

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET

5TH SEPTEMBER 2007

COUNCIL PLAN 2008-2011 PART 1

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To re-confirm the Council's Vision and Council Objectives. Reduce the number of priorities from 10 to five and consider the outline budget options for delivering the required improvement on these priorities to achieve a Comprehensive Performance Assessment rating of "Fair" by later autumn 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that Executive Cabinet:-
- i. Reconfirm the Vision and Council Objectives.
 - ii. Consider the analysis of the Council's national, regional and local context (Appendix 1).
 - iii. Based on this context, agree the definitions of the Council Objectives (Appendix 2).
 - iv. Based on this context agree to a reduced number of priorities.
 - v. Consider the outline budget position 2008/2011, in particular, the outline budget bids in support of the reduced number of priorities (Appendix 3).

3. BACKGROUND

Council Plan 2008-2011

- 3.1 Cabinet and Full Council approved the Council's first Council Plan as part of the 2007/08 budget round. The Council Plan is effectively the business plan for the Council and a key document for Members. The 2008/2011 plan will not be published until March 2008; however, the Council needs to agree its priorities now, so that officers can make detailed plans to deliver these as part of the service business planning cycle.
- 3.3 The first Key line of enquiry in the CPA framework is ambition and the second prioritisation. Understanding our context and setting priorities is critical to achieving a fair rating, but regardless of the CPA framework, feedback from the

public suggests that they want the Council to demonstrate greater vision and forward planning (evidence from focus groups November 2005).

Process to Date

3.3 As part of the work on developing the Vision, Objectives and Priorities the Council must take account of the strategic context within which it operates. The Council is in a much stronger position this year in providing this evidence. The Council has received the following information over the last 12 months:-

- A quantitative analysis of all the quality of life data available on the District e.g. deprivation indices, population growth predictions etc.
- Production of a draft Community Strategy, based on this analysis and the County Local Strategic Partnership Local Area Agreement.
- Public consultation feedback on the draft Community Strategy through the “Glad or Grumpy” campaign.
- Best Value Satisfaction Survey data on the Council’s services and quality of life in the District.
- Customer Panel data on the Community Strategy priorities (and satisfaction with them) and the Council’s priorities (and satisfaction with them).
- Regular performance management reporting and the production of the Annual Report.
- Additional focus group feedback (as part of the 2007/08 budget deliberations).
- Regular attendance by Members and senior officers at PACT meetings

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

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

- A thriving market town.
- Clean streets and recycling.
- Customer Service
- Sense of Community
- Housing

3.6 The Vision and objectives are still considered appropriate.

Process Going Forward

3.7 The cycle of reporting and decision-making for the 2008/2011 budget is set out below. Last year the Council Plan Part 1 went straight through Full Council without any debate. The priorities drive the budget, so it is important that Members debate the priorities.

Action	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Consult staff at staff forums							
Brief Members before Full Council							
Agree priorities and consider outline budget position (Council Plan Pt 1)							
Complete service plans and budget options							
Consult partners							
Detailed Budget Options Considered by - CMT Groups Cabinet							
Undertake budget focus groups.							
Reports results of focus groups.							
Set Council Tax and agree Council Plan							
Publish Council Plan and send out CT bills.							

4. Financial Implications

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

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

6. Corporate Objectives

6.1 The existing corporate objectives to remain unchanged.

7. Risk Management

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

8. Other Sub Headings

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

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

9. Consultation

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

Portfolio Holder	At Leader's Group.
Chief Executive	Yes.
Corporate Director (Services)	Yes.
Assistant Chief Executive	Yes.
Head of Service <i>(i.e. your own HoS)</i>	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>	No.
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10. Appendices

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

Appendix 2 – Outline Budget Options for 2008/09

Background Papers

Council Plan 2007/2010

Budget Book 2007/2008

Bromsgrove Evidence Report (Mott McDonald)

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Bromsgrove District Council

Policy, Performance and Financial Position Statement

26 July 2007

1. Bromsgrove District

Geography

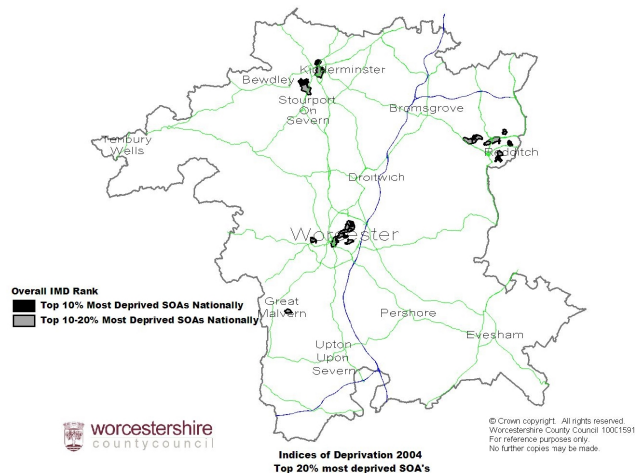
- 1.1 Bromsgrove District is in north Worcestershire, covering a large district area of approximately 83.9 square miles. Whilst only 14 miles from the centre of Birmingham, the Lickey Hills country park provides an important dividing line between the urban West Midlands Conurbation and the rural landscape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

Table 1 – Map of Bromsgrove District



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

Table 2 – Map of County Deprivation



Population

- 1.3 The population of the District is 90,550 with the District experiencing a 0.8% increase between 2003 and 2004 (the joint highest in Worcestershire). This increase is mainly attributable to inward migration as a result of a number of large housing developments, with the District clearly being viewed as an attractive location to live and work in (or commute from). The District's population is also set to expand by a further 3,000 to 7,000 households between 2006 and 2010 depending on the outcome of the Regional Spatial Strategy review. There is also the possibility of a further expansion if the District has to take some of Redditch District Council's housing allocation. The black and minority ethnic population (BME) is only 3.3% which is low for the region and nationally. This BME % comprises 1% Irish, 0.8% Asian, 0.8% mixed, 0.4% black and 0.3% Chinese. There are 37,798 households in the District. Over 25% of households contain only one older person. An estimated 6,964 households in the District have one or more members in an identified special needs group. This is 19.1% of all households in the District, well above the national average; of these 56.7% have a physical disability and 37% are frail elderly. The elderly population is predicted to expand as a proportion of the overall District population, with the over 80s population estimated to increase by 123.3% in the period 2004 to 2029.

Economy

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

Sustainable Development

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

Education, Deprivation and Health

- 1.6 The percentage of the population qualified to NVQ Level 4 is significantly higher than average. GCSE results gained at local authority schools and colleges in Worcestershire in 2004 were amongst the highest in the country (56.1% achieved five or more GCSEs at A*-C). The District ranks 293rd out of 354 councils on the national index of multiple deprivation 2004 (where one is the most deprived), making the District one of the least deprived nationally. Ward deprivation data can now be further analysed into Super Output Areas (SOAs) of 1,000 residents. Using this information, some parts of the Sidemoor and Charford wards fall within the most deprived 20% to 40%. This level of “deprivation” does not feature in terms of Government funding, which would normally focus on the 10% most deprived or lower. Only 4,050 households are in receipt of housing or council tax benefits in the District, one of the lowest figures in Worcestershire. As a result, identifying the vulnerable within our communities is more difficult than a district with geographic areas of deprivation.
- 1.7 Generally, the District’s population is healthier than the regional average. Young people (18-24) have a high risk status being the most likely to smoke, binge drink and not take exercise. Potentially, we could be storing up problems for our young people. The most recent Primary Care Trust (PCT) annual report noted that our children’s health is good, but there is a need for more child and adolescent mental health services. The PCT retain a concern (shared by the Council’s own Community Safety Team) that domestic violence remains “common place”. Between 2000-2003 teenage pregnancies increased marginally across Worcestershire (the overall rate is significantly lower than England as a whole).

