

Annual Report

2007-2008



Bromsgrove
District Council
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk



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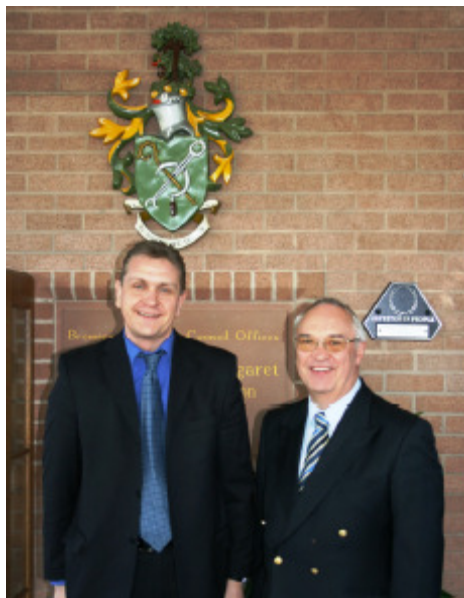
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1. Introduction from the Leader of the Council



Welcome to the Council's Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2008.

I am pleased to report that the performance of the Council has significantly improved. We have delivered 77% of our performance indicator targets, maintained or improved performance for 83% of our indicators, but most importantly, we now have 60% of our Best Value performance indicators above the local authority

average. This means we are now performing at the level of a "Good" council, as defined by the Audit Commission. We expect to be re-assessed by the Audit Commission in October this year and I am confident that we will achieve a much improved rating and an end to "voluntary engagement".

In many ways, this will represent the end of the beginning. The Council's vision is about "building a District people are proud to live and work in" and providing "excellent services", so we have some distance to go before we can say we are truly doing this for our residents. The Council cannot deliver this vision on its own, so I am pleased that we are working well with our

partners on key issues like the town centre, train station, Longbridge, housing and health.

Audits and Inspections undertaken during the year have recognised the improvements we have made; positive comments include :-

"Access to Council services is improving, there is a greater customer focus and the Council is engaging positively with the public".

"The Council is improving at a faster rate than other Councils."

"The Council is delivering improvements in line with most of its plans; it has a robust improvement plan, focused on priorities. Most areas are on track and key milestones have been met."

"The Council's strategic housing service is a fair, one-star service which has promising prospects for improvement. This represents a significant improvement from 2006, when the service was assessed as being a poor, zero-star service with uncertain prospects for improvement."

What does all this mean to our customers? The vast majority of our customers will judge us by the services they receive and not the reports of the Audit Commission. 2007/08 has seen a significant improvement in our service performance:-

- Over 40 per cent of household waste was recycled in 2007/08 which is amongst the top performing councils and satisfaction was high at nearly 80 per cent.

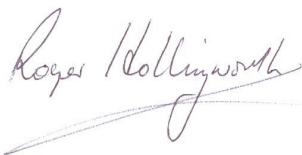
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- Satisfaction with parks and open spaces was high and improving.
- Planning performance has improved dramatically since the nadir in 2006 when the Council's performance was amongst the worst in the country. In 2007/08 performance in all areas of planning was comfortably in the top 25% of all councils and in some areas amongst the highest performing in the country.
- The speed at which we process benefit claims has further improved.
- Sustained improvement in performance across the board at the Customer service Centre.
- The three year Bromsgrove Community Safety Partnership Strategy came to an end in March 2008. This has resulted in a reduction of crime by 32% during the period.

An electronic version of this plan can be found on our website:

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

I look forward to reporting to you again next year.



Roger Hollingworth
Leader of the Council



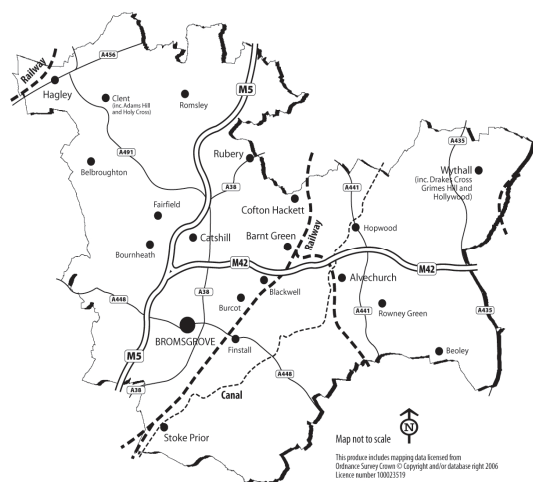
Kevin Dicks
Chief Executive

2. About Bromsgrove District

Location

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



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.

Population

The population of the District is 91,600 and the Office for National Statistics predicts that this will increase by 15.3% over the next 30 years to 105,615 in 2029. The current review of the Regional Spatial Strategy is likely to require homes for 3,000-7,000 households to be built in the District in the next 25 years and there is also the possibility that the District may have to take some of Redditch Borough 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% by 2029.

Economy

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

Sustainable Development

A healthy natural environment is vital to our existence. We need clean air to breathe, water to drink and food to eat. The past twenty years have seen a growing realisation that the current model of development is unsustainable. Our way of life

is placing an increasing burden on the planet. In other words, we are living beyond our means. We need to make a decisive move toward more sustainable development, not just because it is the right thing to do, but also because it is in our own long-term best interests. By thinking about the way in which we do things and becoming more sustainable, we can meet our own needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. This is the concept of sustainable development, and must underpin all of our actions.

We already have a number of initiatives in place to help improve our sustainability. The Council House is in the process of switching to 100% green electricity, and part of our power comes from solar panels on our roof. We use 100% recycled paper, and encourage recycling in house and in the wider District. We are signed up to the Worcestershire car sharing scheme. The Local Strategic Partnership's Better Environment Group has a number of projects underway aiming to reduce our carbon footprint, help conserve and enhance our biodiversity, and reduce pollution.

Affordable Housing

One of the biggest issues facing the District is affordable housing: 83.4% of households are owner occupied, the 11th highest figure in England and Wales, and house prices are rising faster than the national average, with the average house price being £240,867. The Council is currently operating a planning moratorium with only affordable housing developments being built. The Housing Strategy has a target of 80 units of affordable housing a year for the next four years.

Education, Deprivation and Health

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

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

Crime and Fear of Crime

There has been a 31.9% reduction in headline comparator crime figures for the District over the last three years. This, together with the Partners and Communities Together (PACT)

meetings, has had a very positive impact on fear of crime in the District: 98% of residents feel safe in their neighbourhood during daytime and 73% after dark. Low level issues like anti-social behaviour, litter, rubbish, "young people hanging around", vandalism and criminal damage remain an issue. Drug offences are low.

