessment during 2009/2010, with a possible external accreditation in 2010/11, subject to the resource required for the Joint Chief Executive project.

5. Customer Feedback and Performance Indicators

- 5.1 Customer feedback and performance indicators are a key aspect of any improvement agenda. The Council now has in place a proper corporate performance management framework, including customer panel surveys, which was supplemented this year by the new Place Survey. The Council has also introduced a complaints software package across the Council, which has provided further analysis on the nature of our complaints and is reported to Members quarterly. The Council has also been producing good quality performance data for the Customer Service Centre since its inception.

Best Value Satisfaction Survey (to be replaced with Place Survey data when available – available, but no comparable data yet).

- 5.2 A detailed report on the Survey's results was taken to the Performance Management Board in September 2007 and the information was also used in the Council Plan 2008/2011 Part 1, which provided the strategic backdrop to the medium term financial plan. The overall results, compared to the last survey/quartile and then with the other Worcestershire Districts are set out in the two tables below.

Table 1 - Overall satisfaction survey results

Ref	Description	2003/04 Result	2006/07 Result	Quartile
Corporate Health				
BV3	Overall Satisfaction with the way the authority runs things	48%	51%	3
BV4	Satisfaction with complaint handling.	25%	31%	4
Environment				
BV89	Satisfaction with street cleanliness	61%	62%	4
BV90a	Satisfaction with waste collection.	83%	76%	3
BV90b	Satisfaction with waste recycling (local facilities)	71%	76%	1
Culture				
BV119a	Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities	45%	53%	4
BV119b	Satisfaction with libraries	n/a	72%	3
BV119c	Satisfaction with museums / galleries	25%	27%	3
BV119d	Satisfaction with theatres / concert halls	n/a	33%	3
BV119e	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	71%	76%	2
Planning Satisfaction survey				
BV111	Satisfaction with planning service by those making a planning application	69%	56%	n/a
Benefits Satisfaction Survey				

Ref	Description	2003/04 Result	2006/07 Result	Quartile
BV80a	Satisfaction with contact with the office	78%	79%	n/a
BV80b	Satisfaction with service in the office	78%	83%	n/a
BV80c	Satisfaction with the telephone service	73%	72%	n/a
BV80d	Satisfaction with staff in the office	83%	84%	n/a
BV80e	Satisfaction with forms	62%	61%	n/a
BV80f	Satisfaction with speed of the service	78%	74%	n/a
BV80g	Overall Satisfaction with the service	82%	82%	n/a

5.3 Through the medium term financial plan, the Council can point to investment in most of the underperforming issues identified above e.g. customer complaints system, street cleanliness, street theatre, leisure facilities and disinvestment where a decision has been made not to make an area a local priority e.g. the museum. It is interesting to note that the satisfaction with waste recycling is top quartile. This service, along with waste collection and the Customer Service Centre is probably the most visible of the Council's activities. It has received investment and the high level of service being offered clearly has been recognised by the public. The investment in the CSC also appears to have been recognised by the public (see Customer Panel section). The waste collection service is an area that despite operational improvements this year is likely to need a more fundamental investment in both vehicles and ICT to deliver a very high quality service level, which we should aim for on our most visible services.

Table 2 - Comparison of satisfaction survey results with other authorities in the county

BVPI No.	1.1 Description	Bromsgrove	Malvern Hills	Wychavon	Worcester City	Redditch	Wyre Forest
CORPORATE HEALTH							
3	Overall Satisfaction with the way the authority runs things	51%	57%	65%	61%	54%	50%
4	Satisfaction with complaint handling	31%	36%	45%	42%	35%	37%
ENVIRONMENT							
89	Satisfaction with street cleanliness	62%	74%	77%	69%	72%	62%
90a	Satisfaction with waste collection	76%	87%	84%	79%	87%	67%
90b	Satisfaction with waste recycling (local facilities)	76%	86%	80%	72%	79%	73%
1.2 CULTURE							
119a	Satisfaction with sports and leisure facilities	53%	61%	66%	66%	56%	65%
119b	Satisfaction with libraries	72%	-	80%	75%	-	82%
119c	Satisfaction with museums / galleries	27%	49%	37%	60%	33%	42%
119d	Satisfaction with theatres / concert halls	33%	79%	38%	57%	53%	32%
119e	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	76%	85%	81%	74%	78%	76%

- 5.4 For most of the satisfaction indicators the trend for Bromsgrove has been favourable, overall satisfaction increased, compared to an average decrease nationally. Where the national trend increased Bromsgrove results, in most cases, increased by a bigger margin. Likewise, where the national trend was a decrease then Bromsgrove results usually decreased by a lesser amount. The only two indicators where Bromsgrove trend was worse than the national trend was BV 89 – street cleanliness and BV90a – waste collection; however, celebrations about Bromsgrove results bettering the national trend need to be tempered by the fact that for most of the satisfaction indicators Bromsgrove was starting from a very low base, two exceptions being BV90b – recycling (top quartile) and BV119e – parks and open spaces (2nd quartile).

Customer Panel Survey

Quality of Life

- 5.5 The quality of life survey identified that 74% of residents have not used the Artrix which is a clear customer access issue. Similarly, 76% of those surveyed rarely or never use public transport and 11% rated public transport as Excellent or Good. The Council clearly needs to work in partnership with the County Council, who are the transport authority, on the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy and improve public transport in the District, as clearly this is a critical enabler for improving customer access. It is interesting to note that 73% of those surveyed support the introduction of a community transport scheme. The planned new Bromsgrove Railway Station will also be a key development.
- 5.6 For Health, cheaper entry fees and increased promotion were cited as the top 2 reasons likely to increase usage, 61% of those surveying stating that they did not have enough information to make choices about leisure activities in the District.
- 5.7 For older people, being able to live in their homes longer (61%) and community transport (35%) were the key issues. The former has been picked up as a key issue in the new Housing Strategy and the latter has just received funding through the 2009/2010 budget round.
- 5.8 The main issue affecting young people is the lack of things to do (57%). Youth clubs, sports coaching and events were the top priorities for rectifying this. We also need to consider how we improve children and young peoples' awareness of the extensive range of activities that our Sports Development Team and Neighbourhood Wardens already deliver.

Customer Satisfaction

- 5.9 Customer feedback and performance indicators are a key aspect of any improvement agenda. The Council has in place a corporate performance management framework, including two customer surveys per annum, which was supplemented this year by the new Place Survey (the Council also surveys its own staff every year). The Council has also introduced a complaints software package across the Council, which provides further analysis on the nature of our complaints. The Council has also been producing good quality performance data for the Customer Service Centre since its inception.

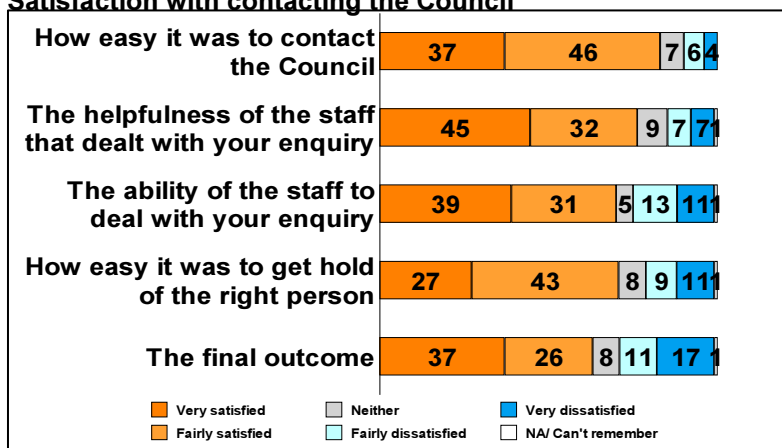
Customer Satisfaction Survey

- 5.10 Bromsgrove District Council commissioned Snap SurveyShop to assist with our Customer Satisfaction Survey 2008. Unlike the Place Survey, the Customer Satisfaction Survey allows us to ask specific questions about our services. The Council has also recently undertaken several Focus Groups on Customer Access which also provided a great deal of feedback to the Council on its customers' experiences. Overall, the feedback about customer service from the Customer Satisfaction Survey and the Focus Groups is increasingly positive; however, there is still considerable room for improvement. The following are key extracts from the Customer Satisfaction Survey:-

Ease of accessing the Council

- 5.11 63% of all respondents had contacted the Council in the last year of these, 57% last made contact over the phone and 35% visited the Customer Service Centre. The majority who made contact in the last 12 months (61%) said they would prefer to contact the Council over the phone. 23% preferred to visit in person and 10% to make contact via email. The main reasons for contact were to request information (27%), to register a complaint (24%) or to make an application (16%).

Satisfaction with contacting the Council



Base: All respondents who have contacted the Council in the last 12 months (342~360)

- 5.12 Those who had contacted the Council were asked how satisfied or dissatisfied they were with different aspects of their contact. 83% of respondents found accessing the Council easy (this rose to 98% in the over 75s). 70% were satisfied with how easy it was to get hold of the right person, 77% with the helpfulness of staff, 71% with the ability of staff to deal with their enquiry, and 63% with the final outcome of their enquiry. These are excellent figures particularly the 83%. The focus groups held on customer access allowed us to research why the other 17% found contacting the Council difficult.

Recommending the Customer Service Centre

- 5.13 Three quarters (73%) would recommend the use of the Centre to a friend, this figure was relatively constant across different groups: from 72% in males to 73% in females, and from 73% in 35-54 year olds to 86% in under 35s.

Would you recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend?



Base: All respondents who have visited the CSC (202)

- 5.14 Respondents who had visited the Customer Service Centre were asked to rate different elements of their experience. The most positively rated elements were; the ease of getting through the door (60%), the availability of parking places (53%), the lighting (52%), the height of counters (49%), and the signs and display materials (49%).

Length of time waiting when calling the Council

- 5.15 Respondents were asked what they felt was an acceptable length of time to wait before having their call answered when calling the Council. The majority (84%) said it should be answered within 6 rings or less (35 seconds). Females (63%) were more likely than males (49%) to have phoned, while males (42%) were more likely than females (29%) to have visited the Customer Service Centre. Older respondents were also more likely to have visited the CSC in person than younger respondents, while younger respondents were more likely to have phoned.

Frequency of Internet use

- 5.16 Nearly 7 in 10 respondents (69%) had internet access at home or at work. 34% had access at home and at work, 32% access at home only and 3% had access at work only. Older respondents were significantly less likely to have Internet access; however, 84% of residents claimed to have used the Council's Internet site less than once a year.

Customer Focus Groups

- 5.17 As part of the research for this updated Customer First Strategy, a number of customer focus groups were conducted.

Customer Standards

- 5.18 There were many positives from the focus group on our customer standards. These included the response of e-mails, which invariably is much faster than our current standard. Similarly, the experience of the CSC was very positive, with customers commenting favourably on the speed of response and the fact that they get through to a human being. Similarly visiting the CSC was generally viewed as a positive experience. The key area for improvement, identified by residents included:-

- Changing the Council's telephone on hold music.
- Back office use of voicemail and being passed around.
- An automatic response to e-mails (as used by many companies) that acknowledges the e-mail and sets out our standard response time.
- A response to all letters, even if they just require an acknowledgement.
- Improved information about councillors – only 20% knew who their councillor was.
- Improved marketing of the Website, other access channels, complaints procedure and customer standards.
- Improved marketing of PACT meetings.
- Return phone calls to customers from senior management to find out about their experience.
- A unique reference number for a customer contact, so it can be traced and returned to.
- The simplification of forms.
- More information at the CSC on other public providers.
- The introduction of a free telephone number to assist those on low incomes.
- Greater efforts to assist those who have difficulty filling in forms through outreach work.
- A list of named officers and their departments and phone numbers.

5.19 All of these ideas have been built in to the updated action plan, with the following exceptions: the list of named officers (this would bypass the CSC which is the main access channel for the Council). A free telephone number would be too expensive for the Council and the current number is a local rate and therefore comparatively very cheap; the use of voicemail (the Council would have to employ more staff in the back office to cover a low number of calls). Voicemail can work, if residents are rung back promptly i.e. within 24 hours, but we need to adhere to this standard and publish it.

5.20 Our existing corporate customer standards are:-

1. Respond to customer letters within 10 working days or letting the customer know if it is going to take longer. This may be by e-mail, letter or telephone.
2. Acknowledging customer feedback within 3 working days. This may be by e-mail, letter or telephone.

3. Providing a full response to customer complaints within 10 working days or letting the customer know if it is going to take longer.
4. Answering the telephone within 6 rings.
5. Responding to voicemail messages within 2 working days.
6. Being polite at all times and aiming to listen and understand our customers needs.
7. Ensuring that our services, offices and information are accessible as possible to all our customers.
8. Ensuring that a senior officer from the Council will attend at least 85% of PACT meetings.

5.21 The focus group amended these to:-

1. Acknowledging all customer contacts within 3 days and stating in the acknowledgement that we will provide a full response within 10 working days (if not possible within the 3 days).
2. Responding fully to customer contact within 10 working days and letting the customer know within this timescale if it is going to take longer.
3. Providing a full response to a customer complaint within 5 working days and letting the customer know within the timescale if it is going to take longer.
4. Answering the telephone within 6 rings.
5. Responding to voicemail messages within 2 working days.
6. Ensuring that our services, offices and information are as accessible as possible to all our customers.
7. Ensuring that a senior officer from the Council will attend at least 85% of PACT meetings.

5.22 A new set, based on this feedback and other considerations is set out below:-

1. Providing an automatic response to e-mails and responding fully within 3 days or letting the customer know if it is going to take longer and why.
2. Responding fully to letters within 10 days or letting the customer know if it is going to take longer and why.
3. Responding fully to customer contact within 10 working days and letting the customer know within this timescale if it is going to take longer.

4. Providing a full response to customer complaint within 5 working days or letting the customer know within this timescale if it is going to take longer and why.
 5. Answering the telephone within 6 rings.
 6. Responding to voicemail messages within 1 working day.
 7. Ensuring that our services, offices and information are as accessible as possible to all our customers.
 8. Ensuring that a senior officer from the Council will attend at least 85% of PACT meetings.
 9. Being polite at all times and aiming to listen and understand our customers needs.
- 5.23 The “being polite at all times” has been re-inserted as, while customers view this as a given, it is important that we communicate to our staff about our expectations as well as our customers. The voicemail has been reduced to one day. The two days was to cover weekends, but it confuses customers. The focus group accepted it, because it was explained to them. The 3 days for e-mails was suggested by the Equalities and Diversity Forum, who felt that the general speed of electronic communication meant a tougher standard, should be set. “Customer contact” has been split between e-mail, letter and telephone to provide clarity.

Customer Access

- 5.24 This feedback from the focus group makes depressing reading. There were clear examples of avoidable contact, due to service failure (and people tend to remember bad experiences). Clearly, a key problem is customers being passed around, not getting a response, a lack of information and lack of ownership. Two service areas seemed to be causing customers a particular concern; Highways (a County Council function) and Planning (a District Council function). We need to consider how we can fast track improving these areas and would suggest Planning, given it is our function. Options may include working with the planning team to identify what excellence looks like and what it is going to take to get there or some form of external peer review, for example, by the I&DeA. Comments from the focus groups included:-

“for these types of enquiry, residents find it easy to contact the council and the council appears to deal with the issues very quickly and effectively”. Complicated requests cause problems”.

“Overall, respondents are aware of how to contact the Council and don’t appear to have a problem doing so; it is more dissatisfaction and frustration with how the enquiry is dealt with (if at all) once it reaches the Council e.g. calls/voicemails not being returned, letters not being actioned”.

“I just want one letter from the right persons, not several letters from different people passing it over”.

“Already have a surgery in the area”

- 5.25 Lack of ownership, empathy on issues and being passed around were constantly cited as issues. We need to measure the extent to which this is happening, but also work with staff on resolving these issues, on the assumption that the average member of staff wants to give good customer service, but something is preventing them from doing so. A 24 hour voicemail for CSC was suggested while not many knew who their councillor was, but those who had used them found them useful for complicated issues:-

“it seems that proactive councillors are a good resource and could be used more at a local level”

- 5.26 Transport access to the CSC was not seen as a major issue, due to the ease of contacting the CSC by telephone. The main concern was around more complicated issues and complaints. Outreach and satellite CSCs were not seen as key improvements by residents (the focus groups were held in Wythall, Rubery and Hagley).
- 5.27 Remote video links were discussed, but not received favourably. There was a view that we “rely too much on technology”, that it would “scare people” and “I wouldn’t want to go to my corner shop and speak to my Council!”
- 5.28 Opening times not identified as issue, but regular feedback on complaints and information requests were.

Older People Focus Groups

- 5.29 A number of focus groups were also held with Older People. The following paragraphs consider the range of issues they came up with.
- 5.30 Fixed incomes and Council Tax and taxation in general came up as issues. Related to this was the need for clearer signposting to available benefits.
- 5.31 The social isolation caused by caring for partners, transport (being able to get on buses and better information) were identified as issues, as was the fear of using the shopmobility scooters and the need for training on them.
- 5.32 Older residents spoke well of health care, but getting to services an issue. They do not want outreach services, but better transport links, including Saturday mornings.
- 5.33 Like all residents a better retail offer in Bromsgrove was a concern. More specific to this age group was a desire to have a regular programme of social activities for older people in the District. A walkthrough linking town centre and Sanders Park was also suggested.
- 5.34 Access to good quality sheltered accommodation and nursing homes was a major concern for all attendees, something that is being addressed through the updating of the Housing Strategy.

5.35 Roads and pavements consistently came up as a problem as did car parking and green waste. The focus group facilitator's comments on these issues were:

"These responses may demonstrate that respondents were generally so comfortable in their lives, and so in control of them that there was little else to worry them".

Younger People

5.36 Younger people were not directly consulted as part of the research for this Strategy, however, the Council has now held two Children and Young People's Conferences and looked at practice at other councils, in particular, Westminster LBC. A number of potential developments have emerged:-

- The need for a place to hang out in the town centre, since the McDonalds closed.
- A website aimed at young people.
- Transport for young people.
- A magazine aimed specifically at young people.

Equalities and Diversity and Disabled User Group

5.37 The Council has taken significant steps over recent years to engage with minority groups in our community. Key improvements currently being worked on include:-

- Town centre toilets.
- A community transport scheme.
- BLAGG.
- A translation service.
- Employment for people with disabilities.
- Town centre layout, in particular, drop kerbs.
- A DDA compliant Bromsgrove railway station.
- In person.
- Quicker response times for customer standards.

5.38 Feedback from the Equalities and Diversity Forum and DUG was generally positive about the Council. Members of these groups tended to prefer contact in person and wanted quicker response times than the set standards, particularly for e-mails.

- 5.39 A key point to emerge from the work with these two groups is the difference between their satisfaction levels and those of the general public. Despite the fact that we are still to deliver most the key points they have raised, the process of dialogue appears to have had a considerable impact on their satisfaction. For example, looking at the town centre, their satisfaction levels are invariably twice or three times those of the general public.

Performance Indicators

- 5.41 The Council was the 6th fastest improving Council in England for 2007/2008. Local indicators have also seen a significant improvement; in particular, the CSC (see overleaf) is now achieving its targets for average speed of answer and calls answered whilst continuing to achieve a 90% plus resolution at the first point of contact.

Ref	Description	Freq	C or S		Apr.	May.	Jun.	Jul.	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.
CSC	Monthly Call Volumes Customer Contact Centre	M	S	Target								
				Actual	9,85	7,576	6,341	7,215	6,275	7,497	6,931	6,563
CSC	Monthly Call Volume Council Switchboard	M	S	Target								
				Actual	6,243	5,629	5,412	5,657	4,842	5,389	5,081	4,361
CSC	Resolution at First Point of Contact all services (percentage)	M	S	Target	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00
				Actual	98.00	98.60	98.90	99.00	98.70	98.40	99.00	99.00
CSC	Average Speed of Answer (seconds)	M	S	Target	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
				Actual	34	36	26	28	22	24	18	17
CSC	% of Calls Answered	M	S	Target	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00	85.00
				Actual	78.00	77.00	87.00	83.00	94.90	88.70	91.00	91.00

6. Comprehensive Performance Assessment and Peer Review

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

- 6.1 Placing the customer at the heart of Council activity was the first key recommendation from the Council's first Comprehensive Performance Assessment. In order to do this, the Audit Commission recommended that:-
- ✚ The Council base service planning and delivery on the outcomes of both evidence based needs assessment and inclusive consultation; and
 - ✚ Make customer satisfaction a key deliverable for all managers and staff and take robust and timely action to address dissatisfaction.
- 6.2 A key point to emerge from the CPA was the Audit Commission's view that while senior management and front line staff at the CSC were committed to Customer First, there is "still too much complacency from the rest of the organisation to the changes that need to be implemented".
- 6.4 The March 2009 CPA moved the Council's overall rating up to "Fair" and commented favourably on the CSC, the transactional website, customer first training and customer standards being in place; conversely, the report identified further outreach work, better communication of available services and access to them, the use of customer complaints data to improve services and greater consistency of customer care, as areas for improvement. The overall recommendation relating to customer service was:-
- A culture of customer focus should be fully established at all levels within the Council.
- 6.5 Other recommendations included the need to feedback to customers, a focus on customer outcomes, the routine evaluation of projects (so that we assess whether they deliver benefits to the customer) and workforce planning.

I&Dea Peer Review

- 6.5 The Council underwent and I&DeA Peer Review in May 2007. The peer review team made 12 recommendations. The Council's Corporate Management Team accepted most of these recommendations; however, all the recommendations focused on process and there were not specific recommendations (based on good practice from other authorities) on how to improve customer service. This was disappointing. These and the Council's response to them are set out on the following page:-

Ref.	Recommendation	Response
4.4.1	Prioritise initiatives in the Council. There was evidence that a great deal had been achieved, but the pace of change is fast and it is unlikely that it can be continued at the same pace without impacting on key people in the Council.	<p>The Council will have an opportunity to update its Improvement Plan again for July 2008 Cabinet. The Council should achieve a rating of Fair during 2008. The Council has also recently recruited an Executive Director Services. The target of achieving 5 CharterMarks by March 2010 has also been dropped. All four of these actions, should enable some reduction in the pace to a more acceptable level.</p> <p>09/10 Update - Council scored a 3 on prioritisation in CPA.</p>
4.4.2	Clarify the roles of all Members in implementing the Customer First Strategy	<p>The peer review team suggested that the Customer First Board include Members. The Portfolio Holder for Customer Services was invited to attend the Board; however, this would have meant another evening meeting. The Portfolio Holder already meets with Assistant Chief Executive and Head of E-Government and Customer Service each month and received a copy of the minutes from the Board. In addition, the Council has a Cabinet, PMB, Scrutiny model which is functioning better and better; focus should be maintained on improving the effectiveness of these formal committees. This recommendation was rejected; however, Members of PMB will be going “back to the floor” to listen to calls at the CSC in January. If this pilot proves successful “back to the floor” could be rolled out to all Members. We also need to increase all Member involvement in the next budget round (from the beginning of the process).</p> <p>09/10 Update – Portfolio Holder linked to Customer First Board.</p>

4.4.3	Define a Customer Access Strategy for Bromsgrove which meets the needs and aspirations of the Members and the community; this should consider the use of all channels and be used to inform discussions in the Worcestershire Hub partnership.	<p>Satellite CSCs around the District is an expensive approach and the need is not proven and needs a business case with clear evidence of a market or need before investment is made. Section 3.7 identified that the under 35s had an issue with accessing the CSC. They are a more mobile age group, which suggests the access issue is less about location. We will need to undertake some survey and focus group work in 2008 to determine the access issues we face.</p> <p>09/10 Update – Update Strategy includes section on Customer Access.</p>
4.4.4	Produce a Consultation Strategy which includes a feedback process.	<p>Updated Strategy agreed at November 2007 Cabinet. Each consultation is different, so there cannot be a standard way of feeding back; however, we should look to feedback to the public on every consultation exercise undertaken.</p> <p>09/10 Update – Community Engagement Strategy in place, but need to improve feedback from consultations.</p>
4.4.5	Implement a corporate complaints process and purchase a system.	<p>Purchased and due to be implemented on 31 January 2008.</p> <p>09/10 Update – System in place and quarterly reports being produced.</p>
4.4.6	Establish a programme and project management framework for the Improvement Plan which is consistently applied across the Council and can be utilised to direct the	<p>Bid made to Capacity Building Fund for Change Manager in Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team. This bid, if successful, should provide sufficient resource to</p>

	Customer First programme.	complete this work. 09/10 Update – Improvement Manager appointed. Programme Board in place.
4.4.7	Review the Spatial project to ensure that it is still fit for purpose, that the Council will achieve the benefits set out in the business case and identify any areas of the project which will provide early returns. The review team believe it might be advisable to split it more clearly into discrete work elements with very overt milestones so that it might be more easily managed and monitored.	Project has been reviewed and new supplier procured. 09/10 Update – Spatial Project delivered to time and budget.
4.4.8	Improve front office/back office working to ensure that the customer receives best possible service. This requires open, two way communications, will include work to improve system interfaces and recognise the need to be explicit about ownership of requests and enquiries.	The Customer First Board are now undertaking a range of customer clinics to provide senior management focus on some of the organisational sticking points that are causing problems. Also, the Change Manager post (above) should be able to undertake some business process re-engineering work on these issues. Asking the CSC to maintain a log of some of the calls put through to the “back office” and then spot checking what happened to these requests may also increase the organisational discipline required to deliver better customer service. 09/10 Update – Increased work between CSC and “back office”. Further migration planned, in particular, planning. Service has improved.
4.4.9	Develop a Bromsgrove position on shared services and communicate this to key stakeholders to ensure that Bromsgrove is in control of its own destiny.	The Council is increasingly working with Redditch. This work needs to progress further, so that it can be evaluated, before the Council can determine whether this is the right approach or whether the Council needs to consider that shared services model being considered by the three

		<p>southern districts. The Council's basic position is clear. If the business case makes sense, the Council will sign up. The recent "business case" for a shared service model of "the Hub" was only an outline proposal and needed further work.</p> <p>09/10 Update – Position is that Joint CEO is our favoured business model.</p>
4.4.10	Introduce a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the Customer First training that had been and will be delivered.	<p>The Customer First Board has agreed that members of the Corporate Communications, Policy and Performance Team will do spot checks on compliance with the Customer Manual.</p> <p>09/10 Update – Some spot checking introduced, but too limited to have any real impact. Mystery shopping to form part of front end of Customer First Part 3 training.</p>
4.4.11	Ensure that internal communications are relevant in terms of content and language and continue to drive both internal and external communications.	<p>The Council's communications is much improved; however, too much language is still in a professional versus customer style. Every manager to go through Plain English training and introduce Plain English clinics.</p> <p>09/10 Update – Positive feedback from Employee Survey, but press coverage blighted by relationship with Advertiser/Messenger and difficult decisions we have had to take.</p>
4.4.12	Enhance the performance management framework to include customer service metrics, satisfaction levels and complaints. Ensure that the improvements that are delivered can be clearly demonstrated.	<p>More customer service performance indicators are being introduced through the 2008/2011 Council Plan. Further changes will be made each year as the Customer Panel survey is refined.</p>

		09/10 Update – Corporate KPIs updated with new perception measures and satisfaction measures.
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Housing Service Inspection

- 6.6 Since the Strategy review, the Council's Housing Service has been inspected and achieved a one star, with promising prospects. The inspection was particularly critical of the need to produce a customer access strategy and the need to benchmark the Council's practice and engage further with residents about access channels and customer standards. This work has now been undertaken.
- 6.7 The Council visited both Shropshire County Council (now a unitary) and Wychavon DC. We have also considered a two star inspection report for Suffolk Coastal District and its Customer Access Strategy.

Shropshire County Council

- 6.8 Four key points emerged from the visit to Shropshire:-
- Their equivalent of the customer service centre was answering calls in consistently under five seconds (they are an excellent rated Council). We asked residents about call waiting times. They were happy with the existing speed of answering.
 - Their use of VDU technology, to enable residents to dial up from pubs and shops with this technology and undertake transactions face to face; whilst impressive, the call centre did not receive one call through access channel, in the time we were at the call centre. We asked our residents about this technology as part of our customer research (see section 5.27).
 - The provision of PCs in pubs, post offices, community halls etc. to enable improved customer access. We also consulted residents on this. This does not seem to be a key issue for residents; however, we should remain alert to such opportunities if demand does arise e.g. MARC etc.
 - The relative size of Shropshire County compared to a District like Bromsgrove. The provision of two CSCs (Bromsgrove and Redditch) means the District is already comparatively well served; however, public transport from some areas may be an issue. Rather than look to create more hubs, which are expensive in absolute terms and expensive in terms of their relative usage, we should look to work with the County Council to improve our understanding of transport accessibility, through the Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy and our own community transport scheme.

Wychavon District Council

- 6.12 Two key points emerged from the Wychavon visit. The decision to pilot Mosaic and an abandoned trial at remote working (as now currently being trailed with benefits in Rubery). Residents simply did not take up this type of service in Wychavon and the service was abandoned. Again, this points to focusing on our main access channels (see Fig. 1), marketing them better, improving them and linking to transport strategy.

Suffolk Coastal District Council (SCDC)

- 6.13 SCDC received its “Access to Services” inspection in January 2009 and received two stars with promising prospects for improvement. The Audit Commission define access through four broad themes: ease of access to services, using e-government to support access to services, reaching all parts of the community and partnership working.
- 6.14 A useful way to judge Bromsgrove’s position is to look at our position relative to the strengths and weaknesses identified in the report:-

Strengths	Bromsgrove DC Response
High levels of satisfaction.	Improving, but from low base. Engagement and communication critical along with improved services and visible outcomes e.g. town centre.
Services generally very responsive.	Much improved through CSC, PACT and service standards. Need to use mystery shopping to really determine whether we are responsive, but complaints of this nature low with the exception of complex contacts that require multiple responses.
Wide range of information sources used to inform and tailor service delivery.	Need to investigate this further at a team level through Customer First Part 3.
All e-Government targets met.	Spatial delivered on time and to budget.
High quality information available for service users.	Probably mixed. Appointment of Graduate Marketing Officer and review through Customer First Part 3.
Access and engagement activities use a variety of techniques.	Not convinced about access through depot etc. CPA positive feedback on engagement. Look at access channels through Customer First Part 3.
Council uses impact assessments to ensure specific needs addressed.	Doing this, but more difficult to point to changes as a result of. Equalities Monitoring will be key.
Effective use of procurement to support customer service and access.	Red action on the 2008/2009 plan, so need to action next year.
Working towards Level 3 of Local Government Equalities Standard.	Similar position.
Strong operational working relationships with partners.	Partnership working much improved. Need to consider looking at developing Theme Group action plans that cover customer access.
Positive service outcomes arising from improved access to services.	No evidence available corporately, but may be available within teams. Area to check during Customer First Part 3.
Corporate standards informed by customer research.	BDC's updated in this Strategy as a result of customer feedback.

Areas for Improvement	Bromsgrove DC Response
Needs to do more on gender and sexual orientation.	Similar position.
Not all service standards have been informed by user engagement.	Similar position. Will be able to offer support through Customer First Part 3.
Council office opening times not informed by user engagement.	Council House needs to open earlier and close later, but did not come back through customer focus groups.
Council's mystery shopping produced mixed results.	Need to mystery shop as part of pre-Customer First Part 3 work.
Need for improved promotion of services.	Employment of graduate marketing officer should help this, but this is being funded by a restructure, so no additional capacity is actually being created.
Make full use of buildings that could be access points.	Disagree with this approach. Our strategy is to focus residents into the CSC.
Promising Prospects Because	
Leadership from Councillors and senior officers.	Portfolio Holder and Customer First Board.
Track record of identifying local need and responding.	Increasingly we can evidence this.
Good progress on implementing customer service team.	CSC established and migration advanced.
Information technology being used to support access.	Where appropriate, probably through outreach and visiting, rather than Shropshire approach.
Clear plans to improve access through transport options.	Community Transport Scheme and development of Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy
Barriers to Improvement	
Collation of intelligence from customer contacts and learning from complaints.	Systems in place, just need to embed them.
Process to capture and share learning from specific access improvements across service areas should be enhanced.	Use of lessons learnt reports. Need to find approach for publishing these to managers.
Partners' website and Intranet not as good as Council website.	Need to concentrate on further improvements to our site, before going on to look at others.

6.15 Other areas of note in the inspection report included:-

- Engagement work with the small business community to learn more about how they want information provided. This led to a business bulletin, designed by the business community.
- The Council operates a business forum.
- The Council undertook a comprehensive baseline review of access across all services and service providers on behalf of the Council. Obtain copy.

- Limited use of GIS.
- The use of post offices for council tax and benefits services.
- The SCDC website has “transactional status” and is used for a range of booking functions.
- Council used grants to enable broadband computer access in settlements which were too small to qualify when BT introduced it.
- Use of special website for youth groups and individuals to connect. The site is well publicised and used by people across the District.
- The website uses the GovMetric system for customer feedback.
- Participation is monitored as part of monthly scorecards (this must be similar to equalities monitoring).
- Additional outlets like TICs and the depot used for some services like parking permits and additional waste bags (disagree with this).
- SCDC has “exemplar” website design.
- Complaints data is reported to Cabinet quarterly.
- Good understanding of needs of older population, in particular, visiting officer services.
- Closure of cash office.
- A specific working group of the LSP co-ordinates customer access activity across partners.

7. Spatial Project

Background Information

- 7.1 In 2005 a wide ranging investigation was carried out in conjunction with various organisations into the efficiency and effectiveness of the Council's service delivery and business processes. The findings of this investigation are detailed separately in the Spatial Business Case. The business case was approved by Council in August 2006. The project started at the beginning of October 2006 and was completed in October 2008.
- 7.2 The Spatial Project was a transforming and modernising programme aimed at providing staff with the systems, processes and tools to change and improve the way services are delivered to BDC customers. The project has delivered the following:
- Corporate Gazetteer
 - Gazetteer Management system aka LLPG – Local Land and Property Gazetteer.
The LLPG will be used to provide data updates to the NLPG – National Land and Property Gazetteer
 - Environmental Health system
 - Estate/Asset Management module
 - Building Control module
 - Development Control module
 - Electoral Management system
 - Housing module
 - Licensing module
 - Land Charges module
 - Document Management system
 - Business Process Mapping
 - Mobile technologies
 - Web based access to mapping data
 - Integration to existing core applications e.g.: Agresso, CRM etc

Benefits and Improvements Delivered by the Project

- 7.3 Corporate Gazetteer and Gazetteer Management
- An accurate, recognised national property reference number (UPRN) for every property that links to systems such as Council Tax and Business Rates.
 - Links to the Revenues and Benefits system to standardise address information and reduce incidences of wrongly addressed information being sent to customers.
 - One central council address database instead of numerous ones
 - Electoral roll data accuracy
- 7.4 Environmental Health
- Sharing of information across all departments for items such as records of

- properties where hazardous waste is generated.
- Link to Customer Relationship Management System to reduce the amount of re-keying when customers make enquiries or order services.
- Online applications to reduce the amount of data re-keying and speed up turn around times for customers.
- Public registers available online to increase public access to statutory information.
- Mobile working enabling officers to deliver environmental services at the required point of delivery without having to come back to the office.

7.5 Estate/Asset Management

- Core information for all asset control and property management that is up to date and available
- Linking to the LLPG will correctly reference addresses and will improve information flow.