Crime and Fear of Crime

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

issue at HMP Blakenhurst and HMP Brockhill. Charford is the only ward where drug use is a significant issue.

2. National Policy

- 2.1 The recent change in Prime Minister has led to a Cabinet re-shuffle and a number of new policy pronouncements that are likely to shape, as a minimum, the next three years of Central Government policy towards local government.

Neighbourhoods

- 2.2 The current Local Government Bill includes a “duty of involvement”. Hazel Blears the new Communities and Local Government Secretary says she will be “putting pressure on all partners to deliver for neighbourhoods and communities”. Exactly what this means at this stage is unclear, but more devolved powers to neighbourhoods are likely. The Government has also recently agreed to a number of pilots of participatory budgeting, based on a South American model of community engagement. Through our town hall meetings, area committees and PACT meetings, the Council is already well placed to respond to this agenda.

Crime Strategy

- 2.3 The Home Office’s new Crime Strategy promises greater freedom for the police and councils to tackle policing problems the public are most concerned with, rather than the current focus on Home Office targets. The Council is well placed to respond to this agenda with its good Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and high level of involvement from Members and senior staff in PACT meetings/area committees.

Economic Development

- 2.4 The Treasury has recently completed a “Review of sub-national economic development and regeneration”. The new Local Government Minister, John Healey, wants councils to have primacy for attracting business and investment to their areas, rather than regional government. Government offices are currently reducing staff numbers. The review could lead to increased powers, including a statutory duty on upper tier councils to assess economic challenges, possible revenue generating powers, but will also see a new form of performance management framework for economic development, probably within the Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2 framework. Economic growth is already strong in the District. What the Council lacks is a town centre, public services infrastructure and transport infrastructure that reflects this.

Efficiency Savings

- 2.5 Whilst the two tier debate appears to have stalled, David Miliband’s reasons for opening up the debate on council structures is still relevant. Miliband wanted to reduce public confusion about service provision and deliver efficiency savings through reducing multiple back offices. The

Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 is likely to see tougher Gershon targets, with the target being increased to 3% and being cashable. The Council's value for money strategy and an open approach to outsourcing, shared services, partnership working will be critical to delivering this agenda. This is an "enabler", not a service priority, but the Council does recognise that it needs to improve its strategic response and actions to address this issue.

Housing

- 2.6 The Government has recently announced a new green paper on housing. The paper suggests councils will have increased powers in order to increase the amount of affordable housing to rent and buy. It set a target of 70,000 new affordable homes and 45,000 social homes per annum by 2010/2011. Councils will also need to identify 15 years' supply of housing land, primarily brownfield land (this is not an option for our District). Consideration had been given by Cabinet and CMT to dropping the housing priority, due to our current inability to influence the land supply required to deliver more affordable housing; however, it is a very real issue in the District and the change in Central Government policy means we should consider retaining it as a priority.

Cross-Cutting Regulatory and Performance Management Framework

- 2.7 The Audit Commission has recently consulted on the proposed new Comprehensive Area Assessment. From the 01 April 2009, the main method of assessing the Council's performance will be through an assessment of the Worcestershire Partnership and Bromsgrove Partnerships delivery of the County and District Community Strategies. The current Local Government Bill going through Parliament will place a duty of co-operation on our partners. The Council will need to improve its relations with the County Council and continue to improve the workings and delivery of the Bromsgrove Partnership. Increasing the democratic accountability of the Partnership will undoubtedly need to be considered during the countdown to this new framework. The Council is in a relatively strong position to respond to this agenda, compared to other districts in the County. This is due in part to the investment from Central Government in our LSP.

Community Cohesion and Diversity

- 2.8 In the current climate of terror attacks, the Government's Commission on Integration and Cohesion report identifies neighbourhoods as the best place to tackle inter-ethnic tensions. While the Council does not have geographic areas of BMEs, there would appear to be a lack of community cohesion between the young and the old. Diversity, which is one of the Council's values, remains important within the District, as it covers not just ethnic groups, but other minorities, for example, the disabled, the frail elderly, different faiths etc., all of which are relevant to our District. The

Council has a successful CDRP, PACT and has improved its reporting of racial incidents and hate crime.

Children

- 2.9 As part of the re-shuffle a new Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has been created. Sporting activities for young people are likely to be boosted as part of the “Every Child Matters” agenda. The new department will also be responsible for the Government’s Respect set of policies, previously with the Home Office, which may suggest a move away from focusing on the young from a criminal perspective to a more supportive one. The “Making Space” review recently warned that four out of 10 children end up wandering the streets because they had nothing to do. Anne Longfield, Chief Executive of 4Children recently commented that “the Government puts a lot of money into young children, but all we have offered teenagers so far is ASBOs”. The Leader and Corporate Director Services share a particular concern that we are demonising our young people and not supporting them with enough facilities and support. This may be a future priority for the Council.

Transport

- 2.10 Councils must tell bus operators by 01 December 2007 on what basis they will reimburse them for the journeys of elderly and disabled people whose journeys will become free. The Council is not responsible for transport, but this may have some, as yet unknown, impact on the Council’s budget plans for 2008/2011.

Third Sector

- 2.11 The Government has recently published its review of the voluntary sector. The report: “The Future Role of the Third Sector in Social and Economic Regeneration” calls for a new partnership between local government and local voluntary organisations working for social change. The Government is likely to introduce a new local survey to measure the quality of relationships between councils and third sector organisations by 2009. The contribution, and possible councils’ performance in working with the third sector, will be assessed as part of new regulatory framework for local government – Comprehensive Area Assessment. The Council has a COMPACT with the voluntary sector which has received positive comment from County. BARN is represented on the LSP Board; however, funding the infrastructure for the voluntary sector is an issue: we currently make no provision and are unique within the County in this respect.

Single Status

- 2.12 The Council still needs to implement a pay review (job evaluation) and review existing terms and conditions of employment for all its staff as part of the Single Status/Equal Pay/National Pay and Reward Strategy. The

impact on staff morale of this process should not be underestimated. Single Status will take effect from 01 April 2008.

Climate Change

- 2.13 The United Nations Intergovernmental Group looking at climate change has concluded that greenhouse emissions could be reduced by 26 billion tonnes by 2030 and this would be more than enough to limited the expected temperature rise to between 2 and 3 degrees centigrade. It is recognised that such a move would cost billions of pounds, but could be recouped by savings due to the health benefits and air pollution. The Council has recently received a report from the Energy Savings Trust looking at the Council's activities and making recommendations. The Council has agreed to set up a cross departmental working group to pursue the recommendations in the report. The Council also now has a duty under the National Environmental and Rural Communities Act to conserve the biodiversity (all species of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them) of the area, for example, our water voles.

3. Regional/Local Policy

Worcestershire Local Area Agreement

- 3.1 The key strategic document which makes the link between national, regional and local policy is the Local Area Agreement (LAA). The LAA is a form of contract between Central Government and the County LSP, with 35 outcomes and 90 targets. There are 6 blocks or objectives for the Worcestershire Partnership Local Area Agreement (the Bromsgrove Partnership has also adopted these as its six objectives). The 35 outcomes are set out in Appendix 1. Some of the outcomes are specific to particular areas of the County (non in Bromsgrove District) and some are the lead responsibilities for particular partner organisations, where the District Council will have little influence over delivery of the target e.g. passenger transport numbers, harm caused by young offenders in the community. The following paragraphs provide a brief commentary on each of the LAA blocks in relation to Bromsgrove District.