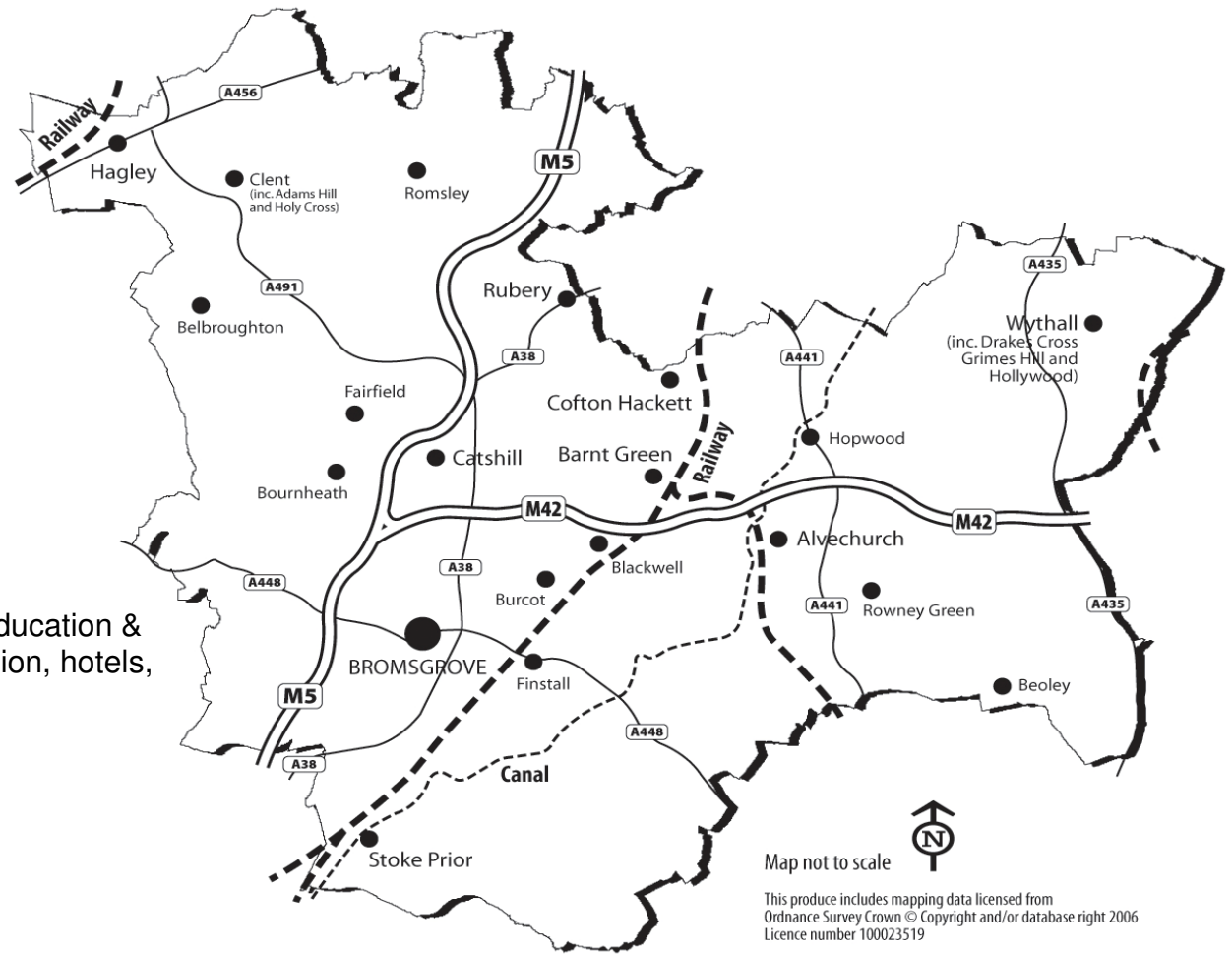
Regulatory, Political, Managerial and Financial Context

The Council has a majority Conservative administration, with twenty-seven Conservatives, six Labour, four Independents, and two Wythall Residents' Association. The Council operates a modernised political structure with the Leader/Cabinet model, supported by three non-Executive Boards: Audit Board, Scrutiny Steering Board and Performance Management Board. There is also a Planning Committee, Standards Committee and Licensing Committee. The Council has a new Corporate Management Team (CMT) and a new Chief Executive, Kevin Dicks.

The Council has a net budget of £11.733m (2008/09) and a Government Grant of £4.858m. The Council employs 358 staff.

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Size Area:	83.9 square miles
Population:	91,600
Households:	37,798
Towns and large villages:	Bromsgrove, Hagley, Rubery, Wythall
Main employment:	Public Administration, Education & Health (25.5%); distribution, hotels, & Restaurants (21.2%)
Unemployment:	1.5%
Ethnicity:	3.3%
Deprivation ranking:	299 out of 354



3 Achievements against our vision, objectives and priorities

A summary of key achievements against our priorities follows.

Council Objective – Regeneration (Priorities: Town Centre, Longbridge and Housing)

- Council approved funding of a new toilet block and a high dependency unit for adults and children with disabilities, in the town centre (£174,000).
- District contribution to funding of feasibility study for regeneration of Bromsgrove Railway Station
- Opening of “Hub”, Customer Service Centre in town centre. This includes Saturday opening.
- Appointment of a town centre project manager, jointly funded by County Council.
- Improved lighting and spruce up of town centre multi-story (£6,000) after problems with teenage drivers.
- Achievement of Safer Parking award.
- Move from a nil star, uncertain prospects housing service to a one star, promising prospects housing service in only 18 months.
- Delivery of affordable housing units has significantly improved since 2004/05 (26 units), to 75 units in 2005/2006 and a planned completion of 96 units in 2007/2008, although due to unforeseeable environmental concerns on one site, 26 of these completions will now be finalised in 2008/2009.
- Delivered the Government’s 2010 target for reducing the number of households living in temporary accommodation two years earlier than target.

- Private Tenancy Scheme – over 10 applicants have found suitable housing, through the support of the Council’s Housing Team.
- The Council is second quartile in returning the level of private sector dwellings returned to occupation.
- Disabled facilities grants team increased, claims now processed in half the time taken the previous year.

Council Objective – Improvement (Priorities: Performance, Reputation and Customer Service)

- Overall performance for this year has again shown a considerable improvement over the previous year (see section 8 for details).
- The overall satisfaction rate with the Council is 51%.
- Increased number of home visits by welfare officer to support those unable to visit the Customer Service Centre.
- Reduced costs by implementing more efficient systems in the Council, making more payments by BACS and working with other Councils to develop larger contract values to make cost savings.
- The Council has continued to be very successful in bringing prosecutions for Benefit Fraud and regulatory enforcement.
- The CSC is consistently achieving its targets of 80% of answered calls and average waiting time of 35 seconds (this is considered an acceptable wait by our customers). Call resolution at the first point of contact is very high at over 90% (target of 85%).