7.6 Planning

- Customers will have access to on-line planning applications and automated land searches.
- GIS will improve accuracy of planning applications and turn around times.
- Automated searches will speed up search times for customers.
- Mobile working will increase staff efficiency and potentially speed up processing.
- Workflow will improve efficiency of the current process, reduce the amount of paper-based memos leading to better customer service.
- Accurate on-line licensing applications and control to automatically update systems and records

7.7 Electoral Management

- Accurate electoral data with integration to the LLPG for addressing data.
- Electronic signature recognition
- Improved quality of output both hardcopy and electronic

8. Review of Strategic Action Plan

Customer First Board Action Plan Feb 08 – Jan 11

Key	On target/completed	Less than 1 month behind target	Over 1 month behind target	Original date of planned action	Reprogrammed date
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Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
Customer Needs Research									
1.	Annual review of outsourced customer panel.	Panel established and providing feedback.	01.09.08	31.10.08	£20,000	HB	M		Review in 2009 to look at 6 district panels, being currently looked at by County's research Unit.
2.	Survey customers twice a year to find out what they think of our services (one "place" type survey/one customer standards survey).	Surveys completed and reported to CMT and Performance Management Board.	01.02.08	31.01.09	As above	HB	M		The second customer panel survey has been received, completed and reported to Cabinet.
3.	Hold a series of focus groups to determine customer access needs and how customers measure satisfaction.	Information used to inform Customer Access Strategy.	01.04.08	31.07.08	Improvement Fund	HB	H		Focus groups held, results received, will be incorporated into updated Customer First Strategy.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
4.	CEO to continue with the "walk the wards" programme.	Short list of actions arising delivered.	On-going	On-going	CEO	KD	M		Walking the wards ongoing. Variety of issues raised ranged from missing street name plates to lack of Police Community Support Officers. Other issues identified include – fly tipping and speeding.
5.	CMT to undertake "back to the floor" days.	Issues identified and resolved staff updated on Intranet.	On-going	On-going	CMT	SS	M		New programme for 2009 and intranet page created for reports on visits
6.	Members to go "back to the floor".	Short list of agreed actions, which are delivered.	01.07.08	31.01.09	Customer First Officer	SS	M		Suspended.
7.	Staff "job swap"	Positive feedback in employee survey.	01.10.08	On-going	Customer First Officer	SS	M		Build into PDR's for 2009/2010.
8.	Expand participatory budget pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equalities and Diversity Forum to submit bids. Children and Young People Forum to submit bids against agreed budget. Citizen's Jury to follow budget process 	Budget Cycle Timeline	Budget Cycle Timeline	2009/2010 Approved Budget	JM	H		Successful budget jury. Successful U Decide event. Successful community bids.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
9.	Annual Review of consultation strategy	Strategy approved by Cabinet.	01.09.08	01.11.08	CCPP Team	JM	M		New Community Engagement Strategy in place.
10.	Co-ordinate community engagement and consultation across the council	Co-ordinated programme of work agreed and delivered.	01.04.08	31.03.09	CCPP Team	JM	M		New Community Engagement Strategy in place.
11.	Establish an annual internal customer survey – before March 2008	Survey conducted and results used in service business plans.	01.02.09	31.03.09	CCPP Team	JM	M		Medium priority. Had to focus on new community engagement strategy etc. in advance of CPA which made doing this survey impossible.
12.	Establish an annual member survey – to be reviewed next year.	Survey conducted and results used in service business plans.	01.02.09	31.03.09	CCPP Team	JM	M		As above. Also post now vacant, so no resource until new appointment.
13.	Ensure the customer service improvements identified through scrutiny (and approved by Cabinet) are actioned.	Recommendations tracker reported to Scrutiny Steering Board.	On-going	On-going	Legal and Democratic Team	CF	M		Tracker report produced in accordance with timescales. Scrutiny recommendations fed into aligned processes via Heads of Service Identified training needs fed into Modern Member Steering Group

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
14.	Introduce a scheme for "adopting" parish plans and continue to develop e-link for parish councils.	Approach agreed by all stakeholders and up and running.	01.02.08	30.06.08	CCPP Team and Legal and Democratic	HB CF	M		Approach drafted, but on hold pending appointments to the CCPP team.
Organisational Structure									
15.	Ensure the impact on the customer is a key criteria in any decisions about future structures of the Council.	Clear evidence of benefit to customer from decisions.	On-going	On-going	CEO	KD	H		Impact on customer incorporated into report templates as specific issue to be addressed.
Service Delivery Process 16 - 24									
16.	Key ICT systems introduced as part of Spatial Project and processes re-engineered to ensure customer benefit.	Services mapped and re-engineered.	01.09.07	31.10.08	£6.7m	DP	H		Delivered on time to budget.
17.	Develop customer benefits statements for each part of the Spatial Project.	See above.	01.04.08	31.05.08	Improvement Manager	HB	H		Initial report produced by Head of Service for December 2008. Further report in 12 months time.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
18.	Ensure formal Resource Level Agreements between the Customer Service Centre and each service area are in place (and migration plans).	Agree schedule to complete them. Completed RLAs	01.02.08	29.02.09	CSC Manager	RH	H		Service migration has been ongoing over the last 3 years. EH RLA is currently being negotiated. Licensing has been in migrated (Oct 2008) and has an RLA. Planning is the next service under consideration (covering service areas of, Building Control, Development Control, Local Plans) This is part of the ongoing work of the Spatial project FM2
19	Ensure all contracts include a section on the customer and how it will be addressed through the particular service purchased.	Procurement guidance and advice reflects this action. Possible coverage as part of Internal Audit work.	01.04.06	30.06.09	Procure Team	JP	M		No further action at this stage – review in 2009
20	Undertake Customer Clinics	Identified improvements delivered.	01.12.07	On-going	Customer First Board	KD	H		Number of clinics held including Planning and Environment, Street Scene and Waste Management, Revenues and Highways Top five irritants identified each CFWG (based on service failure and repeat calls) – clinics held to address issues.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
21.	Additional BPR work with Change Manager post, on interface issues between CSC and "back office.	Identified improvements delivered.	01.05.08	30.09.09	Capacity Building Fund	HB	H		Manager appointed and 3 pilots being considered with further work to follow through next years customer clinics.
22.	Review equipment and ICT requirements for SSWM Department, in particular, waste collection.	Service requirements and costs identified for 2009/2012 MTFS	01.12.07	31.07.08?	SSWM/E-Gov&Cust	MB/D P	H		The project remains on target and in accordance with the project plan. Cases for any additional SSWM requirements will be in line with the business planning/budget. This is correct and on schedule.
23.	CSC to identify a list of customer issues for the Board to look at.	Issues referred to customer clinics and improvements made.	01.08.07	Review in 12 months	CSC Customer First Board	KD/R H	H		Regular item on CFB agenda – where necessary these lead to customer clinics
24.	Focus group on Internet to understand customer issues.	Improvements identified. Positive feedback from customer survey.	01.07.08	30.09.08	E-Gov & Customer Serv / CCP	DP	M		Will be picked up as part of focus group work on users and non-users. May require a separate focus group.
Management Practices 25 – 29									
25.	All DMT meetings to have a standard item on customer issues/feedback once a month.	Minutes of feedback and delivered actions of improvement.	01.02.08	31.01.09	CMT	HB			CMT template reporting being developed. This will provide guidance for DMTs as well. First report due early April. Guidance issued to HOS for monthly report. Needs to be monitored corporately to ensure this happens.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
26.	PDR format to include sections on customer service and behaviours for all staff.	Agreed approach built into 2009/10 PDR approach.	01.09.08	31.12.08	HR&OD	JP	H		Deferred until HR&OD have capacity to complete post Single Status and work force planning.
27.	All new job descriptions to have a standard agreed opening duty on customer service.	Standard duty in place (this is subject to discussion with new Head of HR).	01.02.08	31.05.08	HR&OD	JP	M		Given Single Status, timing not right.
28.	Continue with "Bright Ideas" staff suggestion scheme	Quarterly reporting of what CMT has done with suggestions.	15.04.08	On-going	CCPP	SS	M		Needs re-invigorating as a result of Employee Survey feedback.
29.	Undertake benchmarking visits to at least 2 councils recognised for best practice on customer service.	Ideas brought back and implemented.	01.02.08	31.01.09	Customer First Board	KD	M		Completed.
Measurements 30 - 40									
30.	Undertake the DCLG Place Survey.	Survey completed to required DCLG standard, results sent to DCLG and used in future decision-making of the Council.	01.09.08	31.03.09	Will require budget bid.	HB	H (statutory)		Completed.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
31.	Measure customer standards and charter through customer panel survey.	Improved performance compared to 2007 survey.	01.04.08	31.07.08	£20,000	HB	M		Completed.
32.	Introduce resident mystery shopper surveys.	Undertake surveys, received feedback and take corrective actions.	2009/2010	2009/2010	CCPP/CSC	SS	M		To be used as an evaluation technique for Customer First Part 3.
33.	Undertake annual review of complaints system as part of review of Customer First Strategy. Review complaints and compliments data at monthly performance CMT.	Approved by Cabinet.	01.12.08	06.02.09	Customer First Board	HB/S S	M		Will need to start this work in January 09.
34.	Customer Manual spot checks	Customer Manual being complied with.	01.06.08	Quarterly	Customer First Board	SS/H B/AM	M		Some mystery shopping undertaken by Board but too limited to provide sufficient evidence. HB and DP agreed to fund some external mystery shopping as a pre cursor to Customer Clinic work.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
36.	Update corporate performance indicator set each annum with customer measures.	Agreed by Cabinet as part of Council Plan.	01.12.08	20.02.09	CCPP	JO	M		Updated set in Council Plan 2008/2011. Currently being produced by John Outhwaite for March publication of Council Plan.
37.	Customer Service Excellence Standard for the CCPP Team.	Excellence standard obtained.	01.04.08	31.03.09	Existing budget.	SS	M		Replace with organisational self assessment.
38.	Customer Service Excellence Standard for the Elections Team.	Excellence standard obtained.	2009/2010	2009/2010	2009/2010 budget bid	SS	M		As above.
39.	Review the Customer Service Excellence process and decide on whether to apply the whole Council	Excellence standard obtained.	2009/2010	2009/2010	CCPP	SS	M		2009/10

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	
40.	Ensure residents obtain feedback from PACT meetings, pilot Area Committees. Invite PACT chairs to budget focus group obtain customer service ideas.	Feedback provided in suitable media e.g. next PACT meeting for residents, Together Bromsgrove.	On-going Sept Each Year	On-going Sept Each Year	Community Safety Team CCPP	GR JM	M M		Replaced by Budget Jury and "U Decide".
Training and Development 41 - 46									
41	Ensure the "Top Team" programme includes a focus on the customer.	Agreed training content includes customer service.	On-going	On-going	Improvement Fund	KD	H		Top Team now finished.
42.	All staff to go through annual Customer First Training each year.	95% of staff attended training.	Jan-Mar each year	Jan-Mar each year	Corporate Training Budget	HB/J P	H		Training going well, given difficult circumstances at the moment. Some senior managers have not yet attended inc HB Round up of staff not attending completed. New courses required to meet staff numbers.
43	Identify coaching for middle managers including a focus on customer service and interpersonal skills	All middle managers to have attended "handling difficult customer situations" and "interpersonal communication skills".	01.01.08	31.03.08	Corporate Training Budget	JP	H		No action at this stage.
44.	Continue to subscribe to a professional customer organisation	New ideas fed into the Strategy. Attendance at professional events.	On-going	On-going	CCPP Budget	HB	M		Subscription recently renewed.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	
45.	Review customer manual	Quarterly spot checks by CCPP team. Annual review of Manual	2009/2010	2009/2010	CCPP	SS	M		2009/10 action plan
46.	Develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the customer first training	Successful evaluation. Agree approach as part of training.	Jan-Mar each year	Jan-Mar each year	CCPP & HR&OD	HB&JP	M		Results show that the Council is getting better at the basics i.e. responding but style is not sufficiently customer orientated
Internal Team Building 47 – 52									
47.	Service business planning to be cascaded to a team level.	Staff involvement, measured through annual staff survey.	31 May Each Year	31 May Each Year	CCPP	HB	M		DMTs held business planning away days in September 2007. Meetings between team managers and Executive Director set for May and have now been completed
48.	PDR process to follow business planning.	100% of PDRs completed. Positive feedback on process through annual staff survey.	31 May Each Year	31 May Each Year	HR&OD	JP	H		Process complete but one or two employees did not receive written up PDRs
49.	Job rotation and procedure manuals in place for key customer processes.	Internal audit check arrangements in place (subject to agreement with IA Manager for 2008/09 audit plan). Determine SMART measure part of audit plan.	01.04.08	31.03.09	IA	JP	L		Feed into 2009/2010 Internal Audit Plan.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
50.	CEO DMT member to regularly attend team meeting.	Each manager to attend one meeting per quarter.	01.04.06	31.03.07	CEO DMT	CEO	M		PA to CEO/Leader arranging for CEO DMT to attend meetings
51.	Hold BBQ at Council House and Depot. Hold Xmas meal for all staff (after work)	Improved morale measured through annual staff survey.	01.07.08	01.12.08	£2,000	HB	M		BBQ held 10 July Xmas party 19 Dec 09
52.	Establish a project managers group.	Group established and making better connections between projects.	01.02.08	30.06.08	Within Budget	TB/H B	M		Not established but Programme Board created and training for managers being developed.
Customer Environment 53 - 56									
53.	Review customer friendly layout in Council House reception and CSC prior to CPA inspection.	Positive feedback in Customer Panel survey and CPA site visit.	01.04.08	31.07.08	CSC	HB SS	M		Tour undertaken.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
54.	Review all customer areas for their physical suitability for our customers.	DDA Compliance target.	01.07.08	31.03.09	DDA budget	CF	H		Scope access audits completed in accordance with timescales. All polling stations assessed for accessibility in accordance with timescales Capital budgets identified and built into medium term financial plan All works monitored in accordance with the timescales identified within the Assets Management Plan and Assets Management Group
55.	Obtain customer feedback from the public through the customer panel on the suitability of our premises.	Positive feedback from survey.	01.05.08	31.07.08	£20,000	HB	M		Feedback received through Customer Panel.
56	Introduce modern customer friendly name badges for every member of staff.	Badges for all staff.	01.04.10	31.03.11	CEO	HB	M		AMD/SS have produced option paper. HR do not have the capacity to address this with Single Status and budget restructures on the go. Defer to post Single Status.
Communications – Internal and External 57 - 65									
57	Continue to undertake visible leadership events.	Six monthly staff forums.	01.12.08	On-going	CEO	KD	H		Staff Forums and middle managers sessions and back to the floor sessions. Poor feedback from staff survey which needs to be

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
									considered.
58.	Continue to ensure the editorial policies for Connect and Together Bromsgrove include a strong customer focus.	Positive feedback from Members and Customer Panel.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M		May need to re focus on this.
59.	Continue to ensure a strong focus on the customer through internal communications.	Regular articles on the customer in the various communications.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M		May need to up this and switch away from performance.
60.	Continue team and individual customer service awards.	Monthly and annual award. Posters for each award.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M		Very poor feedback from staff survey, abandon scheme and see what reaction this produces before coming up with alternatives.
61.	Retain copies of positive letters and display at reception points.	Copies in all reception points.	Start in May 2008	On-going	CCPP	SS	M		To be ready for July 2008 along with compliments on website. Sufficient letters available to do this now but have put press releases in reception instead.
Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
62.	Increase awareness and use of Council's text messaging service.	Customer Panel indicator.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	HB	M		Advertised in Together Bromsgrove and Press Releases
63.	Improve customer communication by ensuring all written correspondence is	Plain English or similar training for all middle managers.	2008/2009	2008/2009	Awaiting report on approach and costs	AMD	M		Suspended

	customer focused, clear and easy to understand								
64.	Continue to publish our press releases via e-mail and on staff intranet	Check the intranet	01.04.08	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M		Doing this but website content is not up to date.
65.	Completed review of external communications to check compliance with style guide.	Document work programme for Corporate Communications Working Group on target.	01.02.08	31.01.11	CCPP and graphics contract	AMD	M		Graphics contract recently let.
Managing the Change 66 - 69									
66.	Customer First Board to meet regularly.	Every month. Progress against Customer First Strategy Action Plan reviewed at each meeting.	On-going	On-going	CEO, CCPP, SSWM, E-Gov./Cust	KD	H		Meetings take place monthly
67.	Undertake annual review of Customer First Strategy.	Review completed and reported to Cabinet and PMB.	Feb. Cabinet each year	Feb. Cabinet each year	As above.	HB	M		Going to Cabinet June. Original date was Feb.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
68.	Introduce a programme management structure to support the Improvement Plan and project management methodology at BDC	Documentation has clear process for considering the customer in any decisions/actions.	01.04.08	30.06.08	Change Manager	HB	H		Improvement Manager in post. Presentation to CMT.
69.	Recruit Improvement Manager to CCPP Team (18 month fixed contract).	Post filled by 01.04.08 and delivering actions set out in strategy.	01.02.08	30.09.09	Capacity Building Bid	HB	H		See above
Customer Access 70 - 78									
70.	Review the need for community transport and extending shop mobility hours.	Service up and running and shop mobility hours extended if need identified.	01.02.08	01.04.09	2009/2010 Budget Bids	HB MB	H		Shopmobility open longer hours. Approval received subject to full council final approval.
71.	Respond to the County consultation on transport and ensure future transport developments e.g. railway station, interchange in town centre, improve customer access to council facilities.	Satisfaction measure in Customer Panel.	01.02.08	30.09.09	Network Rail and County Council Funding	HB MB	H		Detailed responses provided.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
72.	Continue to work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and develop the role of the Welfare Officer in Revenues and Benefits.	Increase in take up of benefits claimants. Improved debt advice for residents.	On-going	On-going	Within Approved Budget	JP	M		On-going. Economic Summit to consider further.
73.	Carry out a review of resident's access requirements and determine whether there is a need to develop area offices for the CSC and/or extend the officer opening hours of the CSC.	Business case as part of 2009/2010 budget and start of any agreed changes in 2009/2010.	01.02.08	01.04.09	2009/2010 Budget Bids	HB DP	H		Key message from Housing Inspection. Series of work agreed with sub group of CFB Series of actions now agreed for research Focus groups did not point to the need for area officers so strategic model is existing model with better transport links.
74.	Undertake a benchmarking visit to a high performing Council to look at their approach	New ideas built into future Strategy update.	01.04.08	30.09.08	Officer Time	HB DP	M		Visit to Shropshire undertaken and fed back into customer access strategy work.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
75.	Continue to work towards Level 3 of the equalities standard for local government, in particular, start to deliver service outcomes.	Equality outcomes built into 2008/2009 improvement plan and separate corporate equalities action plan on target.	01.02.08	31.07.08	Equalities Officer	FS	H		Work continues in accordance with the requirements in the action plan and in accordance with timescales. FS currently writing self assessment for level 3. Equalities monitoring an issue.
76	Continue to work on the Council's communications, to ensure residents are aware of the services we provide and how to contact us; and continue to ensure a consistent brand for the Council and improve the Council's website.	Customer Panel measures on awareness of services and ease of access the Council.	01.02.08	31.07.08	Communications and Customer First Manager	AMD	H		CCPP currently being restructured.

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority	Colour	Corrective Action
77.	Work towards ensuring full DDA compliance for our buildings	% of Authority buildings' public areas that are suitable and accessible to the disabled (BV156)	On-going	On-going	Approved Budget	CF	H		<p>All works categorized in accordance with requirements identified within the context of the Partnership Project and the redevelopment of the town centre</p> <p>Capital budgets allocated in accordance with Medium Term Financial Plan</p> <p>Works monitored by Corporate Property Officer and Assets management Group.</p>
78.	Continue to work with the Equalities and Diversity Forum and Disabled Users Group.	Identification of service gaps. Annual review/survey on Forum and Group's satisfaction.	On-going	On-going	Equalities Officer	FS	H		Meeting in accordance with timescales

9. Priorities for the Year Ahead 2009/10

- 9.1 The same 12 themes are still valid; however, we have added a 13th theme, access, on the advice of the I&DeA. There are six priorities within these themes, set out below. A revised action plan is included overleaf.

Customer Needs Research

- Evaluate customer insight software (Mosaic).
- Implement process for corporate equalities monitoring.
- Ensure regular feedback and communication on community engagement exercises.

Service Delivery Process

- Realise service quality benefits of spatial project.
- Ensure regular customer complaints reporting to Members and improved services resulting from customer feedback.
- Ensure Internet content up to date and develop proposals for improved design of site, including GovMetric.
- Complete Planning Service migration to CSC.
- Complete Lean Systems pilots.

Organisational Structure

- Ensure Joint CEO shared services business cases include how customer service is going to be improved.

Measurements

- Communicate updated customer standards.
- Review customer metrics of Council, including outcome measures and Place Survey data.
- Undertake internal customer survey.

Training and Management Development

- Complete Customer First Training Part 3 training, which will be tailored specially to the needs of each team.

- Undertake customer service excellence self assessment.
- Complete phase one of project management training for managers.

Communications – Internal and External

- Increase awareness of text messaging service.
- Research older persons' directory and website.
- Research children and young peoples' magazine and website.

Customer Access

- Implement community transport scheme.
- Develop LSP Theme Group customer access plans.
- Work with the County Council to deliver the Integrated Public Transport Strategy, in particular, two “Gold Standard” modal interchanges, a new town centre hopper service, the publication of improved route information and new train station.
- Publicise the Council's access channels (along with customer standards – see above).
- Achieve Level 3 of the equalities standard for local government,

Section 8 provides a scorecard of measures for this Strategy, drawn from the service business plans. The specific dates for delivering these are set out in Section 9, which is the updated action plan for this Strategy.

10. Strategy Scorecard 2009/2010

Customer Measures	2009/2010	20010/2011	2011/2012	Process Measures	2009/2010	20010/2011	2011/2012
Improved overall satisfaction with the Council (%)	55	57	60	Maintain average answer times at the CSC below 20 seconds (seconds).	20	20	20
Improved satisfaction with refuse collection (%).	77	79	80	Maintain call resolution at first point of contact at CSC above 95% (%)	95	95	95
Improved % of residents recommending CSC to a friend (%).	75	77	80	Undertake Customer Excellence self assessment (date)	SA Sept 09		March 2012
Improved satisfaction with Council website (%).	65	70	75	Achieve Level 3 of the LG equalities standard (Level).	3	3	3
% of complaints resolved within 10 working days (%).	72	74	75	Complete and evaluate lean systems pilots (date)	Dec 09		
How easy it was to get hold of the right person (%)	75	80	85				
% of customers getting response to voicemail (%)	100	100	100				
Staff Measures	2009/2010	20010/2011	2011/2012	Finance Measures	2009/2010	20010/2011	2011/2012
All required staff to complete Customer First (Pt 3) training.	Sep 09			Deliver £300,000 annual saving from Spatial Project (£).	300,000	300,000	300,000
Reduce sickness absence to local authority average (days per FTE).	8.75	8.50	8.25	Undertake 12 month benefits evaluation of Spatial Project.	Dec 09		

Improve employee satisfaction (%). Complete project management training for all identified managers.	30 Apr 09	35	40	Develop Grants Policy to support community bids process. Successfully bid for customer insight software (subject to Wychavon evaluation).	Sep 09 Jan 10		
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11. Customer First Board Action Plan May 2009 – Apr 2012

Ref	Action	Measures of Success	Start Date	Finish Date	Resource	Lead	Priority
Customer Needs Research							
1.	Review Customer Panel contract with a view to transferring to County Council.	Panel established and providing feedback.	01.04.09	31.03.10	£15,000	HB	M
2	Survey customers once a year to find out what they think of our services (one "place" type survey/one customer standards survey).	Surveys completed and reported to CMT and Performance Management Board.	01.07.09	28.02.10	As above	HB	M
3	Hold focus groups as and when to determine customer access needs and how customers measure satisfaction.	Information used to inform Customer Access Strategy.	01.04.09	31.03.10	CCPP Budget	HB	H
4.	CMT to continue with the "walk the wards" programme.	Short list of actions arising delivered.	On-going	On-going	CMT	CMT	M
5.	Re-launch "back to the floor" days.	Issues identified and resolved staff updated on Intranet.	01.05.09	31.05.09	CMT	SS	M
6.	Undertake the DCLG Place Survey.	Survey completed to required DCLG standard, results sent to DCLG and used in future decision-making of the Council.	01.09.10	31.03.11	Will require budget bid.	HB	H (statutory)
7.	Build "over the fence" into future PDR rounds.	Positive feedback in employee survey.	01.04.09	31.0.12	Customer First Officer	SS	M
8.	Continue to work with the Equalities and Diversity Forum and	Identification of service gaps. Annual review/survey on Forum and Group's satisfaction.	On-going	On-going	Equalities Officer	FS	H

	Disabled Users Group.							
9.	Further develop participatory budget pilots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equalities and Diversity Forum to submit bids. Children and Young People Forum to submit bids against agreed budget. Budget Jury to follow budget process. Local Neighbourhood Partnerships. 	As per Budget Cycle Timeline	As per Budget Cycle Timeline	2009/2010 Approved Budget	Vacant Post	H	
10.	Annual Review of Community Engagement Strategy	Strategy approved by Cabinet.	01.09.09	01.12.09	CCPP Team	Vacant Post	M	
11.	Co-ordinate community engagement and consultation across the council	Co-ordinated programme of work agreed and delivered.	01.04.09	31.03.10	CCPP Team	JM	M	
12.	Establish an annual internal customer survey.	Survey conducted and results used in service business plans.	01.04.09	31.03.10	CCPP Team	JM	M	
13.	Establish an annual Member survey – to be reviewed next year.	Survey conducted and results used in service business plans.	01.02.09	31.03.09	CCPP Team	JM	M	
14.	Ensure the customer service improvements identified through scrutiny (and approved by Cabinet) are actioned.	Recommendations tracker reported to Scrutiny Steering Board.	On-going	On-going	Legal and Democratic Team	CF	M	
15.	Introduce a scheme for “adopting” parish plans and continue to develop e-link for parish councils.	Approach agreed by all stakeholders and up and running.	01.03.09	31.07.10	CCPP Team and Legal and Democratic	HB CF	M	

Organisational Structure

16.	Joint CEO Shared Services	Clear evidence of benefits to customer from business case.	On-going	31.07.09	CEO	KD	H
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Service Delivery Processes

17.	Mobile working.	Complete the mobile working project to provide remote access to Council systems using CITRIX	Nov 08	June 09	ICT Manager	DW	M
18.	Smartpoint	Deliver the Smartpoint project to provide a single view of customer's details to CSA's.	Jan 09	Sept 09	Head of E-Government & Customer Services	DP	H
19.	Spatial Project Benefits Realisation	All departments involved in the Spatial Project will need to provide evidence of benefits realisation within their own service areas.	Sept 09	Nov 09	Head of E-Government & Customer Services plus other H of S for involved departments.	DP	H
20.	Annual review of CSC resource level agreements.	Revised Resource Level Agreement, to include Equality Data, agreed at CMT in March 2009. Before rolled out during 2009/10 seeking approval by Customer First Board in April 2009	April 2009	March 2010	Customer Services Manager	RH	M
21.	Planning Service migrated to CSC.	Planning migration (Development Control and Land Charging services) to be migrated to CSC from main reception	December 2008	July 2009	Customer Services Manager	RH	H

Management Practices

22.	Ensure all contracts include a section on the customer and how it will be addressed through the particular service purchased.	Procurement guidance and advice reflects this action. Possible coverage as part of Internal Audit work.	Dependent on date of contract procedure review	Dependent on date of contract procedure review	Procurement Team	JP	M
23.	Undertake Customer Clinics	Identified improvements delivered.	As And When	As And When	Customer First Board	KD	H

24.	Focus group on Internet to understand customer issues.	Improvements identified. Positive feedback from customer survey.	Completed	Completed	E-Gov & Customer Serv / CCPP	DP	M
25.	Introduce standard team agenda linked to CMT meeting.	Minutes of feedback and delivered actions of improvement.	01.04.09	31.10.09	CMT	HB	M
26.	PDR format to include sections on customer service i.e. customer standards.	Agreed approach built into 2009/10 PDR approach.	Completed	Completed	HR&OD	JP	H
27.	All new job descriptions to have a standard agreed opening duty on customer service.	Standard duty in place (this is subject to discussion with new Head of HR).	Will depend on Single Status	Will depend on Single Status	HR&OD	JP	M
28.	Continue with "Bright Ideas" staff suggestion scheme	Quarterly reporting of what CMT has done with suggestions.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	SS	M

Measurements

30.	Measure customer standards and charter through customer panel survey.	Improved performance compared to 2008 survey.	01.05.09	31.12.09	£7,500	HB	M
31.	Mystery Shopping	Undertake evaluation of customer first part 3 training to test improved access and experience.	01.04.10	30.09.10	£7,500	HB DP	M
32.	Undertake annual review of complaints system as part of	Approved by Cabinet. Quarterly Reporting	01.04.09	31.03.12	Customer First Board	HB/SS	M

	review of Customer First Strategy. Review complaints and compliments data at monthly performance CMT.						
33.	Update corporate performance indicator set each annum with customer measures.	Agreed by Cabinet as part of Council Plan.	01.12.09	20.02.10	CCPP	JO	M
34.	Customer Service Excellence Standard corporate self assessment.	Excellence standard self assessment completed and action plan developed.	01.04.09	30.09.09	Existing budget.	RH	M
35.	Customer Service Excellence Standard accreditation.	Excellence standard obtained.	2011/12	2011/2012	2010/2011 budget bid	RH	M

Training and Development

36.	All teams to go through annual Customer First Part 3 training.	95% of staff attended training. Development of customer excellence statements and customer excellence plans.	01.03.09	30.09.09	Corporate Training Budget	HB/JP/DP	H
37.	Project management training.	Complete phase 1 training and evaluate (in house methodology). Complete phase 2 training and evaluate (programme management and PRINCE2).	01.04.09 01.04.10	31.07.09 31.07.10	Corporate Training Budget	HB/JP/DP	H

38.	Continue to subscribe to a professional customer organisation	New ideas fed into the Strategy. Attendance at professional events.	On-going	On-going	CCPP Budget	HB	M
39.	Review customer manual.	Annual review of Manual	01.04.09	31.03.10	CCPP	SS	M
40.	Develop a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the customer first training	Successful evaluation. Agree approach as part of training.	See 31.	See 31.	See 31.	See 31.	See 31.

Internal Team Building

41.	Service business planning to be cascaded to a team level.	Staff involvement, measured through annual staff survey.	31 May Each Year	31 May Each Year	CCPP	HB	M
42.	PDR process to follow business planning.	100% of PDRs completed. Positive feedback on process through annual staff survey.	31 May Each Year	31 May Each Year	HR&OD	JP	H
43.	Job rotation and procedure manuals in place for key customer processes.	Internal audit check arrangements in place (subject to agreement with IA Manager for 2008/09 audit plan). Determine SMART measure part of audit plan.	01.04.09	31.03.10	IA	JP	L
54.	Hold BBQ at Council House and Depot. Hold Xmas meal for all staff (after work)	Improved morale measured through annual staff survey.	01.07.09	01.12.09	£2,000	HB	M

Customer Environment

55.	Introduce modern customer friendly name badges for every member of staff.	Badges for all staff.	2010/2011	2010/2011	?	DP/JP	M
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Communications – Internal and External

56	Continue to undertake visible leadership events.	Six monthly staff forums.	01.12.09	On-going	CEO	KD	H
57.	Continue to ensure the editorial policies for Connect and Together Bromsgrove include a strong customer focus.	Positive feedback from Members and Customer Panel.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M
58.	Continue to ensure a strong focus on the customer through internal communications.	Regular articles on the customer in the various communications.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M
59.	Re-launch team and individual customer service awards.	Monthly and annual award. Posters for each award.	01.04.09	31.05.09	CCPP	AMD	M
60.	Retain copies of positive letters and display at reception points.	Copies in all reception points.	Start in May 2009	On-going	CCPP	SS	M
61.	Increase awareness and use of Council's text messaging service.	Customer Panel indicator.	On-going	On-going	CCPP	HB	M
62.	Improve customer communication by ensuring all written correspondence is customer focused, clear and easy to understand	Plain English or similar training for all middle managers.	2011/2012	2011/2012	Awaiting report on approach and costs	AMD	M

63.	Continue to publish our press releases via e-mail and on staff intranet	Check the intranet	01.04.08	On-going	CCPP	AMD	M
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Managing the Change

64.	Re-boot Customer First Board.	Every month. Progress against Customer First Strategy Action Plan reviewed at each meeting.	May 2009	May 2009	CEO, CCPP, SSWM, E-Gov./Cust	KD	H
65.	Undertake annual review of Customer First Strategy.	Review completed and reported to Cabinet and PMB.	May Cabinet each year	May Cabinet each year	As above.	HB	M
66.	Maintain a programme management structure to support the Improvement Plan and project management methodology at BDC	Documentation has clear process for considering the customer in any decisions/actions.	On-going	On-going	Improvement Manager	HB	H
67.	Permanently recruit Improvement Manager to CCPP Team (18 month fixed contract).	Post filled by 01.04.08 and delivering actions set out in strategy.	01.09.09	31.01.10	2010/2011 Budget Bids	HB	H
68.	Continue to work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and develop the role of the Welfare Officer in Revenues and Benefits.	Increase in take up of benefits claimants. Improved debt advice for residents.	On-going	On-going	Within Approved Budget	JP	M
69.	Work towards ensuring full DDA compliance for our buildings	% of Authority buildings' public areas that are suitable and accessible to the disabled (BV156)	On-going	On-going	Approved Budget	CF	H

Customer Access

70.	Deliver a community transport scheme for the District.	Service and usage levels as per SLA.	04.09.09	-	2009/2010 Budget Bids	HB	H
71.	Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy - Town centre interchange. - Bromsgrove Train Station. - Train station interchange. - Review of District public transport.	New interchange in place. New train station open. New interchange in place. Review complete. Increased % of residents who use public transport. Increased % of residents who think public transport in District is Good.	2009/2010 2009/2010 2009/201 Completed	2013/2014 31.03.11 31.03.11 Completed	Network Rail and County Council Funding	HB PS	H
72.	Benefits pilot evaluation in Rubery.	Usage numbers.	Completed	Completed	Existing Budget	TB JP	M
73.	Continue to work with the Citizen's Advice Bureau and develop the role of the Welfare Officer in Revenues and Benefits.	Increase in take up of benefits claimants. Improved debt advice for residents.	On-going	On-going	Within Approved Budget	JP	M

74.	Lean Systems Pilot	Undertake two pilots in 2009/2010. Evaluate success and develop in-house methodology.	01.04.08	30.09.08	RIEP Funding and 2009/2010 budget bid.	HB DP	M
75.	Improve Website	Ensure website up to date. Improve platform and use of systems like GovMetric Improve transactional capability.	01.04.09	31.09.09	E-Gov/CS Dept County Council	DP	H
76.	Mystery Shopping	Undertake evaluation of customer first part 3 training to test improved access and experience.	01.04.10	30.09.10	£7,500	HB DP	M
77.	Revise Customer Standards	Link between revise standards and focus group feedback. Positive feedback from public, who remember them, by survey.	01.05.09	31.10.09	CCPP Budget.	AM	H
78.	Publish Customer Access Points, Standards and Feedback Mechanisms	Positive feedback from customer surveys that public aware of access channels and standards (fridge magnet?)	01.05.09	31.10.09	CCPP Budget.	AM	H
79.	Customer Insight Evaluation	Evaluate options in 2009/2010 and consider budget bid for 2010/11	01.04.09	30.09.09	2010/2011 Budget Bid	HB	M
80.	Appoint to Graduate Marketing Post	Marketing/Brand Strategy for Council	01.04.09	30.09.09	2009/2010 Budget Bid	AM	M

81.	Older People's Directory, linked to website.	Research best practice and develop joint budget bid for 2010/2011 if there is an identified need.	01.04.09	30.09.09	2010/2011 Budget Bid	AS	M
82.	NI14 – Avoidable Contact	Evaluate results and develop action plans to resolve areas of high repeat contact.	01.02.08	31.07.08	CCPP and E-Government and Customer Service Department	HB DP	H
83.	Local Neighbourhood Partnerships scheme.	Roll out 2 per year. Complete lessons learnt and evaluation.	On-going	On-going	£5,000 per Member/MTFS	HB	H
84.	Work towards ensuring full DDA compliance for our buildings	% of Authority buildings' public areas that are suitable and accessible to the disabled (BV156)	On-going	On-going	Approved Budget	CF	H
85.	Continue to work with the Equalities and Diversity Forum and Disabled Users Group.	Identification of service gaps. Annual review/survey on Forum and Group's satisfaction.	On-going	On-going	Equalities Officer	FS	H
85.	Equalities Monitoring	Implement corporate system. Link to future impact assessments.	01.02.09	31.03.09	CCPP	Vacant Post	H

86.	Close Cash Office	Develop corporate cash less strategy for the Council linking in cheque reduction, cash reduction themes and the promotion of alternative cost effective payment channels e.g. Direct Debit, On line and Automated telephone payments. Long term objective to close cash office in CSC increasing capacity and space to offer other services. Could include payment machines which could be a Joint project with Redditch	April 2009	March 2012	Possible budget bid 2010/2011	JP/DP	M
87.	Develop LSP Customer Access Plan	Develop customer hearbeats. Develop action plans for improved service.	01.09.09	31.03.10	CCPP	Vacant Posts	M
88.	Develop Children and Young Persons Directory, linked to website.	Research best practice and develop joint budget bid for 2010/2011 if there is an identified need.	01.04.09	30.09.09	2010/2011 Budget Bid	PS AM	M
89.	Customer Service Audit.	Develop methodology for undertaken customer access/experience audits. Roll out programme of audits.	01.09.09 2010/11	31.03.10 2010/11	CCPP	AM	H
90.	Review of Planning Service.	Action Plan for delivering 3 star service in place and on target.	01.04.08	31.08.09	?	PS DH HB	H

12. Conclusions

- 12.1 The Council is now improving at a rapid speed and has achieved a CPA rating of Fair. The Council has robust processes in place which should enable it to achieve an excellent rating in the new CAA framework; however, the Council aspires to achieve excellence in customer service and this still does not feel central to either CPA or CAA whose lexicon is one of “citizens”, “users” “access” and “non-users” rather than “customer experience”. In addition, the imposed nature of much of the transformational change, means that it is difficult for the Council to steer its own focused path towards customer service excellence in a language that staff and residents understand.
- 12.2 Rather than look to the Government’s regulatory framework for local government for motivation (as there is very little carrot and a lot of stick), the Council needs to find its own approach. There does not seem to be an obvious and simple solution to achieving excellence in customer service; however, the original approach adopted in the Customer First Strategy of looking to ensure Customer First feeds through every aspect of the Council (in the now 13 themes identified), underpinned by investment in ICT and a long term commitment to customer service from Members and senior management appears a the right way forward. It is important that we make achieving customer service excellence the central theme of our journey from Fair to Excellence.