Block A: Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe

- 3.2 The District has a strong Crime and Disorder Partnership and contributing strongly to this outcome. The targets include the key British Crime Survey (BCS) comparator e.g. burglary, vehicle theft etc. These targets are already built into the Council Plan 2007/2010 and will be rolled forward. There are also targets around hate crime – the Council has played an active part in the recent launch of the Hate Crime procedure. There is also a target around domestic violence. The Council is improving its score on the domestic violence checklist of actions and procedures the Council should have in place and improving its housing provision in this area. Drugs are a low level issue within the District. Anti-social behaviour, in particular, the use of ASBOs is a key target. Feedback from the PACT meeting suggest low level anti-social behaviour is an issue in the District and this is driving a disproportionate fear of crime. This could be a possible priority linked to diversionary activities for the young.

Block B: A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow

- 3.3 The Council has a lead role to play with regard to this block. Agreed outcomes include the delivery of 11 green flag awards for parks across the County (the District has one and met its required contribution), six new play areas, addressing cleanliness, through the BV199 measure of detritus and reducing graffiti. Cleanliness is the number one priority for the District's residents (see 4.5 below).
- 3.4 The Council can only play a minor role on greenhouse gas emissions as this target area is largely associated with households; however, the Council does not currently have a climate change policy and will need to develop one through its Climate Change Group to ensure the Council

plays its part in reducing emissions. The Council is already exceeding the LAA target for reducing waste and increasing recycling.

Block C: Economic Success that is Shared By All

- 3.5 Block C includes targets on employment levels in the Worcestershire science and technology belt e.g. science and technology parks flowing down the A38, business support, commercial registrations, accessibility to employment, adult qualifications and helping the jobless into work. The District already has very low unemployment levels (1.7%), but VAT registrations are declining. The Council plays an active role in seeking businesses for the technology park and running a successful business start up scheme with NEW College. Whilst economic success is not a specific priority for the Council, the planned regeneration of both the town centre and Longbridge will create jobs. The planned regeneration of the railway station should help access to employment sites within the District, including the town centre. Transport planning will also need to be built into the Longbridge designs.

Block D: Improving Health and Well Being

- 3.6 The key contribution that the Council can make to this block is improving people's lifestyles through supporting community sports organisations and through direct leisure provision e.g. the Dolphin Centre. The District's population is relatively affluent and therefore relatively healthy. With Haybridge and Woodrush sports centre transferring out of the Council's control and similar plans to transfer the Dolphin Centre into a charitable trust, direct leisure provision is not a priority for the Council. Worcestershire is also fortunate to have higher than national average participation rates in sports and participation in sports clubs; however, the Council has in the past invested in a number of capital schemes for sport e.g. hockey pitch, without providing revenue funding to ensure community usage beyond the clubs who have benefited. With the apparent desire for residents to see more facilities for young people, the Council needs first to ensure that it has sufficient community sports officer to make best use of its existing provision and develop any new provision. Making best use of existing provision should extend to the transfer of direct leisure provision. The usage of the Dolphin Centre (see 4.10) is a particular concern.

Block E: Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People

- 3.7 The Council has a minor role in delivering this block; however, the Council does need to ensure it has adequate procedures in place for child protection and ensure that its work on leisure and sport supports our children's general health and well being.

Block F: Stronger Communities

- 3.8 This block includes increasing the ability of residents to influence decisions affecting the Council, diversity, supporting the voluntary sector, increasing volunteering, increasing the usage of the Customer Service Centre and increasing the number of bus journeys. The Council already has a high capacity community engagement model, compared to many districts. The Council runs two “town hall” meetings a year, is piloting two area committees and ensure senior officer representation at PACT meetings. Similarly, the Council has invested in diversity and operates an Equalities Forum that through this budget cycle will make a number of budget bids. The Council is exceeding its LAA Customer Service Centre target, is ahead of most councils in Worcestershire with the voluntary sector Compact; however, this is not supported with grants to the third sector, when compared to neighbouring districts. The Council has recently responded to the Integrated Transport Strategy consultation, established a Member/officer working group with a focus around the planned railway station redevelopment and community transport links.

District Community Strategy

- 3.9 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce a Community Strategy, which provides a long term vision and strategy for the District, bringing together the public sector organisations operating in the District, the voluntary sector and private sector. The District’s Community Strategy is currently in draft and out to consultation. Based on the analysis of Bromsgrove District above, the following draft priorities have been agreed by the LSP Board (subject to Full Council approval in November).
- Fear of crime
 - Environment (biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions)
 - Town centre redevelopment
 - Longbridge regeneration
 - Health and well being (increasing physical activity, ageing well scheme for older people and reducing smoking)
 - Children and young people (qualifications, safety, sport and volunteering).
 - Older People (lifelong learning, transport and involvement)
 - Housing (impact of migration and affordable housing)
- 3.10 Specific targets for each of these provisional priorities exist, cross referenced to the LAA.

- 3.11 Clearly there is a very strong synergy between these priorities and the Council's currently priorities, in particular, the town centre, Longbridge and housing. The Council is not the lead organisation for some of the priorities e.g. crime, children and young people, older people; however, the Council should contribute to these and needs to consider whether its existing priorities should be updated to reflect the Community Strategy priorities.
- 3.12 Crime, particularly, low level crime is an issue for our residents as evidenced anecdotally at PACT meetings (see also consultation section below). Youths hanging around and causing general mischief or worse, seem to be a particular issue within the District, so possible new priority around making our communities safer and better for young people may be worth consideration. The Council already has an established Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership and actively supports PACT meetings, so any budget expansion in this area is likely to be around provision for children and young people.
- 3.13 Another key fact to emerge from the development of the Community Strategy is the predicted expansion of our older population. Our population is set to expand by 15.3% (2004 to 2029), but there are significant variations in the age growth. Our 30 to 39 population is set to decrease by 4.7% while our 70-79 population is set to increase by 50% and our over 80s population by 123.3%. The County Council already has to respond to the increase in the County's older population, in particular, people helped to live at home and more intensive care for the frail elderly. On this basis, it is probably not appropriate that the Council makes Older People a priority, as our ability to impact on this priority is marginal; however, we should consider how we shape our services towards the changing demographics. We may need to adjust our leisure provision and probably need to consider transport access, in particular, community transport. Redditch District Council currently supports a fleet of six community buses, we have none. This issue has already been raised by the Council's Equality Forum. The LSP Board are beginning to fund the establishment of an Older Person's Theme Group and Forum, but funding will be required from the Council and its partners in order to make visible service improvements for this age group.
- 3.14 The estimated expansion of the population also poses issues around planning for housing and supporting infrastructure, including transport. Bromsgrove District Council has been operating a housing moratorium since July 2003; this policy was introduced to restrict housing growth to levels identified as sustainable in the Worcestershire structure plan. Permission for new housing is restricted, with the key restriction being that proposals are for 100% affordable housing. Much of the development currently taking in place in Bromsgrove is the building out of planning permissions granted before the moratorium took place.
- 3.15 The Regional Spatial Strategy introduced in 2004 has now given us new targets for residential development although these are currently under

