

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT BOARD

16TH SEPTEMBER 2008

COUNCIL PLAN 2009-2012 PART 1

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The attached report will be going to Full Council on the 17 September. The report re-confirms the Council's Vision and Council Objectives, reduces the number of priorities from five to four and considers the outline key deliverables for delivering the required improvement on these priorities to meet our residents' expectations.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Board:-
- i. Considers the report, in particular, the customer feedback and performance information and the recommended priorities based on this information; and
 - ii. Makes any recommendations to Cabinet, if appropriate, based on the report and the Board's knowledge of customer feedback and performance issues.

3. BACKGROUND

Council Plan 2008-2011

- 3.1 Cabinet and Full Council approved the Council's first Council Plan as part of the 2007/08 budget round. The Council Plan is effectively the business plan for the Council and a key document for Members. The 2009/2012 plan will be published until March 2009; however, the Council needs to agree its priorities now, so that officers can make detailed plans to deliver these as part of the service business planning cycle.
- 3.2 The first Key line of enquiry in the CPA framework is ambition and the second prioritisation. Understanding our context and setting priorities is

critical to achieving a fair rating, but regardless of the CPA framework, feedback from the public suggests that they want the Council to demonstrate greater vision and forward planning (evidence from focus groups November 2005).

Process to Date

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

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

- Recent focus groups on customer standards and customer access.
- 3.4 This information is brought together in **Appendix 1**, into an analysis of the policy context, performance context and financial context of the Council.
- 3.5 Based on this information, the following priorities are recommended to Cabinet and Full Council:-
- A thriving market town.
 - Housing.
 - Sense of Community.
 - Streetscene and Sustainability.
- 3.6 The Vision and objectives are still considered appropriate.

Process Going Forward

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

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

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

4. Financial Implications

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

5. Legal Implications

5.1 There are no legal implications to this report.

6. Corporate Objectives

6.1 The existing corporate objectives to remain unchanged.

7. Risk Management

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

8. Other Sub Headings

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

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

9. Consultation

9.1

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

10. Appendices

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

Background Papers

Council Plan 2008/2011.

Budget Book 2008/2009

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Bromsgrove District Council
Policy, Performance and Financial Position Statement
04 August 2008

1. Bromsgrove District (some figures need updating)

Geography

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

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

Economy

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

Sustainable Development

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

Education, Deprivation and Health

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

Crime and Fear of Crime

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

2. National Policy

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

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (2007)

- 2.2 Last year we reported on the significant changes beginning to take place in local government as a result of the Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper. This has now become an Act (the above) and is probably the most significant legislative change in local government since the Local Government Act 1999 which introduced best value and eventually comprehensive performance assessment.
- 2.3 The District Council became a failing council for many reasons, but one of them was undoubtedly a lack of awareness of the changes that were happening to local government at a national level. The Council must not repeat that mistake and must pay due regard to the changes in this Act.
- 2.4 The Act has introduced four key changes to the regulatory framework of local government. These are:-
- The replacement of Comprehensive Performance Assessment with Comprehensive Area Assessment from 01 April 2009. This shifts the regulatory emphasis from the Council's performance to the performance of all public bodies in an area, in this case Worcestershire. This makes working in partnership more critical than ever, in particular, both the District and County Local Strategic Partnerships. Members can clearly see the benefits of partnership working at a local level, in particular, the crime and disorder reduction partnership and PACT meetings.
 - New, more focused, Local Area Agreements (LAAs). The County LSP has just recently agreed a new LAA for the County. The targets are set out in **Addendum B**. Key areas of focus within the LAA for the Council are: community safety and affordable housing.
 - The replacement of Best Value Performance Indicators with new National Indicators and a Place Survey. The new national indicators are much more outcome focused and perception focused, hence the Place Survey. The Council has already incorporated some of these new NIs into its Council Plan 2008/2011 and is currently updating the District's sustainable community strategy with both the new LAA information and NIs.
 - Efficiency. Every Council is now subject to a net cashable efficiency target of 3% per annum. The Act is encouraging the delivery of this target by establishing regional improvement and efficiency partnerships and through inviting councils to become two

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

- 2.5 Although the Council will no longer be subject to a separate CPA, we will still be subject to an updated annual Use of Resources assessment, which will include some of the old CPA key lines of enquiry and a scored direction of travel judgement.
- 2.6 There were a range of other issues set out in the Act, but these have been tackled later in the report, in order to provide some reasonable grouping of all the changes that are occurring. The extent of the changes should be a cause for concern for the Council. There are a tremendous number of initiatives coming out of Central Government. The Council simply cannot respond to all of them and needs to be able to consider these in the light of its own priorities and local issues and create synergies between national priorities and initiatives and our local priorities and initiatives.

Community Empowerment and Neighbourhoods

- 2.7 The new Local Government and Involvement in Health Act includes a general “duty to involve” residents (compared to the previous duty to consult residents). This has been significantly expanded upon in the recent White Paper: Communities in Control. Key proposals include:-
- A duty to promote democracy. Councils will be expected to do more to in terms of encouraging young people, giving practical support to councillors and information to residents. The Council is reasonably well placed to respond to this duty, with its annual children and young people’s event, linked to the County’s youth forum, PACT meetings and Local Neighbourhood Partnerships. The Council expects to invest in this area through the next budget round, in particular, money to children and young people to vote on and the further expansion of Local Neighbourhood Partnerships.
 - The power of petitions will be strengthened. There will be a new duty for councils to respond to petitions and potentially to act as “community advocates” should the petition be about something outside of a council’s direct control; and