13. Contacts

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd June 2009

Preferred Planning Guidance (PPG)17 – Outturn Report

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service (deputy)	John Godwin
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The following report sets out the operational implications of the PPG17 assessment of Bromsgrove in relation to the delivery of services within the Parks and Open Spaces section. Further more the report seeks members agreement to establish a set of key principles for the planning, implementation, funding and delivery of the services reviewed (current & future) under PPG17.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- 2.1.1 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.6 Parks and Gardens.
- 2.1.2 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.7 Amenity Green Spaces.
- 2.1.3 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.8 Provision for children and young people.
- 2.1.4 Note the comments under the recommended action relating to section 3.9 Outdoor sports facilities.
- 2.1.5 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.10 Allotments.
- 2.1.6 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.11 Cemeteries and Churchyards.
- 2.1.7 Approve the recommended action relating to section 3.12 Civic Space.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As Members will be aware following the PPG17 report to the Local Development Frame (LDF) Working Party on the 16th March 2009, the planning system stresses that a strong evidence base is needed to support the production of development plan documents, such as the Core Strategy. The Council has therefore commissioned a study on open space sport and

recreation which has informed the draft core strategy specifically Core Policy 11: Open Space and Recreation. The study has been carried out by PMP Consultants on behalf of both the Planning and Environment Services and the Street Scene and Community Services.

3.2 The Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation (PPG17) states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, like supporting an urban renaissance, rural renewal, promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development. To achieve this, local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreation facilities and by referring to this information, to set locally derived standards for the area. This study is therefore undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and the guiding principles in its companion guide: Assessing needs and opportunities. The assessment is an essential part of the evidence base which underpins the core strategy, however the document does not only relate to the Council's planning functions it also impacts on the current operation of services with in the Parks and Open Spaces and any future service enhancements/expansions plans. Some of the first core strategies to be developed were found to be unsound as they didn't have a fully compliant PPG17 assessment to justify policies on open space.

3.3 The study covers 10 types of open space, sport and recreation facilities within Bromsgrove. They are:

- 1) *Parks and gardens* – areas that provide informal recreation and community events such as Sander's Park
- 2) *Natural and semi-natural green spaces* – areas for wildlife conservation, biodiversity environmental education and awareness, such as Sycamore Drive Local Nature Area
- 3) *Amenity green space* - green spaces providing informal activities close to home or work, children's play and enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. Example includes the amenity green space on Barnsley Hall Road.
- 4) *Provision for children* - areas for play and social interaction involving children under 12, such as Barnt Green Parish Council Park play area.
- 5) *Provision for young people* – areas for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 or above, such as Stoke Prior Parish Playing Field Basketball Court
- 6) *Outdoor sports facilities* – formal sports facilities like tennis courts and playing fields (including school playing fields). Example includes Wythall Park Bowling Green.
- 7) *Allotments* – such as Hewell Road allotments
- 8) *Cemeteries & churchyards* - place for burial and quiet contemplation, such as St. Laurence Parish Church

- 9) *Green corridors* – areas for walking, cycling, horse-riding, leisure, travel or wildlife migration such as towpaths along canals, rights of way
- 10) *Civic spaces* – places for community events and setting for civic buildings, these are hard surfaced areas usually located within town centre. Example includes Wythall War Memorial.

3.4 A full explanation of the methodology of the study and the steps it followed can be found with in Appendix 1 – The LDF Working Party Report of the 16th March 09 in sections 3.6 to 3.13. Within the same report the author then went on to highlight the following key areas/priorities for consideration:

- 1) Parks & Gardens – section 3.14 to 3.15
- 2) Natural and semi-natural green spaces – section 3.16 to 3.17
- 3) Amenity green space – section 3.18 to 3.19
- 4) Provision for children & young people – section 3.20 to 3.22
- 5) Outdoor sports facilities – *section 3.23 to 3.24*
- 6) Allotments – section 3.24 to 3.26
- 7) Cemeteries & churchyards – section 3.27 to 3.28
- 8) Civic Spaces – section 3.29 to 3.30
- 9) Green Corridors – section 3.31 to 3.32

Members should also be aware that the consultation process used was reviewed by the Council's Corporate Communication and Policy team to ensure it complied with BDC requirements and was statistically robust.

3.5 For the purpose of this report the Council's Street Scene & Community department who are responsible for the current operation of the services will focus on the following areas. Any area not covered in the following sections are considered to be strategic planning issues and will be addressed through the relevant strategies for the department:

The initial comments are taken for the LDF report dated 18th March 09 and the recommended actions are to be agreed with Members and actioned by the Street Scene & Community department. They out line the key principles for the planning, implementation, future funding bids and delivery of the services reviewed (current & future) under PPG17.

In cases where the recommended action states that a review is undertaken to establish future service changes over normal management practices officers will produce subsequent issue specific reports for Member approval.

3.6 ***Parks and Gardens***

Applying the quantity standard shows that there is a current shortfall of 0.21 hectares which will increase to 2.86 hectares in 2026. As, the overall shortfall is relatively small combined with the difficulties of providing formal parks and gardens it is suggested that new provision is unlikely to be

required. Applying the walk time standard shows that the majority of residents in Bromsgrove East, North East, North and West are outside the catchment area, whereas the application of drive time standard shows that all residents can reach a park. The quality standard shows that cleanliness and maintenance are most important.

To meet the future shortfall, it is important to protect parks from development and consider the designation of pocket parks within settlements outside the catchment of a park such as Hagley. To improve the accessibility, a network of 'green linkages' as sustainable transport links is recommended.

Recommended Actions:

- Review the street cleansing, ground maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements at Sanders Park & St Chad's Park and develop improvement/management plans at each site to ensure that they meet resident expectations.
- Work in partnership with other organisations who manage/operate parks and/or recreational open spaces to assist in the enhancement of "pocket parks" in areas outside the catchment areas of BDC parks for example Bromsgrove West (Hagley).
- Continue to increase the role the Council's Arts & Events, Sports Development and Community Safety Teams play in the delivery of activities with in Parks and Open Spaces. Exploit external funding opportunities in these areas to maximise the usage and the benefit to the community for example informal exercise opportunities such as trim trails/outdoor circuit training.

3.7 Amenity green space (AGS)

Apart from Bromsgrove East and North East, the provision of other areas is insufficient to meet current and future demand. For example, settlements like Hagley which fall outside the catchments of a park and amenity space will need increased provision if possible. Accessibility is important in maximising usage. 61% of residents would expect to walk to amenity green spaces. This reflects that people considered amenity green space as local resources. The quality of sites is average and assessments reveal that a number of sites are in need of significant improvement such as Long Meadows Road AGS and Sharps Close AGS. Local consultation shows that only high quality and functional sites are valued.

To address quantity deficiencies, development of the amenity spaces into a network of green corridors and increased provision in smaller villages are recommended. It is also reminded that settlements with over 500 residents would require local access to amenity green space.

Recommended Actions:

- Produce an adoption procedure of areas of AGS that sets minimum standards of provision that area acceptable to BDC and ensure that all areas that are due to be adopted or proposed for adoption by developers are vetted against the criteria.
- Review the ongoing street cleansing, ground maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for AGS's to ensure that they are perceived as being high quality by residents.
- Review the current issues around insufficient provision and investigate the potential to increase provision where appropriate by potential change of use/increased access opportunities. Provision in the Hagley area is highlighted as a specific requirement in the report, however this situation will be eased when the adoption of 2 areas of AGS are completed in due course.

3.8 Provision for children and young people

Although current provision for children is sufficient and overlapping catchments can be found, application of the quantity standard indicates that there will be a shortfall of 0.26 hectares by 2026. In terms of quality, cleanliness and maintenance is considered as the most important factor. Almost half of the respondents of the household survey considered the quality of facilities to be good.

Apart from Bromsgrove Central, provision for young people is insufficient to meet current and future needs. Similar to provision for children, priority of provision should be given to areas without open space that can play the offsetting role, such as Hagley and Clent parishes. For quality, safety and security is considered very important. Many existing sites were criticised for their range of facilities and lack of innovative and exciting play equipment.

To help reduce deficiencies, re-structuring sites serving overlapping catchments and re-profiling sites serving indistinct catchments are recommended. For areas identified as devoid in provision, provision for new facilities should be sought.

Recommended Actions:

- Undertake a review of the play provision for children & young people and adopt a methodology where investment is made into larger AGS's/recreation ground to create multi age provision in one location, with a targeted objective of increasing young peoples and/or risk play provision as a priority.
- In areas where there are small poor quality play facilities or indistinct catchments adopt a methodology of removal of the equipment and returning the area to AGS. To support this work the Council's strategic planning team will review the planning application process to ensure that any proposed removals do not contradict any planning approval that have been granted. This process will though need to be supported by a local area consultation process were required and investment in higher

quality facilities within the catchment area and be subject to the Council's annual budget cycle or the attraction of external funding sources.

- In areas where AGS;s have been inappropriately located as aprt of existing developments consider the sale of the land to generate capital receipts to reinvest in poor quality play facilities and/or expand existing provision with in the catchment area. This recommendation will be subject to the catchment area meeting the applicable local standard.
- Review over lapping sites and ensure that any potential changes to provision consider this factor including producing a removal, enhancement or re profiling list of current play provision.
- Investigate working in partnership with other organisations who manage/operate parks and/or recreational open spaces to increase the quality and accessibility of provision in areas that currently have insufficient provision when measured against the agreed standards.
- Review the street cleansing, ground maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for play provision with in areas where there are perceived quality issues and develop improvement plans to address these issues.
- Work with other organisations and children & young people to ensure that they feel safe when accessing these services and where required provide additional support in such areas to off set access, innovation & risk implications.
- Review & Update the Bromsgrove Play Action Plan to reflect the above reviews.

With in the report specific areas were identified as requiring new or reprofiled provision. Please see officers initial comments in relation to the matter based on recent investment that has been provided via BDC, BIG Lottery and DCSF:

- Bromsgrove West, (Hagley & Clent) – These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning considerations.
- Bromsgrove North, (Beacon & Hillside) - These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning considerations. Officers are however concerned that comments relating to the Beacon ward may be misleading due to its close proximity to St Chad's Park (Waseley) and would consider any future development (in this area) is best made with in existing local provision.
- Bromsgrove North East, (Wythall South & Hollywood & Majors Green) – Due to the recent investment & improvements that has been undertaken in the Drakes Cross and Walkers Heath ward and Hollywood & Majors Green ward (Bromsgrove North East), this area will require closer scrutiny when reviewed to ensure the effective use of resources. However officer do accept that there is a lack of teenage provision in these areas.
- Bromsgrove Central, (Marlbrook & St Johns) – These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning

considerations. The St Johns requirements will also need to be considered by the Town Centre redevelopment group with a specific focus given to the proposed enhancement to the recreation ground.

- Bromsgrove East, (Tardebigge & Alvechurch) - These areas will be reviewed with in the district wide review and built into future planning considerations. However since the report was commissioned the Council has attracted external funding for a redeveloped junior play area in Alvechurch. This will need to be factored into the review, as will the recent purchase of the former MHP land by developers within Tardebigge.

3.9 *Outdoor sports facilities*

Apart from Bromsgrove East, existing provision is insufficient to meet future needs which will result in 19.59 hectares of shortfall by 2026. Applying the accessibility standard, all residents are found to have access to at least one outdoor sports facilities. Cleanliness and maintenance are considered the most important determinant of quality. The householder survey shows that 40% of respondents considered the quality of sports facilities as average and 30% considered that as poor.

Due to the quantitative and qualitative deficiencies, the protection and quality improvement of all outdoor sports facilities are recommended. Improving the accessibility to school-based STP facilities is also considered necessary to help meeting the local needs. It is also recommended that all sites should meet the National Governing Body criteria.

Recommended Actions:

- This area of work is considered within a future report relating Sport Hub provision. However the key message of the assessment were:
 - consideration needs to be given to protecting existing provision either with in BDC's control or that of other providers,
 - enhancing our own provision to address qualitative implications of current provision & facilities, with a specific reference to pitch drainage.
 - A lack of changing provision on some sites.
 - Increasing/decreasing provision (pitch layouts) to meet the local needs identified such as more junior pitches.
 - Increased access to school based provision/pitches.
- Specific areas that were identified as having an under provision were Bromsgrove North East and Bromsgrove West. Although Bromsgrove West should benefit from the playing pitch works that are currently being undertaken close to the Hagley area with in Dudley MBC.

3.10 *Allotments*

There is currently a shortfall of 1.41 hectares and the deficiencies will increase to 3.35 hectares by 2026. Only Bromsgrove Central and West have sufficient provision to meet the current and future needs. Walking to allotments is preferred and applying the standard shows that no residents in Bromsgrove North East have access to an allotment. For Bromsgrove East, North and West, the majority of residents are outside the recommended accessibility catchment. Site visits suggest the quality of allotment is good overall. Security and safety is considered as the most important quality determinant.

Whilst protection of allotments is recommended, provision in areas of deficiencies is recommended. For areas currently without allotments, provision is recommended if evaluation of demand shows such needs.

Recommended Actions:

- Implement an expansion plan for existing allotment sites to reinstate all available plots, for example expansion to Watt Close and Round Hill allotments sites.
- Where applicable utilise existing BDC land and work in partnership with other organisations to develop provision in areas where access is limited or not available. Specific areas mentioned in the report were Hagley, Rubery, Wythall & East Bromsgrove.
- Review the current booking arrangements and restrict residents to a maximum of 1 sixteenth of an acre plots per household for new tenants. For existing tenants give notice that after Oct 2010 the Council will no longer continue with multiple plot allocations over one eighth of an acre.
- Members to agree a policy that Bromsgrove allotment plots are to be leased to Bromsgrove residents only as from Oct 2010.
- Develop a process for the creation of allotment societies to over see the quality of on site provision and agree a model for future service delivery in such circumstances.
- Create a set of guidance notes with CDRP partners for allotment holders to identify best practice with regard to managing on site security and safety concerns. As part of this process undertake a review of all sites with the Police Crime Risk Manager to identify any issues for consideration by the Council or tenants.
- Create an inspection & planned preventive maintenance programme to address quality issues identified and ensure a suitable budget is available through the re profiling of existing budgets or the business planning cycle.

3.11 Cemeteries and Churchyard

PPG17 Annex states “As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one”, whereas for cemeteries “every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is a steady need for more of them”. The council’s cemeteries and churchyards officer indicates that there is sufficient

burial capacity for the foreseeable future#. There is no definitive national or local accessibility standards available and hence no realistic requirement to set catchments. Because very few people identified cemeteries and churchyards as their favourite open space, there was too few response to set a sound quality standard. But among the responses received, cleanliness, maintenance and perceived safety were considered most important.

The lack of standards means it is inappropriate to state areas of deficiency. Apart from protecting the current cemeteries and churchyard, the Council should ensure there is continued and sustainable land provision for cemeteries. In areas of limited open space provision, enhancement to accessibility and quality of cemeteries and churchyards should be prioritised.

- Please note that this comment relates to the space available at the North Bromsgrove Cemetery, however this space is current unusable and no development plan is in place to over see the creation of additional capacity.

Recommended Actions:

- Produce a design specification for the for the expansion of the North Bromsgrove Cemetery, secure a budget bids for the works required and undertake a procurement exercise in order to ensure that the above mentioned capacity is available by April 2011.
- Review the ongoing grounds maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for cemeteries to ensure that they are perceived as being high quality by residents.
- Under take a plotting exercise to establish current capacity with in church yards and to identify the future requirements that will be placed upon the Council with regard to adoption of closed church yards.

3.12 Civic space

PPG17 suggests that it is not realistic to set a quantity and accessibility standards for civic spaces due to their specialist nature. Residents highlighted that cleanliness, maintenance and perceived safety are the most important quality determinants. Infrastructure (such as bins and seats) should also be provided.

It is recommended that new development should take into account the demand for new civic spaces from local residents. Creating green linkages to neighbourhoods will improve accessibility.

Recommended Action:

- Review the ongoing, street cleansing, grounds maintenance and repairs & renewal arrangements for Civic Spaces to ensure that they are perceived as being high quality by residents.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no specific financial implications contained within this report as the resource implications required relate to officer time and/or the reallocation/re profiling of existing budgets.
- 4.2 In cases where service specific reports require additional financial support, subsequent reports will be provided to members (as highlighted in section 3.5) or budget bids will be produced in line with the business planning process/MTFP requirements.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications contained within this report, any future legal implications arising within the reviews recommended will be addressed on a case by case basis.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 The purpose of this report is to identify the steps required to address issues raised by the PPG17 assessment. Although in principle a planning requirement, due to the nature of the assessment and the high levels of consultation & inspection that are used to produce the final document, the report does allow front line services to review the qualitative & accessibility standards of current service delivery against a robust framework.
- 6.2 As such the recommendations are designed to enhance the level of service provision and make services increasingly more accessible to local residents.
- 6.3 The actions and reviews that have been identified will contribute to:
 - The Council's vision by increasing residents satisfaction (become proud) with where they live and by providing service that are on the road to excellence.
 - The values of the Council by increasing partnership working where required to improve residents quality of life, allow greater equality of access to services and respond to the Customer first agenda by using resident feedback to shape service improvements.
 - The improvements made will also directly contribute to C03 and the specific priority of sense of community as shown in section 15.3 to 15.8 (p293) of the PPG17 assessment.
- 6.4 The PPG17 Assessment report in section 15.12 to 15.15 also highlights the contributions Green Spaces, Sport & Recreational facilities make to the

regional & local documents and the Worcestershire LAA & its specific objectives.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

- Inability to influence the identified requirements due to unavailable spaces, budget constraints, capacity implications and ineffective partnerships in areas where BDC does not have sufficient land available.
- Poor publicity or reputational damage with in areas where in sufficient supply is identified.
- Reputation impact in cases where land is reallocated for different use or operational policies are revised and impact on current users.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Inability to influence the identified requirements:
 - *Additional requirements for open space built into future development planning documents*
 - *Maximisation of section 106 agreements and a prioritised approach to future budget submissions based on local need.*
 - *Medium term response plans produced to balance the delivery of existing services with the need to enhance service on a prioritisation basis.*
- Poor Publicity or reputational damage (location based):
 - *Communications plan developed to respond to local concerns and agreed responses based on reviews undertaken prepared.*
 - *Staff briefings to be held where required to ensure effective communications with residents.*
- Reputational impact on residents/users.
 - *All decisions to be publicised in advance and consultation undertaken where required. Where required alternative provision provider or alternative services recommended.*
 - *Ward Members and staff briefed in situations where local provision or the delivery of services will impact on specific groups or individuals and agreed response prepared.*
 - *Communications plan prepared on specific issues as and when required to control the flow of information and ensure suitable notification is given.*

7.3 Currently the risk identified in the bullet point in 7.1 are not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the SS&C risk register for 2009.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Please see section 6 & 7 of this report as they identify all issues and actions required relating to customers.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific Equality & Diversity implications contained with in this report, any future implications with in the reviews recommend will be considered, impact assessed & addressed on a case by case basis.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific VFM implications contained with in this report, however the recommended action will lead to a more coordinated approach to services delivery/provision, a rationalisation a the built play environment, enhanced partnership working, higher customer satisfaction with the services provided (quality of life) and a more effective use of resources in future years.

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 – Yes, this relates to the suggest operational policy change highlighted around fixed play, allotments, partnership working & AMG's.
Environmental – None but bio diversity implications will be considered in relation to future changes of use and open space enhancement.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	YES
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Chief Executive	YES
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	NO
Executive Director - Services	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

Appendix 1: PPG17 Assessment of Bromsgrove District Council

Appendix 2: Bromsgrove Ward Map and Area guide.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Local Needs Survey (A copy has been placed in members room or available electronically from the strategic planning team).

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Local Development Framework Working Party

16th March 2009

PPG 17 Open Space Sport and Recreation Study

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report summarises the findings of the Open Space, Recreation and Sports Needs Study carried out to inform both the LDF and in particular the Core Strategy and also help the Street Scene and Community services formulate long term strategies for open space, sport and recreation needs across the district.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Members note the conclusions of the study, the implications for Bromsgrove and its influence on the Draft Core Strategy.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The planning system stresses that a strong evidence base is needed to support the production of development plan documents, such as the Core Strategy. The Council has therefore commissioned a study on open space sport and recreation which has informed the draft core strategy specifically Core Policy 11: Open Space and Recreation. The study has been carried out by PMP Consultants on behalf of both the Planning and Environment Services and the Street Scene and Community Services.
- 3.2 The Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation (PPG17) states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, like supporting an urban renaissance, rural renewal, promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development. To achieve this, local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreation facilities and by referring to this information, to set locally derived standards for the area. This study is therefore undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and the guiding principles in its companion guide: Assessing needs and opportunities. The assessment is an essential part of the evidence base

which underpins the core strategy, some of the first core strategies to be developed were found to be unsound as they didn't have a fully compliant PPG17 assessment to justify policies on open space.

- 3.3 The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the West Midlands (Jan 08) highlights that the region looks forward to improving people's quality of life, having successful rural renaissance, being recognised for its high quality natural and built environment, having an efficient network of integrated transport facilities and services in the most sustainable way. In accordance with PPG17, Policy QE4 Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces of the RSS also states that local authorities should undertake assessments of local need and audits of provision to ensure there is adequate provision of accessible, high quality urban greenspace in the district. The open space study can contribute to meet these aspirations and requirements. Also, the findings could be used to influence the regional recreation provision, which will be looked at in the RSS Phase 3 revision.
- 3.4 The study covers 10 types of open space, sport and recreation facilities within Bromsgrove. They are:
- 1) *Parks and gardens* – areas that provide informal recreation and community events such as Sander's Park
 - 2) *Natural and semi-natural green spaces* – areas for wildlife conservation, biodiversity environmental education and awareness, such as Sycamore Drive Local Nature Area
 - 3) *Amenity green space* - green spaces providing informal activities close to home or work, children's play and enhancement of the appearance of residential or other areas. Example includes the amenity green space on Barnsley Hall Road.
 - 4) *Provision for children* - areas for play and social interaction involving children under 12, such as Barnt Green Parish Council Park play area.
 - 5) *Provision for young people* – areas for play and social interaction involving young people aged 12 or above, such as Stoke Prior Parish Playing Field Basketball Court
 - 6) *Outdoor sports facilities* – formal sports facilities like tennis courts and playing fields (including school playing fields). Example includes Wythall Park Bowling Green.
 - 7) *Allotments* – such as Hewell Road allotments
 - 8) *Cemeteries & churchyards* - place for burial and quiet contemplation, such as St. Laurence Parish Church
 - 9) *Green corridors* – areas for walking, cycling, horse-riding, leisure, travel or wildlife migration such as towpaths along canals, rights of way
 - 10) *Civic spaces* – places for community events and setting for civic buildings, these are hard surfaced areas usually located within town centre. Example includes Wythall War Memorial.

3.5 This study follows the PPG17 Companion Guide five-step process for local assessment and step 1 and 2 were undertaken simultaneously.

3.6 Step 1: Identifying needs

A series of local consultations were carried out across Bromsgrove. These include the *Household Survey* by which 5000 questionnaires to a geographically representative sample were sent to households across the District. The questionnaire provides an opportunity for residents to comment on the quality, quantity and accessibility of existing open space provision as well as identifying their aspirations for future provision. 481 postal surveys were returned, providing a statistically sound sample. Other consultations include *neighbourhood 'drop in' sessions* which was held in five locations, *internet survey for children and young people* where 314 responses were received, *external agencies questionnaire*, *internal council officers consultation* with 16 responses received, *parish council and elected members questionnaires*, *sports clubs survey* and *user group workshops* such as allotment users and older residents. The results of the survey have been used to inform the various elements of the study more feedback from the surveys can be seen in appendix G of the study (due to the lengthy nature of the PPG17 assessment a copy has been placed in the members room and not reproduced full on this summary report)

3.7 Step 2: Auditing local provision

PPG17 states that audits of provision should encompass all existing open space, sport and recreation facilities, irrespective of ownership and the extent of public access as all forms of provision can contribute to meeting local needs. 305 sites were identified during the audit and they were all classified by their primary purpose into one of the ten typologies listed above. Sites were assessed against accessibility, quality and wider benefits.

3.8 Step 3 and 4: Setting and apply provision standards

PPG17 recommends that local authorities use information gained from the assessment of needs and opportunities (stage 1) to set locally derived standards.

3.9 *Quantity Standard*: the quantity standard is used to define the amount of each of the various open space types the district should be providing in different locations. At first, the current standard was measured against the existing population. Then by referring to the projected population growth up to 2026 and the level of satisfaction displayed in the household survey and other consultations listed in step 1, the recommended quantity standard is set. For example, if the satisfaction level is above 50%, the recommended standard will remain the same as the current standard. However, if the satisfaction level falls in between 40% to 49%, a 2% increase in the current standard will be suggested for the standard. Similarly, a 5% and 10% increase in the recommended standard will apply if the satisfaction level falls between 30% to 39% and 20% to 29% respectively. The percentage

increases have been derived from best practice of the consultants who have completed more than 60 similar studies for other organisations.

- 3.10 *Accessibility standard*: the aim of the accessibility standards is to identify how accessible sites are and how far people willing to travel to access open space. From the findings of the household survey and other consultations listed in step 1, the most popular expected travel mode and maximum travel time are recommended as the accessibility standard. This standard is then applied across the district to identify areas where the accessibility to open space needs to be improved.
- 3.11 *Quality standards*: in order to assess the quality, all sites were visited and assessed by the consultant. Each site was scored against four areas: cleanliness and maintenance, security and safety, vegetation, and ancillary accommodation. A weighting system is then applied to these scores to reflect the most important element of each site. Once this analysis has been done it is possible to see where quality can be improved.
- 3.12 Step 5: Drafting policies – recommendations and strategic priorities
The application of local standards enables the identification of deficiencies in terms of accessibility, quality and quantity and also enables analysis of the spatial distribution of unmet need.
- 3.13 As open space, sport and recreation facilities make a major contribution to the quality of life, the main role of the planning system is therefore to ensure that these facilities are sufficient, in the right place, of high quality and well maintained. The following summarises the main findings and their implications to the Local Development Frameworks

Priorities for the Local Development Frameworks

- 3.14 *Parks and Gardens*
Applying the quantity standard shows that there is a current shortfall of 0.21 hectares which will increase to 2.86 hectares in 2026. As, the overall shortfall is relatively small combined with the difficulties of providing formal parks and gardens it is suggested that new provision is unlikely to be required. Applying the walk time standard shows that the majority of residents in Bromsgrove East, North East, North and West are outside the catchment area, whereas the application of drive time standard shows that all residents can reach a park. The quality standard shows that cleanliness and maintenance are most important.
- 3.15 To meet the future shortfall, it is important to protect parks from development and consider the designation of pocket parks within settlements outside the catchment of a park such as Hagley. To improve the accessibility, a network of 'green linkages' as sustainable transport links is recommended.
- 3.16 *Natural and Semi Natural Open Space (NSN)*

Quantitatively, the current provision is insufficient to meet the needs of residents and the shortfall by 2026 is expected to reach 5.38 hectares. However, by its very nature, natural open space is difficult to create. For accessibility, all areas, particularly Bromsgrove East and North East have accessibility deficiencies. The quality of this typology is regarded as average and vegetation is regarded as the most important factor. For example, Newton Road NSN and Falcony Centre NSN are identified in need for improvement. It is also mentioned that consideration should be given to biodiversity conservation and promotion should opportunities arise.

- 3.17 Given the already existed provision shortfall, it is important to protect sites from development. Qualitatively, apart from enhancing the recreation values of the sites, opportunities for wildlife and habitats enhancement should be sought. Lastly, to meet demand effectively, maximising access to these sites should be a priority. Provision in Bromsgrove North East and in Stoke Prior is recommended.

Amenity green space (AGS)

- 3.18 Apart from Bromsgrove East and North East, the provision of other areas is insufficient to meet current and future demand. For example, settlements like Hagley which fall outside the catchments of a park and amenity space will need increased provision if possible. Accessibility is important in maximising usage. 61% of residents would expect to walk to amenity green spaces. This reflects that people considered amenity green space as local resources. The quality of sites is average and assessments reveal that a number of sites are in need of significant improvement such as Long Meadows Road AGS and Sharps Close AGS. Local consultation shows that only high quality and functional sites are valued.

- 3.19 To address quantity deficiencies, development of the amenity spaces into a network of green corridors and increased provision in smaller villages are recommended. It is also reminded that settlements with over 500 residents would require local access to amenity green space.

Provision for children and young people

- 3.20 Although current provision for children is sufficient and overlapping catchments can be found, application of the quantity standard indicates that there will be a shortfall of 0.26 hectares by 2026. In terms of quality, cleanliness and maintenance is considered as the most important factor. Almost half of the respondents of the household survey considered the quality of facilities to be good.

- 3.21 Apart from Bromsgrove Central, provision for young people is insufficient to meet current and future needs. Similar to provision for children, priority of provision should be given to areas without open space that can play the offsetting role, such as Hagley and Clent parishes. For quality, safety and security is considered very important. Many existing sites were criticised for their range of facilities and lack of innovative and exciting play equipment.

3.22 To help reduce deficiencies, re-structuring sites serving overlapping catchments and re-profiling sites serving indistinct catchments are recommended. For areas identified as devoid in provision, provision for new facilities should be sought.

Outdoor sports facilities

3.23 Apart from Bromsgrove East, existing provision is insufficient to meet future needs which will result in 19.59 hectares of shortfall by 2026. Applying the accessibility standard, all residents are found to have access to at least one outdoor sports facilities. Cleanliness and maintenance are considered the most important determinant of quality. The householder survey shows that 40% of respondents considered the quality of sports facilities as average and 30% considered that as poor.

3.24 Due to the quantitative and qualitative deficiencies, the protection and quality improvement of all outdoor sports facilities are recommended. Improving the accessibility to school-based STP facilities is also considered necessary to help meeting the local needs. It is also recommended that all sites should meet the National Governing Body criteria.

Allotments

3.25 There is currently a shortfall of 1.41 hectares and the deficiencies will increase to 3.35 hectares by 2026. Only Bromsgrove Central and West have sufficient provision to meet the current and future needs. Walking to allotments is preferred and applying the standard shows that no residents in Bromsgrove North East have access to an allotment. For Bromsgrove East, North and West, the majority of residents are outside the recommended accessibility catchment. Site visits suggest the quality of allotment is good overall. Security and safety is considered as the most important quality determinant.

3.26 Whilst protection of allotments is recommended, provision in areas of deficiencies is recommended. For areas currently without allotments, provision is recommended if evaluation of demand shows such needs.

Cemeteries and churchyard

3.27 PPG17 Annex states "As churchyards can only exist where there is a church, the only form of provision standard which will be required is a qualitative one", whereas for cemeteries "every individual cemetery has a finite capacity and therefore there is a steady need for more of them". The council's cemeteries and churchyards officer indicates that there is sufficient burial capacity for the foreseeable future. There is no definitive national or local accessibility standards available and hence no realistic requirement to set catchments. Because very few people identified cemeteries and churchyards as their favourite open space, there was too few response to set a sound quality standard. But among the responses received, cleanliness, maintenance and perceived safety were considered most important.

3.28 The lack of standards means it is inappropriate to state areas of deficiency. Apart from protecting the current cemeteries and churchyard, the Council should ensure there is continued and sustainable land provision for cemeteries. In areas of limited open space provision, enhancement to accessibility and quality of cemeteries and churchyards should be prioritised.

Civic space

3.29 PPG17 suggests that it is not realistic to set a quantity and accessibility standards for civic spaces due to their specialist nature. Residents highlighted that cleanliness, maintenance and perceived safety are the most important quality determinants. Infrastructure (such as bins and seats) should also be provided.

3.30 It is recommended that new development should take into account the demand for new civic spaces from local residents. Creating green linkages to neighbourhoods will improve accessibility.

Green corridors

3.31 The Annex A of PPG17 states that “the need for Green Corridors arises from the need to promote environmentally sustainable forms of transport... This means that there is no sensible way of stating a provision standard”. Vegetation is considered as the most important contributing factor to quality. There is no accessibility standard available.

3.32 The lack of standards means it is inappropriate to identify areas of deficiency. But the aim of provision should be to provide opportunities for informal recreation, alternate means of transport and resources for wildlife. Protection and enhancement of the existing network (including the Public Rights of Way network) through the creation of additional linkages can help alleviating other open space deficiencies.

3.33 The recommended quantity, quality and accessibility standards in the study are summarised as follow:

Typology	Quantity standard (per 1000 population)		Quality standard (most important feature)	Accessibility standard
	Current	Proposed		
Parks and gardens	0.26ha	0.26ha	Cleanliness and maintenance	Urban: 15 min walk Rural: 15 min drive
Natural and semi-natural green spaces	0.43ha	0.44ha	Vegetation	15 min walk
Amenity green space	0.40ha	0.42ha	Cleanliness and maintenance	10 min walk
Provision for children	0.027ha	0.027ha	Cleanliness and maintenance	10 min walk
Provision for young people	0.026ha	0.03ha	Security and safety	15 min walk

Typology	Quantity standard (per 1000 population)		Quality standard (most important feature)	Accessibility standard
	Current	Proposed		
Outdoor sports facilities	1.64ha	1.67ha (0.81ha for community pitches)	Cleanliness and maintenance	Grass pitches - 10 min walk Tennis/Bowling - 15 min drive/ public transport Synthetic pitches/Golf - 20 min drive/ public transport
Allotments	0.17ha	0.19ha	Security and safety	15 min walk
Cemeteries and churchyards	Sufficient burial capacity for foreseeable future		Insufficient response for standard setting	No realistic requirement as locations not dependant on population's location
Civic spaces	Not realistic to set due to its specialist nature		Cleanliness and maintenance	No realistic requirement as provision will not be appropriate in every environment
Green corridors	No sensible way to set as its provision arises from the need to promote sustainable form of transport		Vegetation	No requirement.

Conclusion

3.34 To sum up, the open space, sport and recreation facilities should be protected from development and only facilities serving overlapped catchments could be developed. But this must result in improvement in accessibility to and quality of the nearby site. An improvement in the green corridors network will improve the health of residents, address nearby deficiencies and promote sustainable transport. Also, apart from the recreational value, the biodiversity value of sites should be enhanced. To do so, planning contributions from developers must be maximised.

3.35 It is important to note that if the housing numbers proposed in RSS change (i.e. more than 2100 houses from 2006 to 2026), then the quantity standard recommended in the study may need revising.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The study was commissioned by Planning and Environment Services and Street Scene and Community services, from within existing budgets

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Under PPS12, the examination of a development plan document will involve the legal compliance check and an assessment against three tests of soundness: 1) justified; 2) effective; 3) consistent with national policy. This PPG17 study is done in accordance with the principles stated in PPG17

Companion Guide as well as policy QE4 of RSS. This study therefore will assist the Core Strategy in passing the soundness test in examination.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

Council Objective (CO)	Regeneration	Council Priority (CP)	1. Town centre 2. Housing
Impacts			
Sufficient open space provision will make a place more attractive and hence assist in regeneration.			

Council Objective (CO)	Improvement	Council Priority (CP)	
Impacts			
No impact			

Council Objective (CO)	Sense of Community and Well Being	Council Priority (CP)	4. Sense of community
Impacts			
Local standards on the provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities will meet the needs and aspirations of local residents and will therefore enhance the sense of community and well being.			

Council Objective (CO)	Environment	Council Priority (CP)	5. Clean streets and climate change
Impacts			
Facilities such as waste bins and recycling bins in open space, sport and recreation facilities will encourage people to recycle and put rubbish in waste bins. This will contribute to clean streets and recycling. Improving the green linkages will encourage using sustainable transport and reduce emissions that contribute to climate change.			

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

The soundness of the Core Strategy is challenged in the future

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 Incorporating the local standards recommended in the study, which was the result of extensive consultation with customers, will ensure customers' needs and aspirations in the district are met.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 As stated in paragraph 3.6, a series of consultations were carried out at the needs identification stage. The household survey, neighbourhood 'drop in' sessions and internet surveys for children and young people, for example, would have included residents from all backgrounds. Also, this study will form part of the evidence base to inform the Core Strategy and consultation will be carried out with all sections of the community as the plan progresses.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 This study was jointly commissioned by Planning and Environment Services and Street scene and Community, thereby using resources efficiently by spreading the costs between Services and carrying out a study of relevance to both Services.

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 study will support the core strategy. The core strategy forms an essential part of the LDF and the policies contained within the core strategy will shape future development.
Environmental	The study will support the core strategy. Core strategy will contain policies in relation to the

	environment.
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12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	No
Chief Executive	No
Executive Director - Partnerships & Projects	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. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Local Needs Survey (A copy has been placed in members room or available electronically from the strategic planning team)

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

3rd June 2009

Sports Hub Provision

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr Roger Smith
Responsible Head of Service (deputy)	John Godwin
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The following report sets out the proposed allocation of the Capital funding relating to the Provision of Sports Hubs as contained within the forward capital programme. This report is linked to the Playing Pitch Strategy review contained within the Preferred Planning Guidance (PPG) 17 Assessment and outlines the headline areas that require consideration.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Cabinet agrees the proposed schemes/projects identified in section 3.15 and recommends to the Council that the funding allocation and projects contained within this report are agreed and implemented.
- 2.2 The Cabinet request officers to review the PPG17 sections relating to Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Facilities and develop appropriate actions plans to address these issues in time for the 2010/11 football season. This review will include where required additional funding bids to be contained with in the forth coming business planning cycle and the review of the medium term financial plan.
- 2.3 That the Cabinet request officers to implement a Bromsgrove first approach to pitch allocations and gives priority to Bromsgrove Teams & Bromsgrove League during the initial stages of rebooking.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As Members will be aware as part the of the 200/09 business planning cycle, capital funding was allocated for the review and implementation of Sports Hubs to increase the availability of high quality sports provision and to ensure that facilities/activities were accessible to all sectors of the local community.
- 3.2 This work was to be undertaken following the results of PPG17, with specific reference being paid to the section that covers Playing Pitches and Outdoor Sports Facilities.