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- The Council has recently invested in a queue management system for the CSC to improve the service to our walk in customers.
 - 71% of our customers would recommend the CSC to a friend. Only 11% of residents were dissatisfied with the service received.
 - £5.0m investment in the Spatial Project, which will see the roll out of 11 software packages including a land and property gazetteer. These improvements will enable residents to view and submit planning applications on-line and ensure information is update to date.
 - Launch of a Customer Feedback system and customer standards, with three stage escalation process and link to Ombudsman.
 - Only 15% of our residents found contacting the Council difficult and we are currently writing a customer access strategy to address the issues raised by those 15% of residents.
 - 60% of residents found the resident magazine useful and only 7% found the Council Tax leaflet not useful.
 - Benefits Overpayments/fraud – improved recovery of overpayments and improved fraud detections and more prosecutions.
 - Massive improvement in performance on processing planning applications, following the introduction of weekly planning surgeries. All three parts of BV109 planning applications are top quartile for 2007/2008.
 - Half way through registering all Council's land, which is significantly ahead of other councils and means we are now selling this service to other councils.
 - Procurement savings achieved of over £80,000 per annum.
 - Introduction of the "Scores on the Doors" food establishment rating service.
 - Development of a County wide Air Quality Strategy aimed at reducing emissions, better planning, transport and controlled areas.
 - 100% of the Environmental Health best practice list achieved.
 - Massive improvement in processing new benefit claims and change of circumstance performance indicators.
 - Development of a "Flooding Matters" leaflet with top tips for homes affected by the recent floods.
 - Licensing Policy short and simple to use. Praised by British Beer and Pub Association for short length of policy and easy of use.
 - Sickness absence had dropped to 9.35 days per FTE for 2007/2008, compared to 10.66 in the previous year.
 - The Council is in the top quartile for paying invoices within 30 days.
 - The Council is top quartile for collecting Council Tax.
 - Over 30 business start ups in 2007/2008 with a business survival rate of over 75%.
- Council Objective – Sense of Community and Well Being (Priorities: Community Influence and Community Events)**
- Launch of the Events Facilitation pack to advise residents & voluntary groups of how to run community events with in the District.

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- Implementation of 11 new play facilities and the securing of £200,000 of external funding (BIG Lottery) for new play areas.
- The establishment of the Equalities and Diversity forum, leading to their involvement in budget setting, the development of the town centre, the high dependency suite, community transport and car parking within the District.
- Hanging baskets and welcome sign in Rubery as a result of Neighbourhood Area Committee.
- A Veteran Day's bandstand programme and special event at the Artrix Theatre, as a result of resident feedback.
- Successful bandstand programme in Sanders Park (funded through sponsorship).
- External accreditation of Lifeline Service. 98.85% of Lifeline calls answered within 30 seconds (target is 80%).
- 32.3% reduction in crime levels across District (2005/2008) (target was 17.5%).
- Introduction of Alcohol Free Zones in areas e.g. Alvechurch, Rubery etc. and we are currently looking at increasing the powers of our Neighbourhood Wardens.
- Delivery through partnership of 68 PACT meetings, which directly contribute to reduced crime levels through local policing and support from Council. Waseley has seen vehicle crime drop by 47% since 2005/06; domestic burglary by 17% and criminal damage offences have reduced by almost 20%.
- The Council is very unusual in the level of support it provides to the PACT meetings, compared to the rest of the County and nationally. We have an excellent working relationship with the Police that reflects this level of support.
- Active support of Neighbourhood Watch schemes.
- Extensive range of diversionary activities, including free football coaching sessions, delivered by an FA qualified coach.
- Increased funding from the Council for the Neighbourhood Warden Scheme who engage with local residents, particularly young people.
- Only three violent incidents in town centre over Xmas period due to high visibility policing, better licensing and improvements to taxis.
- The Council's Quality of Life Survey found that only 5% of residents said that crime and anti social behaviour affects their lives a great deal.
- Only 10% of residents felt they did not belong to their local area. 64% felt it was a nice place to live.
- 47% reduction in car crime over last three years.
- Introduction of an "adopt the box" scheme, a joint initiative between the Council and Virgin Media, with residents being provided with an unlimited supply of cable box paint, to cover up graffiti.
- The roll out of 22 Hate Crime reporting centres across the District, through the Bromsgrove Hate Incident Partnership.
- Events such as tea dances, International Women's Day event, games sessions for people with learning difficulties etc run in the Spadesbourne suite.
- Swimming gala for primary and second school children.
- The introduction of multi-skills sessions across the District for 5 to 9 year olds to improve their fundamental

skills of agility and balance. This also included a multi-skills festival with an excellent turnout.

- The Council has an active civic calendar which provides a sense of civic pride and raises money for local charities. The outgoing Chairman raised almost £10,000 for one of her nominated charities.
- Children and Young People's Convention to find out what youngsters want in the District.
- Football tournament at Bromsgrove's Ryland Centre, which kicked off a series of sporting projects across the District, delivered by the Sports Development Team, in partnership with the County Council and the voluntary sector.
- Setting up of a Gymnastics Club by the Sports Development Team, in partnership with the Wyre Forest Gymnastics Club and North Worcestershire School Sports Partnership.
- Opening of the Lickey and Blackwell playground (£40,000 funding from Council).
- Holocaust Memorial Day supported by Council, with service held in Sanders Park in January 2008.
- Annual Xmas Carol Concert and Xmas Lights.
- Bonfire Night. Almost 10,000 people turned up and income targets were met.
- Introduction of Together Bromsgrove residents' magazine with focus on areas in each issue.
- Satisfaction with parks and open spaces is high and improving.

Council Objective Environment (Priorities: Clean District and Planning)

- Achievement of Green Apple Award for Street Cleansing Services.
- Additional grounds maintenance equipment has been purchased and is fully operational improving the quality of mowing. In addition litter collection in advance of the mowing operations has seen an improvement in the standard of cleanliness of the area
- Older and hired recycling vehicles have been replaced with more up to date equipment. A smaller recycling vehicle has been purchased to allow the service to be rolled out to narrow access areas. This has resulted in a reduction in cost and a reduction in the number of missed collections.
- Cutting back of overgrown shrubs on A38 allowing daffodil bulbs to flourish and providing improved access for litter collection crews and grounds maintenance staff.
- Additional street cleaning staff have been recruited as full time employees, developing a greater sense of commitment and ownership of the task.
- Recycling rates amongst most improved and highest in England (DEFRA).
- Introduction of clearer collection policy.
- Introduction of clearer Xmas calendar.
- "Recycle Now" week with drop in sessions and "Waste Stop Shops" so that residents can find out more about recycling.
- 85% of our streets now meet the Government's standards for cleanliness compared to 65% a year ago.
- 100% of abandoned vehicle reports are investigated within 24 hours of notification (top quartile) and almost 100% removed within 24 hours of the Council being able to do so (top quartile). Similarly, the Council

removes all animal debris within agreed timescales and deals with almost all fly tips within our response times.