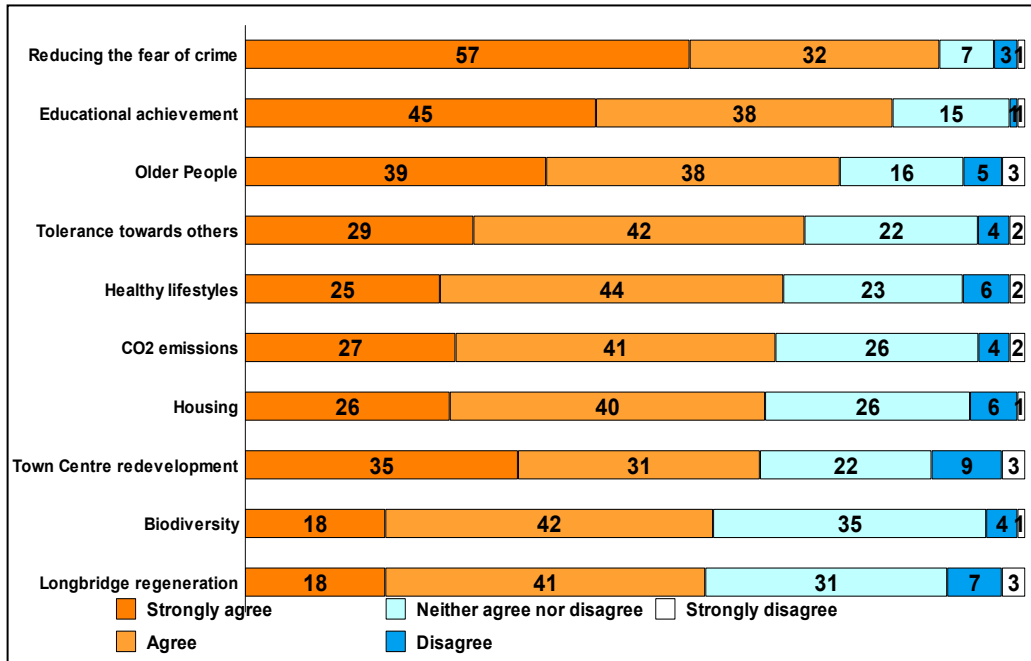
review. This new target (to be published for consultation on the 24th September 2007) will indicate the level of house building required in Bromsgrove up to 2026. The moratorium remains in place because whilst we have not exceeded the total number of new dwellings required under the RSS, we have significantly exceeded the phased targets. The phased target for number of new dwellings to April 2007 is 1596 and we have built in the region of 2650 dwellings. The housing target allocated to Bromsgrove through this review will take into account this previous development. For the foreseeable future we cannot release open market housing sites as we have no policy to be able to control them. If we released them without control we would potentially very quickly surpass these new targets, and be faced with a moratorium which could last up to 2026. It is the council's intention to review the current moratorium and replace it with a new policy which will phase the release of new housing sites over the period up to 2026. The fact that we have met our phasing target on the current figures up to 2017 means there is no pressing need to amend this policy from a housing supply perspective. In short our ability to increase our supply of affordable housing is very limited, outside of the town centre regeneration scheme, Longbridge regeneration scheme and any new future housing allocation from RSS2. The District is not an area of identified growth in RSS2; the District's housing allocation could be as little as 3,000 or as high as 13,000, if we have to take some of Redditch District Council's housing allocation.

- 3.16 The Council is also currently has a nil star rating for its strategic housing service. This rating was primarily due to previous corporate policies on affordable housing or the lack of policies and practice around performance management, customer service and equalities. Based on the nil star and recent housing green paper from Central Government we should consider retaining housing as a priority.

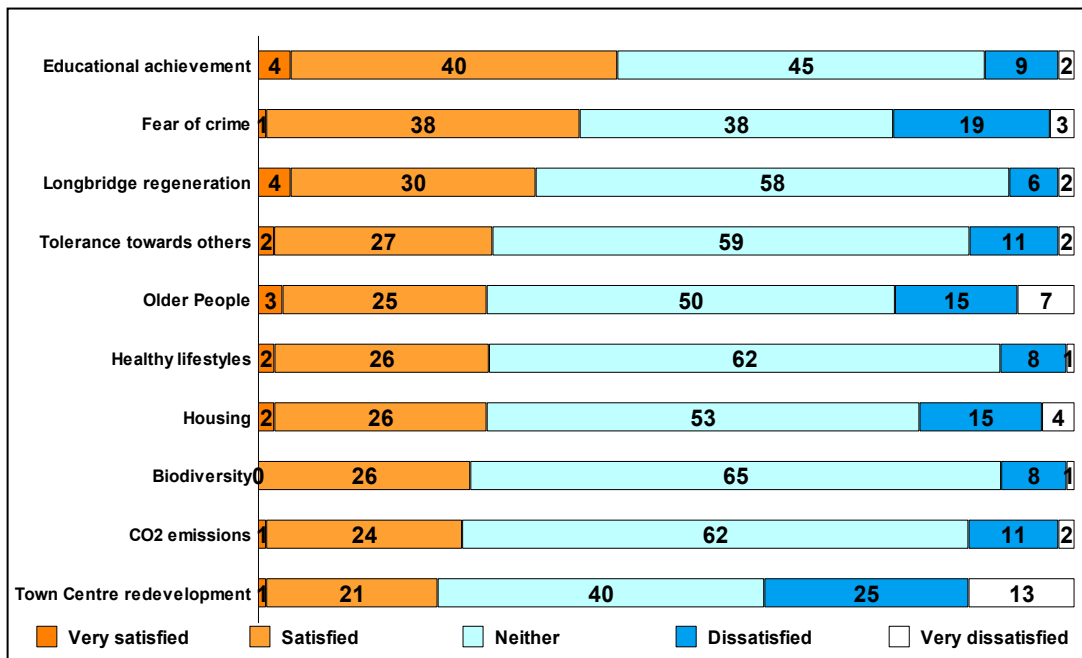
4. Consultation

Customer Panel Results

- 4.1 The Council has recently received the draft survey results for its first Customer Panel. The Panel were asked about their agreement with the draft Community Strategy priorities:-



- 4.2 9 out of 10 (89%) agreed that reducing the fear of crime should be a priority, but interestingly tolerance towards others (a Community Strategy priority that was focused about tolerance towards young people and is now referred to as Children and Young People) was a priority for 71% of respondents. The town centre is only a priority for 66% of residents; however, the Panel were also asked about their satisfaction with each priority:-



- 4.3 Residents' priorities and satisfaction generally match i.e. high priority, higher level of satisfaction with performance; the one significant change is the town centre, with only 22% being very satisfied or satisfied. Residents' comments included:-

“Do not see any evidence of progress or work done.”

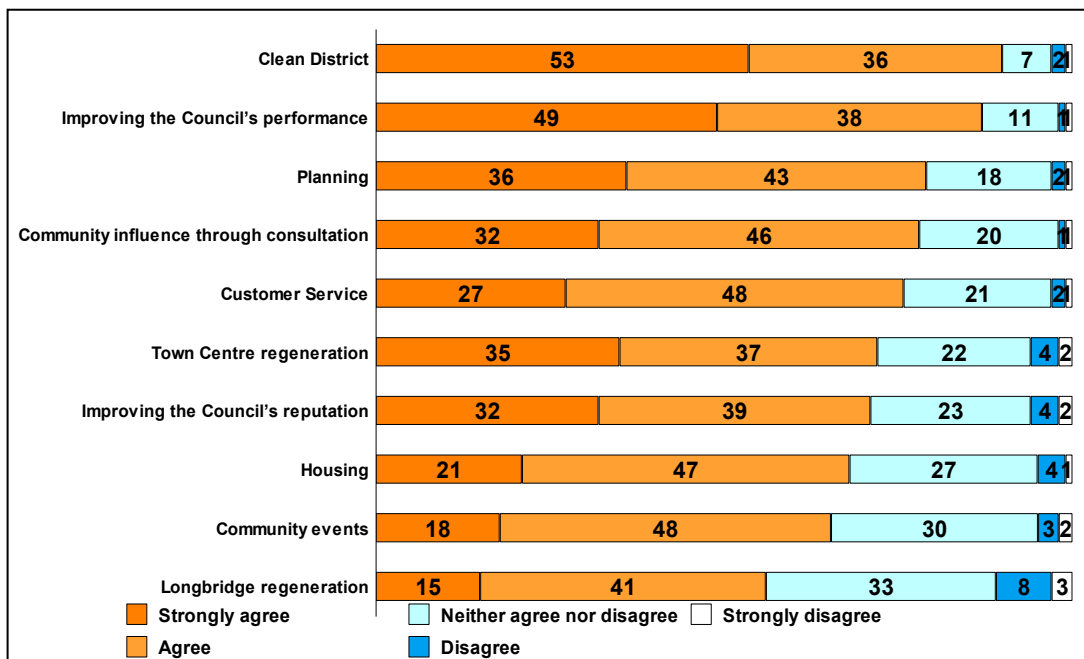
“How do we know what you have achieved, most of the above are not visible.”