- 3.3 The Planning Policy Guidance 17: Planning for open space, sport and recreation states that well designed and implemented planning policies for open space, sport and recreation are fundamental to delivering broader Government objectives, like supporting an urban renaissance, rural renewal, promotion of social inclusion and community cohesion, health and well being and promoting more sustainable development. To achieve this, local authorities should undertake robust assessments of the existing and future needs of their communities for open space, sport and recreation facilities and by referring to this information, to set locally derived standards for the area. This study is therefore undertaken in accordance with PPG17 and the guiding principles in its companion guide: Assessing needs and opportunities. The assessment is an essential part of the evidence base which underpins the core strategy, however the document does not only relate to the Council's planning functions it also impacts on the current operation of services with in the Parks and Open Spaces and any future service enhancements/expansions plans. Some of the first core strategies to be developed were found to be unsound as they did not have a fully compliant PPG17 assessment to justify policies on open space.
- 3.4 During the review of the capital programme in 2008/09 this work was re profiled and the funding was placed in the capital programme for use in 2009/10. This change was primarily due the receipt of the PPG17 being delayed and the Council not having the information required to make a robust decision on local need.
- 3.5 The out turn reports relating to the above mentioned areas can be found as appendixes to this report. The PPG17 reports give a detail breakdown of the definitions, methodology, context, comparator information, finding and recommendations relating to these areas and have been used as a basis for the funding allocations recommended.
- 3.6 For the purposes of this report Officers have excluded any future planning development implications as these will be address through the Local Development Frame Work/Core Strategy documents, further more officers have not considered the future demand implications highlighted and have based the recommendation on the current position with in the District.
- 3.7 The following information shows the key issues and key implications arising from the reports summary section:

Playing Pitch Strategy (section 9.1 & 9.2)

The key issues arising from the application of the methodology include:

- *there is an theoretical oversupply (17.4) of adult football pitches on the peak day across the District*
- *there is an undersupply of junior pitches (-8.6) on the peak day (Sunday). However, in practice the adult pitch stock is being used by junior teams*

- *there is an undersupply of (-1.8) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Sunday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches*
- *there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-2.0) on the peak day (Sunday)*
- *there is an oversupply (10) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)*
- *there is an undersupply (-10.5) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day, which is Sunday mornings. However, there is also a theoretical surplus of adult pitches on this day, which is used to accommodate junior matches*
- *in order to maximise resources, increasing access to school facilities should be a key priority going forward.*

The key implications of these findings for the Local Development Framework are:

- *protect all pitches from development unless it can be proven that the replacement of a facility will result in a higher quality facility in a nearby location*
- *seek to improve the quality of pitches. Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities and installation of drainage where required*
- *allow for a strategic reserve of pitches to ensure that rest and recovery can take place*
- *allocate additional land for the development of at least one synthetic pitch and floodlit training facilities for football.*

Outdoor Sports Facilities (section 8.73, 8.101 to 107)

The key issues arising from the accessibility mapping regarding the provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove sites include:

- *all residents have access to at least one outdoor sports facility within the recommended travel times*
- *all residents, with the exception of those in the far North East of the District (Hollywood and Majors ward) are within a 15 minute drive of tennis court provision*
- *the majority of residents, with the exception of those in the far North West of the District (Hagley Ward), fall within the accepted travel times of bowling greens, athletics tracks and STPs*
- *grass pitches are evenly distributed across the District but whilst most residents are within a 15 minute walk of a playing field site there are areas in all analysis areas that fall outside of these catchments.*
- *while consideration of the distribution of facilities is important, it is important to balance the desire to ensure that all residents have local*

access to facilities with the logistics of providing high quality facilities. Sites containing multiple facilities are more cost effective as well as providing greater opportunities for local residents.

Outdoor sports facilities are a wide-ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation. Facilities can be owned and managed by Councils, sports associations, schools and individual sports clubs with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports. Examples include:

- *playing pitches*
- *athletics tracks*
- *tennis courts*
- *bowling greens*
- *golf courses.*

PPG17 considers the provision of all the different types of outdoor sport facilities as one and does not break down the typology into more detailed assessments for each sport. However, for the purpose of this study each sport has considered individually.

Consultation highlights issues with both the quality and quantity of facilities. Analysis of the existing provision supports this with pockets of deficiency identified in the Bromsgrove North East and Bromsgrove West analysis areas and variable quality ratings achieved during site assessment visits. Consultation indicated that enhancing the quality of sports facilities is perceived to be more important than increasing the quantity of provision.

Generally there is a good distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the District with all residents having access to at least one outdoor sports facility within the recommended travel time. All residents, with the exception of those in the far North East of the District (Hollywood and Majors ward) are within a 15 minute drive of tennis court provision and the majority, with the exception of those in the far North West of the District (Hagley Ward), fall within the accepted travel times of bowling greens, athletics tracks and STPs.

Whilst most residents are within a 15 minute walk of a playing field site there are areas in all analysis areas that fall outside of these catchments. Both enhancing the quality of existing outdoor sports facilities and increasing access to school-based provision are considered key priorities for the District.

Sport England, the national government and wider governing bodies are targeting an increase in sporting participation of 1% per annum in the run up to London 2012 and beyond. While this increase is across all sports, there will be a knock on impact on demand for facilities should this target be achieved.

It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision for outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove that should be addressed through the Local Development Framework and/or other delivery mechanisms are:

- *protect all outdoor sports facilities from development unless it can be proven that the replacement of a facility will result in a higher quality facility in a nearby location*
- *seek to improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities. Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities*
- *improve access to tennis court provision at school sites and improve public transport links to existing sites*
- *upgrade the quality of identified sites tennis court provision*
- *investigate demand and potential for new provision in Hollywood and Majors ward*
- *focus on increasing access to existing publicly accessible bowling greens in the District and promoting wider participation opportunities*
- *increase access to school-based STP facilities in the District and develop at least one additional pitch*
- *facilitate the delivery of improved pitches including the provision of changing rooms and drainage installation.*

3.8 Also contained within the Playing Pitch Strategy report are several key facts and issues that officers feel should be highlighted when reviewing this issue:

- Bromsgrove has a relatively high adult to pitch ratio when compared against the national average. However football and rugby pitches are below the nation average.
- The number pitch available for community use is high, although access arrangements may need reviewing to ensure they are formally administered.
- Residents do not feel that the current pitches offer Value for Money due to high cost, low value implications and the current pitch marking arrangements (clubs are responsible for marking the pitches themselves).
- There is spare capacity on Saturday's within the District, although officers are aware that demand is low.
- The current booking arrangements and low quality of pitches create a usage in balance that places greater pressure on the pitches which are considered to be of a higher standard.
- Bromsgrove teams and teams playing in the Bromsgrove league are playing out side of Bromsgrove, whilst Bromsgrove's pitches are being used by teams/leagues from out side the district.
- Pitches are considered to be poor on the whole with private pitches considered to be of a better standard. But access to these sites and schools was considered to be difficult and the pitches under utilised.
- The lack of changing accommodation on site is considered to be a major issue and could contribute to cross boarder usage.
- Cricket provision was well catered for and not considered as requiring any assistance.

- Rugby Football has some difficulties with capacity for juniors but these issues do not require close attention as they are pitch marking/layout issues. There are some draining implications but the report felt that these may be more aspirational in the short term.
- PMP site visits did show a higher quality score than anticipated but these visits were carried out in the summer following the annual maintenance programme and the drainage issues were not evident.
- 2 pitches were identified as being unable to support the normal District/Parish Council usage of 2 games per week, these being Hopwood and Braces Lane. This will have impacted on the under provision figures in these areas.
- The new Cricket provision at Clent has not been included in the information provided, this has been notified to PMP and will be updated on the BDC spread sheet in due course.
- Other than Sub Area 3, existing provision is sufficient to meet local demand provided the pitch allocations & layouts are reviewed and revised. This is, though predicated on all pitches being compliant with the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) standards.

3.9 As Members may be aware during the preparation of the PPG17 assessment the Council has been approached by 2 junior football clubs to investigate the possibility of working in partnership to enhance and/or maintain their current community/football development work. Officers and Members of the Cabinet have met with both clubs and although being at differing stages, requiring differing levels of support and proposing differing schemes it is felt that both schemes will benefit the Community and meet the objectives set out in 3.1.

3.10 The first proposal received was from Meadow Park Football Club (sub area 5), who currently play out of Harris Brush in Stoke Prior. Meadow Park are an excellent football club with an outstanding reputation both locally and across Worcestershire and are waiting confirmation of Community Club status.

The current situation is that following a series of Health and Safety incidents that were out of their control, they are at risk of losing their home ground. Thus the pitches will be lost from public use, the large number of teams that play out of the site will fold (15 teams) or be required to relocate and it is more than likely that the club will cease to exist.

The consequences of this happening are significant and include increased pressure on the current playing pitch stock that may not be met elsewhere, loss of the contribution the club makes to football development and the associated health benefits of participants, increased demand on the Council Sports Development team to provide football opportunities, the loss of effective school club links and player pathways that are provided, inability to provide Football Association qualifications/courses to local residents and potential reputational damage for BDC if we are seen as not assisting the club.

At present the club has secured agreement for £200,000 worth of funding out of a total project cost of £250,000 to invest in onsite improvements including new changing rooms, community training room/kitchen area, car parking & additional fencing requirements to resolve the health & safety implications. The club have requested that the Council contributes the remaining £50,000 for this project in order for them to secure a 21 year lease for the facilities. Subject to a VAT review (the club have made an appeal for special dispensation) the cost to be BDC may drop to £40,000.

It is officers opinion that subject the club receiving Community Club Status, establishing a formal working relationship with Council's Sports development team in relation to training opportunities for residents and agreeing a set of KPI's to monitor the out turn of their improvement plan that a one off partnership contribution should be made as shown in section 4.

- 3.11 The second proposal received was from Alvechurch Lions Football Club (sub area 3), who currently play across a number on sites including the Hopwood site mentioned in section 3.7 of this report. Alvechurch Lions are an excellent football club with aspirations obtain Community Club status and increase their influence with in the local community.

The current situation is that due to a number of accessibility and quality implications relating to the pitches the club use it is finding it difficult to achieve its ambitions and increase its local influence. These issues have been raised with the pitch providers, however no real improvement has been seen and large numbers of game have to be cancelled thus affecting the clubs ability to grow and attract players for new teams.

In order to progress the matter the club have held discussions with Kings Norton Rugby Football Club (KNRFC) about a potential partnership approach to the situation, where by KNRFC will work with the football club and external funders (Rugby Football Union & Football Foundation) to increase capacity at its site in Hopwood. This would be primarily around infrastructure and ancillary accommodation, however the project team would also need to secure additional land alongside there current site to provide the pitch requirements. One issue that would require careful consideration is who BDC may potentially fund as although the approach was by the football club the actual current facilities & land are in the ownership of the rugby club.

At present total costs for the project are unknown as the discussions are at a very early stage, however it is felt that a sum of money in the region of £250,000 (excluding purchase or leasing of the land to provide the pitches) will be required for match funding purposes. Although it is difficult to establish a partnership contribution figure at this stage it is not unreasonable to expect that the Clubs would look for a 50% contribution or 25% of the total project costs if match funding is on the normal 50/50 basis.

The consequence of this project not going forward include, increased pressure on the current playing pitch stock that may not be met (as the current situation can not continue), potential reduction in the number of teams playing and the lose of the opportunity to grow the clubs influence.

The alternative course of action that at this stage has not been discussed with the football club is to the one highlighted above would be for the Council to liaise with the pitch provider and negotiate a pitch improvement plan and maintenance requirements (equipment) funded by BDC. This agreement would be predicated on the basis that the pitch provider would then issue a long term lease for the exclusive use of the pitches at set times by the club and charge them an agreed rate. It is anticipated that the cost of enhancing the current provision would be in the region £70,000, however this figure would require additional on site investigations to be confirmed.

It is officer's opinion based on the total available budget and the information contained within Playing Pitch Strategy that the most effective way of addressing the clubs need would be to enhance the existing playing pitch stock they use. It is accepted that that this approach may not fully meet the aspirations of the club and does not create the overall that Hub concept that was initially discussed. However it will create a sound basis for the club to develop over a period of time to achieve their objectives.

Any agreement that is established relating to this matter would require the club to obtain Community Club Status with in 18 months, establishing a formal working relationship with Council's Sports Development team and Alvechurch Football Club to enhance player pathways and agree a set of KPI's to monitor the out turn of their improvement plan/benefit to the Community.

- 3.12 Although not a project that is directly funded from this capital budget, Officers felt an update should be provided on the Barnsley Hall scheme (sub area 5) that was also delayed whilst PPG17 assessment was prepared. Based on the information contained with in the assessment specifically relating to a lack of Junior & mini soccer pitches in sub area 5, officers recommend the creation a junior based facility with no adult pitches.

The current site is capable of providing 2 junior pitch and at least 1 mini soccer pitch, which will go a long way to improving the current short falls in this area. This approach will also allow the Charford Recreation Ground Pitches to be fully utilised for adult games and as this site is already equipped with changing rooms, Bromsgrove league games should be prioritised. Currently one of the reasons for team playing away from the district is that they are fined if their pitch has no changing provision.

This approach coupled with the proposed Bromsgrove first policy will allow 4 more Bromsgrove Teams to play out of the site each season and contribute to the pitch resting implications identified with in the assessment.

This project will also require suitable changing accommodation and car parking to be created. Due to the budget constraints, section 4 financial implications will show and an increase of £45,000 is required to fund this project successfully from the Sports Hub capital budget. Officers would also feel that this scheme could be suitable for football foundation funding and would ask members to give permission for officers to develop a partnership to attract this funding whilst maintaining control of the facility if possible.

3.13 This section of the report relates to the need to address the qualitative aspects of the Council's playing pitch stock in relation to quality and drainage of pitches to ensure that they can support current demand and build upon this.

As stated in the assessment there are only three sites that currently provide changing accommodation with in the District these being located at Charford, Lickey End and Rubery. Unfortunately due to the demand on these 5 pitches the playing surfaces are considered to be poor and in need of drainage/enhancement works. Officers would consider this work imperative to meet current demand, increase usage and conform to National Governing Body and League requirements, as follows:

- Charford Recreation Ground (Sub area 5) – Drainage Works.
- Lickey End Recreation Ground (Sub area 5) – Enhancement Works & re marking.
- St Chad's Park Rubery (Sub area1) – Drainage & re marking.

3.14 The final section of this report relates to the first stage in addressing the shortfall in provision and is based upon sites currently under BDC's ownership or management. The following schemes are recommended to increase available pitches for junior & mini soccer provision and are designed to assist small local football clubs to develop and increase usage.

The 2 schemes are as follows:

- Aston Fields Recreation Ground (Sub area 5) – Enhancement works to the current pitch provision to increase the number of pitches by 1 junior and 1 mini soccer pitch.
- Braces Lane AMG – Implementation of changing accommodation and additional car parking provision to support additional usage of the pitches. Members should be aware that the comments relating to the pitch at Braces Lane (returning it to maximum capacity) have been excluded from the above recommendations as they are already programmed into the off season playing pitch maintenance plan for this year.

3.15 The following table summarises the above schemes/projects and demonstrates there contribution to the PPG17 assessment.

Scheme/Project	Sub Area	Justification Linked to PPG17
Meadow Park FC/Harris Brush	5	Protects current access arrangements and under supply of junior pitches in the sub area.
Alvechurch Lions	3	Increases provision of junior pitches in local area by return them to maximum capacity by addressing quality implications.
Barnsley Hall (existing project)	5	Increases provision junior and adult pitches. Allows pitch enhancement at other sites by creating flexibility to rest pitches periodically.
Charford Recreation Ground	5	Addresses quality implications and will allow more Bromsgrove Teams to play in Bromsgrove. This will also increase off peak usage and support sport development progression.
Lickey End Recreation ground	5	Address quality implications and will increase available pitches at off peak times.
St Chad's Park	1	Addresses quality implications and will allow more Bromsgrove Teams to play in Bromsgrove. This will also increase off peak usage and support sport development progression.
Aston Fields Recreation Ground	5	Increases provision of junior pitches and supports sport development progression.
Braces Lane AMG	5	Addresses the on site changing accommodation and capacity issues in relation to car parking.

3.16 Further more members will realise from the above table that no schemes have been recommended in Sub Areas 2 or 4, these areas will require further investigation as highlighted in recommendation 2.3. This primarily due to the fact that BDC has little or no provision in these areas and as such has a limited ability to address the issues at this stage.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The funding requirements associated with these schemes/projects are contained with in the forward capital programme under Sports Hub Provision.

4.2 The following table shows the costs associated with each scheme/project and there implication on the overall budget position.

Scheme/Project	Sub Area	Costs £000
Meadow Park FC/Harris Brush	5	50
Alvechurch Lions	3	70
Barnsley Hall (existing project)	5	45 (total scheme cost 258)
Charford Recreation Ground	5	35
Lickey End Recreation ground	5	10
St Chad's Park	1	15
Aston Fields Recreation Ground	5	15
Braces Lane AMG	5	120
Total	N/A	360
Available Budget	N/A	360

4.3 Following the completion of these schemes/projects the Councils revenue budget will need to be altered to reflect the increased cost of the change accommodation. However based on the current cost of operating changing rooms and the income generated from there use it is believed that this will be cost neutral. These costs will be built into the Medium Term Financial Plan during the forth coming budget cycle.

4.4 Members are advised that due the delay in the PPG17 assessment, the nature to the projects/schemes being under taken and the need to keep pitches available during the upcoming football season, not all of these projects will be completed with in the this financial year. The full extent of this situation will not be known until the contractor is appointed but these

issues will be used in the procurement exercise as a way of vetting applicants to ensure the works are completed as soon as possible.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are two areas within these schemes/projects that related to specific legal implications these being:

- Contract procedures relating to the procurement and installation works associated with these schemes/projects.
- Funding and usage agreements that need to be developed to govern the partnership arrangements that are proposed in relating to the football clubs reviewed in sections 3.10 & 3.11.

5.2 All other aspects relating to this report that have a legal implication for example hire agreements are covered by established operating procedures.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

6.1 The purpose of this report is to identify the funding allocations for Council's plan to develop Sports Hub Provision and the steps required to address the issues raised by the PPG17 assessment relating to the Play Pitch Strategy & Outdoor Sports Facilities. Although PPG17 is in principle a planning requirement, the nature of the assessment and the high levels of consultation & inspection that are used/undertaken in the report allows front line services to review the quantitative, qualitative & accessibility standards of current service delivery against a robust framework.

6.2 As such the recommendations are designed to enhance the level of current service provision, increase the availability of pitches and make services more accessible to local residents.

6.3 The schemes and projects that have been identified will contribute to:

- The Council's vision by increasing residents satisfaction with where they live (become proud), provide services that are on the road to excellence and by demonstrating leadership in these areas.
- The values of the Council by increasing partnership working where required to improve residents quality of life, allow greater equality of access to services and respond to the Customer first agenda by using resident feedback to shape service improvements.
- The improvements made will also directly contribute to C03 and the specific priority of sense of community as shown in section 15.3 to 15.8 of the PPG17 assessment summary and planning overview.

6.4 The PPG17 assessment report in section 15.12 to 15.15 also highlights the contributions Green Spaces, Sport & Recreational facilities make to the

regional & local documents and the Worcestershire LAA & its specific objectives.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

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

- Inability to undertake the identified schemes/projects should the Council not be able to develop effective partnerships in areas where BDC does not own/manage the sufficient land.
- Potentially poor publicity or reputational damage within the sub areas where insufficient land supply is identified to make short terms changes.
- Project management implications within a small team that has a large number of projects ongoing during a limited time frame.
- User dissatisfaction whilst the works are undertaken and/or some projects are prioritised over others to ensure that sufficient pitches are available to met current need.

7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:

- Inability to undertake the identified schemes/projects:
 - *Officer's & Members to meet with the relevant organisations and build working relationship based on the indentified need to improve provision for residents.*
 - *Full project plans to be developed that include key milestones for a jointly agreed project scope & definition, usage agreements designed to met the projects aims and claw back clauses. These will need to be signed off prior to any other works commencing.*
 - *A set of PI's developed for each scheme that agree the out turns required to draw down the BDC investment, the reporting format and frequency of data and any claw back clauses based on under performance. These will need to be signed off prior to any other works commencing.*
- Poor Publicity or reputational damage in sub areas:
 - *Communications plan developed to respond to local concerns and agreed responses based on proposed schemes/projects prepared.*
 - *Staff briefings to be held where required to ensure effective communications with residents.*
 - *Long term implications built into future planning documents to address shortfalls in provision.*

- *Project Management & User dissatisfaction Implications*
 - *Project management team established and project methodology & plan agreed to reflect capacity implications.*
 - *Procurement to be based on single supplier to ensure effective working relationships developed and single point of contact established.*
 - *Current work loads re profiled and any additional responsibilities/back filling requirements identified.*
 - *Work programme/plans designed to minimise impact on users and work to be under taken out side of football season where ever possible.*
 - *Alternative pitches to be provided during work programme to provide continuity of access.*
 - *Communications plan prepared on specific issues as and when required to control the flow of information and ensure suitable notification is given of changes to pitches etc.*

7.3 Currently the risk identified in the bullet point in 7.1 are not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the SS&C risk register for 2009.

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 Please see section 6 & 7 of this report as they identify all issues and actions required relating to customers.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific Equality & Diversity implications contained with in this report. However all build projects that are undertaken will conform to the Disabled Discrimination Act and building regulations part M. Once the schemes are commenced the service area/provision will be impact assessed & any potential issues addressed on a case by case basis.

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific VFM implications contained with in this report, however the recommended action will lead to a more coordinated approach to services delivery/provision, a rationalisation playing pitches to met user need, enhanced partnership working, higher customer satisfaction with the services provided (quality of life) and a more effective use of resources in future years.

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues – Yes, procurement of a supplier/contractor to undertake pitch and ancillary works.
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Personnel Implications - None

Governance/Performance Management - None
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – None
Policy – Yes, this relates to the suggested operational policy change highlighted around restricting Bromsgrove pitches initially for Bromsgrove teams.
Environmental – None

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

Portfolio Holder	YES
Chief Executive	YES
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	NO
Executive Director - Services	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

Appendix 1: PPG17 Assessment of Bromsgrove District Council section 8 Playing Pitch Strategy & Outdoor Sports Facilities.

Appendix 2: Bromsgrove Ward Map and Sub Area guide.

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Open Space, Sport and Recreation Local Needs Survey (A copy has been placed in members room or available electronically from the strategic planning team).

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Outdoor sports facilities

Introduction and definition

- 8.1. PPG 17 guidance considers the provision of both indoor and outdoor sports facilities. For clarity, these amenities are separated into two distinct typologies within this document. This section considers the provision of outdoor sports facilities across Bromsgrove
- 8.2. Outdoor sports facilities is a wide-ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation that are either publicly or privately owned.
- 8.3. Facilities included within this category are:
 - playing pitches (including football, rugby, cricket, hockey)
 - synthetic turf pitches (STPs)
 - tennis courts
 - bowling greens
 - athletics tracks
 - golf courses.
- 8.4. Outdoor sports facilities are often a focal point for a local community, functioning as a recreational and amenity resource in addition to a formal sports facility. This is particularly true of grass pitches, which often have a secondary function of a local dog walking and kickabout area.
- 8.5. Private facilities/clubs play a crucial role in the provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove and several large clubs provide opportunities for player progression from a young age through to veterans.
- 8.6. While this PPG17 study provides a strategic overview of existing provision of outdoor sports facilities and future priorities across Bromsgrove, in light of the demand led nature of outdoor sports facilities, specific studies should be carried out relating to each type of facility.
- 8.7. There are many opportunities for the improvement of facilities across Bromsgrove, particularly capitalising upon the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. In addition, other sources of funding (such as National Governing Bodies and National Lottery) may offer further avenues for improvement, although it is recognised that funding opportunities for the majority of sports are currently limited.
- 8.8. Effective provision of high quality formal and informal sports facilities is essential if more adults and young people in Bromsgrove are to be encouraged to regularly participate in community sport. This will place greater demand on the facility stock and emphasises the need to ensure that facilities are fit for purpose.
- 8.9. Sport England, the national government and wider governing bodies are targeting an increase in sporting participation of 1% per annum in the run up

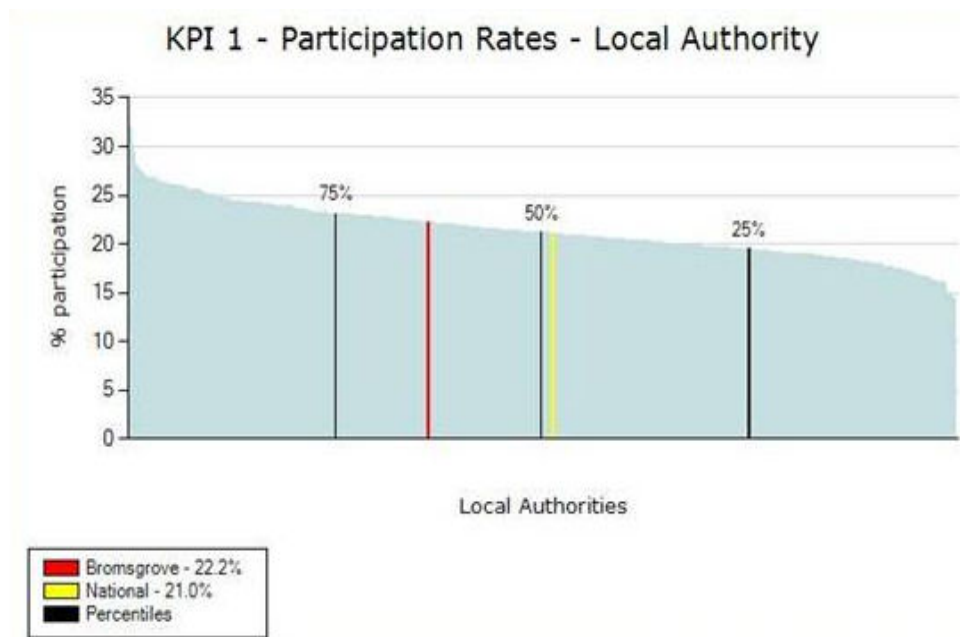
to London 2012 and beyond. While this increase is across all sports, there will be a knock on impact on demand for facilities should this target be achieved.

Context

Active People Survey results

- 8.10. The Active People Survey 2006 (the Survey) was a survey of adults aged 16 and over living in England. The Survey gathered data on the type, duration and intensity of people's participation in different types of sport and active recreation, as well as information about volunteering, club membership (member of a club where they play sport), people receiving tuition from an instructor or coach, participation in competitive sport and satisfaction with local sports provision.
- 8.11. Bromsgrove District was recorded as having a participation rate of 22.2%, which, as shown in Figure 8.1 below, is above the national average and places the District in the upper middle quartile for participation (3 x 30 minutes sport and active recreation).

Figure 8.1 – Participation rates within Bromsgrove



- 8.12. Bromsgrove falls within the Hereford and Worcestershire County Sports Partnership (CSP), which is in the West Midland Sport England region. Table 8.1 overleaf shows the results of the 2006 Active People Survey to allow comparison between the District, neighbouring local authorities, county and regional and national averages

Table 8.1 – Selected results from the Active People’s Survey 2006 for Bromsgrove

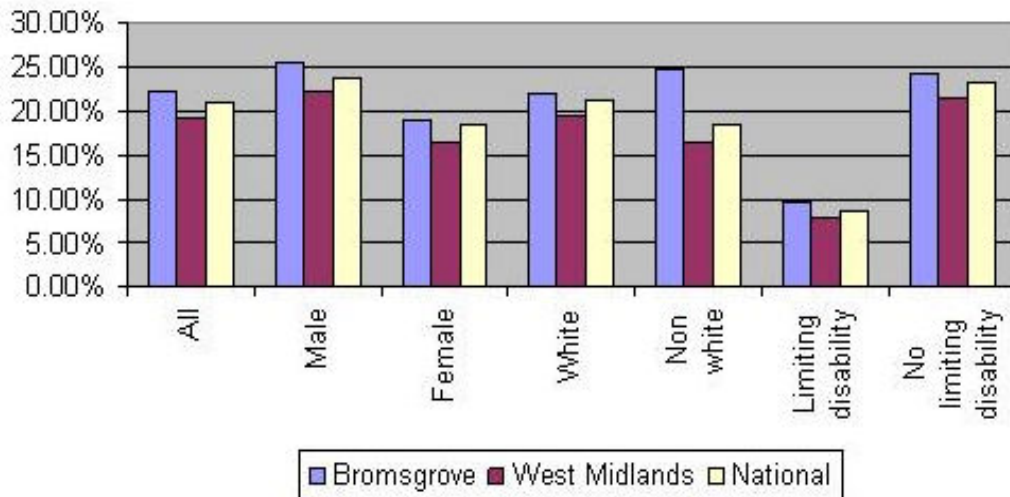
	At least 3 days a week x 30 minutes moderate participation (all adults) %	Taken part in organised competitive sport in last 12 months (all adults) %	Satisfied with local sports provision (all adults) %	At least one recreational walk lasting 30 minutes at moderate intensity (all adults) %	At least one recreational cycle lasting 30 minutes at moderate intensity (all adults) %
National	21.0	15.0	69.5	20.0	7.8
West Midlands	19.3	13.9	69.1	18.4	6.7
Hereford and Worcestershire CSP	21.6	15.6	71.4	22.5	7.8
Wychavon	21.5	16.5	77.2	23.7	8.7
Wyre Forest	20.1	14.2	76.5	19.1	7.8
Redditch	19.0	12.1	68.7	18.3	7.0
Bromsgrove	22.2	15.3	71.2	20.7	8.8

8.13. As table 8.1 above shows, results for Bromsgrove are similar to the findings for Hereford and Worcestershire CSP. Marginally more people in Bromsgrove take part in recreational cycling than the national, West Midlands and CSP averages.

8.14. 71.2% of people in Bromsgrove are satisfied with their local provision, which places the local authority in the upper middle quartile. However, neighbouring local authorities score more highly on this performance indicator, which could act as an inspirational standard for Bromsgrove to match by sharing best practice ideas. Headline findings from the 2008 Active People Survey indicate that within Bromsgrove, levels of participation have risen by 1.5% to 23.7%. This level of participation is significantly above both the regional and national figures and indicates that participation targets have been achieved. In addition to the growth in participation, volunteering has also increased. However, there has been a decline in club membership and the proportion of residents satisfied with sports provision in the district has reduced significantly from 71.2% to 65.9%. This may be linked to the ageing stock of facilities in Bromsgrove.

8.15. Figure 8.2 shows that Bromsgrove has comparable levels of participation for various socio economic groups to both regional and national figures.

Figure 8.2 – Participation rates for selected socio economic groups



- 8.16. Those with a limiting disability in Bromsgrove (9.8%) participate in sport and active recreation marginally more than those in the West Midlands (7.9%) and nationally (8.8%).
- 8.17. More ‘non whites’ do 30 minutes of sport and active recreation three times a week in Bromsgrove (24.8%) than in both the West Midlands and nationally, by more than 6%.
- 8.18. The analysis of data from the Active People survey therefore demonstrates that on the whole, participation in Bromsgrove is marginally above the national average. Alternative opportunities for participation in physical activity can help increase the proportion of people participating in sport and physical activity and help Bromsgrove meet national and local targets for participation growth.

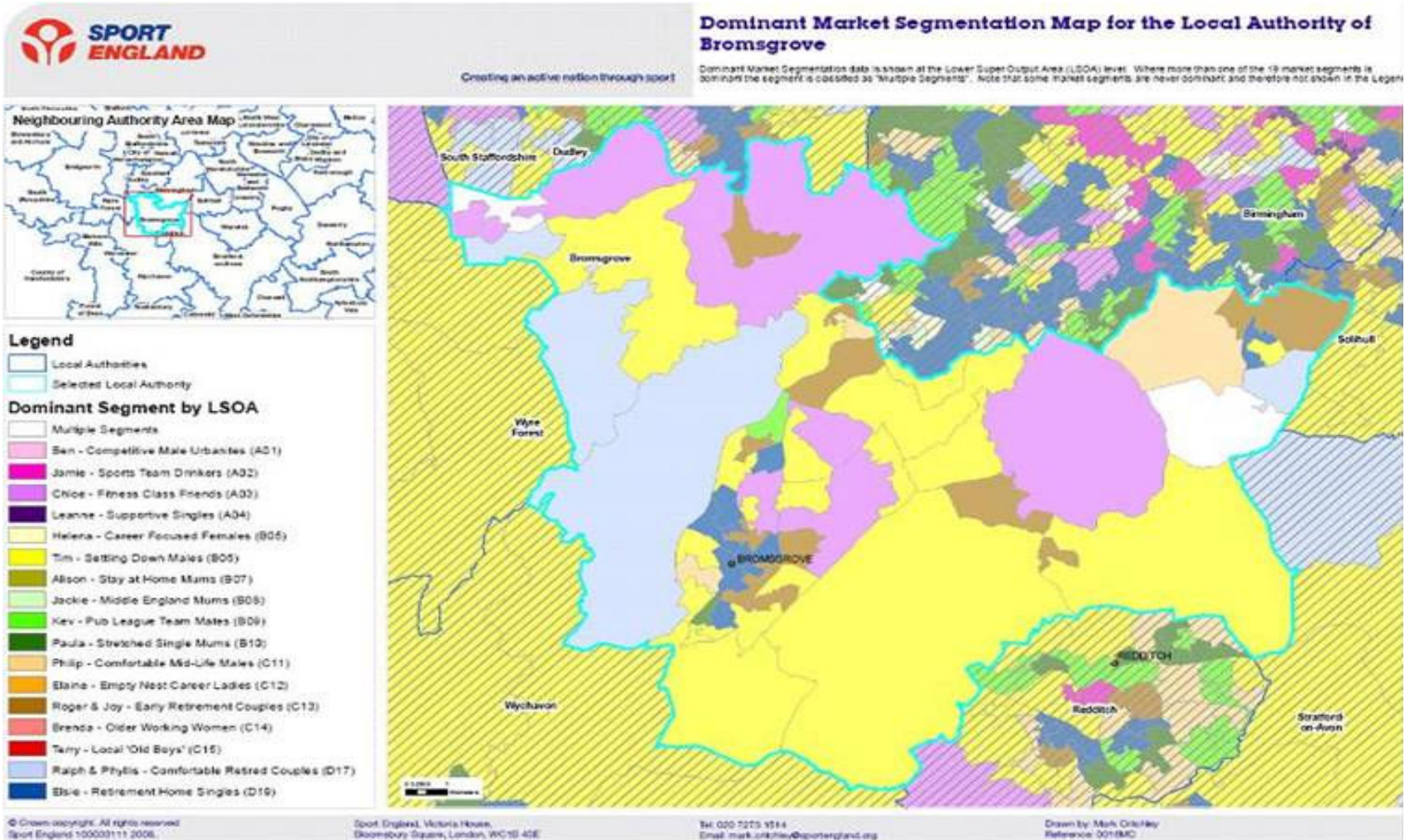
Market Segmentation

- 8.19. Sport England has developed nineteen sporting segments to help us understand the nations’ attitudes and motivations – why they play sport and why they don’t. This is particularly important to understand in order to ensure that the facilities in Bromsgrove cater for the needs and expectations of local residents.
- 8.20. The research builds on the results of Sport England’s Active People Survey, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport’s Taking Part survey and the Mosaic tool from Experian. It informs Sport England’s Strategy and Business Plan 2008-2011 and helps ensure that money is invested into areas that will have the greatest impact.
- 8.21. Residents are classified according to their key characteristics. The dominant groups in the district are explained in Table 8.2. Map 8.1 illustrates the spread of these residents.
- 8.22. It can be seen that ‘Tim’ appears to be the most dominant group throughout the district, followed by ‘Ralph and Phyllis’ in the north east and ‘Roger and Joy’ who are primarily dominant in the west of the local authority.

Table 8.2 – Dominant market segments in Bromsgrove

Label	Age	Status	Characteristics
Tim	26 – 35	Single/ married May have children Professional	Sporty Settling down with partner, buying a house Enjoys technical sports. Likely to have private gym membership, and compete in some sports
Chloe	18 – 25	Single Graduate/ professional	Image conscious, likes to keep fit/trim Makes friends at fitness classes etc Likely to volunteer within sports/the arts.
Roger and Joy	56-65	Married Retired or part time	Free-time couples nearing the end of their careers Participate one/two times a week. Enjoy activities such as walking, swimming, table tennis or golf, and also keep fit classes.
Ralph and Phylis	65 +	Married Retired	Enjoys a variety of activities and are likely to be members of sports and social clubs Particularly enjoy individual activities such as swimming, fishing or golf and lower intensity sports such as bowls
Philip	45 - 55	Married Professional Older children	Sporty Has more time for himself Most active type within this Peer Group, enjoys participating in a number of activities, including team sports, racquet games and technical sports.
Elsie and Arnold	66+	Widowed Retired	Health problems and disability being major inhibitors to activity. Those that do participate tend towards low intensity activities, such as walking, bowls or dancing (traditional ballroom), safe environments would encourage this group to walk more often

Map 8.1 – Distribution of dominant market segments in Bromsgrove



- 8.23. The market segmentation information helps the identification of priority areas and helps to channel investment accordingly. The distribution of the dominant markets for Bromsgrove indicates that there are areas that may benefit from certain types of provision.
- 8.24. For example, to the west of the district 'Ralph and Phyllis' are dominant. This is a group which particularly enjoys individual activities such as swimming, fishing or golf and lower intensity sports such as bowls and whose main motivation for participation is to meet with friends, improve performance, and keep fit, but also because they enjoy it.
- 8.25. This will be returned to later in this section when considering the appropriateness of existing provision.