- Set up four new bring banks, especially for Tetra Pak beverage cartons, in partnership with Tetra Pak Ltd.
- Recycler, the hip hop Rapping Robot visited 10 schools in the District to encourage the three Rs of recycling.
- 81% of residents use one of the Council's recycling facilities and 84% are satisfied with the recycling service.
- 25% of residents were dissatisfied with the black bag collection, but since then our performance has improved steadily throughout 2007/2008. At the beginning of the year the Council was missing around 100 missed collections a month, this figure had fallen to 63 by March 2008, with overall collections missed of 1,102, compared to 1,596 the previous year.
- The number of missed recycling collections was consistently within target throughout the year.

4. Summary of audit and inspection findings

During the year the Council had a re-inspection of its strategic housing service. The auditors also undertook a Use of Resources assessment and an assessment of management arrangements for data quality. A summary of these inspections is shown below. Copies of all these reports are available on the Audit Commission website www.audit-commission.gov.uk as well as the Annual Audit Letter which summarises all audit and inspection activity in the past year. The Council has responded to all inspection recommendations and has incorporated improvement actions to address identified areas for improvement in the Council Plan, the Improvement Plan and departmental Business Plans, all of which can be seen on the Council website www.bromsgrove.gov.uk.

Housing Inspection (May 2008)

Result: Fair (one star) service with promising prospects for improvement.

The Inspectors said:

“This represents a significant improvement from 2006, when the service was assessed as being a poor, zero-star service with uncertain prospects for improvement. The Customer Service Centre provides an effective, one-stop shop service. The Council has improved both accessibility to supported accommodation and the quality of service provision for victims of domestic violence. It is investing its own resources in increasing the supply of accommodation to meet needs and

invests significantly in grants to provide aids and adaptations to vulnerable people, which are being completed quickly. The strategic approach to housing has increased the supply of affordable housing and is working to overcome constraints on supply. This is clearly supported by members.”

“Areas for improvement remain. The Council does not know the profile of its customers, and is not able to demonstrate that services are delivered fairly to all parts of the community. There has been mixed progress in ensuring that houses in multiple occupation provide safe and suitable standards of accommodation.”

The Inspectors made recommendations covering five areas:

- Improving the focus on customers
- Improving the focus on diversity
- Maximising the impact of activities in the private sector
- Maximising the delivery of affordable housing
- Improving value for money

Details can be seen in the audit report on the Audit Commission website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa

What the Council is doing:

An updated improvement action plan is being developed and will be submitted to Cabinet for approval in July. The Performance Management Board will continue to review progress against this revised action plan.

Use of Resources

Between August and October 2007 the Auditors completed the third scored judgement of Use of Resources.

Result: Score 2 (out of 4)

The Inspectors said:

“This sustains the good performance of the previous year’s assessment. The authority has made proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness on 9 of the 12 criteria determined by the Audit Commission. This represents an improvement on last year when the authority then failed to meet 8 of the 12 criteria. We have reconsidered our recommendations made in then previous year and have re-iterated those we consider significant”

What the Council is doing:

Actions are in place to further improve the use of resources.

Management arrangements over data quality.

In 2007 the Auditors completed the second review of data quality

Result: score 2 (out of 4)

The Inspectors said:

“We considered the Authority’s arrangements to be adequate overall. This marks significant progress over last year’s

assessment when the Authority’s arrangements were judged inadequate overall. The Council needs to demonstrate more clearly its commitment to data quality in its key corporate documents and policies and improve its arrangements for reviewing underlying data and data quality training for staff.”

What the Council is doing

Cabinet approved a data quality strategy and action plan in July 2007. The action plan has been reviewed and revised in light of recommendations by the Auditors. The Performance Management Board reviews progress against this action plan.

5. Summary of achievements against our Improvement Plan

The Council developed its third Improvement Plan in July 2007 to take account of recommendations from the Corporate Assessment and to give it a more outward focus e.g. strategic priorities, customer issues and performance indicators. The revised plan was agreed by Cabinet on 10th July 2007. The plan, which runs until June 2008, contains over 350 actions under a number of different improvement outcome headings, including:

- Town centre regeneration
- Longbridge employment, housing and community facilities
- Delivery of affordable housing
- Customer service
- Council reputation
- Performance
- Community influence
- Community events
- Cleaner district
- Improved planning service
- Value for money
- Financial management, strategy and reporting
- Council governance and learning & development
- Partnership working
- Workforce modernisation, employee climate and learning & development

At the end of March 10 actions were one month behind schedule and 2 were more than one month behind schedule, all other actions in the plan were either completed or on schedule. The Improvement plan is currently being revised again for 2008/09. Further details about the Improvement Plan are available on the Councils' website <http://bromsgrove.whub.org.uk/home/bdc-improvement-plan>

6. The Council's Performance Management framework

The Council's Performance Management Framework seeks to create explicit links between the Community Strategy, Council Plan, Service Business Plans and Team/Personal Development Plans

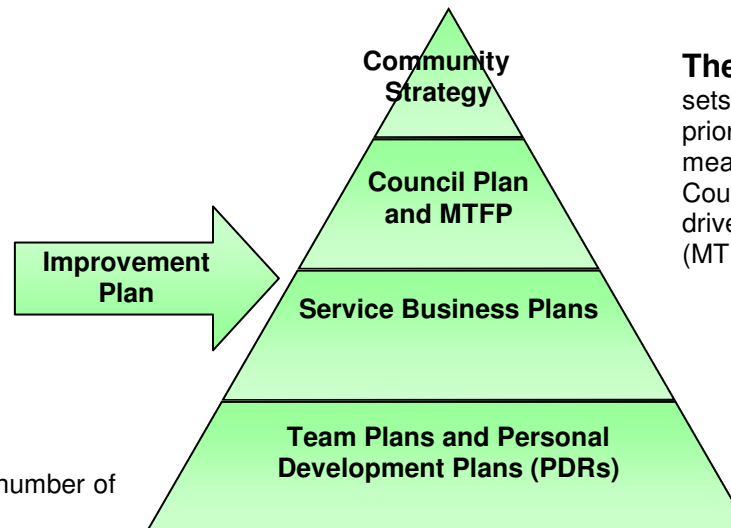
At the top of the framework is **The Community Strategy**. It is a 10-year plan that has been developed by the Bromsgrove Partnership, comprising public, private, voluntary and community organisations, which have been consulted with locally to identify the priorities for the area. The Community Plan represents an 'umbrella' plan from which each organisation prepares its own strategy to deliver aspects of the community plan for which it is responsible. The District's Community Plan is currently being reviewed.