“I have no knowledge about whether or not the Council are doing anything towards achieving these priorities, so can only presume they are doing nothing.”

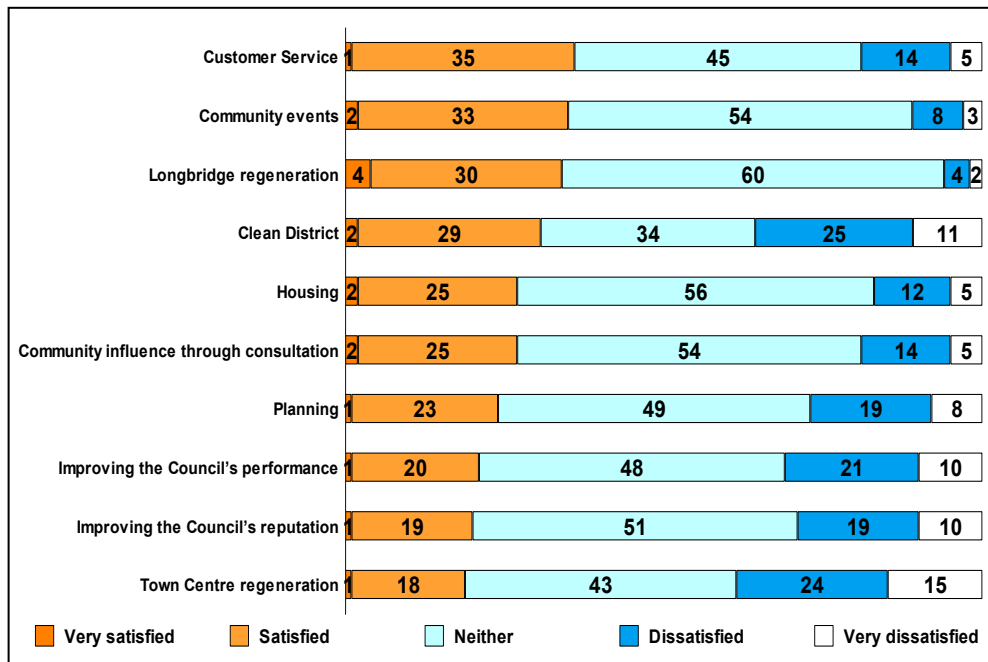
“It is all talk, fine words but very little action. They come up with grandiose schemes that you know will never come to fruition.”

“It is slow to take affect, has been going on for years, just talking no action.”

- 4.4 Some of the Council's projects are going to take a long time to come to fruition e.g. town centre, Longbridge, but the Council could undertake short term measures to begin to change this perception e.g. upgrade public toilets in the town centre, better community events for the town centre etc.
- 4.5 The Panel was also asked about the Council's own priorities, as published in the Council Plan 2007/2010. The results were as follows:-



- 4.6 A clean District is the top priority for residents. This is consistent with feedback from PACT meetings.
- 4.7 The Panel were then asked about their satisfaction with each priority.



4.8 Customer Service is the highest. This result is not consistent with the anecdotal feedback from many Members. 72% of users of the Customer Service Centre, would recommend it to a friend. The Panel are least satisfied with the town centre regeneration. When asked about other priorities the following types of response were given:-

“Local centre development (e.g. village) - why only Bromsgrove town?”

“Tough on crime.”

“More attention given to outlying parts of the area, not just Bromsgrove area.”

“Refuse is still an issue.”

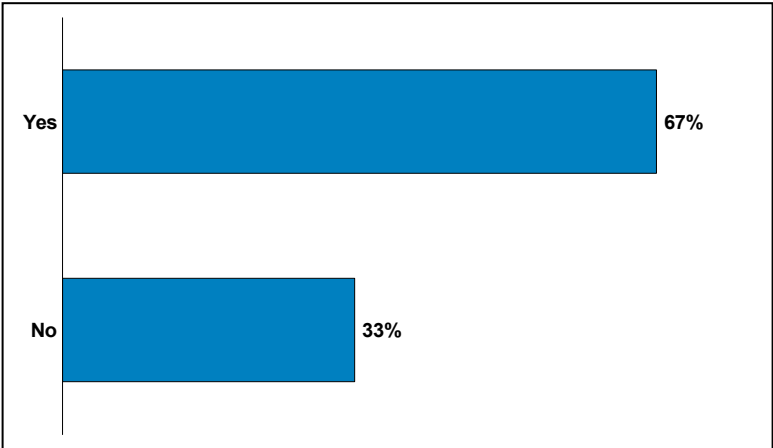
“Rubbish collection, more road sweepers.”

4.9 More specific questions were asked about customer satisfaction (see section 5), but a number of key results need to be fed back from this part of the survey.

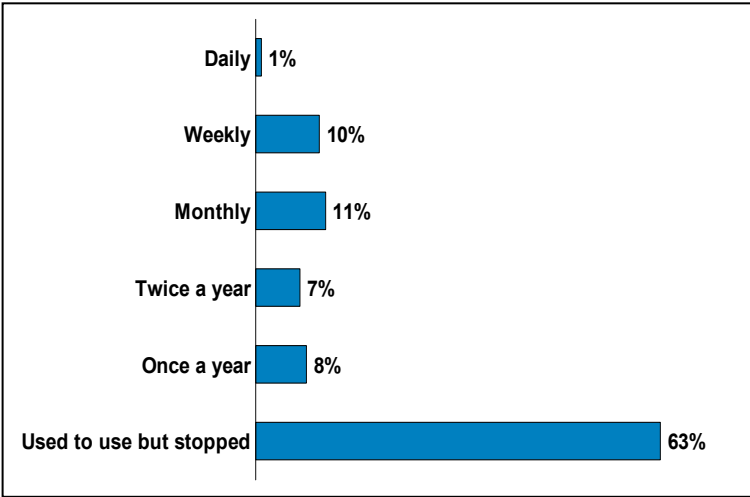
1.1 Support for suspension of green waste collection during winter.

The Council suspended the green waste collection for the winter period because evidence demonstrated a much reduced requirement for the service in this period, and reduced the environmental impact of having (on occasion) empty vehicles being driven around the District.

Two thirds (67%) supported the decision, 61% in males and 72% in females, rising to 77% in under 35s.