Strategic context

Regional

Regional Sports Facility Framework for the West Midlands (2007)

- 8.26. The Regional Sports Facility Framework for the West Midlands (the Framework) was produced by Nortoft in 2007. The Framework identifies the priorities for the future investment in sport and active recreation facilities. It considers the period up to 2021 and assesses the impact of population change, and the facility requirements that will be needed if the targets for participation in sport and active recreation are to be met and support is to be given to the highest levels of elite sport.
- 8.27. The Framework has three sections:
- part 1: Character of the Region, policy and key issues
 - part 2: Hierarchy of provision, regional level proposals, implementation and monitoring
 - part 3: County Sports Partnership generic section, and CSP specific sections.
- 8.28. The Framework identified the requirements of the various priority sports for different levels of facilities, and also proposed a network of facilities at the local and regional level. The key elements of this network, for the 10 priority sports are detailed in Table 8.3 overleaf. This report (Sections eight, nine and fourteen) provides a broad overview of the key issues for sports facilities in Bromsgrove.

Table 8.3 –Facility priorities for priority sports in the West Midlands

Sport	Facility Type/specification		Location
Athletics	Indoor track and field	High performance Centre	One regional
		200m track	One regional
		Indoor training centres 82m x 25m x 7m high	One per 545,000 people or within a 45 minute drivetime in rural catchment areas. (2 each for Birmingham, Black Country, Greater Warwickshire and Staffordshire) (1 each for Shropshire, Hereford and Worcester)
	Outdoor track and field	8 lane track with covered spectator provision	One in each CSP
		6 lane track	1 per 250,000 or 45 minute drivetime in rural catchments
		Training facilities eg 6 lane x 100m straight, 4 lane x 200m J track, 2 lane x 400m track or 3 lane x 300m track	As satellites, particularly in rural areas
In facility terms the priority is to maintain what exists and take advantage of new build eg Specialist Sports Colleges.			
Badminton	Badminton requires an indoor space equivalent in size to that of 4 badminton courts with the relevant height clearance		Centre per 50,000 adult population and/or within a 15 minute drive time of anyone within an urban/semi urban area, or 20 minutes in a rural area. A minimum of one Centre per County.
	Provision of a badminton facility in Worcestershire is a priority as there is no provision currently.		

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Sport	Facility Type/specification	Location
Cricket	<p>The English Cricket Board have identified a number of broad priorities in relation to facility provision. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security of tenure for cricket clubs. • Improving the standard of pavilions and support facilities. • Improving the standard and availability of <i>indoor sports halls</i>. • Improving the standard of strategically located indoor Cricket Centres. • Improving spectator safety and provision at Test, One day international and first Class Cricket Grounds. • The need to improve the availability and standard of indoor practice facilities. 	
	<p>In addition to the indoor facility requirements the ECB have identified the following specific facility needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure all accredited Premier League Clubs meet the minimum facility requirements and standards. • To ensure a network of accredited District Development Centres is established to service the facility requirements of District development squad coaching and competition programmes. • To ensure a network of accredited facilities is established to service the requirements of County Representative, Academy, University Centres of Excellence and National Development Squads Programmes. 	
Football	<p>The Football Association (FA) has no advertised standards for the provision of full size pitches,</p>	<p>However informally the FA work on a ratio of 1 full-size pitch per 30,000 population of football participation age (6 - 45 years). The FA estimates that the prime catchment area for full-size 3G pitches is a radius of around 5 miles.</p>
	<p>The Football Association’s recommended dimensions for small-sided football pitches vary for 5, 6 and 7 a-side pitches. However small-sided football is also provided for on full-size STPs by sub-dividing the pitch, usually into three.</p>	<p>The informal advice of officers within the FA is that they would expect that a supply rate of one small-sided court/pitch to a total population of 10,000 to be reasonable. This rate includes the availability for hire of full-sized STPs divided to provide for the small-sided game.</p>
	<p>New provision leads to an overall increase in participation in football, particularly amongst adults.</p>	

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Sport	Facility Type/specification	Location
Hockey	<p>Across the region there are seven water based pitches, some of which are deemed important to Performance Development. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fox Hollies Leisure Centre (Birmingham) • Birmingham University (2) • Cannock Hockey Club • Lilleshall National Sports Centre • North Solihull Sports Centre • Wyndley Stadium (Sutton Coldfields). 	<p>Provision of facilities for a minimum of one model key club in each local authority area. Current gaps in provision include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Warwickshire • North Shropshire • South Shropshire • Birmingham
	<p>Increase the number of water based pitches in the region as only four of those currently in existence are of the appropriate standard for top quality club games. This is too few to fully serve the elite English Hockey League teams.</p>	
Netball	<p>A Regional Centre, funded by Community Club Development Programme (CCDP) monies.</p>	<p>No location identified, although the Regional Office is to be based at University of Wolverhampton and it is hoped that this will also be the venue for the Regional Centre.</p>
	<p>There is a desire to increasing the number of Club Action Planning Scheme clubs across the West Midlands through a structured club development programme</p>	
Rugby	<p>As part of it range of facilities strategies and plans the RFU has introduced a structure for club provision, using four Model Venues.</p>	<p>Model Venue 1 (MV1) – club, school or other provider playing recreational, introductory and lower level competitive rugby.</p> <p>Model Venue 2 (MV2) – club, school, university or other provider, with a wider programme.</p> <p>Model Venue 3 (MV3) – established venue with a wide range of programmes and potentially higher level competitive rugby.</p> <p>Model Venue 4 (MV4) – a venue for top-level training and competition rugby.</p>

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Sport	Facility Type/specification	Location
	The provision of at least one rubber crumb pitch.	within each County Sports Partnership (CSP) is identified as desirable There are currently no RFU compliant 3rd Generation surfaces in Warwickshire or Herefordshire.
	RFU Council agreed to the formation Schools of Rugby (SoR)	With the objective of a minimum of one in each area.
Swimming	Swimming clubs to have agreed access to 25m pools at appropriate times and cost.	In each local authority area
	At least one 25m x 6-lane pool with timing equipment and adequate accommodation for competitors and spectators to stage local galas and events	
	There is at least one 25m x 8 lane pool with timing equipment and accommodation for competitors and spectators, capable of staging county galas and league events.	Within every English county and major conurbation
	At least one 8 lane, 50m and one 8 lane 25m competition pool for Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) District competitions.	In each of the nine Sport England regions
	The ASA has also identified the need for Regional Performance Centres to cater for elite swimming. These pools should be 50m pools (6 lane minimum) providing at least 22 hours access for elite swimmers together with access to land conditioning, sports science, and sports medicine services on site or close by.	Where there is no High Performance Centre within a reasonable travel time
	Four or five sub-regional 50-metre community pools	In the West Midland Region, specifically around: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Birmingham • Coventry • The Potteries/North Staffordshire (Stoke on Trent) • Wolverhampton • The Black Country • Warwick

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Sport	Facility Type/specification	Location
Tennis	International High Performance clubs capability of supporting all aspects of player development	Up to 10 throughout the UK
	High Performance Clubs with outstanding player performance programmes	40 – 50 throughout the UK
	County Accredited Clubs, which will be satellites or feeders for the top clubs.	Circa 175 throughout the UK
	There are currently 4 High Performance Clubs in the West Midlands: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solihull Arden • Edgbaston Priory • Tipton • Sutton Coldfield. 	
Synthetic Turf Pitches	Encourage some limited new STP provision, but each proposal needs to be market tested if the business case is reliant on community use.	.Likely to be predominantly education led.
	Encourage a mix of pitch types and sizes, including the retention of at least one water-based pitch for hockey, and the development of one match quality 3G pitch.	
	Resurface existing pitches available to the community to retain quality and availability.	

Regional and local

- 8.29. The key issues for outdoor sports facilities arising from a review of strategic documents are summarised in table 8.4 overleaf

Table 8.4 – Strategic context – Regional and local

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation assessment
<p>Bromsgrove Local Plan</p>	<p>Policy RAT4 covers the retention of open space, stating that the Council will seek to retain and enhance all public and privately owned open space of recreational and amenity value.</p> <p>Policy S31 protects school sports facilities from development stating that development proposals at educational sites which result in the loss of open space and/or sports facilities will not be permitted.</p> <p>Policy S32 refers to sports pitches of all ownership and identifies that proposals leading to the loss of private playing fields, school playing fields and other public or private sports facilities will not be permitted unless:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there is sufficient provision of playing fields (Council standard) • there is alternative local provision • there is an alternative replacement site that could be provided in a suitable location • the scheme would lead to an improvement in the facilities elsewhere available on site. <p>Policy RAT1 refers to development in the Green Belt for outdoor sport or recreation stating it will be directed to areas of low quality agricultural land.</p>	<p>This assessment of outdoor sports pitches and playing fields will provide an indication as to the adequacy of the current supply of facilities to meet with demand, enabling informed decision making and providing an evidence base to policies.</p>

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation assessment
	<p>Policy RAT2 supports the development of outdoor sport and recreation facilities in the Green Belt as long as: the development is within a reasonable walking distance of public transport, there is adequate car parking, the development does not have an adverse impact on ecological or environmental interests or an unrelieved concentration of pitches is created.</p> <p>Policy RAT8 states that the Council will seek the provision of dual use school sports facilities where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the proposed scheme can meet demand • there is adequate car parking • the site is accessible by public and private transport • external floodlighting and increased vehicle movement do not affect residential areas. <p>Policy RAT21 states that the development of golf courses will be considered against a number of criteria.</p>	
<p>Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy 2002</p>	<p>The ratio of pitches to adults in Bromsgrove is 1:1165. This is significantly below the national average.</p> <p>Within Bromsgrove there is a shortfall of 13.6 junior football pitches, 8.5 junior rugby pitches and 4.9 hockey pitches. Based on future population</p>	<p>This study updates the findings of the Worcestershire Playing Pitch Strategy and provides a more detailed breakdown of supply and demand within the district of Bromsgrove.</p>

Document Reviewed	Summary of key strategic drivers	Links to open space, sport and recreation assessment
	<p>projections, there will also be a small shortfall of cricket pitches (0.4) by 2009.</p> <p>Only 44% of pitches within Bromsgrove have changing facilities and no sites have female changing facilities.</p> <p>The strategy recommended the development of changing facilities at the following sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aston Fields Recreation Ground • Boleyn Road, Frankley • Braces Lane Recreation Ground • Brook Road, Rubery • King George V Recreation Ground • Market Street Recreation Ground • New Inns Lane, Rubery • Sanders Park. <p>Within the District there area 106 ha of sports pitches of which 93% are available for community use.</p>	

Assessing current provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove

8.30. Existing provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove has been assessed in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility. This assessment has been informed by consultation with local residents, sports clubs and District and Parish Councillors, which explored local needs and opinions on current facilities.

8.31. Consultation findings relating to specific aspects of the assessment are covered over the following pages. However main points regarding usage of outdoor sports facilities and some of the emerging headline themes are outlined below:

- 42% of household survey respondents were found not to use outdoor sports facilities whilst 16% stated they use this type of facility at least once a week. These results reinforce the specialist nature of these facilities and are consistent with participation rates recorded through the 2006 Active People Survey
- the importance of outdoor sports facilities was reinforced through the Young People's IT Survey with 86% of respondents stating that they take part in sport and football (25%) and cricket (20%) featuring among the top three most popular sports
- one third of respondents to the IT Young People's Survey identified playing sport outdoors as their favourite activity, making it the second most popular activity for young people
- levels of regular sports participation by young people were encouraging with 40% participating in sport two to three times a week and 38% participating more than three times a week. This suggests strong participation in sport by young people in Bromsgrove and reinforces the need to ensure that adequate facilities are provided, particularly in light of the wider benefits associated with taking part in sport and physical activity
- residents raised both quantitative and qualitative issues relating to outdoor sports provision, with a particular emphasis on community use of school facilities
- although sports clubs and other sport specific consultees also raised a variety of issues relating to both the quality and quantity of provision, the quality of outdoor sports facilities was the main focus of discussions.

Quantity of provision

8.32. Outdoor sports facilities across Bromsgrove are owned and managed by a range of providers including the District Council (and management contractor), voluntary sports clubs and Parish and Town Councils. This reinforces the importance of partnership working.

8.33. The quantity of outdoor sports facilities across Bromsgrove is summarised in Table 8.5 below. Calculations include all outdoor sports facilities regardless of

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

their primary purpose. Consideration will be given to the specific type of facility provided during the application of local standards.

Table 8.5– Provision of outdoor sports facilities across Bromsgrove

Analysis areas	Current provision	Current provision per 1,000 population	Number of sites	Smallest site (hectares)	Largest site (hectares)	LDF population (2026)	Provision per 1,000 population (2026)
Bromsgrove North	16.80	1.49	12	0.11	5.97	12,575	1.34
Bromsgrove West	23.11	1.82	17	0.17	6.05	14,154	1.63
Bromsgrove East	24.19	2.59	12	0.11	7.77	10,429	2.31
Bromsgrove North East	11.33	1.00	8	0.09	5.46	12,706	0.89
Bromsgrove Central	70.51	1.63	41	0.11	7.44	48,192	1.46
Overall	145.94	1.66	90	0.09	7.77	98,056	1.49

8.34. In order to properly understand the distribution of sports facilities it is essential to subdivide the typology to consider the different functions that different facilities provide. Table 8.6 below sets out the distribution of each type of sports facility enabling more in depth analysis and interpretation.

Table 8.6 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities by analysis area

Analysis areas	Total number of sites	Sites containing grass pitches	Synthetic turf pitches (STPs)	Tennis courts	Bowling greens	Athletics tracks
Bromsgrove North	12	9	0	2	1	0
Bromsgrove West	17	15	0	1	1	0

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

Analysis areas	Total number of sites	Sites containing grass pitches	Synthetic turf pitches (STPs)	Tennis courts	Bowling greens	Athletics tracks
Bromsgrove East	11	9	0	2	1	0
Bromsgrove North East	8	4	1	2	1	0
Bromsgrove Central	41	31	1	5	3	1
Overall	90	68	2	12	7	1

8.35. Analysis of outdoor sports facilities by type and geographical area shows that:

- all areas have grass pitch, tennis court and bowling green facilities
- overall Bromsgrove Central has the highest provision of outdoor sports facilities and Bromsgrove North East the lowest
- the distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the District is relatively even with the exception of Bromsgrove Central, which has a significantly higher number of sites with grass playing fields than any other analysis area
- there are three STPs in the District located on two school sites. One site is located in the North East and one in the Central analysis area
- there is only one athletics track in Bromsgrove, which is located in the Central analysis area.

8.36. Additionally, there are eight golf courses located across the district, all of which are private facilities.

8.37. The key issues emerging from the data presented in Table 8.67 and 8.7 and consultations relating to the quantity of outdoor sports provision across the District are as follows:

- household survey findings indicated that residents perceived the quantity of grass pitches (43%) and golf courses (50%) to be sufficient but were dissatisfied with provision of STPs, tennis courts, bowling greens and athletics tracks. The highest level of dissatisfaction related to the provision of tennis courts with 54% of respondents stating that provision was insufficient
- geographical analysis of household survey results showed that residents in Bromsgrove North East were the most satisfied with

provision of STPs, tennis courts and bowling greens, which may be reflective of the fact that this analysis area has one of two STPs in the District and bowling and tennis facilities at Wythall Park. Respondents from Bromsgrove North, which has eight playing field sites, expressed the highest levels of satisfaction with provision of grass pitches

- conversely residents from Bromsgrove North were found to be most dissatisfied with provision of tennis courts, bowling greens and STPs. This analysis area has the second lowest provision per 1,000 population in the District although it is significantly higher than the level of provision in Bromsgrove North East
- feedback at the BECAN discussion session highlighted a lack of publicly accessible STPs in Bromsgrove, which was consistent with the household survey findings. Attendees identified two publicly accessible sites (Woodrush and Bromsgrove High School) both of which only offer community access after 6pm
- attendees at the sports club discussion session emphasised a lack of grass pitches in the area, contradicting the findings from the household survey. It was highlighted that six football pitches had been lost in recent years and that around 80% of league teams currently travel outside of the District to access a pitch. Droitwich Leisure Centre football pitches were identified as the facility used by many clubs in the football league
- 38% of young people stated that provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove was insufficient. Sports pitches were highlighted as the second most popular facility for young people in Bromsgrove (16%)
- elected Members highlighted the issue of limited outdoor sports provision in Bromsgrove stating that current facilities were insufficient and the majority are located on school sites.

8.38. Consideration will be given to the quality of facilities later in this section.

Playing Pitch Provision

8.39. The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM), explained in the Sport England document 'Towards a Level Playing Field', enables a more detailed estimate of the adequacy of the current supply of playing pitches to meet demand. It specifically considers provision for football, cricket, rugby and hockey.

8.40. A Playing Pitch Strategy has been produced in conjunction with this study, which has concluded that within Bromsgrove there are:

- 49 adult football pitches
- 5 dedicated junior football pitches
- 6 dedicated mini soccer pitches
- 15 cricket pitches
- 21 rugby union pitches

SECTION 8 – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES

- 3 STPs.
- 8.41. 75% of sites are secured for community use, a proportion significantly higher than the majority of local authorities.
- 8.42. Analysis of demand for these pitches indicates that there are 138 football teams, 81 cricket teams and 46 rugby teams playing in the district.
- 8.43. The full details of the pitch assessment can be found in section 9.

Active Places Power

- 8.44. Active Places Power (a strategic planning tool provided by Sport England) enables the comparison of the provision of outdoor sports facilities with other areas.
- 8.45. As shown in Table 8.7 below, Bromsgrove compares favourably to West Midlands and national levels of provision. Bromsgrove has a greater supply of athletics tracks and golf courses per 1,000 population than both nationally and regionally although it should be noted that the only facility available is a grass school based track.
- 8.46. For STPs the provision per 1,000 population in Bromsgrove is the same as national and regional levels.

Table 8.7 – Outdoor sports provision per 1,000 of the population

Area	Athletics tracks/1,000 population (lanes)	Golf courses/ 1,000 population (holes)	STPs/1,000 population (pitches)
National	0.05	0.67	0.03
West Midlands	0.06	0.61	0.03
Bromsgrove	0.07	1.64	0.03

- 8.47. The distribution of specific facilities will be considered later in this section as part of the application of standards.
- 8.48. As well as reviewing the quantity and quality of sports facilities, it is important to consider the delivery of sport and recreation for disabled people within the local community. The provision of open space, sport and recreation facilities has a key role to play in maintaining and increasing levels of participation amongst less able bodied residents.
- 8.49. It will be vital to consider the needs of disabled people living and working in the District when planning for the future delivery of open space, sport and recreation facilities in Bromsgrove.
- 8.50. The Council should seek to raise awareness of the facilities and activities available to disabled people in the community and ensure that open space, sport and recreation facilities are accessible and cater for the needs of disabled users. A key strategic priority within the Worcestershire Board Cricket Development Plan is to increase opportunities for disabled residents

to participate in cricket, which will involve a review of cricket facilities in the District.

Setting provision standards – quantity

- 8.51. The recommended local quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities considers all provision covered within this typology and therefore provides an overarching standard for broad planning need only. This standard should be used to provide an indication regarding the amount (in hectares) of sports facilities that should be provided per 1,000 population i.e. to predict the increase in demand for sports facilities as a result of growth in the local population. Local decisions would then be taken in order to determine the most appropriate type of facility in an area.
- 8.52. The application of the PPM enables the calculation of a more specific local standard for pitches that provides detail on the quantity of community use pitches required. The development of a local standard specific to pitches for Bromsgrove is included as part of the overarching quality standard. Full background relating to the calculation of this standard is set out in Section 9 of this report.

Developing a local quantity standard

- 8.53. The recommended local quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities has been derived from the local needs consultation and audit of provision and is summarised overleaf. Full justification is provided within Appendix E and F. **Quantity standard (see Appendices E and F – standards and justification, worksheet and calculator)**

Existing level of provision	Recommended standard
1.64 ha per 1,000	1.67 ha per 1,000 of which 0.96 ha should be dedicated to community pitches
Justification	
Due to the broad nature of the sports facilities included within this typology, it is recommended that this standard is used for planning need only. Detailed studies (such as the Playing Pitch Strategy) should be used to ascertain the detailed provision required for each type of facility. The recommended standard takes into account the findings of the Playing Pitch Strategy as well as the expressed demand during consultations and supports a pitch specific standard.	

Overall there is general dissatisfaction with the current level of provision, with respondents to the household survey indicating there is insufficient provision of four of the six outdoor sports facility types. General comments from residents further emphasised a lack of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove. Attendees at the sports club workshop highlighted a lack of grass pitches in the District, stating that six sites have been lost to development in recent years and that around 80% of clubs in the football league have to travel outside Bromsgrove to access a football pitch.

Application of the playing pitch methodology highlights that while there are sufficient adult football pitches to meet demand, there are shortfalls in cricket and rugby pitches. 0.81 ha per 1000 will be sufficient to meet projected demand as well as provide a 10% strategic reserve allowing the rest and recovery of pitches.

In light of the above evidence it is recommended that the local standard is set above the existing level of provision. Setting the standard above the existing level of provision will enable the Council to identify any areas deficient in the provision of outdoor sports facilities and, combined with the application of the accessibility standard, enable the identification of locational deficiencies as well as the provision of new facilities to meet increased demand.

Current provision - quality

- 8.54. The quality of existing outdoor sports facilities in the District was assessed through site visits and is set out in Table 8.8 overleaf. It is important to note that site assessments are conducted as a snapshot in time and are therefore reflective of the quality of the site on one specific day.
- 8.55. The quality scores are weighted according to the findings of the local consultation. Cleanliness and maintenance and safety and security were the elements highlighted through consultation as being the most important determinants of quality for outdoor sports facilities. As such they have been given the highest weightings to ensure that they have a greater influence on the overall quality score achieved by each site. The full rationale behind this approach is set out in Appendix G.
- 8.56. The site visits undertaken assess the outdoor sport site as a whole and do not specifically consider the degree to which a facility can be considered fit for purpose. Pitch assessments looking specifically at the suitability of the pitches in Bromsgrove for the sporting purpose they were intended are set out in section 9.

Table 8.8 – Quality of outdoor sports facilities across Bromsgrove

Geographical area	Number of sites	Range of quality scores (%)	Average quality scores (%)	Lowest quality sites	Highest quality sites
Bromsgrove North	3	80-100	93	Barnt Green CC (Site ID 20)	Barnt Green CC (Site ID 19)
Bromsgrove West	2	80-90	85	Belbroughton Rec Tennis Courts (Site ID 36)	Fairfield Villa Football Club (Site ID 330)
Bromsgrove East	9	48-100	85	Wiggin Memorial Playing Fields (Site ID 14)	Bromsgrove Cricket, Hockey & Tennis Club (Site ID 237) Bromsgrove RFC (Site ID 299)
Bromsgrove North East	6	46-96	80	Chapel Lane Sports Ground (Site ID 46)	Wythall Park Tennis Courts (Site ID 96)
Bromsgrove Central	12	52-89	73	Catshill Middle School Playing Field (Site ID 52)	Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club (Site ID 414)
Overall	32	46-100	80	Chapel Lane Sports Ground (Site ID 46)	Barnt Green CC (Site ID 19) Bromsgrove Cricket, Hockey & Tennis Club (Site ID 237) Bromsgrove RFC (Site ID 299)

- 8.57. The key issues emerging from the data presented in Table 8.9 and the consultation relating to the quality of outdoor sports facilities are as follows:
- 40% of household survey respondents regard the quality of outdoor sports facilities to be average whilst 30% consider the quality of this type of open space poor. This suggests that satisfaction with outdoor sports facilities is lower than other types of open space in Bromsgrove
 - although results within three of the five analysis areas are consistent with these overall findings a higher proportion of respondents were found to be dissatisfied with the quality of provision in Bromsgrove Central (36%). In contrast almost one third of respondents in Bromsgrove East consider the standard of facilities to be good, which indicates variance in the quality of sites in different areas of the District
 - general comments from respondents to the household survey highlighted the need to improve the standard of outdoor sports provision and indicated that enhancing quality is considered more important than increasing the quantity of provision. Residents felt a number of facilities had become run down and were in need of investment
 - attendees at the sports clubs discussion session identified the poor quality of grass pitches as a key issue. Football pitches were generally perceived to be of low quality and suffering from a number of problems such as sloping and poor drainage. Specifically, a lack of maintenance was perceived to be the cause of this. Charford Recreation Ground was recognised as one of the best Council owned pitches but also as a site with poor parking facilities
 - respondents to the Parish Council questionnaire also highlighted the quality of outdoor sports facilities as poor. Within the parishes of Tutnall and Cobley and Lickey and Blackwell the quality of outdoor sports facilities was perceived to be very poor. The tennis courts within the parish of Barnt Green were identified as in need of resurfacing
 - a division in opinion regarding the quality of outdoor sports facilities was highlighted by the Children's IT survey with 36% of respondents indicating that facilities are clean, safe and nice to use and 36% stating that facilities are sometimes unclean with litter and could be made better
 - 37% of respondents to the Young People's IT Survey rated the quality of outdoor sports facilities as average and in need of some improvements.

Setting provision standards – quality

- 8.58. The recommended local quality standard for outdoor sports facilities is summarised overleaf. Full justifications and consultation relating to the quality of provision for the local standard is provided within Appendix G. The standard highlights the key aspirations of local residents with regards sports facilities.

Quality Standard (see Appendix G)

Recommended standard – OUTDOOR SPORTS FACILITIES		
Local consultation, national guidance and best practice suggest that the following features are essential and desirable to local residents:		
Essential	Desirable	
Clean and litter free	Toilets	
Parking facilities	Changing facilities	
Well kept grass	Good access	
Detailed analysis of the local consultation suggests that with regards to outdoor sports facilities, the relative importance of the key components is as follows:		
Component of quality	Proportion of possible total responses received	Weighting
Security and Safety	41%	3
Cleanliness and maintenance	48%	4
Vegetation	32%	1
Ancillary accommodation	36%	2

Setting provision standards – accessibility

- 8.59. The accessibility of sites is paramount in maximising usage as well as providing an opportunity for all people to use the site. The recommended local standard is set in the form of a distance threshold and is derived directly from the findings of the local consultations.
- 8.60. An assessment of current usage patterns showed that the majority of frequent users, those residents who use outdoor sports facilities in the District more frequently than any other type of open space, travel to these sites by car (71%). 29% travel by foot.
- 8.61. Results from the household survey support these findings with the majority of residents stating that they expect to drive to outdoor sports facilities, with the exception of grass pitches where residents expect to walk.
- 8.62. Accessibility was one of the key issues for outdoor sports, with many residents highlighting that the lack of access to school facilities restricted their use of local sites.

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- 8.63. Site specific accessibility issues were also analysed as part of the programme of site visits where information and signage, transport and general accessibility issues were assessed.
- 8.64. These assessments revealed that the accessibility of outdoor sports facilities is generally good with 81% of sites visited achieving accessibility scores of over 70%.
- 8.65. The recommended local accessibility standard for outdoor sports facilities is summarised below. Full justification for the local standard is provided within Appendix H. The standard reflects the aspiration that pitches will be provided in close proximity to the home.

Accessibility standard (see Appendix H)

Recommended standard
<p>10 MINUTE WALK TIME = GRASS PITCHES</p> <p>15 MINUTE DRIVE (or public transport) TIME = TENNIS COURTS AND BOWLING GREENS,</p> <p>20 MINUTE DRIVE (or public transport) TIME = SYNTHETIC TURF PITCHES AND GOLF COURSES</p>
Justification
<p>There are several factors to consider in setting a standard for outdoor sports facilities. In particular, the range of facilities that lie within this typology makes it difficult to set a meaningful standard that can be applied across the board. For example, residents have significantly different expectations for synthetic turf pitches (to which they are willing to travel further) than they do for grass pitches (where there is a presumption of more localised provision).</p> <p>Findings from local consultation suggest three standards should be set. A walk time standard has been set for grass pitches and a drive time standard for tennis courts, bowling greens, synthetic turf pitches, golf courses and athletics. These standards have been recommended in line with the expected travel methods and to reflect the specialist nature of this typology, with all facility types not expected to be provided locally.</p> <p>Findings from the household survey highlight the importance of localised pitch provision for residents. A standard in line with the modal and mean has therefore been set. Although differing results are portrayed within three of the five analysis areas, a 10 minute walk time has been set to reflect the expectation for grass pitches to be locally accessible.</p> <p>For tennis courts and bowling greens a 15 minute drive time has been set and for synthetic turf pitches, golf courses and athletics a 20 minute drive time has been set. These standards are both based on key themes of the consultations and take into account both the mode and the mean and the spread of responses, as well as the more strategic nature of these facilities. These standards are reflective of the expectation of residents that there is a need to travel to access these types of outdoor sports facilities.</p>

Applying provision standards

- 8.66. Given the broad nature of the outdoor sports facilities typology within PPG17, standards should only be applied to provide an indication of planning need.
- 8.67. The application of the recommended quality, quantity and accessibility standards helps to understand the existing distribution of outdoor sports facilities and identify areas where provision is insufficient to meet local need.
- 8.68. The quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Applying the standards together is a more meaningful method of analysis than applying the standards separately.
- 8.69. Sport England, the national government and wider governing bodies are targeting an increase in sporting participation of 1% per annum in the run up to London 2012 and beyond. While this increase is across all sports, there will be a knock on impact on demand for facilities should this target be achieved.
- 8.70. Table 8.10 below summarises the application of the quantity standard for outdoor sports facilities. As highlighted, the broad range of facilities included within this typology means that the application of a quantity standard provides only an indication of provision. The type of facility that is most appropriate for a given area will be derived from expressed demand and local participation trends.

Table 8.10 – Application of quantity standard

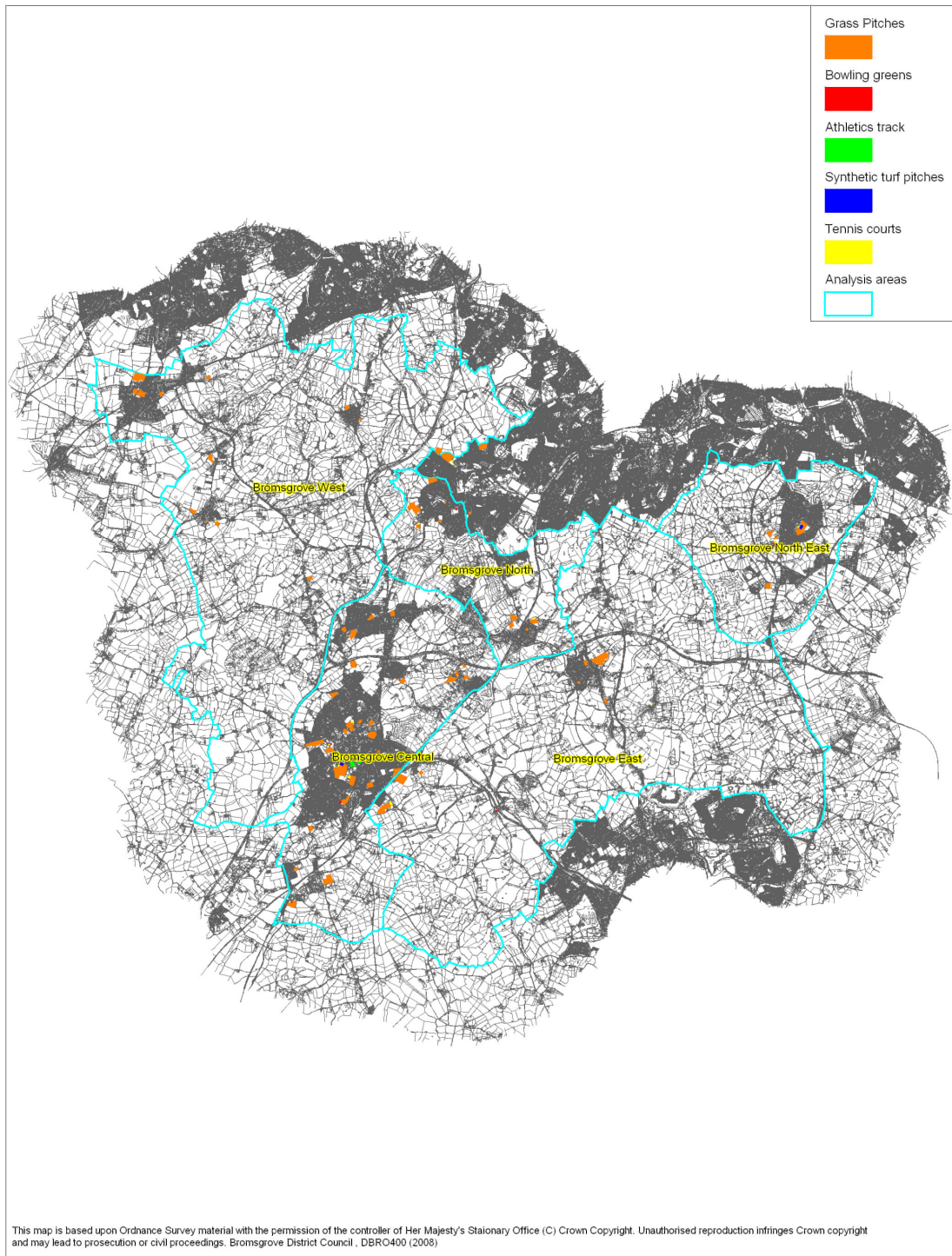
Analysis areas	Current balanced against local standard (1.67 hectares per 1,000 population)	Future balanced against local standard (1.67 hectares per 1,000 population)
Bromsgrove North	-1.98	-4.20
Bromsgrove West	1.86	-0.53
Bromsgrove East	8.65	6.77
Bromsgrove North East	-7.67	-9.89
Bromsgrove Central	-1.61	-9.97
Overall	-0.75	-17.81

- 8.71. As can be seen in Table 8.11:

- the recommended local standard (1.67 ha per 1,000 population) has been set above the existing level of provision to reflect the findings of the consultation and unmet demand highlighted in the Playing Pitch Strategy
- application of the local standard shows a surplus of provision in Bromsgrove East both now and in the future
- although provision in Bromsgrove West is sufficient to meet current needs projected population growth will increase demand and transform this into a shortfall of 0.53 ha by 2026
- there are deficiencies in existing provision in the remaining three areas - Bromsgrove Central, Bromsgrove North and, particularly, Bromsgrove North East. The current shortfall in each area becomes more pronounced by 2026 as rising population levels result in increased local demand. However the impact is most significant in Bromsgrove Central where the deficiency changes from -1.61 ha to -9.97 ha
- overall this means there is insufficient provision to meet demand currently (-0.75 ha) and shortfalls in provision become considerably more marked in the future as population numbers rise (-17.81).

8.72. The application of the local accessibility standards for outdoor sports facilities is set out overleaf in Maps 8.3 – 8.7. Map 8.2 demonstrates the distribution of different types of sports facility.