Improvement Plan. The Improvement Plan provides a link between the 3 year Council Plan and the 1 year service business plans. It extracts key actions for the year ahead in a GANT chart format, against which progress is reported each month, using a traffic light system.

Performance Management

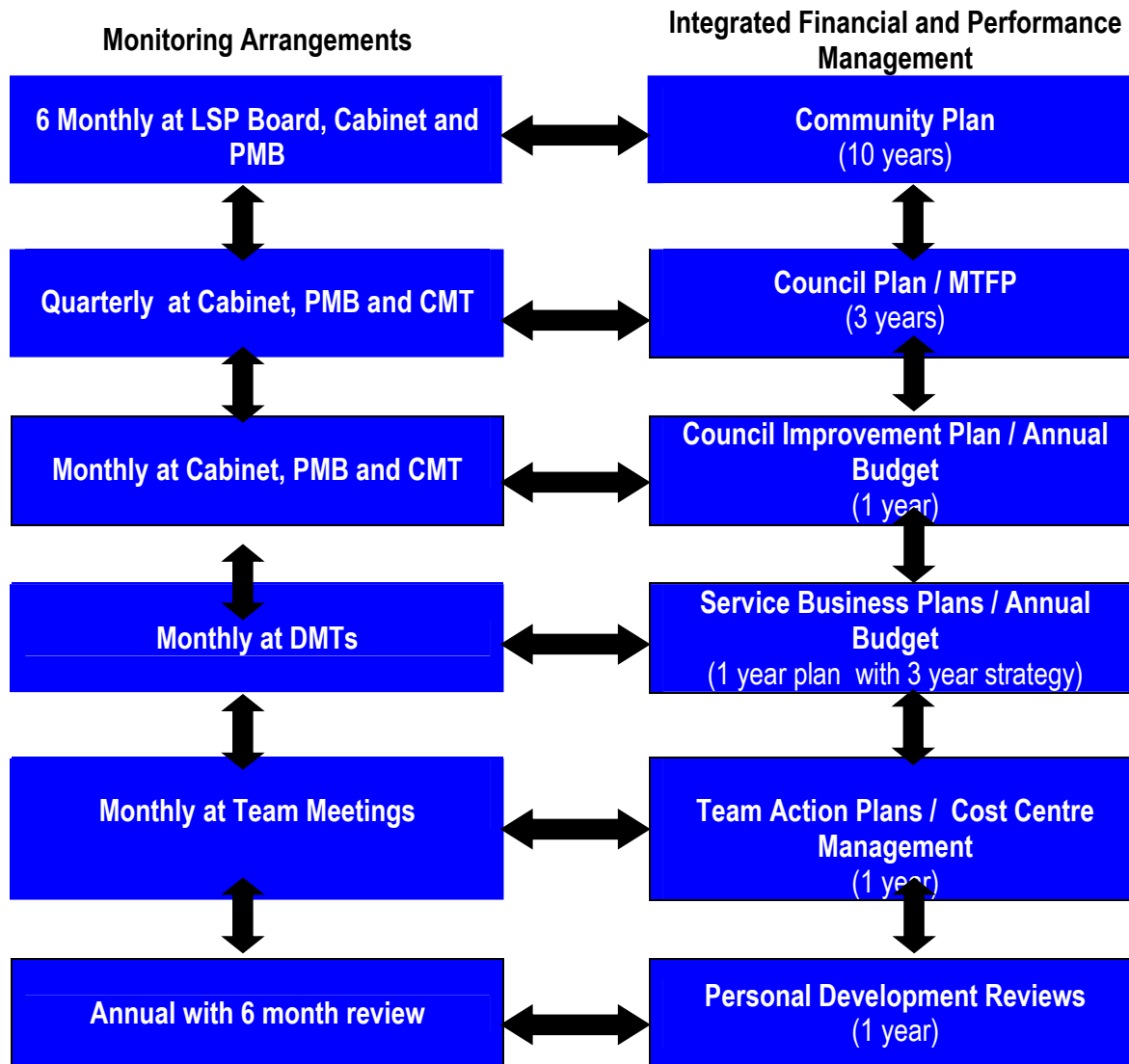
Progress against our plans are monitored and managed at a number of levels (see also overleaf):-

1. Cabinet receives a quarterly integrated financial and performance report and an Improvement Plan update each month.
2. The non-executive Performance Management Board receives monthly updates on the corporate performance indicators and the Improvement Plan. Any issues identified are reported to Cabinet.
3. All the above information goes to the Council's Corporate Management Team each month and it also receives quarterly updates against the service business plans.



The Council Plan is based on consultation and sets out the Council's corporate objectives and priorities for the next 3 years in specific and measurable terms. The Plan also sets out how the Council will contribute to the Community Strategy and drives the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).

Service Business Plans identify at a departmental level the actions we plan to undertake in order to deliver the Council Plan and Improvement Plan. These are then translated into team plans and individual PDRs, ensuring all staff understand their role in delivering the Council's priorities. The progress against our Service Business Plans are monitored quarterly at Corporate Management Team while staff receive a formal review of their PDR every six months.



The Monitoring Arrangements for each part of the performance management framework are detailed in the table opposite. This was agreed at December 2006 Cabinet.

7 Value for Money Summary

The Use of Resources review in December 2007 included a review of the VFM provided by the Council from which the Council received a scoring of 1 out of 4.

Since the review there has been a corporate focus on the demonstration and delivery of VFM.

Key improvements include:

- Development of clear links between priorities and medium term financial plan
- Integration of the financial and performance reports considered by Members
- Development of budget request schedules to consider whole life costs of schemes
- Improvements in consultation with stakeholders on budget issues
- Significant improvements in performance.
- Efficiencies realised as part of restructures to deliver services alternatively (printing, financial services, democratic services)
- Improvements in procurement and joint working on achieving greater efficiencies (stationery , procurement manager, graphic design, printing)
- Revised contract rules to demonstrate greater competition.
- VFM training for Members and officers.
- Formal consideration of Value for Money in Cabinet reports.