4.10 The usage of the Dolphin Centre clearly demonstrates the lost custom and therefore lost income from inadequate facilities

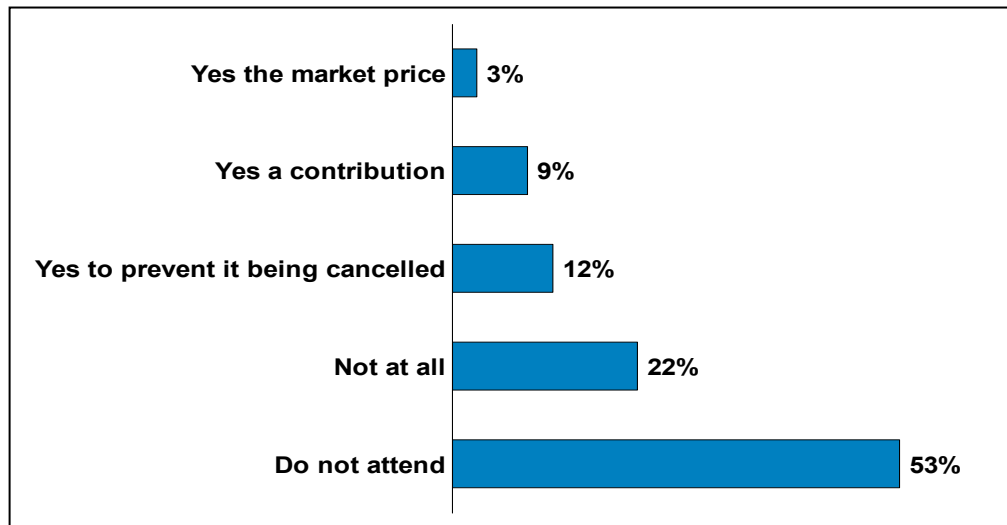


4.11 The public's propensity to contribute to the bonfire night was as follows:-

1.2 Propensity to contribute towards the cost of funding Bonfire night.

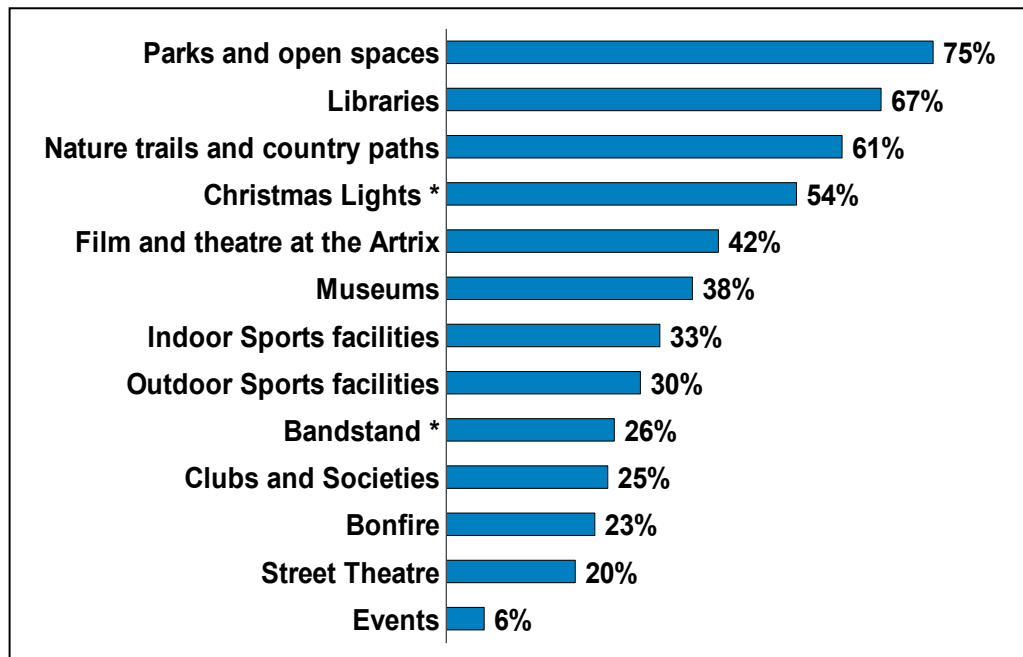
One quarter (25%) of respondents would be prepared to contribute towards the cost of staging the Bonfire. This ranged from 20% in males to 30% in females and from 21% in 55 or older to 37% in under 35s.

Would you be prepared to contribute towards the cost of staging Bonfire night?



4.12 For cultural and recreational activities, events, the street theatre and bonfire night scored surprisingly low, which contradicts previous focus group consultation. The difference is probably the District wide nature of this consultation exercise.

Cultural and recreational activities available which are of interest



“Glad or Grumpy” Campaign

4.13 As part of the “Glad or Grumpy” campaign, the Bromsgrove Partnership’s consultation on the draft Community Strategy is still on-going, but initial results suggest that following things make people feel “glad” about living in the District:-

- Low crime.

- Sanders Park / Artrix.
- Recycling.
- Community activities (bandstand, fireworks night etc.).
- Improved schools and colleges.
- Specific examples of health care.

4.14 While the following things make them grumpy:-

- Town centre.
- Car parking charges.
- Toilets in town centre.
- Town centre library.
- Dolphin Centre.
- Poor range of shops.

4.15 The Council has also recently completed the statutory Best Value Satisfaction survey. Most of this is dealt with in the next section on performance, but the survey identified the following priorities for improvement:-

Priorities for Improvement	
Which of the following (standard list) do you think most needs improving	
Issue	Percentage of respondents
Road and pavement repairs	47
Traffic congestion	41
Activities for teenagers	40
Crime levels	40
Public transport	34
Clean streets	32
Health services	25
Affordable decent housing	21
Shopping facilities	21
Facilities for young children	12
Job prospects	10
Sports & leisure facilities	10
Pollution	9
Cultural facilities	9

Parks & open spaces	8
Community activities	8
Education provision	6
Wage levels & local cost of living	6
Access to nature	4
Race relations	0

4.16 Interestingly, the first five are not the responsibility of the Council and the first one is street cleansing (see 4.5).

5. Performance Position

Best Value Satisfaction Survey Results

5.1 The headline customer satisfaction results for the Council are as follows:-

Ref	Description	2003/04 Result	2006/07 Result	Quartile
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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
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Benefits Satisfaction Survey

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

5.2 Comparison of satisfaction survey results with other authorities in the county

BVPI No.	1.3 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%
1.4 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%

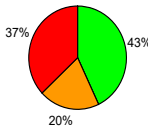
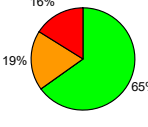
5.3 Summary of issues

Issue	Comment
Satisfaction with complaint handling is bottom quartile	New Complaints handling system being introduced in January 2008.
Satisfaction with street cleanliness is bottom quartile, 19% of respondents think this has worsened in the past three years and is seen as a priority for improvement	Possible area for additional funding in future years and priority.
The top five items identified by respondents as priorities for improvement are in areas which are not the responsibility of the Council	Road & Pavements is a problem that County are beginning to recognise. Crime levels and activities for teenagers may well be a future priority for the Council. The Council has recently established a scrutiny task group on public transport and established a Transport LSP theme group
The proportion of respondents who feel very or fairly well informed about the services provided by the council is, at 39%, ten	The Council has recently invested in a new Communications and Customer First manager

percentage points below the average for District Councils	
A majority of respondents believe that the Council does not provide good value for money	The Council needs to make visible improvements to help drive perception and continue to improve communications
Respondents were split 50/50 as to whether the Council is well run and efficient or not	Given the "Poor" rating this is surprisingly good. We need to move to Fair and onto Excellent
A majority of respondents believe that the Council does not act on the concerns of local residents	Increase co-ordinated consultation and ensure feedback
Respondents were split 50/50 as to whether the council promotes the interests of local residents or not	Continue with improved press coverage and deliver large projects – Town Centre, Longbridge and Train Station
A majority of respondents believe the Council is remote and impersonal	Review Customer First strategy and incorporate new access strategy. Improve Customer Service Centre and links to the back office. Improve communications on how to contact the Council

Performance Targets and Predicted Outturn

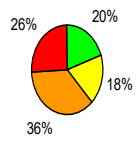
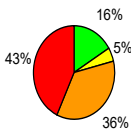
5.4 Performance, as measured by BVPI's, improved considerably during 2006/07, compared to the year before, as the tables below demonstrate. Figures are taken from the Annual report 2006/07 and 2005/06 quartile positions were used in this analysis.