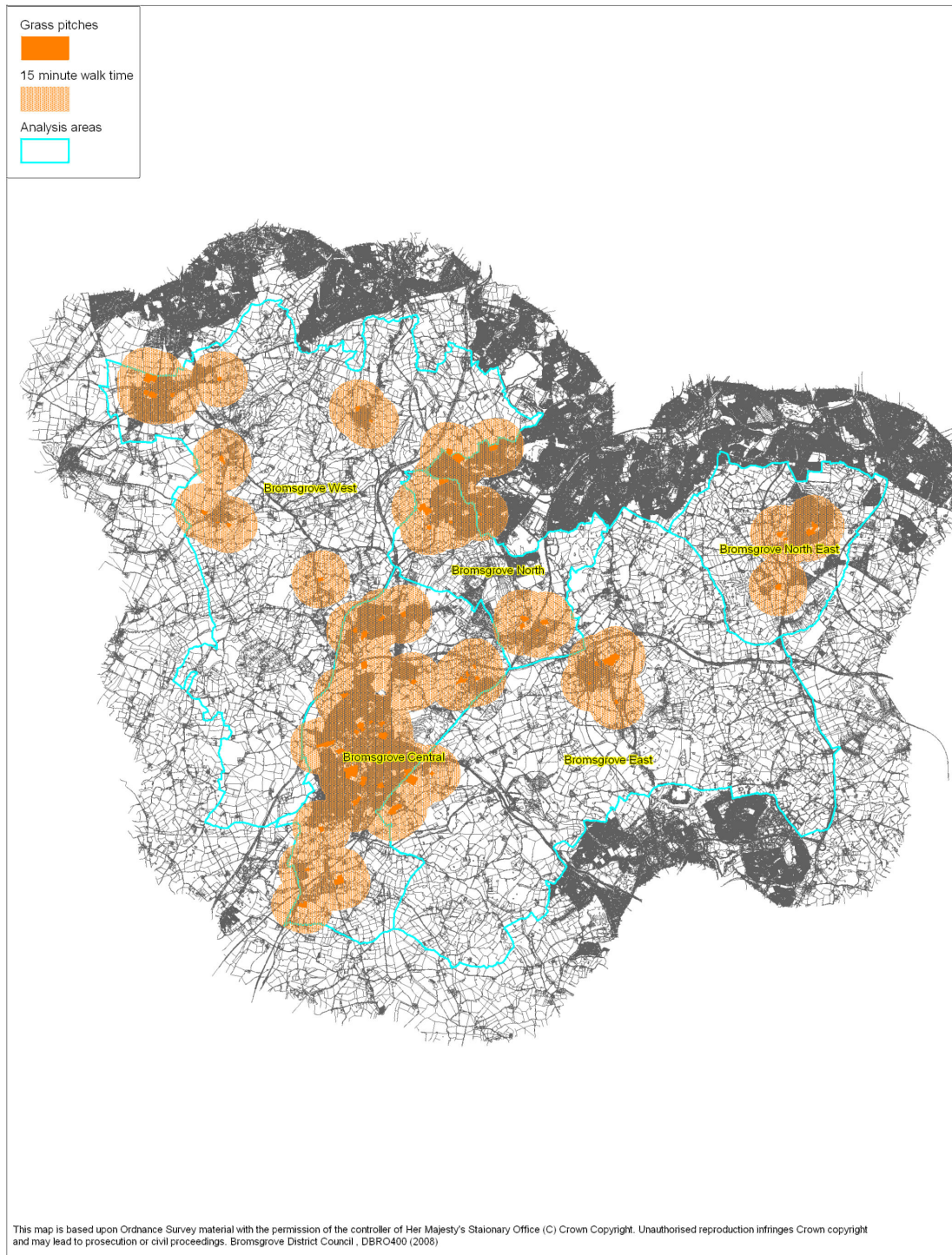
Map 8.2 – Provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove



Outdoor sports facilities



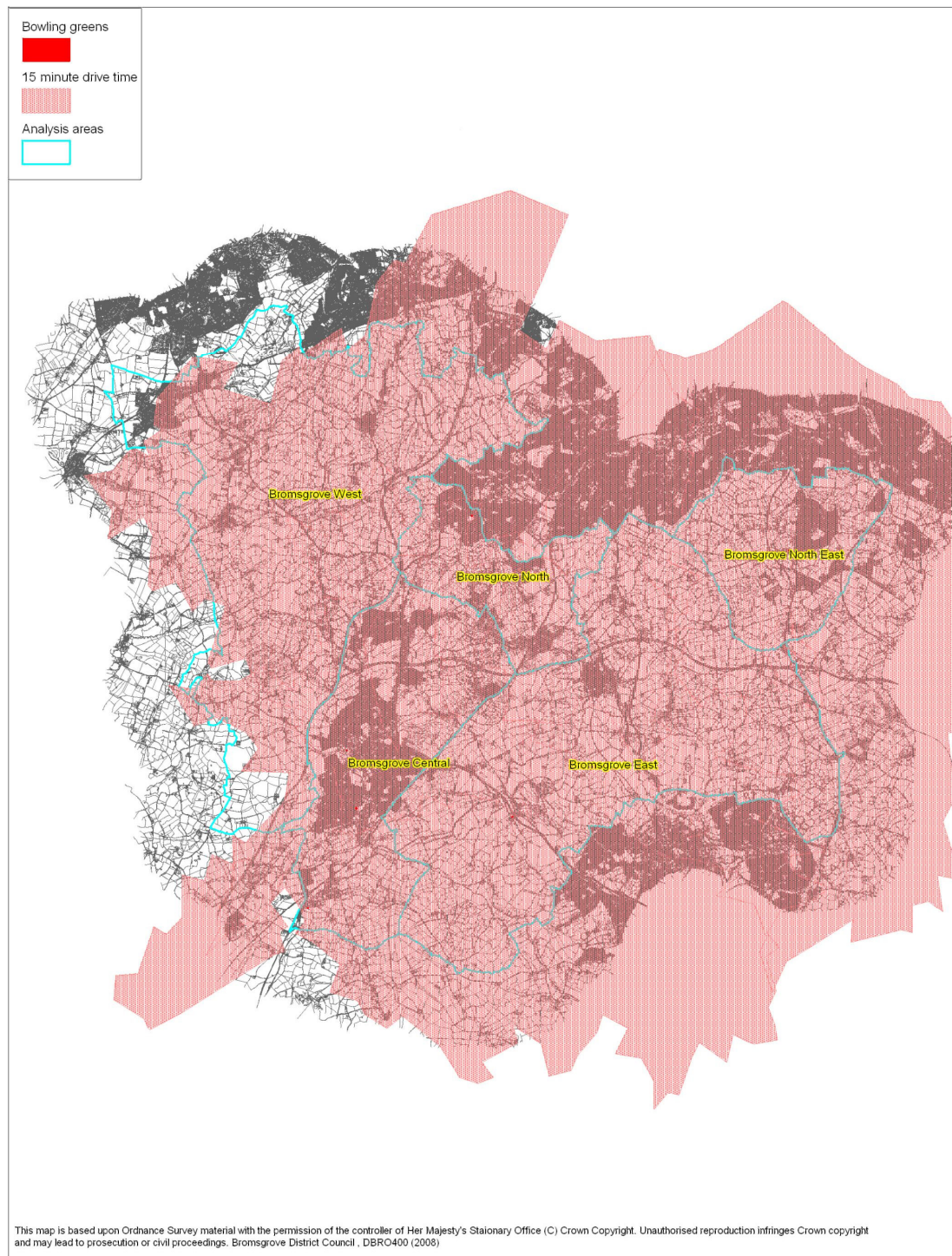
Map 8.3 – Provision of grass pitches in Bromsgrove



Grass pitches - 15 minute walk time



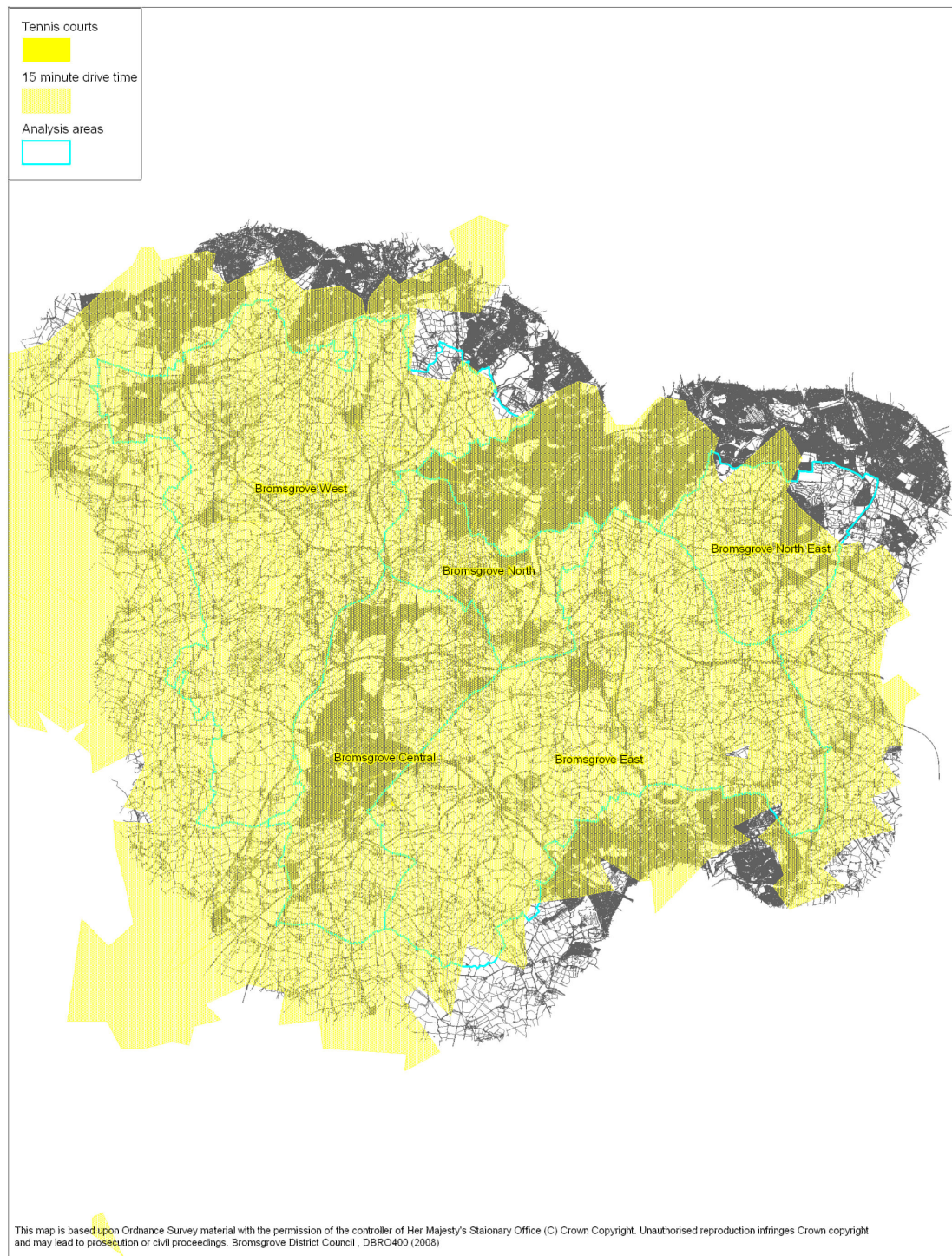
Map 8.4 – Provision of bowling greens in Bromsgrove



Bowling greens - 15 minute drive time



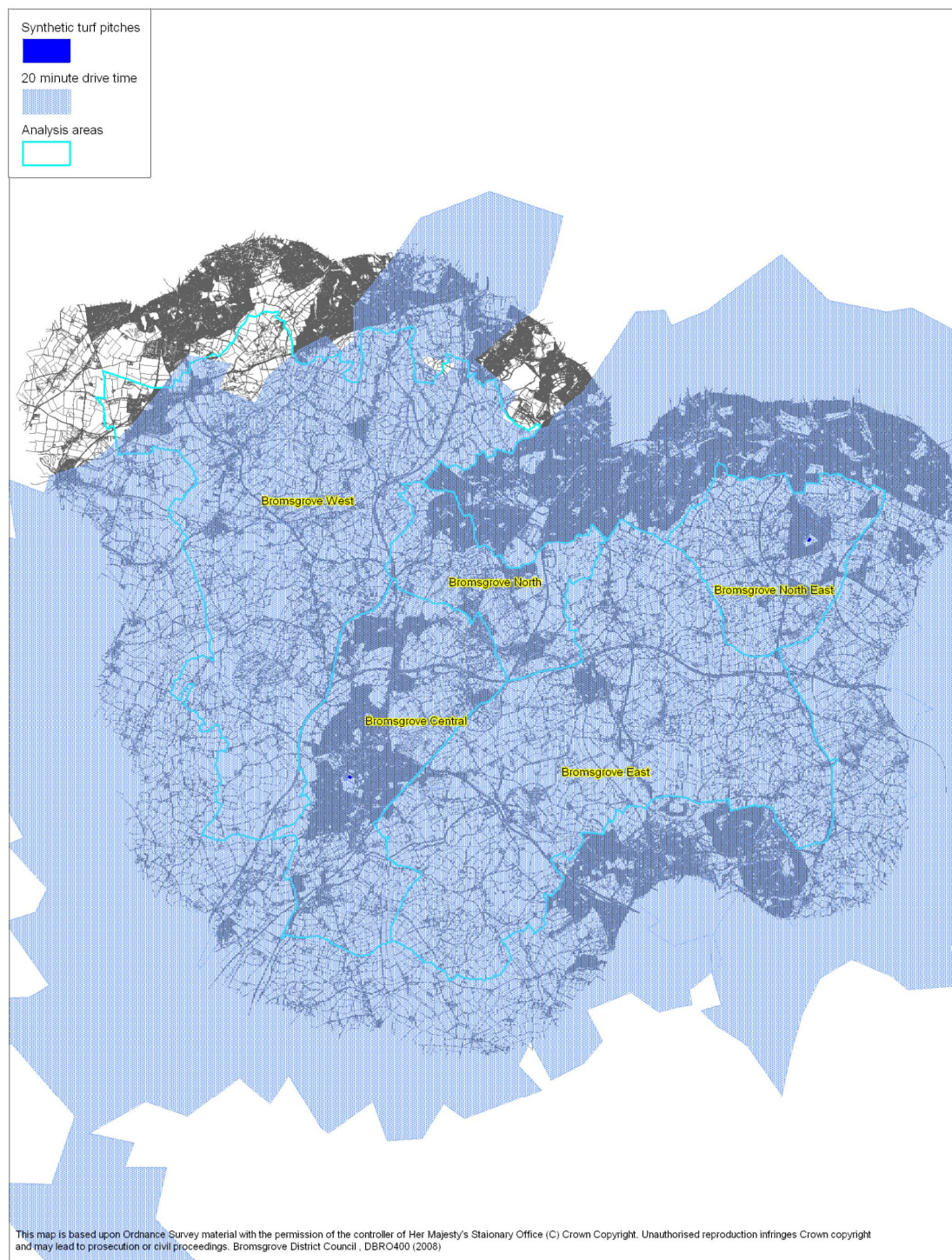
Map 8.5 – Provision of tennis courts in Bromsgrove



Tennis courts - 15 minute drive time



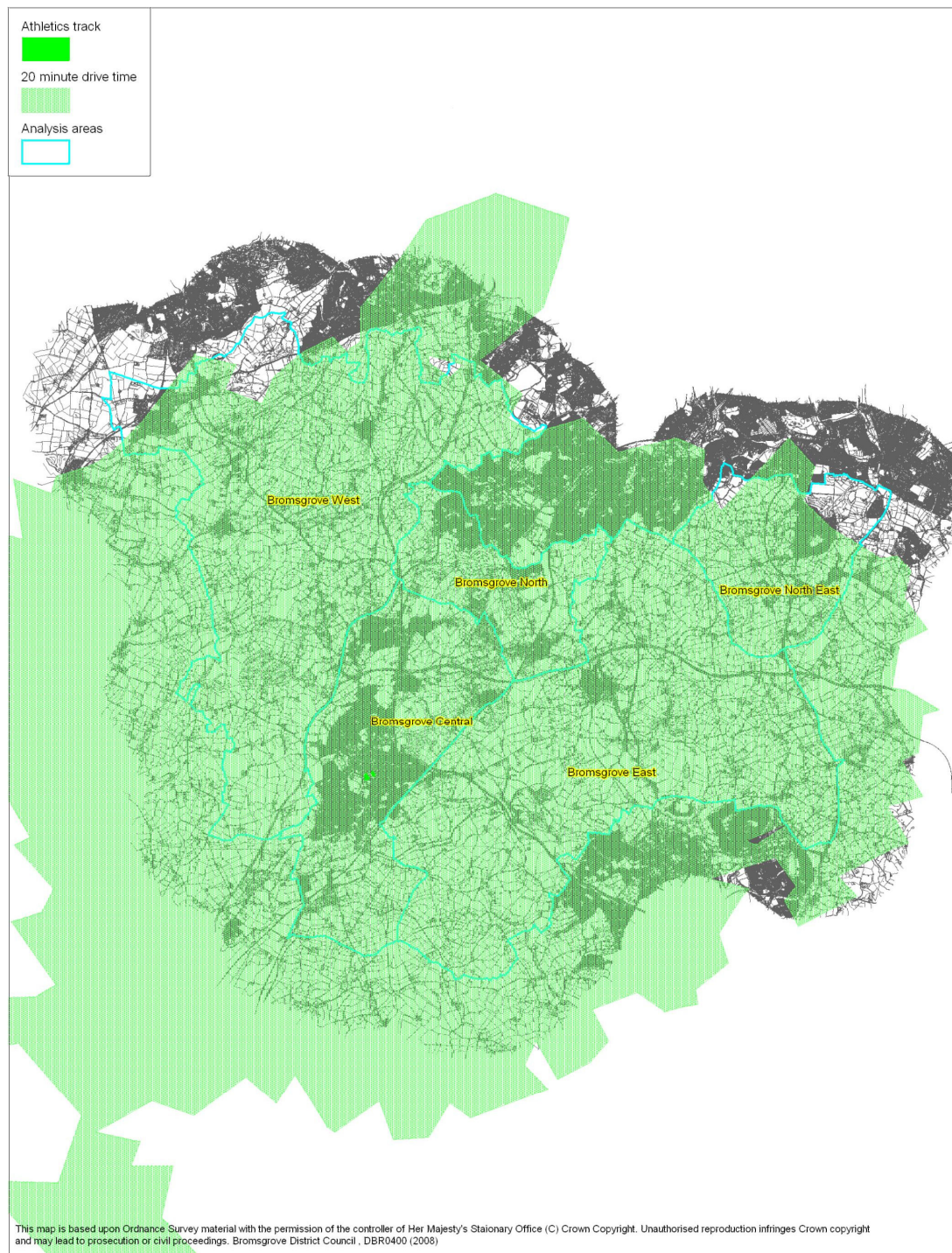
Map 8.6 – Provision of synthetic turf pitches in Bromsgrove



Synthetic turf pitches - 20 minute drive time



Map 8.7 – Provision of athletic tracks in Bromsgrove



Athletics - 20 minute drive time



- 8.73. The key issues arising from the accessibility mapping regarding the provision of outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove sites include:
- all residents have access to at least one outdoor sports facility within the recommended travel times
 - all residents, with the exception of those in the far North East of the District (Hollywood and Majors ward) are within a 15 minute drive of tennis court provision
 - the majority of residents, with the exception of those in the far North West of the District (Hagley Ward), fall within the accepted travel times of bowling greens, athletics tracks and STPs
 - grass pitches are evenly distributed across the District but whilst most residents are within a 15 minute walk of a playing field site there are areas in all analysis areas that fall outside of these catchments.
 - while consideration of the distribution of facilities is important, it is important to balance the desire to ensure that all residents have local access to facilities with the logistics of providing high quality facilities. Sites containing multiple facilities are more cost effective as well as providing greater opportunities for local residents.

Applying the quality, quantity and accessibility standards together

- 8.74. Quantity standards enable the identification of areas that do not meet the minimum provision standards, while the accessibility standards will help determine where those deficiencies are of high importance. Quality standards outline the key aspirations of local residents and provide an indication as to where sites may currently fall below expectations.
- 8.75. Consultation indicated that while the quantity of facilities is problematic in some areas, there is a real need to improve the quality of many existing sites. In many instances, improvements to the quality of existing sites will impact on the capacity of the facility. A facility that is able to sustain more games will serve the local community to a greater extent.
- 8.76. As indicated through the consultation process and the site assessments the quality of outdoor sports facilities in the District is highly variable. Although a selection of sites achieved a 100% quality rating and the overall average was 80%, some sites scored less than 50%. With limited accessibility deficiencies the initial focus should be on the enhancement of existing facilities.
- 8.77. Sites have therefore been divided into quartiles according to their quality. A full list of all scores achieved during site assessments can be found within Appendix I. To fall within the top quartile, a score of 90% would be required.
- 8.78. Key issues relating to the quality of specific sites will be considered during the application of the standards for each of the specific types of open space. The findings of the quality assessments should be used to guide the provision of outdoor sports facilities to ensure that they are fit for the purpose that they are intended.

OSF1	<p>Seek to improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities, to achieve 90% (the score required to fall within the top quartile). This should ensure that all are fit for their intended purpose.</p> <p>Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities.</p>
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- 8.79. In addition to the quality of outdoor sports facilities, consultation highlighted that the quantity of provision in some areas is problematic. As previously highlighted all residents are within the recommended catchment of a tennis court and the majority within the established travel times for athletic track, bowling green, grass pitch and STP provision.
- 8.80. Consideration is given to the location of each type of facility in order to understand the provision of different facilities. In light of the expectation that athletics tracks, bowling greens, tennis courts and STPs will be provided within a drive time distance and are not expected within close proximity of the home, consideration has been given to the provision of these facilities at a District wide level.

Tennis courts

- 8.81. All residents have access to a tennis court within the distance threshold of 15 minutes drivetime. Four out of the five analysis areas have a similar resident population. Three of these areas have two sites and the remaining area one site. In comparison Bromsgrove Central has five sites but a population that is roughly four times larger. Four of these facilities are situated at school sites.
- 8.82. The profile of provision in different areas can be summarised as follows:
- Bromsgrove North – facilities at Barnt Green Sports Ground as well as Rubery Leisure Centre providing for both club-based and casual participation
 - Bromsgrove West – provision solely at Belbroughton Recreation Ground offering casual use opportunities
 - Bromsgrove East – facilities at Rowney Green Recreation Ground as well as Bromsgrove Cricket, Hockey and Tennis Club providing for both club-based and casual participation. Bromsgrove Tennis Club provides five male and five female competitive adult teams
 - Bromsgrove North East – provision at Wythall Park supporting casual participation with facilities also at Woodrush Community High School
 - Bromsgrove Central – provision at Sanders Park offering casual use access with facilities also at three school sites: Park Middle School, Bromsgrove School and South Bromsgrove School.
- 8.83. The above indicates that there are casual participation opportunities in each of the key settlements across the District.
- 8.84. Household survey findings showed that satisfaction with the quality of outdoor sports facilities is lower than other types of open space and consultation with Parish Council representatives highlighted that tennis courts at Barnt Green Recreation Ground are in need of resurfacing. However site assessments at Wythall Park, Rowney Green

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Recreation Ground and Belbroughton Recreation Ground indicated that the quality of publicly accessible tennis courts is generally good.

- 8.85. Residents also expressed particular dissatisfaction with the quantity of tennis courts. Since the majority of residents in the District are within the recommended accessibility catchment of a facility the reason for this perception may be the lack of publicly accessible facilities and / or the quality of sites. The focus therefore should be on increasing access to school sites as well as improving the quality of specific sites. Comments were also made relating to the lack of tennis courts that are suitable for winter use.

OSF2	Focus on increasing access to school sites as well as improving public transport links to maximise access to sites. Enhance the quality of sites identified as low quality through consultation and site assessments.
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- 8.86. With an identified pocket of deficiency in Hollywood and Majors Green ward, it is also recommended that a localised assessment is carried out and the potential for introducing tennis court facilities at grass pitch or amenity green space sites in this area is explored. While these residents are able to access facilities in neighbouring authorities, local access to facilities is poor.

OSF3	Examine demand for tennis provision in Hollywood and Majors Green ward and the potential for tennis court development on existing grass pitch or amenity green space sites.
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Bowling greens

- 8.87. There are bowling green facilities in all five analysis areas. Three of the seven sites in the District are located in Bromsgrove Central, which has the highest population. Residents in parts of the Hagley and Furlongs wards are the only people in the District to fall outside of the 15 minute drive time accessibility catchment for such provision. Provision of bowling greens is particularly important to the west of the district in light of the Sport England Market Segmentation data which demonstrates that residents in this area of the district have a particular propensity to participate in activities such as bowls.
- 8.88. Consultation indicated that there is a clear perception among residents in all areas except Bromsgrove North East that current bowling green provision is insufficient. The greatest level of dissatisfaction was evident in Bromsgrove East where provision is club-based as opposed to pay and play. Site assessments indicated that the quality of Wythall Park Bowling Green and Hewell Bowls Club is good with quality ratings of 80% and 93% respectively.
- 8.89. With the majority of residents within the recommended travel time of an existing facility the initial focus should be placed on increasing access to existing public bowling greens to improve their value to the local community as well as promoting related activities such as short mat bowls at local leisure facilities.

OSF4	Focus on increasing access to existing publicly accessible bowling greens in the District and promoting wider participation opportunities.
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Synthetic turf pitches

- 8.90. There are two sites containing STPs in the District, both of which are school sites. Bromsgrove High School contains two pitches although only one of these is accessible to the local community. Active Places Power indicates that the quantity of provision in Bromsgrove is equal to the national and regional averages.
- 8.91. Consultation highlighted strong dissatisfaction with the provision of STPs and concerns were raised by local sports clubs regarding the lack of publicly accessible facilities in the District. This was also reinforced in the playing pitch strategy, where competing interests between football clubs (who wish to use synthetic pitches for training) and hockey clubs (who require pitches for match play) were identified.

OSF5	Focus on improving access to the two school-based facilities in the District, particularly at weekends for hockey club and consider the provision of at least one additional synthetic pitch, potentially located at Bromsgrove Hockey Club.
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- 8.92. In addition to the creation of a new synthetic pitch, in order to ensure that demand is adequately met, further floodlit training facilities for football teams may be required.

Athletics tracks

- 8.93. There is one athletics track in the District and this is not a synthetic facility. For the size of the authority however this means that provision of this type of facility per 1,000 population is slightly above national and regional levels.
- 8.94. In terms of accessibility the majority of the Bromsgrove community, with the exception of some residents in the Hollywood and Majors ward (Bromsgrove North East) and Hagley ward (Bromsgrove West) are able to access an athletics track within the accepted 20 minute travel time. Residents outside of the facility in Bromsgrove are located within the appropriate distance of a facility in an adjacent authority.
- 8.95. Given that the facility is a grass based track and not a synthetic facility, it does not meet the needs of local clubs. The Bromsgrove and Redditch Athletics Club train at the Abbey Stadium in Bordesley, Redditch. The Regional Sports Facility Strategy does not identify the need for an additional facility in Bromsgrove, instead indicating that priority should be given to maintaining existing facilities. Should demand arise, a training track should be provided at a school site.

OSF6	Maintain existing athletics provision and should demand arise consider the provision of a training facility at a school site.
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Golf Courses

- 8.96. Analysis of Active Places Power indicates that the provision of golf courses in the Borough is above the national average. Consultation also demonstrates that residents are satisfied with provision. Despite this, there are limited facilities for pay and play, with the majority of clubs requiring memberships.
- 8.97. Future priorities should focus on facilitating access to golf for local residents and protecting existing sites from development.

OSF7	Protect existing golf courses from development and facilitate access to existing courses.
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General

- 8.98. Outdoor sports facilities provide important sport and recreation opportunities for local residents and can contribute to improving participation and health. As highlighted in the sections above, the distribution of facilities is even and there is a good level of provision across the district. Therefore, all outdoor sports facilities within the District should be protected from development.

OSF8	Protect all outdoor sports facilities from development unless it can be proven that the site is surplus to demand, or that development of one site will result in improved facilities at a nearby site. This should be incorporated through the provision of appropriate policies in the LDF.
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- 8.99. The playing pitch strategy considers the provision of grass pitches in detail. Application of the accessibility standard highlights that while there are areas that fall outside of the recommended 15 minute walk time catchment of a pitch, overall the distribution of pitches is even. Despite this, not all pitches are accessible for community use. The playing pitch strategy identifies that in particular, it will be important to secure access for community use to pitches that serve a unique catchment area. The playing pitch strategy examines the supply and demand in detail and concludes that:

- there is a perception that pitches are of poor value for money. Drainage at pitches and the provision of ancillary accommodation are particular priorities with regards the quality of pitches
- there is an theoretical oversupply (17.4) of adult football pitches on the peak day across the District
- there is an undersupply of junior pitches (-8.6) on the peak day (Sunday). However, in practice the adult pitch stock is being used by junior teams
- there is an undersupply of (-1.8) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Sunday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-2) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an oversupply (19) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)

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- there is an undersupply (-10.5) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day, which is Sunday mornings. However, there is also a theoretical surplus of adult pitches on this day, which is used to accommodate junior matches
- in order to maximise resources, increasing access to school facilities should be a key priority going forward.

8.100. The key priorities and actions for pitch provision in each geographical area are therefore discussed in detail in Section 9. Delivery of these priorities should be incorporated within the LDF and should be integrated within planning policy.

Summary

8.101. Outdoor sports facilities are a wide-ranging category of open space which includes both natural and artificial surfaces for sport and recreation. Facilities can be owned and managed by Councils, sports associations, schools and individual sports clubs with the primary purpose of participation in outdoor sports. Examples include:

- playing pitches
- athletics tracks
- tennis courts
- bowling greens
- golf courses.

8.102. PPG17 considers the provision of all the different types of outdoor sport facilities as one and does not break down the typology into more detailed assessments for each sport. However, for the purpose of this study each sport has considered individually.

8.103. Consultation highlights issues with both the quantity and quality of facilities. Analysis of the existing provision supports this with pockets of deficiency identified in the Bromsgrove North East and Bromsgrove West analysis areas and variable quality ratings achieved during site assessment visits. Consultation indicated that enhancing the quality of sports facilities is perceived to be more important than increasing the quantity of provision.

8.104. Generally there is a good distribution of outdoor sports facilities across the District with all residents having access to at least one outdoor sports facility within the recommended travel time. All residents, with the exception of those in the far North East of the District (Hollywood and Majors ward) are within a 15 minute drive of tennis court provision and the majority, with the exception of those in the far North West of the District (Hagley Ward), fall within the accepted travel times of bowling greens, athletics tracks and STPs.

8.105. Whilst most residents are within a 15 minute walk of a playing field site there are areas in all analysis areas that fall outside of these catchments. Both enhancing the quality of existing outdoor sports facilities and increasing access to school-based provision are considered key priorities for the District.

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8.106. Sport England, the national government and wider governing bodies are targeting an increase in sporting participation of 1% per annum in the run up to London 2012 and beyond. While this increase is across all sports, there will be a knock on impact on demand for facilities should this target be achieved.

8.107. It is therefore recommended that the key priorities for the future delivery of provision for outdoor sports facilities in Bromsgrove that should be addressed through the Local Development Framework and/or other delivery mechanisms are:

- protect all outdoor sports facilities from development unless it can be proven that the replacement of a facility will result in a higher quality facility in a nearby location
- seek to improve the quality of outdoor sports facilities. Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities
- improve access to tennis court provision at school sites and improve public transport links to existing sites
- upgrade the quality of identified sites tennis court provision
- investigate demand and potential for new provision in Hollywood and Majors ward
- focus on increasing access to existing publicly accessible bowling greens in the District and promoting wider participation opportunities
- increase access to school-based STP facilities in the District and develop at least one additional pitch
- facilitate the delivery of improved pitches including the provision of changing rooms and drainage installation.

Playing pitch strategy

Introduction

- 9.1 The key areas of this part of the study included:
- analysing the current level of pitch provision within the District
 - assisting the Council in meeting the requirements for playing pitches in accordance with the methodology developed by Sport England in conjunction with the Central Council for Physical Recreation (CCPR)
 - providing information for decision-making and future development proposals.
- 9.2 The application of the playing pitch methodology provides more detail regarding the provision of pitches and builds on the analysis set out in elsewhere in this report. An electronic toolkit has also been provided to the Council to enable it to regularly update the data as pitch demand and usage evolves over the next few years, including any demographic changes or increases in participation.
- 9.3 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) assesses participation in competitive pitch sports by adults and young people. This section applies the PPM calculations to the following sports (these will be referred to as 'pitch sports' in the body of the report):
- association football (football)
 - rugby
 - cricket
- Usually hockey is included within this list but there is currently no competitive hockey played in the District, mainly due to the absence of an accessible suitable synthetic turf pitch (STP).
- 9.4 This section presents the key findings arising from pitch specific survey work and consultation, highlighting areas of concern and opportunity. It is important to note that, in terms of the PPM, the strategy discusses the provision of playing pitches (ie the playing surface, safety margins and the wider area for repositioning the pitch within the playing field) and not playing fields nor open spaces (which include grass or other areas which are not used for sport). This is an important distinction because some of the areas surrounding pitches are not used for sport but rather have a value as a recreational area. Calculations set out in this section may therefore differ from figures quoted in section 7 of this study.
- 9.5 This strategy covers the following key areas:
- the current picture – a review of current participation trends and playing pitch and provision in England for pitch sports and outdoor sports, at national and local levels
 - methodology – a summary of the research process
 - supply and demand – an overview of the playing pitch facilities and pitch sport activity in Bromsgrove
 - an application of Sport England's PPM
 - key actions, recommendations and priorities for the future based on development of the main issues arising from the supply and demand analysis.

The Playing Pitch Methodology

- 9.6 Our process follows the methodology set out in 'Towards a Level Playing Field: A manual for the production of a playing pitch strategy'.
- 9.7 The aim of the PPM is to determine the number of pitches required for each activity based on demand in an actual or predicted set of circumstances. The essential difference between the methodology and previous approaches based on national standards is that, instead of using land area per head of population as the basic unit, it measures demand (at peak times) in terms of teams requiring pitches and then compares this with the pitches available, thus enabling a tangible measure of the adequacy of existing supply.
- 9.8 The particular advantage of this methodology is that it is related precisely to the local situation and the task of collating and analysing the information highlights problems and issues from which policy options and solutions can be explored.
- 9.9 In line with this methodology, this strategy only applies the PPM to pitch provision for football, rugby and cricket.
- 9.10 The success of the PPM outlined above depends largely on obtaining as accurate a tally as possible of the number of teams and pitches. To achieve this, a full audit of pitches, users and providers within the District boundary was conducted. A variety of methods were used to identify pitch provision:
- review of Active Places to determine the number and relative proximity of pitches
 - review of The FA's Local Area Data Report for the District, which details the number of teams
 - Parish Council questionnaires (see Appendix C)
 - telephone consultation with private pitch providers (eg work grounds such as Britannica Insurance) and schools
 - identification of sports facility sites via aerial maps and subsequent visits by PMP site assessment staff.

All known football, cricket, rugby and hockey clubs were identified in governing body and county association handbooks, league handbooks, pitch booking records, websites, local press, telephone directories, or local knowledge. To ensure accuracy the records were verified against the FA's Local Area Data report for Bromsgrove District.

Supply and demand of playing pitches

Pitch stock

9.11 There is a total of 94 pitches in the District. This figure includes all known public, private, school and other pitches whether they are in secured public use or not. The full audit of pitches can be seen in Appendix D. They comprise:

- 49 adult football pitches
- 5 dedicated junior football pitches
- 6 dedicated mini soccer pitches
- 15 cricket pitches
- 21 rugby union pitches
- 3 STPs

(It should be recognised that, in practice, the adult pitch stock accommodates junior matches and a low number of junior pitches is not necessarily reflective of the state of junior sport in any local authority)

Adult pitches

9.12 Based on the current adult population in the District there is a ratio of one pitch to every 875 adults. This is quite a high ratio, especially taking into account that a high percentage (88%) of the total pitch stock is made up of adult pitches. As an illustration, the best figure we have encountered is 1:365 in Kennett in Wiltshire and the worst is 1:2,637 in Newham. Provision in Bromsgrove is similar to that in North Wiltshire and there are more pitches per head of adult population than the national average (1:989).

9.13 Table 9.1 sets out a selection of previous results from studies that PMP has undertaken for illustration purposes.

Table 9.1 - Ratio of adult pitches per 1,000 adults

Local Authority	Ratio (Pitches: adults)
Kennett	1: 365
Bath and North East Somerset	1: 574
Colchester	1:655
Elmbridge	1:681
Canterbury	1:720
Maidstone	1:723
Huntingdonshire District	1:725
District	1:743
North Wiltshire	1: 804
Bromsgrove	1:875
England	1: 989
St. Helens	1: 1,050
Portsmouth	1: 1,100
Worcester	1:1,125
Torbay	1: 1,313

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- 9.14 The ratio for Bromsgrove has also been compared with the national averages for each sport (Table 9.2 below) taken from the Sport England database. The comparison shows that Bromsgrove has a higher number of adult football and rugby union pitches per head of adult population compared to the national averages. However, the ratio of cricket pitches is low compared to the national average.

Table 9.2 – Ratio of Pitches to Adult

Sport	Bromsgrove District (pitches: adults)	England (pitches: adults)
Football	1:1,351	1: 1,840
Cricket	1:5,451	1: 4,243
Rugby	1:3,374	1: 8,968

Community pitches

- 9.15 In line with the updated documentation '*Towards a Level Playing Field: A Manual for the Production of a Playing Pitch Strategy*' our definition of community pitches is those pitches with 'secured community use', recognising that this has a considerable bearing upon the value of facilities both individually and collectively to the community at large.

- 9.16 In practice this definition embraces:

- all local authority and parish council facilities
- any school facilities where they are subject to formal dual/community use agreements between the school/education authority and the Council
- any other institutional facilities which are available to the public as a result of formal dual/community agreements
- any facilities owned, used or maintained by clubs/private individuals, which as a matter of policy or practice are available for use by large sections of the public through membership of a club or admission fee. In either case the cost of use must be reasonable and affordable for the majority of the community.

- 9.17 Of the 99 pitches identified, 74 (74.7%) are secured for the local community. Table 9.3 shows how pitches secured for community use in Bromsgrove compares to other local authorities in the country.

Table 9.3 - Pitches with secured community use

Local Authority	% of pitches secured for community
Bromsgrove District Council	74.7%
South Somerset Borough Council	69%
Maidstone Borough Council	61%
Elmbridge Borough Council	60%
Canterbury City Council	50%
Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead	33.2%

- 9.18 Table 9.3 shows that the proportion of pitches secured for community pitches in Bromsgrove District is very high in comparison with other local authorities for which data is available. This figure should be treated with caution as it is often difficult to ascertain as to whether community usage of school sites is actually subject to a formal use agreement, or whether it is as a result of a relationship between the club and an individual staff member.
- 9.19 It is therefore recommended that further work should be undertaken to determine the level of formal community use agreements in place.