A VFM action plan was approved by Cabinet in November 2007 to identify the key areas that were to be addressed to improve our demonstration of VFM. The action plan is monitored quarterly to Corporate Management Team and Members.

The key areas being addressed are:

Benchmarking: to assess the high cost/low quality services that the Council can focus on improving. This will include financial benchmarking with neighbouring councils.

Capital Programme: Realigning the programme to ensure the outcomes as identified in the project plans are delivered as anticipated.

VFM Projects: The planned Value for Money element of key projects will be reviewed. These will include; refuse, leisure transfer, printing and the Spatial Project. The Spatial project will radically transform the way a number of our services are delivered. Business process reengineering has already taken place and this information will be used to demonstrate the Councils delivery of effective use of ICT to drive VFM across the departments.

Bromsgrove Council is committed to deliver Value for Money to our customers and will ensure that officers and members look to address this commitment in all the services we provide.







8. Performance results

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) are chosen by Central Government and are collected and published by all Councils. The purpose is to show whether Council's services are improving over time and how they compare with those of similar Councils. In each year since their introduction in 1999/2000, changes have been made to the information collected in light of previous experience. Where indicators are new, or have been subject to significant changes of definition, it is not yet possible to look at performance trends or comparisons.

Each year the Audit Commission publishes performance figures for BVPIs for all councils. For each BVPI every council is assigned to a quartile, depending on performance. There are four quartiles – allocation to the top quartile means that, for that PI, the councils performance is in the top 25% of all councils, allocation to the bottom quartile means that performance is amongst the lowest 25% of all councils

In addition to the BVPIs the Council also uses a set of local performance indicators (LPIs) which help to measure performance against local priorities. Of all the performance measures available to the Council a subset of 35 PIs which reflect the Councils' priorities are corporately reported and managed on a monthly basis, the remainder are managed within Departments and reported less frequently.

Key:

Ref.	The reference code of the BVPI
Description	The official description of the indicator
2005/06	The target and actual performance achieved for the year April 2005 to March 2006 inclusive
2006/07	The target and actual performance achieved for the year April 2006 to March 2007 inclusive
	Performing above target
	Performing below target within 10%
	Performing below target by more than 10%
Trend	Comparison of performance to the previous year
	Improving performance
	Steady performance
	Declining performance
Quartile	Shows which quartile the performance achieved in 2006/07 falls into. 1= top quartile, 4 = bottom quartile.

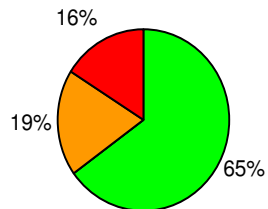
Summary of performance

Performance against targets

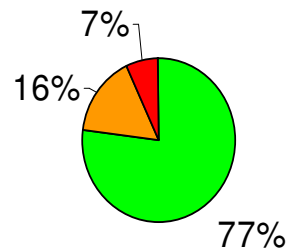
The following table and graph provides information on how the BVPIs are performing against targets set by the Council, where the data is available.

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

2006/07



2007/08

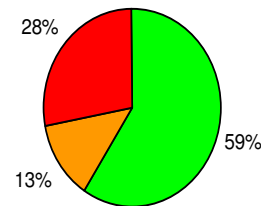


Performance Trends

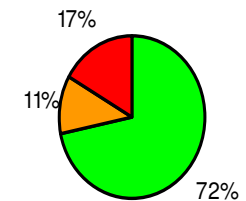
The following table and graph provides information on how BVPIs are performing against previous year's performance, where comparable data is available.

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

2006/07



2007/08

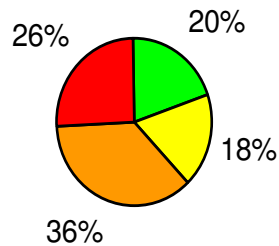


Performance Comparison

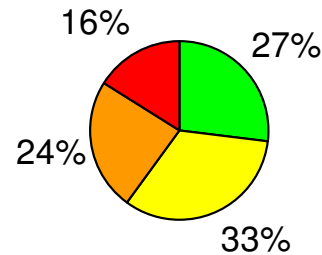
Annually performance figures are published detailing the performance of all Councils, which give quartile figures. As a Council we compare our performance against other District Councils. Quartile data is not available for all indicators, the following table, graph and summary only includes BVPIs for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

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

2006/07





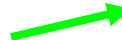






2007/08




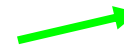



Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		


Corporate Health

BV2a	The level (if any) of the Equality Standard for Local Government to which the Authority conforms.	2	2	3	2	n/a	
BV2b	The duty to promote race equality, as a % of a scorecard.	75	80	80	87.5	1	
BV8	Percentage of invoices paid on time.	100	94.74	97	97.83	1	
BV9	Percentage of Council Tax collected.	98.80	98.40	98.8	98.6	1	
BV10	Percentage of Non-Domestic Rates collected.	98.80	98.20	98.8	98.6	3	
BV11a	The percentage of top 5% of earners: who are women.	24	22.70	25	40.74	1	
BV11b	The percentage of top 5% of earners: from minority ethnic communities.	1.50	0.00	2	0.00	2	
BV11c	The percentage of top 5% of earners: with a disability.	1.50	4.55	2	3.7	2	
BV12	The average number of working days lost due to sickness.	9.5	10.66	9	9.35	2	

Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
BV14	The percentage of employees retiring early (excluding ill-health).	1.00	0.90	0.8	2.67	4	
BV15	The percentage of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health.	0.30	0.30	0.2	0.25	3	
BV16a	The percentage of employees with a disability.	1.20	1.97	1.8	1.98	4	
BV16b	The percentage of the population with a disability (Census 2001).	n/a	11.73	n/a	11.73	n/a	n/a
BV17a	The percentage of employees from minority ethnic communities.	1.00	1.23	2	1.98	2	
BV156	The percentage of Authority buildings' public areas that are suitable and accessible to the disabled.	85	87.5	85	85.7	n/a	

Housing

BV64	The number of vacant private sector dwellings returned in occupation.	4	8	4	19	2	
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Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		

Homelessness

BV183b	The average length of stay in temporary accommodation – hostel.	8	16.87	12	10.75	3	
BV202	The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the local authority.	0	0	0	0	1	
BV213	Housing Advice Service: Preventing homelessness.	1.5	2.17	1.5	4.8	1	

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit

BV76b	Number of fraud investigators, per 1,000 caseload.	0.56	0.42	0.60	0.43	n/a ^{note 1}	n/a ^{note 1}
BV76c	Number of fraud investigations, per 1,000 caseload.	50	53	55	43.9	n/a ^{note 1}	n/a ^{note 1}
BV76d	Number of prosecutions and sanctions, per 1,000 caseload.	8.5	8.9	8.6	8.5	n/a ^{note 1}	n/a ^{note 1}
BV78a	The average number of days taken for processing new claims.	35.78	31.13	28	26.33	2	
BV78b	The average number of days taken for processing changes in circumstances.	10.80	8.04	9	6	1	









Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
BV79a	The percentage of cases for which the amount of benefit due was calculated correctly.	99.00	94.20	98.00	98.4	2	
BV79bi	The percentage of recoverable Housing Benefit (in-year) overpayments that have been recovered.	55.00	65.96	60	87.48	1	
BV79bii	The percentage of recoverable HB (all-years outstanding) overpayments recovered.	25.00	30.99	30	32.2	3	
BV79biii	The percentage of recoverable HB (all-years outstanding) overpayments written-off.	<6.00	4.92	5	3.53	n/a ^{note 1}	

Waste and Cleanliness ^{note 2}

BV82ai	The percentage of household waste that has been recycled.	21.50	21.42	21.5	22.54	2	
BV82aia	The tonnage of household waste that has been recycled.	9,010.52	8,242.31	8,200	8891.77	2	
BV82bi	The percentage of household waste that has been composted.	21.50	19.81	19.6	21.02	1	
BV82bii	The tonnage of household waste that has been composted.	9,010.52	7,621.81	7,500	8294.17	1	
BV84a	The number of kilograms of household waste collected per head of population.	445	424.2	420	430.7	3	

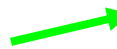



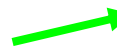
Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
BV84b	The percentage change in the amount of household waste collected.	9.61	-5.11	-1.00	1.39	3	
BV86	The cost of household waste collection. (£.pp)	70.00	78.69	Not set	70.66	4	
BV91a	Percentage of households covered by kerbside collection of recyclables (one recyclable).	94.0	94.12	95	93.8	4	
BV91b	Percentage of households covered by kerbside collection of recyclables (two recyclable).	94.0	94.12	95	93.8	4	
BV199a	The proportion of land & highways assessed as having unacceptable levels of litter and detritus.	20	16.94	17	11	3	
BV199b	The proportion of land & highways assessed as having unacceptable levels of graffiti visible.	5	4.79	4	5	4	
BV199c	The proportion of land & highways assessed as having unacceptable levels of fly-posting visible.	1	0.76	1	1	3	
BV199d	The year-on-year reduction in number of incidents and increase in number of enforcement actions in relation to fly-tipping.	3	3	2	4	4	


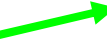
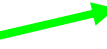
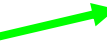

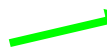
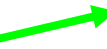
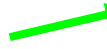
Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		

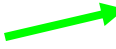
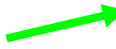





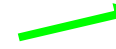
Environment

BV166a	The percentage score against the Environmental Health best practice checklist.	70.0	78.0	80	100	1	
BV216a	The number of sites of potential concern with respect to land contamination.	1,815	1,850	1,815	1,684	n/a ^{note 1}	n/a ^{note 1}
BV216b	The percentage of identified sites for which sufficient details are available for decisions.	2	1.33	3	5	2	
BV217	The percentage of pollution control improvements to existing installations completed on time.	90	100	90	94	3	
BV218a	The percentage of new reports of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours of notification.	95	95	95	100	1	
BV218b	The percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours of legal entitlement.	95	95	95	98.78	1	




Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Planning							
BV106	The percentage of new homes built on previously developed land.	67	83	83	84.87	2	
BV109a	The percentage of major planning applications determined within 13 weeks.	60.00	73.00	60	95.35	1	
BV109b	The percentage of minor planning applications determined within 8 weeks.	75.00	72.00	65	92.42	1	
BV109c	The percentage of other planning applications determined within 8 weeks.	87.00	84.00	80	93.11	1	
BV200a	Was a Local Development Scheme submitted by 28/03/05 and a 3 year rolling programme maintained.	Yes	Yes	yes	yes	n/a ^{note 1}	
BV200b	Have the milestones in the LDS been met.	Yes	No	yes	yes	n/a ^{note 1}	
BV204	The percentage of planning appeal decisions allowed.	40	27.8	33	26.3	2	
BV205	The percentage score against the quality of planning services checklist.	89	83	94	94	3	

Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
Culture and Related Services							
BV219b	The percentage of conservation areas with an up-to-date character appraisal.	20.00	20.00	30	30	2	
Community Safety							
BV126	The number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households.	12.45	11.02	12.45	9.78	3	
BV127a	The number of violent crimes per 1,000 population.	13.11	12.09	13.11	12.14	2	
BV127b	The number of robberies per 1,000 population.	0.63	0.58	0.63	0.74	4	
BV128	The number of vehicle crimes per 1,000 population.	10.17	11.18	10.17	7.89	2	
BV174	The number of racial incidents reported to the Council per 100,000 population.	0	0	n/a	0	n/a	
BV175	The percentage of those racial incidents that have resulted in further action.	100	n/a	100	n/a	n/a	
BV225	The percentage score against a checklist for actions against domestic violence.	78.00	73.00	73.00	90.9	n/a ^{note 1}	


Annual Report 2007/08

Ref	Description	2006/07		2007/08		Quartile	Trend
		Target	Actual	Target	Actual		
BV226a	The total amount spent on advice and guidance provided by external organisations.	338,255	337,299	348,033	311,945	n/a ^{note 1}	
BV226b	The percentage of the money spent, given to organisation holding the CLS Quality Mark.	34.46	34.80	34	38.4	n/a ^{note 1}	
BV226c	The total amount spent on advice and guidance on housing, welfare benefits and consumer matters provided by the Council.	32,251	20,631	21,000	24959	n/a ^{note 1}	

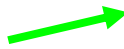
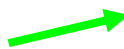
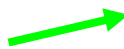
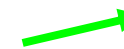
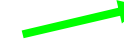

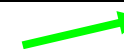

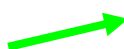

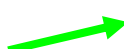
Note 1 – Quartiles are not calculated for these indicators

Note 2 - Waste figures are subject to final calculation by Defra which they will publish later. Final figures may vary slightly from those shown.