Performance against target	2005/06	2006/07	2005/06	2006/07
Performing above target	43%	65%		
Performing below target within 10% of target	20%	19%		
Performing below target by more than 10%.	37%	16%		

Performance Trends	2005/06	2006/07	2005/06	2006/07
Performance Improving	39%	59%		
Performance steady	17%	13%		
Performance declining	44%	28%		

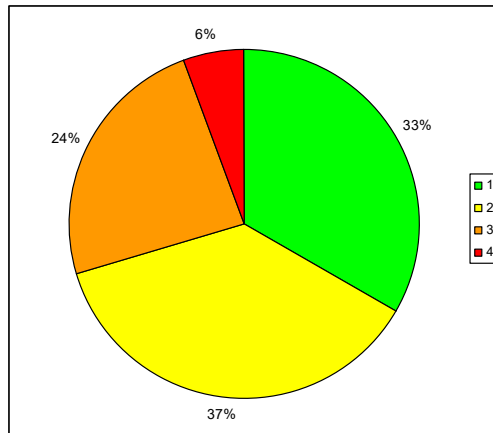
Quartile	2005/06	2006/07	2005/06	2006/07
	6			

Performance in Top Quartile	16%	20%
Performance in 2 nd Quartile	5%	18%
Performance in 3 rd Quartile	36%	36%
Performance in 4 th Quartile	43%	26%

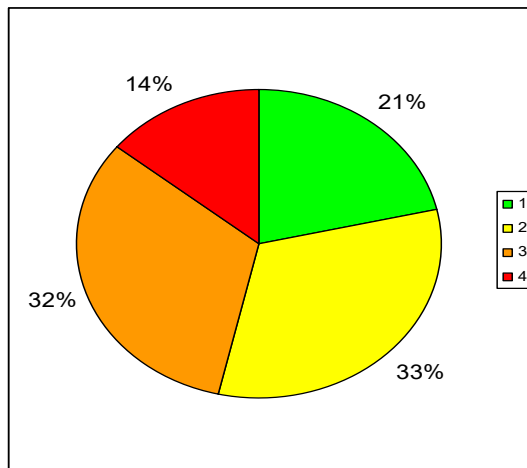


5.5 However, our position in the quartiles 'league table' is determined not only by our own performance but also how well other authorities are performing. Using provisional quartile information now available for 2006/07 then analysis of our forward targets shows that by 2009/10 we can only expect just over 50% of our BVPI's to be above the median, and this figure is likely to decline as quartile positions improve further in the intervening years.

Quartile spread 2009/10 targets
Using 2005/06 quartiles



Quartile spread 2009/10 targets
Using 2006/07 quartiles



- 5.6 Therefore, in order to improve our standing in the quartiles 'league table' to a similar level as 'Fair' authorities and assuming that we will have a second Corporate Assessment in late 2008 we now need to lift our performance even higher than currently planned, which may require re-allocation of resources to achieve.
- 5.7 Looking at forward priorities the areas where consideration should be given to improved performance, supported by increased resources if required, are as follows:-

Street cleanliness and waste collection

- 5.8 The triennial best value satisfaction survey results for 206/07 have recently been analysed, they show that satisfaction with street cleanliness is bottom quartile and the lowest figure compared to other authorities in the County; satisfaction with waste collection is 3rd quartile and second lowest of authorities within the county. A significant minority of people (19%) think that keeping public land clear of litter has got worse over the past three years; similarly 20% think that collection of household waste has worsened in the last three years. In the anti-social behaviour element of the satisfaction survey 41% of respondents think that 'rubbish and litter lying around' is a big or fairly big problem, which is two percentage points higher than the national average for all District councils. Correlating this with BVPI results shows that BVPI 199a – land & highways assessed as having unacceptable levels of litter is currently bottom quartile and even with planned improvements will only be 3rd quartile in 2009/10. BV199b – unacceptable levels of graffiti is currently bottom quartile but future targets should bring that up to 2nd quartile in 2009/10. BV199c – unacceptable levels of fly posting is currently 3rd quartile and is not expected to move by 2009/10. The BVPI's for waste collection are not particularly helpful as they tend to contradict one another.

Customer Service

- 5.9 Performance at Customer Service centre continues to be mixed, with higher call volumes than other CSC's in the county, which it does not have the capacity to deal with effectively. Call volume and performance issues are exacerbated by service and communication failures between the back office and the CSC. There are no BVPI's which help assess our performance in this area. However, some of the satisfaction survey results are relevant, to varying degrees. Satisfaction with complaint handling is bottom quartile and the lowest of authorities in the county. Only 39% of respondents feel very or fairly well informed about the services provided by the Council, compared to a national average of 49% for all District Councils. 60% of respondents think that the Council is

remote and impersonal and 52% of respondents think that the Council does not act on the concerns of residents.

- 5.10 Housing Benefit performance has been dogged by difficulties with IT systems which has kept some of the BVPI measures below median performance, BV78a – average number of days taken for processing new claims is currently 3rd quartile and although future targets are improved there is a slight risk that improvements in other councils could keep us in the 3rd quartile on present future targets. However, satisfaction with the benefits service is high at 82% overall satisfaction

Community Cohesion

- 5.11 Crime figures, although much improved, are still high in comparison. Based on current targets (new targets awaited from Police) burglaries and robberies will continue to be bottom quartile in 2009/10 and vehicle crimes in the 3rd quartile with only violent crime above the median.

Comprehensive Performance Assessment

- 5.12 The Council's first Comprehensive Performance Assessment has recognised that "Bromsgrove have come a long way, from a very low base, in the past year"; however, the 2005/06 performance results were "unimpressive" and the public will not have noticed much difference as a result of the improvements the Council has had to make to its governance. Making visible service improvements and placing the customer at the heart of what the Council does are key areas for improvement before the next assessment.

6. Strategic Direction

Vision

6.1 The Council's proposed new Vision is:-

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

6.2 This Vision is still considered appropriate.

Objectives

6.3 The current objectives are Regeneration, Improvement, Sense of Community and Well Being and Environment. 6.4 below identifies at least one priority for each objective, so there is no reason to change them. The definitions of each objective are in Appendix 2.

Priorities

6.4 The following five priorities have been identified for this Council Objective:-

Current Priority	Revised Priority	Comment	Report Ref.
Town Centre	A thriving market town.	Lowest satisfaction score on existing priorities.	4.2
Longbridge		Continue to work with partners, but not a priority for most residents.	4.1
Housing	Housing.	Address nil star and reflect housing green paper.	1.3, 2.6
Performance	Delete.	Being addressed through priorities selected.	-
Customer Service	Customer Service.	Overall satisfaction with Council only 51%	5.1
Reputation	Delete.	Previous investment is delivering improvement.	-
Community Influence	Sense of Community.	Merge into new priority reflecting fear of crime, young people, neighbourhoods and events.	2.9, 4.15, 4.2
Community Events	Merge into above priority.	See previous.	2.9, 4.15, 4.2
Planning	Delete.	Performing at top quartile, but need to watch vacancy factor.	-
Clean Streets	Clean Streets	Number one priority for	4.5

		residents.	
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Performance Measures

6.5 The performance measures for each priority will need to be “worked up” through the business planning process, budget process and production of the Council Plan 2008/2011 (February 2008 Cabinet). The performance measures for each priority will be along the following lines:-