Quality of pitch and ancillary facilities

Consultation feedback

- 9.20 As stated in the Playing Pitch Strategy methodology ‘Towards a Level Playing Field’, pitch quality is a key issue. The presence, and quality, of ancillary facilities is also important, particularly in an era when child protection is high on the sporting agenda. Access to changing facilities is also often a league requirement placed on local clubs. In our experience it is often the case that the *perceived* quality of pitches (and ancillary facilities) is more important than their *actual* quality, and such perceptions can heavily influence the pattern of demand and explain why certain sites are ‘overplayed’ whilst others are not used to the same extent. Perceived quality of pitches has been looked at from a user perspective as well as a detailed pitch quality inspection (completed by the PMP in 2008).
- 9.21 All sports clubs were sent a postal questionnaire to provide qualitative feedback about the pitch stock in the District. In addition a focus group was held at the Council offices for local sports clubs to provide feedback as to the quality and quantity of facilities. Some clubs and league secretaries were also telephoned to gather basic quantitative information, but actually provided additional qualitative feedback verbally. This feedback is summarised below. It is not unusual for this feedback to be inherently negative as it reflects people’s perception of facilities. This analysis should not therefore be treated in isolation and examined alongside the PPM findings throughout the report.

Football	
Value for money	The overriding view of respondents is that clubs do not receive value for money when hiring Council pitches. Specifically, the perceived lack of preparation and ongoing maintenance is not reflected through a reduced cost of pitch hire, which has actually increased over the last few years. In particular, clubs feel that they are somewhat ‘left to their own devices’ when preparing the pitch and have to mark the lines out themselves, without receiving any assistance in sourcing equipment to do this.

Football	
Pitch availability	<p>Examination of the Council booking sheets for pitches suggests that there is spare capacity in the pitch stock in the District. For example, Charford Recreation Ground is not officially used on Saturdays for either of its match slots whilst other facilities such as Aston Fields Recreation Ground, Frankley, Rubery Recreation Ground and Sanders Park have capacity to accommodate additional matches if necessary.</p> <p>The Council operates a first come, first served system concerning pitch bookings and, as a result, there is a natural scramble amongst clubs to play on what are perceived to be the best quality, or most conveniently located, pitches. This policy can lead to junior teams playing on senior pitches (eg Bromsgrove Town Juniors FC use Charford Recreation Ground, which has two senior pitches) despite there being capacity at other junior pitch sites in the District.</p> <p>The Bromsgrove Football League is the principal senior football competition covering the District. It has around 20 teams and some clubs are forced to hire pitches in neighbouring local authorities, such as Droitwich, when ideally they would prefer to play matches in the Bromsgrove area. There is also a demand from teams playing in the Redditch League to use the facilities (due to pitch demand outstripping supply in Redditch) which increases demand for the pitches and means that Bromsgrove League matches have to be played outside the District.</p> <p>In terms of demand, the League has reduced in size over the last few seasons, which has meant less demand for pitches. Clubs attribute this to the ever increasing costs to participate in league competition as well as high facility costs. It should, however, be noted that this trend is mirrored countrywide and is not unique to Bromsgrove.</p> <p>Clubs also refer to the lack of affordable access to school facilities, mainly due to the high rent costs associated with the need to pay for a caretaker to facilitate access to facilities.</p>
General quality	<p>The majority of respondents rate the pitches as either average or poor. In particular dog foul was identified as the single biggest inconvenience at Council sites, along with poor preparation and maintenance.</p> <p>The perception of users is that the quality of pitches has reduced over the last few years. In particular the length of grass, unevenness of surfaces and lack of ancillary facilities were identified as three areas where the quality of the facilities could be improved.</p> <p>Clubs identified that the best pitches were located at private sites, specifically those at Stoke Prior Sports &</p>

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Football	
	<p>Social Club, Barnt Green Sports Club and Britannia Insurance. However, like schools, access to these sites was considered to be difficult and there is a perception amongst clubs that the pitches are not used to capacity.</p> <p>Charford Recreation Ground was identified as being the best pitch site in the District of those that are accessible.</p> <p>Belbroughton Recreation Ground and Hopwood Playing Fields were assessed as the worst scoring pitches in the District. The main reasons for this are the unevenness of the pitches, the long grass length and the evidence of high levels of unofficial use for non-competitive matches, which is detrimental to their long-term quality.</p>
Ancillary accommodation	<p>Only two of the Council's sites having ancillary accommodation, namely Charford Recreation Ground and Rubery Recreation Ground.</p> <p>Worcestershire County FA states that a minimum league requirement is to have access to changing facilities on playing pitch sites. This is a requirement in the Bromsgrove & District League. Due to this clubs feel that a high number of pitches in Bromsgrove are not 'fit for purpose', and this could explain why they travel outside the District to alternative sites with suitable ancillary facilities.</p>

Cricket	
Pitch ownership	<p>All the cricket pitches in the District are club-based. There are therefore no Council maintained pitches available to local clubs. This is not unique to Bromsgrove as the high level of preparation and ongoing maintenance necessary to prepare a good quality, not to mention safe, cricket pitch would place an increased strain on Council budgets.</p>
Quality and quantity	<p>Consultation with clubs has highlighted that, overall, the quality of facilities in Bromsgrove is good. There are no fundamental pitch issues to report and all clubs have private groundstaff that prepare the pitches to the highest quality.</p> <p>The ground regulations to compete in league competitions are stringent and as a result clubs are subject to annual audits to ensure that their grounds meet quality standards. Clubs identified modifications to their grounds which they hoped to make in the future with upgrades to practice nets and increases in the number of square wickets, to further protect the quality of the pitches.</p> <p>Bromsgrove Cricket Club has considered installing an artificial wicket onto the pitch to increase the number of junior matches which can be played, but this surface can be dangerous when wet.</p>

Rugby union	
Club structure	<p>There are five main clubs playing in Bromsgrove:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bromsgrove RUFC • Five Ways Old Edwardians RUFC • Old Halesonians RUFC • Kings Norton RUFC • Woodrush RUFC <p>As with cricket, all the facilities are privately owned and maintained. The RFU conducts regular facility audit checks, which allows the governing body to directly support clubs to achieve their facility development aspirations. A number of key facility improvement projects have recently been supported as a result of this structure, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Woodrush RUFC – developed a 8.3 acre site adjacent to the current ground to provide one additional pitch to accommodate the Club’s junior programme and relieve pressure from the first team pitch • Bromsgrove RUFC – funding to floodlight the main pitch to RFU standards. • Old Halesonians RUFC – new clubhouse facility has recently opened with improved changing facilities and social areas.
Quality	<p>Clubs have identified that a lack of proper pitch drainage is an issue, particularly with the level of junior usage of the pitches. This pressure is particularly acute at Bromsgrove RUFC which has a large junior section and therefore a great demand on the pitches.</p> <p>Clubs expressed a desire to improve their facilities overall but, other than drainage, the improvements relate to improving the floodlighting or installing barriers to protect the first team pitch. Such improvements can therefore be described as aspirational rather than absolutely necessary in the short-term.</p>

Hockey	
Lack of facilities	The only facility within the District is located at Wythall, which is a 10 mile drive from the town centre. It is therefore more practical for the club to access facilities at Trinity High School in Redditch. Nevertheless, Bromsgrove Hockey Club feels that there is not a sufficient number of artificial turf pitches in the District.
Access to facilities	The club occasionally hires the STP at Bromsgrove High School during the week for training purposes. However, this facility is over-subscribed and is not available for hire on Saturdays, which is when competitive matches are played.

Site visits – an overview

- 9.22 PMP carried out a number of site visits to the outdoor sports facilities. In total around sites were visited and assessed using a series of criteria in line with Sport England guidance. Some sites were subsequently not included in the audit as the pitches were not considered suitable for competitive matches to be played and therefore not required for the Playing Pitch Model.
- 9.23 There is a total of 48 sites in Bromsgrove. All sites were given an overall quality rating of poor, average or good:
- 38 sites scored above average
 - 8 sites scored average
 - 2 sites scored poor.
- 9.24 It should be noted that these assessments do present a snap shot in time and as such cannot be used to provide a definitive quality assessment of the pitches. The site assessments were carried out in the summer of 2008 at a time when the pitches were generally in their best condition as they were out of season or, in the case of cricket actually in season and therefore prepared to their highest standard. These results should therefore not be treated in isolation from the consultation findings.

Demand from sports clubs in Bromsgrove District

9.25 Table 9.4 below illustrates the number of teams playing each sport in Bromsgrove. These include adult, junior and mini teams.

Table 9.4 - Sports clubs using playing pitches in Bromsgrove

	Football	Cricket	Rugby Union	Hockey	TOTAL
Total number of teams	138	81	46	N/A	264
Number of adult teams	44	46	18	N/A	108
Number of junior teams	58	35	28	N/A	121
Number of mini-teams	36	N/A	N/A	N/A	36

9.26 The revised playing pitch methodology, *Towards a Level Playing Field*, assumes that clubs are based in the ward where they play their home matches and does not take into consideration where players live or where they would prefer to play their matches. The key issues emerging from this analysis include:

- the dominant sport in the District is football. Around half of the total number of teams plays football. There are more junior teams than adult teams which could lead to an increase in demand for senior pitches in the future if these teams are retained in the sport
- cricket teams represent nearly a third (31%) of the total teams in the District. There is a relatively even split of adult and junior teams in the District
- five rugby union clubs make up the 46 teams within the District
- there is no hockey club playing in the District, as Bromsgrove Hockey Club plays its matches in Redditch. This is principally due to a lack of a suitable and accessible facility to play matches.

The Playing Pitch Methodology

9.27 The Playing Pitch Methodology (PPM) comprises eight stages. Stages one to six involve numerical calculations, whilst stages seven and eight develop issues and solutions. The methodology is employed to analyse the adequacy of current provision and to assess possible future situations, in order that latent and future demand (identified through Team Generation Rates), and the problems with quality, use and capacity of existing pitches can be taken into account.

9.28 It is important to note that the methodology deals with each sport individually with a specific set of calculations because, despite some superficial similarities, they exhibit very different patterns of play.

9.29 We have further subdivided the analysis of some sports to deal with specific sub-sectors of activity, e.g. junior play or adult play, so that important aspects are not

submerged in aggregated data. Football and rugby have been subdivided in this manner, whereas no differentiation has been made between junior and senior cricket as they play on pitches of similar dimensions.

- 9.30 It should be noted that these sub-sections of activity are not always clearly defined and therefore cannot claim to provide a totally accurate picture of participation in the District. For example, it is common for junior teams to play matches on senior pitches, perhaps due to the improved facilities at such sites. This can distort the supply/demand figures in relation to a particular sub-section of pitches and therefore any conclusions around surpluses or deficiencies should be treated in the light of each other, ie whether senior pitches do in fact accommodate junior matches.
- 9.31 The 1991 playing pitch methodology assumed that all pitches are of sufficient standard to sustain two games per week. The 2002 playing pitch methodology suggests that the quality of a pitch should be taken into account. This information can be gained from three sources:
- club surveys
 - site visits (conducted by PMP in June 2008)
 - consultation with key officers and stakeholders.
- 9.32 Using all of this information, it is possible to make a judgement on the carrying capacity of the District's pitches. It should be recognised that there is no formula for factors such as weather conditions, age of users, quality of players, etc. However, through local knowledge, user surveys, interviews and an analysis of usage patterns from the previous season it is possible to consider the capacity of each pitch.
- 9.33 To assign a carrying capacity to each pitch, we have used the estimate provided by clubs for their own pitches and utilised the information gathered from surveys and consultation to estimate the carrying capacity for other pitches. Where we have received no specific comments regarding a pitch, the following assumptions have been made:
- carrying capacity weighting of 0.5 for all school facilities as they are not likely to be able to take as many matches as a public facility
 - parish council/local authority pitches have a carrying capacity weighting of one (ie they can carry two matches per week - a standard assumption).
- 9.34 The pitch site assessments conducted allowed for the lowest quality pitches to be identified and their carrying capacity reduced suitably within the playing pitch model. These pitches scored 'poor' for the quality of the site overall as well as scoring poorly on more than one specific pitch quality factor, namely:
- grass cover
 - quality of surface
 - slope of pitch or outfield
 - evenness of pitch
 - quality of equipment.

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9.35 Those pitches whose carrying capacity was reduced based on the findings for these pitch quality factors were:

- Braces Lane
- Hopwood

In addition the capacity for all school sites has been reduced to cater for curriculum use that takes place on them.

(NB – pitches were assessed during the summer months, which can misrepresent their true quality throughout the season).

PPM calculations

9.36 Table 9.5 below demonstrates the calculations undertaken to determine the surplus/deficit of pitches in the District. It should be noted that the calculated surplus/deficit is based upon the peak load of games to be played at a specific time during the week (i.e. am or pm on a day). However, for some sports such as mini-soccer it may be possible to spread the games during the course of a Sunday morning and therefore not require the maximum amount of pitches. The calculations take into account the capacity of pitches (determined by quality) available. Improvements to pitch quality would increase the number of games a pitch is able to sustain (capacity) and would therefore reduce any shortfalls.

9.37 The PPM calculations can inform the basis of Local Development Framework policies with the objective of resolving deficits and oversupplies of pitches.

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Table 9.5 – PPM summary

		Football	Mini-soccer	Cricket	Rugby Union	Rugby League	Hockey		
STAGE ONE		Adult games	44	36	46	18	0	0	
Identifying teams		Junior teams	58		35	28	0	0	
STAGE TWO		Adult games	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	
Calculate home games per week		Junior teams	0.5		0.7	0.5	0.5	0.5	
STAGE THREE (S1x S2)		Adult games	22	18	32	9	0	0	
Assessing total home games per week		Junior teams	29		25	14	0	0	
STAGE FOUR Establish temporal demand for pitches	Saturday AM	Adult games	0%	40%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	30%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Saturday PM	Adult games	20%	0%	45%	100%	100%	100%	
		Junior teams	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	Sunday AM	Adult games	55%	60%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	40%		0%	75%	100%	100%	
	Sunday PM	Adult games	25%	0%	50%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	30%		20%	25%	0%	0%	
	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	0%	0%	5%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		80%	0%	0%	0%	
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	
		Junior teams	0%		0%	0%	0%	0%	
	STAGE FIVE (S3 x S4) Defining pitches used each day	Saturday AM	Adult games	0	7	0	0	0	0
			Junior teams	9		0	0	0	0
Saturday PM		Adult games	4	0	14	9	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		0	0	0	0	
Sunday AM		Adult games	12	11	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	12		0	11	0	0	
Sunday PM		Adult games	6	0	16	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	9		5	4	0	0	
Mid week 1- Specify day		Adult games	0	0	2	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		20	0	0	0	
Mid week 2- Specify day		Adult games	0	0	0	0	0	0	
		Junior teams	0		0	0	0	0	
STAGE SIX		Adult games	30	9	19	19	0	0	
Establishing pitches currently available		Junior teams	3		0	0	0		
STAGE SEVEN (S6-S5) Identifying shortfall (-) and surplus (+)	Saturday AM	Adult games	29.5	1.8	19.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	-5.7			0.0	0.0		
	Saturday PM	Adult games	25.1	9.0	4.5	10.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	3.0			0.0	0.0		
	Sunday AM	Adult games	17.4	-1.8	19.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	-8.6			-10.5	0.0		
	Sunday PM	Adult games	24.0	9.0	-2.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	-5.7			-3.5	0.0		
	Mid week 1- Specify day	Adult games	29.5	9.0	-2.2	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	3.0			0.0	0.0		
	Mid week 2- Specify day	Adult games	29.5	9.0	19.0	19.0	0.0	0.0	
		Junior teams	3.0			0.0	0.0		

Key issues

9.38 Key issues arising from the PPM are:

- there is an theoretical oversupply (17.4) of adult football pitches on the peak day across the District
- there is an undersupply of junior pitches (-8.6) on the peak day (Sunday). However, in practice the adult pitch stock is being used by junior teams
- there is an undersupply of (-1.8) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Sunday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-2.0) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an oversupply (10) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)
- there is an undersupply (-10.5) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day, which is Sunday mornings. However, there is also a theoretical surplus of adult pitches on this day, which is used to accommodate junior matches

9.39 The PPM can then be applied at ward level (see Table 9.6 below) showing the over and under supply compared to the current demand in each ward. However it should be strongly noted that ward boundaries are effectively an artificial barrier in so far as people naturally travel across boundaries to access pitches. Therefore an oversupply in one ward is likely to cater for the needs of a neighbouring ward that may have an undersupply. Nevertheless it is a useful way of displaying the data at a local level.

Table 9.6 - Summary of PPM results by ward areas

Ward name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches	Sub-area
Alvechurch	0.9	-0.4	-1.8	0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.5	Sub-area3
Beacon	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Sub-area1
Catshill	1.0	-0.6	-1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.8	Sub-area5
Charford	-0.5	-0.9	-1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-2.9	Sub-area5
Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.9	2.0	-1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.3	Sub-area4
Furlongs	1.0	0.0	0.0	-2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-1.2	Sub-area2
Hagley	1.7	-1.0	-1.2	0.2	4.0	-3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	Sub-area2
Hillside	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.2	Sub-area1
Hollywood & Majors Green	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	Sub-area4
Linthurst	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	Sub-area5
Marlbrook	-0.1	0.0	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	Sub-area5
Norton	0.0	-0.6	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	Sub-area5
Sidemoor	-0.7	-0.3	0.0	0.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	Sub-area5
Slideslow	1.0	-0.2	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.6	Sub-area5
St Johns	-0.3	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.7	Sub-area5
Stoke Heath	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.1	Sub-area5
Stoke Prior	4.4	-1.4	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	4.5	Sub-area5
Tardebigge	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2	1.0	-4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-2.9	Sub-area3
Uffdown	1.0	-0.2	0.0	1.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.4	Sub-area2
Waseley	4.2	-0.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	3.4	Sub-area1
Whitford	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2	Sub-area5
Woodvale	1.2	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	Sub-area2
Wythall South	1.2	-0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.9	Sub-area4
	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
	0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0
Total	17.4	-5.7	-1.8	4.5	10.0	-10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0		

9.40 Table 9.6 shows that there are no significant over/under supplies of pitches anywhere in the District, although the greatest deficiency was identified in the Tardebigge and Charford wards.

9.41 Consultation identified that there are a number of Bromsgrove teams playing matches in neighbouring local authority areas, particularly Birmingham. The geographical location of Bromsgrove gives club the opportunity to travel locally to access suitable pitch provision.

Amalgamation of wards

- 9.42 For pitch sports, there is an accepted need for players to travel to games. Therefore, analysis at ward level can misrepresent the real situation by not taking into account cross-boundary issues.
- 9.43 Table 9.7 overleaf shows the allocation of wards into analysis areas. These analysis areas reflect those used in the remainder of this report when considering open space provision. It permits analysis at a local level slightly higher than ward level. The groupings were identified following discussions with Bromsgrove Council throughout the process.

Table 9.7- Analysis areas

Analysis area	Wards
Sub area 1	Beacon, Hillside, Waseley,
Sub area 2	Furlongs, Hagley, Uffdown, Woodville
Sub area 3	Alvechurch, Tarebigge
Sub area 4	Dukes Cross & Walker Heath, Hollywood & Majors Green, Wythall South
Sub area 5	Catshill, Charford, Linthurst, Marlbrook, Norton, Sidemoor, Slideslow, St Johns, Stoke Heath, Stoke Prior, Whitford

- 9.44 Since clubs/teams may travel to adjoining or nearby wards in order to play their home matches the findings of the study were also analysed at an analysis area level. These results are shown in Table 9.8 below.

Table 9.8 - Summary of PPM result by analysis areas

Sub-area name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches
Sub-area1	4.2	-0.8	0.0	2.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.6
Sub-area2	4.9	-1.4	-1.2	-0.5	4.0	-3.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.1
Sub-area3	0.9	-0.4	-1.8	1.0	1.0	-4.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	-3.3
Sub-area4	1.5	-0.3	0.0	0.9	2.0	-1.9	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.2
Sub-area5	5.9	-2.9	1.2	1.0	1.5	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.4
	17.4	-5.7	-1.8	4.5	10.0	-10.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	

9.45 The key issues arising from Table 9.8 at an analysis level are:

- there is an overall shortfall of pitches in sub-area 3 (Alvechurch, Tarebigge)
- there is an overall oversupply of adult football pitches in all analysis areas
- despite the surplus of adult football pitches, there are shortfalls of junior football pitches in three of the five analysis areas indicating that junior teams may also be using adult pitches
- there are shortfalls of mini soccer pitches in two of the sub-areas (sub-areas 2 and 3). This indicates that there is a concentration of mini soccer in these areas and consideration should be given to increasing provision in these areas
- there are shortfalls of junior rugby union provision across all analysis areas, although in reality the adult pitch stock is able to accommodate junior demand
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket in sub area 2, although this is not reflective of the generally sufficient supply of pitches across the District.

Predicting the future

Team Generation Rates

- 9.46 Team Generation Rates (TGRs) indicate how many people in a specified age group are required to generate one team. TGRs are derived by dividing the appropriate population age band for the relevant sport (eg for adult football it is the 16-45 age group) by the number of teams playing that sport. Calculating TGRs enables fair comparison to be made between different areas where similar studies have been undertaken.
- 9.47 TGRs can be calculated for each of the individual disciplines, such as adult men’s football, adult women’s football, mini-soccer. Once these TGRs have been calculated, they can be brought together to form one TGR for each sport.
- 9.48 The TGRs for each sport in Bromsgrove District are shown below and are compared to the national average based on Sport England database of Playing Pitch Strategy information.

Table 9.9 - Football Team Generation Rates

Age group	Bromsgrove District TGR	National average
Senior male	379	1:314
Senior female	16,453	10,593
Junior male	72	1:71
Junior female	443	1:818
Mini-soccer	120	1:141
Overall	394	239

Table 9.10 - Cricket Team Generation Rates

Age group	TGR
Senior male	618
Senior female	7,288
Junior male	159
Junior female	574
Overall	736
National average	761

Table 9.11 - Rugby Union Team Generation Rates

Age group	TGR
Senior male	1,015
Senior female	15,381
Junior male	103
Junior female	1,072
Overall	783
National average	1,498

What do these numbers mean?

9.49 The following examples help clarify what TGRs mean:

1:100 → high TGR → relatively low latent (unmet) demand

1:1000 → low TGR → relatively high latent (unmet) demand

9.50 These figures are only a guide and do not specify the sport or refer to local conditions. For example, the national popularity of football will mean that it will almost always have the lowest TGR. Equally, hockey usually has the highest. Therefore, it is more useful to compare Bromsgrove District’s TGRs with other areas.

9.51 From our previous work we have found that football TGRs range from 1:118 in Mid-Devon to 1:636 in Waltham Forest, with an England average of 1:239. This means that Bromsgrove District has a relatively high latent demand for football compared to the other local authority areas. This may be reflective of the District’s proximity to major urban sprawls, such as Birmingham, which attract players out of the District to compete in more competitive competitions.

9.52 For cricket, the TGRs have ranged from 1:212 in West Devon to 1:9,450 in Newham. The national average TGR for cricket is 1:761 and it can be concluded that the participation in Bromsgrove is broadly representative of the national participation trend.

9.53 For rugby union, TGRs have ranged from 1:495 in Mid-Devon to 1:6,615 in Newham. Therefore, the TGR in Bromsgrove (1:783) is significantly higher than the national average (1:1,498) and suggests that there is a strong and thriving club structure in the District which is meeting current levels of demand.

9.54 Overall, the TGRs for Bromsgrove are good, which indicates low levels of latent demand and a strong club structure across most pitch sports. The most notable exception to this is the absence of competitive hockey in the District, with Bromsgrove Hockey Club playing its matches at Trinity High School in Redditch. The TGR for football could also be another area to target development, in particularly the developing womens and girls teams to bring them in line with national ratios.

Projections for 2026

- 9.55 By applying TGRs to the population projections for 2026 we can project the theoretical number of teams that would be generated over the next few years. This can then be applied to the PPM model to forecast any future shortfall of pitches, assuming that no new pitches are provided in the interim.
- 9.56 Small increases in participation in football, cricket and rugby union (5%) have been factored into the model. This assumes that a combination of sports development initiatives, the growth of mini and junior sports (which may have a knock on impact to adult participation) and enhanced promotion of the health agenda and physical activity will have an impact on demand for pitch provision. These increases are therefore reflected in the figures for 2026.
- 9.57 As can be seen in Table 9.13, this increase in demand is reflected in the increased deficiencies in all the pitches across the District. As currently, the most severe deficiency in 2026 will be in sub area 3.

Table 9.13 - PPM calculations by analysis area (2026)

Sub-area name	Shortfall of adult football	Shortfall of junior football	Shortfall of Mini-soccer	Shortfall of cricket	Shortfall of adult rugby union	Shortfall of junior rugby union	Shortfall of adult rugby league	Shortfall of junior rugby league	Shortfall of hockey	Total pitches
Sub-area1	4.0	-0.9	0.0	1.4	1.3	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	5.4
Sub-area2	4.7	-1.8	-1.4	-1.1	3.7	-4.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2
Sub-area3	0.7	-0.6	-2.1	0.4	0.6	-4.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	-5.7
Sub-area4	1.1	-0.4	0.0	0.8	1.9	-2.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.2
Sub-area5	4.8	-3.6	-0.1	0.4	1.3	-0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3
	15.3	-7.2	-3.7	2.0	8.7	-12.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	

- 9.58 It is not predicted that the supply/demand patterns will change significantly in the future, although clearly the deficiencies will become more acute as development initiatives result in increased team participation and therefore a greater demand for pitches.
- 9.59 There is likely to be a shortfall of rugby union pitches, with the over supply of senior pitches (8.7) not sufficient to accommodate the junior deficiency (-12.1).
- 9.60 The only two pitch types to have a true surplus in 2026 are senior football and cricket, although once again the surplus in senior football pitches will be used to accommodate deficiencies in both junior and mini pitches.
- 9.61 It can be seen from the issues raised above that there can be key changes over a period of years (such as an increase in population and participation) that will change the demand for pitches. The capability to model ‘what if?’ scenarios ensures that a changing local context can always be accommodated and local policies changed to

reflect this. The electronic database provided with the playing pitch strategy element of the work ensures that changes can be accounted for and supply and demand in the District can be reassessed.

- 9.62 This section has presented the modelling element of the Playing Pitch Strategy which considers both the quality and quantity of provision. The key conclusions for pitch sports arising from the application of the playing pitch methodology are set out in the paragraphs that follow. These conclusions are specific to pitch sport provision within the District and should complement and supplement those recommendations outlined within the outdoor sports analysis in the previous section.

Priorities for action and key recommendations

9.63 Priorities and key recommendations for pitch provision in Bromsgrove are considered under the following headings:

- protection of existing provision
- identifying deficiencies
 - improving access to provision
 - enhancing the quality of existing pitches
- further opportunities for improvement.

9.64 The principles behind each of the above elements is considered generally across the District and then specific issues within each of the analysis areas are highlighted and solutions to address the issues are discussed.

Protection of existing provision

9.65 The identified deficiencies of certain pitch types (and pressures on the overall pitch stock in the District) emphasise the importance of protecting many of the existing areas of playing pitch land and open space in public, private and educational ownership as playing pitches are often under threat from other, non-sport, development.

9.66 Due to the current levels of demand and the pressures on pitches to cope with this demand, all known playing fields sites should be afforded protection within specific policies that benefit sport and physical activity in Bromsgrove.

9.67 Policies RAT4/S31/S32 in the Bromsgrove Local Plan identifies the commitment of the District to protect open spaces, sport and recreation facilities, at public, private and education sites. The application of the playing pitch methodology supports this protectionist stance.

PPS 1	All pitch sites should specifically be afforded protection within the Local Development Framework. Protection policies should link with policies for other open space typologies. This is discussed further in the planning implementation section.
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9.68 In light of the growth aspirations of the District, particularly in relation to the market towns and key centres for growth, a formal requirement for contributions towards new pitch provision (S106 agreements) should be set out in the LDF. The local standard outlined later in this section should be used to ascertain the level of input from developers specifically for pitches (as opposed to outdoor sports facilities in general). The results of the application of the playing pitch methodology should inform the most appropriate use for this money in pitch terms.

PPS 2	The Council should secure developer contributions to improve the quality of existing outdoor playing fields or alternative sporting provision in the District and provide new ones where a shortfall has been identified. Developers cannot be asked to make up existing deficiencies, only to contribute to those caused by or exacerbated by their development. This links with recommendations outlined in the planning implementation section.
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Pitch issues – dealing with surpluses and deficiencies.

- 9.69 Deficiencies in pitches arise when there is an absolute shortage and/or when existing pitch (es) cannot accommodate existing demand, particularly at peak periods. Application of the sports pitch methodology to the District as a whole disguises sport and location specific shortfalls and issues. The results of the playing pitch methodology calculations at sub area level indicate that there are locational deficiencies in pitch provision as well as some areas where pitch provision is currently above the minimum level of demand.
- 9.70 Opportunities for optimising pitch provision and addressing deficiencies include:
- redesignation of pitches
 - increasing access to pitches, particularly school sites
 - creation of new pitches.
- 9.71 It must be acknowledged that the recommendations for pitches are a minimum level of provision, based on a pragmatic approach to what may be feasible in the long-term and where the latent demand/pressure for additional pitches both now and in the future has been identified. Key recommendations for addressing pitch provision in each analysis area are set out in tables 8.14 – 8.18.
- 9.72 The principles behind the solutions proposed are outlined in detail in the paragraphs that follow.

Improving access to school pitches

- 9.73 There remain some pitches at school sites that are not dual use facilities at the present time.
- 9.74 Access to these facilities could provide a vital community resource, both in terms of access to open space (particularly in smaller settlements where there is limited provision) but more specifically through meeting the demand for pitch provision.
- 9.75 School facilities permitting community use maximise use of existing assets and such partnerships are attractive to public funding partners. School sites can also be used to address areas of deficiency and to provide training facilities. Developing facilities at school sites offers the opportunity to enhance school club links and to foster development of sports within the school environment at an early age.
- 9.76 Ensuring this open access policy and encouraging schools to permit community use may require genuine financial commitment from the Council to improve playing surfaces and capacity, provide or improve changing accommodation.

PPS 3	Investigate the option of securing additional school facilities for dual use. Schools in areas of deficiency of pitch provision should be prioritised. This links with recommendations in the outdoor sports facility section, which suggests securing community access to school sites that serve a unique catchment area.
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- 9.77 While community use of school pitches should be encouraged in order to maximise the use of assets, it must be acknowledged that school pitches are required to meet curricular demand during the week as well as sustaining community use at

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weekends. It is essential that they can effectively meet this role first, as their primary purpose, and therefore wear and tear on these sites should be minimised.

PPS 4	Where possible, any school pitches used for community use should be assigned for youth games to protect the site and ensure it is able to serve its primary purpose – curriculum use.
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9.78 The development of community use agreements could help to offset some of the unmet demand for junior and mini pitches, and therefore create capacity at some of the principal senior pitch sites in the District (eg Charford).

9.79 In addition to making better use of corporate resources, the development of formal long term community use agreements will also help to:

- improve school club links
- develop extended school links
- maximise public assets
- aid junior progression and development routes.

9.80 Where community use agreements are negotiated it should be ensured that these facilities are accessible to community teams and that a clear booking system is in place. Where possible, prices should also be standardised. The inclusion of parish pitches and pitches owned by other providers would further improve the ease of access to pitches within Bromsgrove District.

PPS 5	Consider the inclusion of school pitches available to community within the existing pitch booking system.
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Providing a minimum level of provision

9.81 While it is important to ensure that deficiencies are met for each sport and each pitch type, some degree of spare capacity is an integral part of playing pitch provision for the following reasons:

- to accommodate latent and future demand for existing pitch sport teams
- to enable the development of new clubs and teams
- for the development / expansion of new pitch sports (such as mini-soccer and 'tag' rugby)
- to accommodate backlogs and for rest and recovery periods.

9.82 The playing pitch methodology considers the minimum supply of pitches needed to meet demand. For the reasons highlighted above, it is important to ensure that a strategic reserve of facilities is maintained. Ideally, this should represent about 10% of demand and consideration of the maintenance of this strategic reserve should be taken into account when addressing deficiencies.

9.83 This strategic reserve is of increased importance in Bromsgrove, especially considering that anecdotal evidence suggests that neighbouring local authorities such as Birmingham City and Redditch are struggling to meet demand through their

current pitch stock. Therefore, travelling to access these sites, whilst practical due to the good transport links enveloping the District, is infact not a realistic solution. In many of the smaller settlements (such as parishes) the sports club or playing fields are in a focal point of community life and even if it is not used to maximum pitch capacity (two games per week) the pitch has an important role in enabling local players to participate in sport and providing them with home grounds.

PPS 6	Maintain a strategic reserve of pitches to accommodate backlogs and enable rest and recovery. Ideally this should be around 10% of demand.
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Enhancement of existing provision

- 9.84 The overall quality of pitches and ancillary accommodation is important as it impacts not only on the quality of play, but also on the potential capacity of a pitch and hence numerical surpluses and deficiencies.
- 9.85 The majority of pitches within the District are good quality pitches and maintained to a high standard of play. Despite this, some sites were perceived not to be of sufficient quality to sustain two games per week. Site-specific enhancements have been highlighted in tables 8.14 to 8.18 that follow this section.
- 9.86 Deficiencies highlighted earlier can be addressed through improvements to the existing pitch stock (as this generates an increase in the capacity of pitches). Some of the key issues specific to the overall quality of pitches in Bromsgrove include:
- perception of value for money is poor
 - only a handful of sites have ancillary facilities, which makes them unsuitable for clubs competing in local league competitions. This may also lead to issues accommodating female teams and problems for providing for junior teams alongside senior teams for child protection issues.
 - good quality sites are located at privately run facilities, which are deemed inaccessible to the public
 - there is limited on site parking at some sites
 - the lack of suitable drainage was the most fundamental issue concerning pitch quality
- 9.87 Implementation of this playing pitch strategy should drive a programme of improvements that will simultaneously assist in meeting identified deficiencies. Improved facilities will drive increases in participation, improve access for all groups and enable higher participation levels to be maintained over a sustained period.
- 9.88 Any programme of improvements should bear in mind the following issues:
- the standard of play at the site (including league requirements)
 - the intended capacity of the site (number of games and training sessions per week and level of informal use)

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- the need to encourage use by young people, women and other target groups through appropriate ancillary facilities
- facility specifications from National Governing Body (NGB) strategies.

PPS 7	Identify a priority list of pitches for facility improvements The Council should act as an enabler and support Parish Councils and voluntary clubs in the improvement of facilities where necessary. The programme of improvement should concentrate on pitches in areas of deficiency first and should look to target the achievement of the quality vision outlined for all outdoor sports facilities.
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9.89 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) of 1995 received additional powers in October 2004 when an additional phase came into force. The implications of this are considerable as all goods, services and facilities – whether charged for or provided free of charge – are covered by the legislation which requires providers to ensure that:

- people are not treated less favourably
- service providers must make reasonable adjustments for people with disabilities, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services
- service providers may have to make other reasonable adjustments in relation to the physical features of their premises to overcome barriers to access.

The full Code of Practice is downloadable from <http://www.disability.gov.uk>.

PPS 7	A full access audit should be undertaken ensuring that pitch facilities are accessible to all community groups. This should include an assessment of compliancy with DDA.
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Ensuring provision meets demand

9.90 As part of this study, we have looked at what could happen in the future, taking into account demographic and participation changes. The spreadsheet provided to the Council ensures that changes to both the pitch stock and the demand for those pitches can be modelled. The continual updating of this spreadsheet to reflect changes to provision and demand will be particularly important in the coming years in light of the proposed growth agenda and the current uncertainty as to the extent of the impact of this.

PPS 8	Ensure the modelling spreadsheet is kept up to date to reflect the ongoing changes in population, housing developments and sports development initiatives in addition to improvements made to the pitch stock.
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9.91 Tables 8.14 to 8.18 overleaf examine the current issues for pitch provision in each of the analysis areas and propose solutions based on the principles outlined in the

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previous page. These solutions should be prioritised and turned into an action plan, driving continuous improvement of the pitch stock in Bromsgrove.

PPS 9	Develop a specific action plan based on the issues lists highlighted in tables 11.17 to 11.22
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- 9.92 Potential sources of funding are outlined in section 11; Resourcing the Strategy. While the Council should act as the coordinator in ensuring that pitch provision meets the needs of the community, it is important to continue to work in partnership to ensure that effective delivery of sports provision in all areas of the District. Key partners include voluntary clubs, Parish Councils and National and Local Governing Bodies such as the Worcestershire FA.

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Table 9.14 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 1 - QUANTITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub area 1 = 19.24ha of playing pitch provision of which 14.08ha is secured for community use. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football Adult (4) Junior (-1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An oversupply of adult football pitches in this area indicates a potential need to convert adult pitches into smaller sized pitches alleviating the current deficiency of junior and mini pitches. In reality the adult pitch stock is able to accommodate junior matches and, whilst not ideal from a development perspective, maintaining a degree of flexibility in the pitch stock (ie use by both senior and junior teams) can be beneficial to maximising the pitch stock. ➤ New provision of junior and mini football pitches should be considered when none of these policies are effective at sufficiently increasing pitch provision in the analysis area. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.
<p>Cricket (2.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The current surplus of cricket pitches in the analysis area should be maintained in line with the recommended 10% level of strategic reserve. ➤ Barnt Green Cricket Club has access to two facilities, although it believes that its second team pitch is too small to adequately accommodate its teams. The first team ground is now outdated and requires modernisation, in particular to bring it up to DDA requirements. The Club has planning permission for six additional practice nets and this will relieve pressure on the pitches for practice.
<p>Rugby Adult (1.5) Junior (-1.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is currently sufficient provision to meet the demand of adult rugby in this area. The model indicates that there is a shortfall in the supply of junior rugby pitches equivalent to one pitch, but this deficiency will be accommodated by the senior pitch stock.
QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Frankley	Pitch is not used on Saturdays, only by Rubery Juniors on a Sunday. There are no changing rooms available at the site which limits the attractiveness of the site for local teams. Consideration should be given to funding proposals to construct a changing facility at the site to make it eligible to host local league matches. Pitch quality is average although the grass coverage and line markings were identified as the main quality issues.
Barnt Green Cricket Club	The pavilion does not comply with DDA standards and is in need of modernisation. This has been identified by the Worcestershire Cricket Board. The Club also has planning permission for practice nets, which it hopes will reduce the need to practice on the main pitch. It is also considering the possibility of installing an artificial cricket wicket on its third team pitch (Douglas Ground) and play some of its junior matches using this facility. However, there is a safety risk associated with this as it becomes very slippery when wet.