In addition to the nationally defined BVPIs the Council also monitors performance against a range of locally defined performance indicators. Those that are reported to the Corporate Management team, Cabinet and Performance board are shown in the table below

Description	2006/07	2007/08		Trend
	Actual	Target	Actual	
Percentage of press articles which enhance our reputation (%)	n/a	80	67.27	n/a
Percentage of helpdesk calls closed within timescales (%)	83.99	86	90.5	

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Description	2006/07	2007/08		Trend
	Actual	Target	Actual	
Resolution at first point of contact all service streams (%)	83	85	94.3	
Average speed of answer (telephone calls at the Customer Service Centre) (seconds)	48	35	36	
Percentage of calls answered (at the Customer Service centre) (%)	76	80	84	
Percentage of animal/debris cleared within timescales	82	95	100	
Percentage of fly tips dealt within response time	96	95	99.46	
Number of missed household waste collections	1,630	1,596	1,102	
Number of missed recycle waste collections	748	800	352	
Number of written complaints (all Departments within SS&WM)	334	264	143	
Percentage of responses to Excess Charge appeals in 10 days	94	95	97.91	
Number of units of affordable housing delivered	72	80	46	
Number of households in temporary accommodation	63	44	16	
Number of usages of Sports centres	n/a	621,600	592,133	n/a

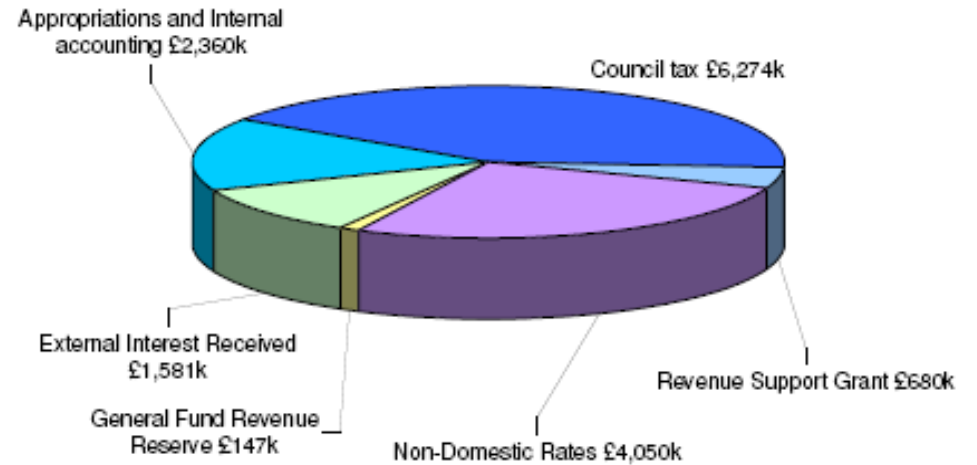
Annual Report 2007/08

Description	2006/07	2007/08		Trend
	Actual	Target	Actual	
Attendance at arts/community events	18,515	25,000	25,056	
Emergency call responses in 30 seconds (percentage)	97.47	80	98.85	
Score on building control performance matrix	74.5	60	74.5	
Number of small business start ups	38	30	31	
Business survival rate (percentage)	75.00	75	75	

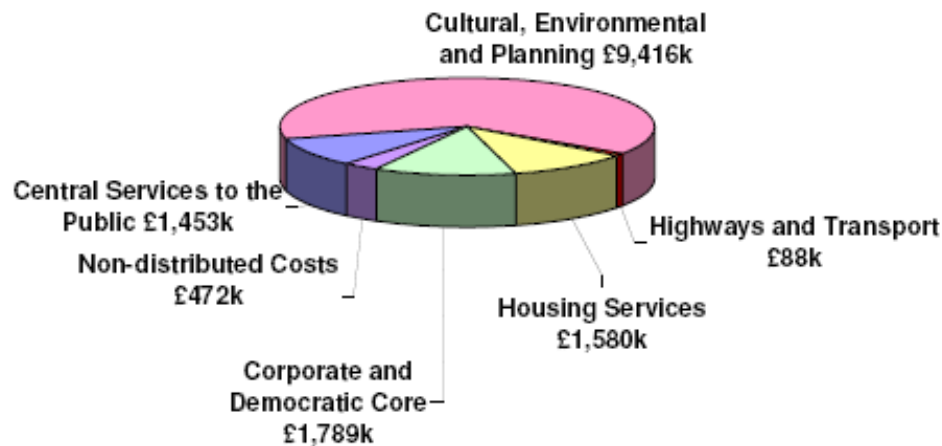
9. Summary financial Information

The income and Expenditure Account shows the spending and income involved with the day to day running costs of the Councils services, for example employees, premises and supplies. For 2007/08, our net budgeted revenue expenditure was £12.2 million. Due to a significant increase in the investment income received during 2007/08, the Council has been able to transfer £147k to balances.

Where the money came from



What we spent the money on



10. Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Audit Commission	The regulatory body that has responsibility for examining the work of local authorities
Best Value	A legal duty (Local Government Act 1999) designed to make sure that local authorities continually improve their value for money
Building Pride	The Council's transformation programme designed to make Bromsgrove District Council an excellent local authority.
Corporate Management Team (CMT)	The Council's officer management team made up of the Chief Executive, Executive Director Services, Executive Director Partnerships & Projects, Assistant Chief Executive and the seven heads of service.
Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)	An external assessment by the Audit Commission which makes a judgement on the whole of a Councils performance and provides a single rating of Excellent, Good, Fair, Weak or Poor.
Community Strategy	A long-term vision for the District as a whole. The Strategy co-ordinates the actions of public, private and community organisations in meeting the needs and priorities of local communities. Under the Local Government Act 2000, all local authorities are required to work in partnership with the community, business, voluntary sector and other public sector partners to develop a long-term strategy to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of their local communities.
Annual Report	An annual report which outlines how the Council has performed against what it said it would do. It includes Best Value Performance Indicator results and targets required by law.
Local Area Agreement (LAA)	A form of contract between Central Government and the Worcestershire Local Strategic Partnership for the delivery of a range of outcomes supported by targets. The LAA includes a pump priming grant from Central Government and the payment of a reward grant for successful delivery of some of the targets.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	A family of partnerships and organisations that is working to a common aim - to improve the quality of life in the District and deliver the Community Strategy

Annual Report 2007/08

Term	Definition
Medium Term Financial Plan	A three year budget for the Council's expenditure and income, linked to the Council's objectives and priorities.
Objectives	The broad goals for the Council, within which priorities are set.
Performance Development Review	A formal meeting between a member of staff and their line manager to review past work and agree future work, setting standards and targets
Performance indicators	Yardsticks used to assess our achievements.
Performance Management Framework	Sets out the processes by which Elected Members, Officers and residents can monitor how the Council is performing.
Priorities	The five areas identified by Elected Members where we wish to make significant improvement in how we perform.
Service Business Plans	One year plans that set out what each department intends to deliver over the coming year
Spatial Business Project	A large IT project designed to improve customer service through data integration.
Target(s)	A fixed goal or objective which results in improvements.
Values	The fundamental principles that guide the way we work.
Vision	The ideal of how we would like the District and the Council to be in the future