Priority	Outline Performance Measures
A thriving market town.	Targets to be developed through Area Action Plan process.
Housing	One star service with promising prospects for improvement (in 2008) moving on to 2 star at agreed later date.
Customer Service	Customer Service Centre consistently hitting its targets. Reduction in service failures which lead to calls to the Customer Service Centre. Improved tone of correspondence. Improved customer orientation of “back office” services. Customer satisfaction with the Customer Service Centre. Customer satisfaction with the Council.
Sense of Community	Reduction in headline crime rates e.g. violent crimes, burglary etc. Reduction in fear of crime. Reduction in anti-social behaviour. Facilities for young people (satisfaction with). Community events (satisfaction with). Sense of community (perception measure for residents on being part of a good community).
Clean Streets	Best Value measures of detritus (BV199) with comparative performance being at least better than average compared to

	<p>other English district councils.</p> <p>Increased frequency of cleansing.</p> <p>Area sweepers.</p> <p>Increased education and enforcement activity.</p> <p>Increased focus on hot spots.</p>
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Enablers

6.6 The existing priorities are underpinned by a set of 12 enablers:-

- ✚ Value for money;
- ✚ Financial management
- ✚ Financial strategy
- ✚ Financial reporting
- ✚ Customer processes
- ✚ Improved governance
- ✚ Spatial business project
- ✚ Improved partnership working
- ✚ Learning and development
- ✚ Human Resources modernisation
- ✚ Positive employee climate
- ✚ Performance culture

6.5 These are still considered appropriate for the five proposed priorities; however, one addition could be the inclusion of planning which underpins the town centre regeneration and Longbridge.

7. Financial Position

- 7.1 Based on the five draft priorities set out in 6.4, the attached Excel spreadsheet outlines the required expenditure. This information will be subject to further detailed discussions over the coming months.

Appendix 1

Worcestershire Local Area Agreement Outcomes

Communities that are safe and feel safe

- A1. To reduce crime.
- A2. To reassure the public reducing the fear of crime.
- A3. To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs.
- A4. To build respect for communities and to reduce anti-social behaviour.
- A5. To improve the quality of life for the people of South Worcestershire by reducing crime and deliberate fires
- A6. To improve the quality of life for the people of Redditch by reducing crime and deliberate fires
- A7. To improve the quality of life for the people of Wyre Forest by reducing crime and deliberate fires
- A8. To reduce the harm caused by young offenders to the wider community

A better environment for today and tomorrow

- B1 To have cleaner, greener and safer public spaces
- B2 To reduce greenhouse gas emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change
- B3 To reduce waste and increase recycling
- B4 To protect and improve Worcestershire's natural environment / biodiversity

Economic Success

- C1. To develop a vibrant and sustainable economy
- C2. To develop the economic infrastructure
- C3. To improve the skills base of the local population
- C4. To ensure access to economic benefits

Improving health and well being

- D1. To increase life expectancy and reduce morbidity in adults
- D2. To reduce incidence of coronary heart disease and cancer
- D3. To improve the quality of life of older people
- D4. To improve the quality of life of older people with a limiting long term illness
- D5. Health inequalities
- D6. Improved life choices for people with mental health problems

Meeting the needs of children and young people

- E1. To improve access to and take up of integrated local preventative services
- E2. To develop inclusive communities by increasing the level of educational attainment
- E3. To increase participation in education and training
- E4. To improve the life chances of vulnerable children and young people
- E5. To enrich the experiences and development of children and young people through activity and positive contribution
- E6. School Travel Advisors – Be Healthy
- E7. To increase life expectancy and reduce morbidity of children and young people
- E8. LTP4 mandatory outcomes

Stronger communities

- F1. To increase the availability of affordable, appropriate and decent housing
- F2. To increase opportunities for recreation, leisure and culture for all
- F3. To develop an inclusive community which empowers local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and delivery of services
- F4. Empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery
- F5. To improve passenger transport, leading to improved accessibility and an increase in passenger numbers
- F6. To improve access to services
- F7. To reduce income deprivation including child and pensioner poverty
- F8. To reduce the impact of traffic congestion upon Worcestershire
- F9. To improve the quality of life for people in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods (Oldington and Foley Park Ward) and ensure service providers are more responsive to neighbourhood needs and improving their delivery

Council Objective Definitions

Council Objective 1 - Regeneration

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Improving the physical fabric of the District, in particular, the town centre and Longbridge site.
- Improving the living environment of the vulnerable, in particular, eliminating fuel poverty, reducing the gap in serious accidental injury, and the indoor living environment in so far as it affects respiratory health (cold, damp, indoor pollution).
- Ensuring quality and choice in the local housing market across all tenures with the availability of sufficient decent, affordable and sustainable housing to meet the needs of all of the District's residents including those with special housing needs.
- Improving people's lifestyle choices, including diet, smoking and physical activity.
- Ensuring a strong, prosperous and competitive local economy which creates wealth in order to support the level of investment required to close the gap of inequality; contributes to the region's economy and enable people to improve their quality of life.
- Securing public and private investment in the above factors in order to lever in sufficient investment to tackle these issues.
- Reducing inequalities wherever these exist within our District.
- Improving household incomes through increasing economic activity by promoting enterprise and entrepreneurship and the take up of employment opportunities through improved access to jobs, employment growth (both public and private) and improving people's skills (both young people's and adults). Where people are genuinely unable to work ensuring that people take up the full benefits to which they are entitled.

Council Objective 2 - Environment

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Ensuring the District offers a quality living environment for everyone, with access to good facilities including clean and attractive open spaces.
- Sustaining this quality living environment for future generations.

- Waste collection, recycling and disposal.
- Maintaining and fostering the District's biodiversity.
- Maintaining our rural communities.
- Balancing our green belt whilst responding to the economic development needs of the District.

Council Objective 3 - Sense of Community and Well Being

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Ensuring the District's residents has a good cultural "offer" which encourages a sense of community.
- Providing effective community leadership.
- Promoting active citizen engagement in the democratic process.
- Ensuring people are able to access services whatever their circumstances.
- Ensuring the value and contribution of the diverse communities in our District is recognised and celebrated.
- Improving the social capital of our communities and developing sustainable and cohesive communities.
- Enabling people to enjoy a high quality independent life in their own homes and communities for as long as possible and when this is no longer possible ensuring more intensive care is available.
- Ensuring the Council fully embraces the "Every Child Matters" Agenda: that our children and young people are: healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution, achieve economic well being and can access services.
- Reducing crime and the fear of crime within our communities.
- Ensuring access to lifelong learning opportunities for learning and creativity to help everyone achieve their potential for quality of life and prosperity.

Council Objective 4 - Improvement

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Providing an excellent customer experience including choice where possible.
- Maintaining a clear focus on our citizens' priorities.
- Making the best use of new technologies to improve services whilst reducing costs.
- Driving out efficiency savings and making the best use of our assets in order to further invest in our priorities.
- Making appropriate use of management systems e.g. risk management, performance management and project management.
- Ensuring we recruit the right staff and retain and develop their skills.
- Achieving public confidence in our prudent financial management, service delivery and corporate governance through positive external audit and inspection feedback.
- Maintaining a level of council tax from which the public feel we make good use of the money we spend and reflects the quality of services they receive.
- Ensuring we seek out, listen, respect and represent the views of our diverse citizens and communities.
- Communicating consistently to our citizen's and communities.
- Actively involve our citizens and communities in the design and delivery of our policies, strategies, plans and services.
- Joining up and integrating services both within the Council and with our partners making the best use of new technologies.
- Tailoring the mix of customer service, community leadership and democratic engagement to fit the particular circumstances of each community.