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Table 9.15 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 2 – QUANTITY

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub area 2 has 21.52ha of pitch stock, of which 15.36ha is available for community use. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (3.9) Junior (-1.3) Mini (-1.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is only a small surplus of adult football pitch provision in this area which should be maintained as a strategic reserve and used to overcome the shortfall of junior and mini pitches. Improvements to the adult pitch at Hail Weston would increase the capacity of adult football pitches in this area. The installation of changing facilities at Belbroughton Recreation Ground would enhance the site and make it more usable for local clubs. ➤ PMP was unable to confirm whether the pitches at Haybridge Sports Centre are used by the community. There is potentially three senior pitches and one junior pitch located on this site. Due to the relatively small level of surplus in adult football provision, and the need to overcome junior deficiencies, consideration should be given to formalising use of appropriate school sites in the area. ➤ The Sports Centre is a dual-use facility which is available to the community outside school hours. However, the pitch bookings are controlled by the School rather than via the commercial operator at the Centre. To increase community use of the pitches consideration should be given to transferring booking control of the pitches to the commercial operator. ➤ New provision of junior and mini football pitches should also be considered to ensure that demand is not suppressed by a lack of facilities. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(-0.7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is a small deficiency of cricket provision in Sub area 1 highlighting that there is pressure on existing cricket provision to cope with the level of demand. Both Belbroughton Cricket Club and the Mews Cricket Club are privately maintained grounds which are considered to be good quality with no significant improvements necessary at either site.
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (4.0) Junior (-3.8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As other pitch types in Sub area 2, there is pressure on pitches to meet the demand from rugby teams. Old Halesonians is the largest club in the area, with six rugby pitches at its site. The Club currently fields 14 teams and can accommodate this level of demand at its current site. There is limited potential for increasing provision, although providing additional grass areas for mini rugby could alleviate some pressure from the existing match pitches and maintain their long-term quality. It is recommended that demand is monitored on an ongoing basis to ensure that pitch provision does not suppress demand.

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Belbroughton Cricket Club	The pitch is quite small although there are no major quality issues.
Belbroughton Recreation Ground	A site visit to the site suggests that the grass should be cut more regularly. The pitches are on an open recreation ground and there is evidence that there are significant levels of unofficial use of the pitches for kick-arounds, which has a negative impact on the long-term quality of the pitches.
Hagley Community Centre	A site visit identified that the grass was too long to be suitable for football. There is also a slight slope on the pitches.
The Mews Church Cricket Club	Pitch is heavily sloped for cricket and the level of grass coverage on the outfield is considered to be poor.

Table 9.16 - Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 3 - QUANTITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub area 3 has the second lowest level of pitch provision in the District (10.26ha). The area centres is made up from Alvechurch and Tarebigge wards. ➤ Despite this the quality of pitch provision is actually very high, with Bromsgrove FC, Bromsgrove RUFC, Alvechurch FC and Harris Brush Works (private site), all of which are privately maintained and high quality sites. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (0.9)</p> <p>Junior (-0.4)</p> <p>Mini (-1.8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There is neither a surplus nor a deficiency of pitches in this analysis area. In order to meet the strategic reserve target opportunities to increase the pitch stock in this area should be explored. ➤ One of the District's main football clubs is located in this area –Alvechurch FC, which competes in the National League System. The level of competition places a requirement for a certain base level of facilities to compete at this level of competition, including a spectator stand and floodlights. ➤ New provision of mini football pitches should be considered to ensure that demand is not suppressed by a lack of facilities. This could involve utilising other appropriate open space sites, perhaps those which are currently underused or of low quality. The Council should investigate the opportunity to use school sites to provide additional mini-soccer and/or junior pitches. ➤ An improvement in the quality of Hopwood Community Centre pitches would increase their carrying capacity and allow them to take more matches per week. Also, local clubs' perception of the facilities at Harris Brush Works is that the site is not readily available for hire.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(0.8)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The small surplus of provision should be retained to allow for the rest and recovery of pitches.
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (1.0)</p> <p>Junior (-4.1)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ As can be seen, there is pressure on pitches to meet the demand from rugby teams, particularly junior pitches. Bromsgrove RUFC has high numbers of teams, in particular a very active junior section, and it may be that some overspill provision is required. The Club has been in discussions with an adjacent landowner to purchase an additional area and create two additional pitches. However, discussions are still ongoing to reach a satisfactory conclusion.

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Bromsgrove RUFC	The drainage on the main pitch is poor and leads to the cancellation of matches during periods of inclement weather.
Lye Meadow	Site is privately maintained and has a stand and floodlights. The Club does permit usage of the pitch on Sundays.

Table 9.17- Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 4	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The level of provision in sub area 4 is the lowest across all of the five geographical areas 8.72ha). There is no rugby played in this area. ➤ The quality of pitch provision in sub area 4 is good. There are a number of privately maintained sites in the area, such as Wythall Park, Woodrush RUFC and the Britannia Insurance site. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (1.5) Junior (-0.3)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The main football pitch site in the area is Britannia Insurance facility and is maintained privately to a high standard. The pitches are excellent quality and therefore able to accommodate the maximum number of matches per week. Other than this site there are no other accessible football pitches in the area. ➤ The shortfalls of junior pitches are accommodated by the surplus in senior pitches.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(0.9)</p>	<p>This minimal over provision should be monitored to ensure that a lack of available pitches does not inhibit demand. Wythall Cricket Club has a relatively small junior section at present in comparison to other clubs in the District and therefore demand for pitches is relatively low. However, future club development should be monitored to ensure the club's facility needs are understood.</p>
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (2.0) Junior (-1.9)</p>	<p>These supply/demand calculations do not take into account the additional two pitches to be constructed at Woodrush RUFC, which will help achieve the 10% strategic reserve target.</p>

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Wythall Park	Site is owned and maintained by Wythall Community Association. The sports facilities are contained within 37 acres of recreational parkland and the facility has a volunteer community management team to maintain the quality of the facilities.
Woodrush RUFC	Poor drainage of first and second team pitches is a problem and this issue is exacerbated by the heavy use of the pitches by the club's junior section. The club has recently bought an adjacent piece of land to develop two additional pitches, which will relieve pressure on the existing stock. Due to the increase in pitches there is now pressure on the existing changing facility and the Club has been granted planning permission to construct a new changing facility but has a match funding gap of around £50,000, which makes any upgrade unrealistic for the foreseeable future.
Britannica Insurance	Private site with good quality pitches and associated changing facilities.

Table 9.18- Playing pitch issues and solutions: Sub area 5	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Sub-area 5 has the largest amount of playing pitch provision in the District (23.8ha) and contains some of the principal outdoor sports facilities in the District. ➤ Braces Lane Recreation ground is perceived to be poor quality and this explains the current poor levels of usage on the site. ➤ A 10% level of provision should be maintained for all sports pitches to allow for a strategic reserve for rest and recovery and for the realisation of latent demand 	
<p>Football</p> <p>Adult (5.9)</p> <p>Junior (-2.9)</p> <p>Mini (1.2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The small oversupply of adult football pitches should be retained to allow for a strategic reserve and rest and recovery of pitches. It is also being used currently to accommodate the deficiency in junior pitches. ➤ Despite there being a theoretical oversupply of senior pitches this is not supported through local consultation as clubs are unable to secure pitches in this area. The highest demand for pitches in this area comes from junior teams and this is illustrated by the usage levels at senior pitch sites in the area, for example at Charford Recreation Ground, which is used by Bromsgrove Town FC’s junior teams. At present the Council operates a first come, first served policy and should consider re-directing junior teams playing at Charford to other sites in the area (eg Sanders Park) to create capacity for senior teams playing in the Bromsgrove League. ➤ There is an opportunity to re-designate the mini-soccer pitches sites in the area (eg Sanders Park) to junior pitches, which would create additional capacity to enable junior 11-a-side teams, currently using senior pitches, to play at the site.
<p>Cricket</p> <p>(-1.0)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The small shortfall of one pitch should be monitored in order to understand whether there is demand for additional cricket provision. If required, consideration should be given to making use of an existing sports site in the area and installing a cricket wicket. This could be done in liaison with Bromsgrove Cricket Club.
<p>Rugby</p> <p>Adult (1.5)</p> <p>Junior (-0.4)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Kings Norton RUFC is the main club in the area and does not have any major facility issues.
<p>Hockey</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is recommended that discussions are held with Bromsgrove School with a view to facilitating access to the STP for Bromsgrove Hockey Club to play competitive matches on Saturdays. This should centre around the need to ensure that the facility is made available and supervised for weekend community use.

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

QUALITY – PITCH SPECIFIC ISSUES	
Bromsgrove Rovers FC	Site is privately maintained and is used beyond its recommended capacity during the week, both by the youth teams of the Club and by teams using the pitch on Sunday mornings. This has a detrimental effect on the surface but does ensure that the pitch is made available to local clubs.
Charford Recreation Ground	The pitches are described as the best in the District but the drainage is poor and they become unplayable during periods of inclement weather. The changing facilities are adequate quality.
Hunters Hill Playing Field	Pitch is adequate quality, although the level of grass coverage could be improved and there is a demand for the pitches to be cut more regularly. The fact that there is no changing at the site makes it unattractive to local teams, although the fact it is a single pitch site means that constructing a changing facility is not recommended.
Braces Lane Recreation Ground	Only junior/youth team pitches on the site which are poor quality. Investment to improve the drainage and pitch surfaces at this site would increase their carrying capacity.
Market Street Recreation Ground	Pitch is not suitable for competitive league matches due to the unevenness of the surface and poor goalpost quality.
Harris Brush Works	Private facility with good quality football pitches.
Sanders Park Recreation Ground	The pitch is uneven in places and the quality of the goalposts is poor. The site is mainly used exclusively for mini-soccer yet there is no changing facility available to teams.
Stoke Prior Recreation Ground	Length of grass is poor and the pitch is particularly uneven. The quality of the goalposts and line markings could also be improved.
Stoke Prior Sports & Country Club	Excellent site, although the outfield is uneven which makes it dangerous for cricket.

Training facilities

- 9.93 A lack of training facilities emerged as a key issue in consultations across the District, with both clubs and other consultees highlighting difficulties in accessing appropriate facilities midweek.
- 9.94 This was raised particularly by football clubs who wish to use the synthetic pitches for midweek training and match practice and clearly have competing interests with hockey teams. Bromsgrove School has two STPs, only one of which is available for community hire. However, this is oversubscribed and clubs cannot book time slots.
- 9.95 Provision for training is an important part of pitch provision. Without this, clubs may use match day facilities meaning deterioration in the overall quality of pitches due to the number of matches that they are required to sustain.
- 9.96 Further provision of pitches dedicated to / suitable for training should be considered. There is also no accessible STP available for Bromsgrove Hockey Club, although this could be overcome by facilitating access to a suitable facility at weekends. Provision of a further synthetic facility to be used for competitive hockey on peak competition days may also provide opportunities for football clubs to train. Alternatively, floodlighting training areas located at the side of some existing pitch sites should be considered in order to facilitate evening training for football clubs, while ensuring that the quality of match pitches is sustained.

PPS 9	<p>Further investigate the provision of floodlit training facilities.</p> <p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional synthetic pitch provision • provision of small floodlit pitches adjacent to the main pitch area <p>At least one facility should be made available within each geographical area of the District.</p>
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Developing a local standard

9.97 An important outcome from a playing pitch strategy is the development of local standards of provision, in accordance with national planning policy. Such standards will:

- underpin negotiations with developers over their contributions for new pitch provision to meet the needs of new residential developments
- provide an additional overview of the general supply of pitches/level of provision
- assist in protecting land in playing field use
- assist in benchmarking with other areas/authorities.

9.98 Overall quality, quantity and accessibility standards for outdoor sports facilities are set in section 7 of this report. This includes consideration of pitches, tennis courts and bowling greens.

9.99 The application of the playing pitch methodology enables the calculation of a more specific local standard for pitches which provides detail on the amount of pitches required. The application of the playing pitch methodology (which measures supply against demand) can then be used to determine the most appropriate balance of pitches between the four pitch sports – football, cricket, rugby and hockey.

9.100 The existing and future local standards have been calculated in Table 9.19. The existing local standard is based upon the current supply of pitches (measured in area) in each sub area, divided by the population in that analysis area. The total represents the current standard, which is 0.87 ha per 1000 population.

9.101 The future local standard calculation is based upon the findings of this report for the future year 2026. It takes into account the additional (or surplus) pitches identified within this report in 2026 and calculates the required area per 1000 population, which is 0.91ha. This is set out in Table 9.19 below.

Table 9.19 – Calculation of Local Standard

Sub-area	Population	Total playing pitch area with secured community use (ha)	Playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)	Additional pitch area required (ha)	Total future pitch area (ha)	Future population	Future playing pitch area per 1,000 population (ha)
Sub-area1	11,247	14.08	1.25	0.72	14.80	12,556	1.18
Sub-area2	12,723	17.72	1.39	4.75	22.47	14,203	1.58
Sub-area3	9,305	11.76	1.26	3.88	15.64	10,387	1.51
Sub-area4	11,377	8.72	0.77	1.67	10.39	12,701	0.82
Sub-area5	43,185	23.80	0.55	1.77	25.57	48,209	0.53
Total	87,837	76.08	0.87	13.13	89.21	98,056	0.91

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

9.102 It is important to also allow for rest and recovery of pitches (strategic reserve) as highlighted in recommendation PPS 6. An allowance for a strategic reserve equivalent to 10% should therefore be included within the standard; hence the recommended local standard for future provision should be 0.81 hectares per 1000 population.

PPS 9	A local standard of 0.81 hectares per 1000 population specific to pitch provision in Bromsgrove should be applied. This complements the standard set for outdoor sports facilities of 1.67 ha, indicating that a minimum of 0.81 ha of the 1.67 should be made up of pitches available for community use.
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Summary

9.103 This assessment of pitches provides a greater level of detail on the provision of pitches in Bromsgrove and has been carried out following the methodology set out in Towards a Level Playing Field (Sport England 2002).

9.104 The key issues arising from the application of the methodology include:

- there is an theoretical oversupply (17.4) of adult football pitches on the peak day across the District
- there is an undersupply of junior pitches (-8.6) on the peak day (Sunday). However, in practice the adult pitch stock is being used by junior teams
- there is an undersupply of (-1.8) mini-soccer pitches on the peak day (Sunday). This indicates that mini soccer teams are likely to be using adult / junior pitches
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches (-2.0) on the peak day (Sunday)
- there is an oversupply (10) of adult rugby union pitches on the peak day (Saturday)
- there is an undersupply (-10.5) of junior rugby pitches on the peak day, which is Sunday mornings. However, there is also a theoretical surplus of adult pitches on this day, which is used to accommodate junior matches
- in order to maximise resources, increasing access to school facilities should be a key priority going forward.

9.105 The key implications of these findings for the Local Development Framework are:

- protect all pitches from development unless it can be proven that the replacement of a facility will result in a higher quality facility in a nearby location
- seek to improve the quality of pitches. Sites should meet National Governing Body criteria. This includes the provision of appropriate changing facilities and installation of drainage where required
- allow for a strategic reserve of pitches to ensure that rest and recovery can take place

SECTION 8 – PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY

- allocate additional land for the development of at least one synthetic pitch and floodlit training facilities for football.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

Wednesday 3rd June 2009

Think about Health and Safety – What Elected Members of Local Authorities Need to know

Responsible Portfolio Holder	Cllr. G. Denaro
Responsible Head of Service	J. Pitman

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To raise the awareness of Cabinet Members to their role and responsibilities in relation to health and safety, and to specifically share new IOSH (Institute of Occupational Safety and Health) guidance which provides timely and pertinent prompts for consideration when making decisions.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That all Members be required to attend a compulsory training session to familiarise themselves with the guidance.
- 2.2 That Councillor R. Smith be appointed as the Council's Corporate Health and Safety Champion.
- 2.3 That as a consequence of the guidance from IOSH, a section addressing Health and Safety considerations be included within the standard report format for Cabinet/Council meetings (Appendix 1).

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) in association with LGE, WLGA, COSLA and HSE have produced this new booklet which outlines the health and safety roles and responsibilities of local authority elected members.

The formal launch took place at London's Living Room on Monday 2nd February 2009.

The guidance seeks to give Leaders, Portfolio Holders and backbench elected members a flavour of the issues they need to consider in fulfilling their responsibilities to ensure that health and safety is effectively managed

within the council. This is particularly important as the Corporate Manslaughter Act is now in force and the fines for health and safety breaches were raised significantly in January 2009.

Given the high profile nature and public scrutiny of health and safety within the public sector it is recommended that a Member Champion be appointed for health and safety purposes. Whilst this might normally be expected to fall to the Portfolio Holder for Human Resources, on this occasion it is felt that it would more be appropriately be Councillor Roger Smith, given his professional background as a Health and Safety Advisor.

It is also recommended that the corporate report template for Cabinet/Council reports be amended within the Risk Management section so that it extends to include "health and safety" implications. This will ensure that Members can be confident that they are aware of, and can consider, health and safety implications when they are being asked to make decisions. The revised standard report format will be introduced following the Members training sessions. In the meantime, a copy of the revised report template (to include signposting to Health and Safety implications) is appended to this report for information.

In addition, in order to ensure that Members are sufficiently aware of the IOSH guidance, and comfortable in their understanding of their responsibilities, it is proposed that training sessions be conducted by the Health & Safety Advisor, D. Ibbitson, and Cllr. Smith, as the recommended Member Champion for health and safety matters. Dates and times of the training (including refresher training) will be organised through the Modern Councillor Steering Group training programme, and notified in due course.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of successful prosecutions for failure to meet health and safety obligations can be varied, ranging from fines of £20,000 to unlimited fines. Prison is now also an option for nearly all offences.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 This can best be described at two levels – criminal law and civil law.

Criminal Law

All employers have a duty under the Health and Safety at Work Act to protect the health and safety of workers and members of the public who could be affected by their work/services – including contractors. In addition to the Health and Safety at Work Act there is a range of regulations linked to the provision of health and safety that must also be considered.

A much more recent legal implication is the introduction of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act which came into force in 2008.

In providing information, instruction and training to all employees (and anyone acting on their behalf), the Council is demonstrating that it is taking its responsibilities for Health and Safety seriously. However, training itself is not enough; the management of health and safety is a “hearts and minds” matter, and we must all take responsibility for ensuring that it is at the forefront of our minds when making decisions that affect the health and wellbeing of those that we are responsible for.

Civil Law

Local authorities have a “duty of care” to their employees and anyone else who is affected by what we do by way of delivering our services.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 As a health and safety enforcing authority, the Council is expected to be exemplars of health and safety and leading the way on achieving effective action on health and safety considerations and promoting best practice. The Council’s Corporate Objectives of continuous improvement of service delivery and quality will be demonstrated through its commitment.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

Failure to manage health and safety at work effectively or meet legal requirements increases the risk of unlimited financial penalties being imposed by the courts under Statute Law. It can also lead to imprisonment. The threat of civil action against the Council is greater than in the past due to the introduction of the Civil Procedure rules, more recently the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 and the revision of the Health and Safety Offences Act 2008.

Failure to give adequate consideration to health and safety matters, particularly where accidents have occurred as a consequence can also lead to negative publicity/organisational reputation and/or negative impact upon corporate assessments such as CPA (now replaced by CAA).

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Following the Cabinet meeting, it is proposed that the guidance booklet be distributed and communicated to all members of the Full Council by way of training sessions (see Recommendation 2.1). The Corporate Health and Safety at Work Policy and Procedures Manual will also be updated accordingly.

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 No diversity impact.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

<p>Procurement Issues</p> <p>There are no procurement issues arising from the content of this report or the associated IOSH guidance.</p>
<p>Personnel Implications</p> <p>See body of report</p>
<p>Governance/Performance Management</p> <p>By raising awareness of Members roles and responsibilities in relation to health and safety, the Council will enhance its overall approach to health and safety management (both to employees and residents/visitors to Bromsgrove). The Council will therefore be in a much stronger position to demonstrate that political decisions are made in the full knowledge of all health and safety implications.</p>
<p>Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Policy</p> <p>The Corporate Health and Safety at Work Policy and Procedures Manual will be updated as a consequence of this guidance.</p>
<p>Environmental</p> <p>There are no environmental implications arising directly from this report, although environmental health is clearly an issue that must be given ongoing consideration.</p>

11. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

Portfolio Holder	Yes
Chief Executive	Yes at CMT
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes “

Assistant Chief Executive	Yes “
Head of Service (i.e. your own HoS)	Yes
Head of Financial Services (<i>must approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader’s Group</i>)	Yes “
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services (<i>for approval of any significant Legal Implications</i>)	Yes “
Head of Organisational Development & HR (<i>for approval of any significant HR Implications</i>)	Yes “
Corporate Procurement Team (<i>for approval of any procurement implications</i>)	Yes “

12. **APPENDICES**

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

Appendix 1 – Updated standard corporate report format for Cabinet and Council meetings

13. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

IOSH Guidance : Think about Health and Safety – What Elected Members of Local Authorities need to know

CONTACT OFFICER

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

DATE (author to insert)

REPORT TITLE (author to insert)

Responsible Portfolio Holder	
Responsible Head of Service	
Key Decision / Non-Key Decision (author to indicate which type of decision)	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended (Only include this part of the box if you consider the report should be a pink one; otherwise delete it. If you consider the report should be pink you should also insert the details referred to under the Legal Implications heading)	

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Brief outline of the subject matter of the report (one or two sentences at most)

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 State exactly what it is officers are asking Members to decide, for example:

That the Communications Strategy attached at Appendix 1 be approved.

If the decision needs to be referred to the full Council start the recommendation as follows:

That the Cabinet recommend the Council to

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 Detailed reasons why the report has been written and the history or technical background to the report

3.2 Include details of any public or other consultations which have taken place

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Examples of details to include in this section are:

- how much it would cost to implement the recommendations
- whether or not budgetary provision already exists
- whether or not a virement is needed
- impact on the Medium Term Financial Plan

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Which, if any, legislation covers what is proposed.
- 5.2 If you consider the report should be pink the following paragraph must be included:

This report is exempt in accordance with Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, because(*report authors to provide reasons for exemption in accordance with the public interest test*). For these reasons it is felt that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

6. COUNCIL OBJECTIVES

- 6.1 How the item links to the Council's objectives and priorities.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT- incl. HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS

Please include the following details:

NOTE TO AUTHORS : PLEASE INCLUDE REFERENCES TO CORPORATE / SERVICE / RISK REGISTER AND SERVICE BUSINESS PLAN WHEN CONSIDERING HEALTH & SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS.

- 7.1 The main risks associated with the details included in this report are:
(list by bullet points up to a maximum of 3 as per the following example)
- Loss of income
 - XXXX
 - XXXX
- 7.2 These risks are being managed as follows:
(list by bullet points up to a maximum of 3 and refer to the relevant risk register as per the following example)
- Loss of income:

Risk Register: *Financial Services*
Key Objective Ref No: *1*
Key Objective: *Maximise collection of Council Tax and Business Rates*
 - XXXX:

Risk Register: XXXX
Key Objective Ref No: *X*
Key Objective: *XXXX*
 - XXXX:

Risk Register: XXXX
Key Objective Ref No: X
Key Objective: XXXX

7.3 *If any of the risks identified in 7.1 are not covered by any risk register, insert the following:*

Currently the risk identified in the *(first/second/third)* bullet point in 7.1 is not addressed by any risk register and will be added to the *(insert appropriate name e.g. Financial Services)* risk register as follows:

Include here the key actions

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

8.1 *How the recommendations will impact on internal/external customers. How/when will the recommendations be communicated to the customer. Will staff be briefed on any possible problems arising as a result of the recommendations.*

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 *State what the implications of the report are for the Council's Equalities and Diversity Policies.*

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 *Examples of issues to include in this section are:*

- impact on corporate VFM action plan*
- appraisal of other options for delivery*
- VFM outcomes from project implementation*

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

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

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

Environmental

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

Portfolio Holder	
Chief Executive	
Executive Director - Partnerships and Projects	
Executive Director - Services	
Assistant Chief Executive	
Head of Service <i>(i.e. your own HoS)</i>	
Head of Financial Services <i>(must approve Financial Implications before report submitted to Leader's Group)</i>	
Head of Legal, Equalities & Democratic Services <i>(for approval of any significant Legal Implications)</i>	
Head of Organisational Development & HR <i>(for approval of any significant HR Implications)</i>	
Corporate Procurement Team <i>(for approval of any procurement implications)</i>	

13. WARDS AFFECTED

Please list any particular Ward(s) affected by the contents of the report. If no particular wards are affected, put 'All Wards'

14. APPENDICES

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

Appendix 1	Description
Appendix 2	Description

15. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The papers used in the preparation of the report should be listed (you do not need to list background papers if the report includes exempt information and any document which has been published does not need to be referred to as a background paper).

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

03 JUNE 2009

CABINET

IMPROVEMENT PLAN EXCEPTION REPORT [MARCH 2009]

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To ask Cabinet to consider the Improvement Plan Exception Report for March 2009 (Appendix 1).

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That Cabinet considers and approves the revisions to the Improvement Plan Exception Report attached as Appendix 1, and the corrective action being taken.
- 2.2 That Cabinet notes that for the 102 actions highlighted for March within the plan 80.4% of the Improvement Plan is on target [green], 3.9% is one month behind [amber] and 2% is over one month behind [red]. The actions that have been reprogrammed with approval¹ reflect the re-programming of the town centre actions (as a result of Parkside) and the re-programming of HR actions (as a result of JE implementation).
- 2.3 This month's performance is shown on the first page of Appendix 1.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 July 2008 Cabinet approved the Improvement Plan 2008/09. The Improvement Plan is directly linked to the five corporate priorities and thirteen enablers identified in the Council Plan 2008/2011.
- 3.2 The Improvement Plan was designed to push the Council through to a rating of Fair during 2008/09.
- 3.3 There were four amber and two red activities this month for the following areas of the Improvement Plan:-

¹ NB reprogrammed actions are those that have been suspended completely and those that have been moved to a later point in the year. Extended actions are listed separately are actions that are anticipated to take longer than had originally been programmed

Ref.	Council Plan Balanced Scorecard Reference	Number
CP4	Sense of Community	1
FP3	Financial Strategy	1
FP4	Financial and Performance Reporting	1
PR5	Planning	1
HR & OD 2	Modernisation	2

3.4 The re-programmed actions i.e. those that have been suspended or moved to a much later date in the Plan are:-

	Ref.	Action	Reason
1	1.2.2	Market Hall redevelopment	Suspended. Credit Crunch
2	1.4.2, 1.4.3, 1.4.4, 1.4.5, 1.4.6, 1.4.7	Market Hall negotiations.	Suspended. Credit Crunch.
3	2.1.3, 2.1.4, 2.1.5	Affordable housing SPD.	Suspended. RSS2.
4	3.3.1	Service data monitoring	Suspended. Expected to be introduced Spring 2009
5	4.1.5, 4.1.13	Consultation for LSP neighbourhoods.	Re-programmed. Different approach agreed for 2009/2010.
6	4.3.11, 4.3.12, 4.3.14, 4.3.15	Review of promotional materials / Artrix	Suspended. Budget constraints / SLA delays
7	8.1.4	Market test treasury advisors	Reprogrammed. Credit crunch
8	14.3.5	Submission Core Strategy	Reprogrammed. Delays with RSS review.
9	15.2.4	Review and consult on the "Bromsgrove Way".	Suspended. Existing approach acceptable. Other HR&OD priorities.
10	15.3.1, 15.3.2, 15.3.3	"Bromsgrove Way" and competency framework for non-managers.	See above.
11	16.3.3	Review of harassment and bullying policy	Suspended. Pending JE implementation
12	16.4.5	Parental rights guide	Re-programmed. Pending JE implementation
13	18.1.2, 18.1.3, 18.1.4	PDR process review.	Suspended. Pending JE implementation
14	18.3.1, 18.3.2, 18.3.3, 18.3.4, 18.3.5	Core competencies for all staff.	Suspended. Pending JE implementation

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 No financial implications.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 No legal implications.

6. **COUNCIL OBJECTIVES**

6.1 The Improvement Plan relates to all of the Council's four objectives and five priorities as per the 2008/2011 Council Plan.

7. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1.1 The risks associated with the Improvement Plan are covered in the CCPP departmental risk register. Specific corporate risks are related to the Improvement Plan in the following ways:

Corporate Risk Title	Improvement Plan Reference
KO1: Effective Financial Management and Internal Control	FP2 – Financial Management FP3 – Financial Strategy
KO2: Effective corporate leadership	FP1 – Value for Money FP2 – Financial Management FP3 – Financial Strategy FP4 – Financial and Performance Reporting PR2 – Improved Governance
KO3: Effective Member / Officer relations	PR2 – Improved Governance HROD1 – Learning and Development
KO4: Effective Member / Member relations	PR2 – Improved Governance HROD1 – Learning and Development
KO5*: Full compliance with the Civil Contingencies Act and effective Business Continuity	PR1 – Customer Process
KO6: Maximising the benefits of investment in ICT equipment and training	PR3 – Spatial Business Project
KO7: Effective partnership working	PR4 – Improved Partnership Working
KO8: Effective communications (internal and external)	PR1 – Customer Process FP4 – Financial and Performance Reporting HROD 4– Performance Culture
KO9: Equalities and diversity agenda embedded across the Authority	CP3 – Customer Service CP4 – Sense of Community
KO10: Appropriate investment in employee development and training	HROD1 – Learning and Development HROD2 – Modernisation HROD4 – Performance Culture
KO11: Effective employee recruitment and retention	HROD2 – Modernisation
KO12: Full compliance with all Health and Safety legislation	FP3 – Financial Strategy PR1 – Customer Process HROD2 – Modernisation

KO13: Effective two tier working and Community Engagement	CP4 – Sense of Community PR4 – Improved Partnership Working
KO14: Successful implementation of Job Evaluation	HROD2 - Modernisation
KO15: All Council data is accurate and of high quality	FP2 – Financial Management FP4 – Financial and Performance Reporting PR3 – Spatial Business Project HROD4 – Performance culture
KO16: The Council no longer in recovery	FP1 – Value for Money FP4 – Financial and Performance Reporting
KO17: Effective Projects Management	FP1 – Value for Money PR3 – Spatial Business Project
KO19: Effective Business and Performance Management	FP4 – Financial and Performance Reporting
KO20: Effective Customer Focused Authority	CP3 – Customer Service CP4 – Sense of Community PR1 – Customer Process

* KO5 and KO18 have been merged

8. CUSTOMER IMPLICATIONS

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

9. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Please see sections CP3 and CP4 of the Improvement Plan

10. VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

10.1 See section FP1 of the Improvement Plan

11. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Procurement Issues: See Section FP1 of the Improvement Plan.
Personnel Implications: See Sections HROD1-HROD4 of the Improvement Plan.
Governance/Performance Management: See Sections FP4 and PR2 of the Improvement Plan.
Community Safety including Section 17 of Crime and Disorder Act 1998: See section CP4 of the Improvement Plan
Policy: All sections of the Improvement Plan relate to this.
Environmental: See sections CP1 and PR5 of the Improvement Plan.

12. OTHERS CONSULTED ON THE REPORT

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

13. WARDS AFFECTED

13.1 All wards

14. APPENDICES

14.1 Appendix 1 Improvement Plan Exception Report March 2009

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS:

15.1 The full Improvement Plan for March can be found at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk under meetings Minutes and Agendas. A hard copy is also left in the Members' Room each month.

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Exception Report for March 2009 Improvement Plan

Appendix 1

PROGRESS IN 2008/09

Overall performance as at the end of March 2009, in comparison with the previous year, is as follows: -

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

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

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July 2008			August 2008			September 2008			October 2008			November 2008			December 2008		
RED	11	8.6%	RED	17	14.4%	RED	16	11.9%	RED	15	10.6%	RED	12	8.7%	RED	13	9.9%
AMBER	3	2.3%	AMBER	4	3.4%	AMBER	8	6.0%	AMBER	7	5.0%	AMBER	8	5.8%	AMBER	5	3.9%
GREEN	114	89.1%	GREEN	96	81.4%	GREEN	99	73.9%	GREEN	104	73.8%	GREEN	106	76.8%	GREEN	100	76.3%
REPRO	0	0%	REPRO	1	0.8%	REPRO*	11	8.2%	REPRO	15	10.6%	REPRO	12	8.7%	REPRO	13	9.9%

January 2009			February 2009			March 2009			April 2009			May 2009			June 2009		
RED	0	0%	RED	2	1.5%	RED	2	2%	RED			RED			RED		
AMBER	4	3.6%	AMBER	3	2.3%	AMBER	4	3.9%	AMBER			AMBER			AMBER		
GREEN	95	86.4%	GREEN	112	86.2%	GREEN	82	80.4%	GREEN			GREEN			GREEN		
REPRO	11	10.0%	REPRO	13	10.0%	REPRO	14	13.7%	REPRO			REPRO			REPRO		

Exception Report for March 2009 Improvement Plan

Appendix 1

Where: -

	On Target or completed		One month behind target or less		Over one month behind target		Original date of planned action		Re-programmed date.*
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* NB. Reprogrammed actions are both those that have been suspended completely and those that have been moved to a later point in the year. They are not actions that have been extended and they do not appear on the exception report.

Out of the total of 102 actions for March 2009, 6 actions have been extended with approval. This amounts to 5.9 percent of the original actions scheduled for this month. Extended actions are shown with hatched marking and extend the timescale of a current or ongoing action on the Improvement Plan.

An Exception Report detailing corrective actions follows:

CP4: Sense of Community																	
Ref	March 2009 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
4.3.1 3	Establish monitoring & meeting arrangements set out in the SLA with the Artrix.				Work in this area is ongoing due to concern raised by the Operating Trust of the Artrix over some of the phrasing in the agreement document. Extended to July.										JG	Jul-08	Jul-09
4.3	Popularity of events programme																
4.3.13	Establish monitoring & meeting arrangements set out in the SLA with the Artrix.	JG														At its February 2009 meeting the Artrix operating trust rejected the SLA proposed by BDC and have proposed a revised SLA. Officers have now completed the review of the documents to identify discrepancy and will be meeting with the portfolio holder in April to agree our position prior to re opening discussion on this matter. We expect the SLA to be signed off in July (i.e. 2009/10 Improvement Plan).	

FP3: Financial Strategy																	
Ref	March 2009 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
8.2.3	Commitment accounting reports available for budget holders				The reports for commitments will be in place for year end and included in future financial budget monitoring reports.										JLP	Sep-08	June-09
8.2	Implement the Purchase Ordering Processing System																
8.2.3	Commitment accounting reports available for budget holders	JLP														Due to delays in final implementation the reports for commitments will be in place for year end (April 09) and will be included in future financial budget monitoring reports from June (1 st quarter 2009)	

FP4: Financial and Performance Reporting																	
Ref	March 2009 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
9.3.1	Monthly reporting to Portfolio Holders				New starter in place from 01 April. Process expected to be "re-booted" from end of April.										HB	Sep-08	April-09
9.3 Performance and Project Management																	
9.3.1	Monthly reporting to Portfolio Holders	HB														Has not been monitored over previous months, due to staff vacancy, so some departments are doing this and some are not. New starter in place from 01 April. Process expected to be "re-booted" from end of April.	

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PR5: Planning																	
Ref	March 2009 Action		Colour		Corrective Action										Who	Original Date	Revised Date
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action		
14.5.1	Maintain training programme every 12 weeks				Recruitment of Principal Planner to this role will enable this area to be addressed.										DH	Dec 08	June 09
14.5 Maintain Greenbelt through enforcement and upheld appeals																	
14.5.1	Maintain training programme every 12 weeks															Next training event to include enforcement Department. Recruitment of Principal Planner to this role will enable this area to be addressed – Interviews to take place in early March. Likely start date for SEO June.	

HR & OD 2: Modernisation																
Ref	March 2009 Action	Colour	Corrective Action											Who	Original Date	Revised Date
16.1.4	Workforce data analysis		Work commenced											HP	Mar 09	Apr 09
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action	
16.1	Workforce Planning															
16.1.4	Workforce data analysis															Work commenced

HR & OD 2: Modernisation																
Ref	March 2009 Action	Colour	Corrective Action											Who	Original Date	Revised Date
16.1.8	Feed information in joint CEO business case		Data analysis pending payroll fix											HP	Mar 09	Apr 09
Ref.	Action	Lead	July	Aug.	Sep.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	Corrective Action	
16.1	Workforce Planning															
16.1.8	Feed information in joint CEO business case															Horizon scanning completed Data analysis pending payroll fix

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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