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

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

Crime Strategy

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

Economic Development

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

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

Housing

- 2.11 Last year we reported that the Government had recently announced a new green paper on housing. The paper suggested councils will have increased powers in order to increase the amount of affordable housing to rent and buy. It set a target of 70,000 new affordable homes and 45,000 social homes per annum by 2010/2011. Councils would also need to identify 15 years' supply of housing land, primarily brownfield land (this is not an option for our District). The Council was challenging its RSS2 allocation, because while the Government was demanding a significant increase in housing numbers within the County, very few of these were set to be in the District, with the growth areas being Redditch and Worcester City. The situation is now further confused by Central Government pressure for even higher housing targets, which may see a dramatic increase in the number of houses built in the District, but in the wrong place (around Redditch and out from Birmingham towards the M42).
- 2.12 Another key development since last year has been the achievement by the Housing Team of a "one star with promising prospects" rating. The team were very unlucky not to achieve a two star rating. This is an excellent improvement from the previous nil star, uncertain prospects rating of 18 months ago. Key recommendations from the inspection included: an increased customer focus, an increased focus on diversity, maximising the contribution that private sector renting can make to the housing stock, delivery of affordable housing and improved value for money. The Council accepts all these recommendations.
- 2.13 Consideration was given last year to dropping housing as a priority, because of our ability to influence the market. In addition, our Council Plan target was to achieve a two star rating and during 2008/2009 we should achieve this (although we will not be re-inspected). Staff feedback this year has also suggested dropping housing as a priority. Cabinet and CMT gave this idea due consideration at their recent away day and concluded that while our ability to influence the market and regional housing allocation is limited, housing is so fundamental to the future shape of the District (in terms of geography and age profile) that it must remain a priority. It was also felt that dropping it as a priority would send the wrong message to our partners, both locally and regionally.
- 2.14 Members may also wish to note that the planning white paper: Planning for a Sustainable Future, has set out detailed proposals for the reform of

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

Community Cohesion and Diversity

- 2.15 The Government's focus on community cohesion and diversity tends to be on ways of tackling inter-ethnic tensions in inner cities, which has obtained an increased significance since 9/11. While these tensions do not really apply in the more rural setting of the District, diversity, remains important within the District, as it covers not just ethnic groups, but other minorities, for example, the disabled, the frail elderly, different faiths etc., all of which are relevant to our District. The Council is comparatively well placed (in Worcestershire) to respond to the diversity agenda. The recent county wide "Being Different Together" project supports our claim of level 2 and we should deliver level 3 (of the Local Government Equality Standard) by March 2010, if not sooner, although the Standard is actually changing from April 2009 and will reduce the number of levels from five to three; this is broadly to be welcomed, as the existing standard is too rigid and overly bureaucratic. The Standard is not longer a BVPI; that said the Council will maintain its commitment to this agenda because it is consistent with our value of equality and with our value of customer first, these are particular customer groups with particular needs which we have a social duty to meet.
- 2.16 We have previously noted that the older population is set to increase dramatically over the next 25 years. The customer panel reports (see below) indicate the public want us to do more in this area and the Audit Commission's "Don't Stop Me Now" report has highlighted that councils are not sufficiently age proofing their work or future plans. The Commission recommend a closer consideration of demographic profiles, more innovation and forward thinking as key areas for improvement. The Council is due to undertake a scrutiny task group on older people and rather like the public transport task group, this is very timely. The Council needs to improve its understanding in this area, not just focusing on some of the current irritants e.g. car parking, but a more fundamental consideration of the needs of an ageing population.

Children

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

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

Transport

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

Third Sector

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

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

Single Status

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

Climate Change

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

Customer Service

- 2.22 The Government does not talk much about customer service, but instead refers to customer access and customer choice. The feedback from the recent customer panel, from the budget jury and from a range of focus groups held on customer access (these were undertaken because of the criticism in the housing inspection about customer access to the Council) do not indicate a desire from residents for additional access channels e.g. remote technology, more hubs etc. What they do show is the need to get our existing access channels right; for example, reduce the average speed of answering at the CSC, reply to voicemails, reply to e-mails etc. In effect, deliver our existing customer standards.
- 2.23 The Council has undertaken some benchmarking work with an excellent council on additional customer access channels, in particular, remote technology, community lap tops etc. The Council has been through a considerable period of change over the last 2 years. At this stage, it may be more appropriate to get right the existing changes before embarking on any additional expenditure around customer service.
- 2.24 As part of the customer access agenda, both Central Government and the Audit Commission seem to be obsessed with information, in fact, one of their recent documents has a chapter entitled "information, information, information". Clearly, good information is critical to running a business. The Audit Commission report "In the Know" cites Tesco's clubcard and a range of other multi-national companies as examples of good practice in using information to provide competitive advantage. Poor information can have devastating consequences, for example the Soham murders. How relevant these examples are to a small district council is a mute point. The ability of the Council to undertake direct marketing of its services through improved information would be of benefit; however, it is hard to justify this as a priority for improvement, despite what the Audit Commission are saying. The one area that has come out of the research the Council has been undertaking is community transport. The Council is unusual in not supporting a community transport provision and this is an area with strong public support according to the customer panel.

3. Regional/Local Policy

Worcestershire Local Area Agreement

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

Block A: Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe

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

Block B: A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow

- 3.3 This block now has a tighter focus around climate change outcomes. Previously, it contained indicators on parks and open spaces, recycling and street cleanliness. Recycling remains important, but the target is more outcome focused, concentrating on NI 193 municipal waste land filled. The big change is the emphasis on per capita CO2 emissions with

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

Block C: Economic Success that is Shared By All

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

Block D: Improving Health and Well Being

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

Block E: Meeting the Needs of Children and Young People

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

Block F: Stronger Communities

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

District Community Strategy

- 3.9 The Council has a statutory responsibility to produce its own Community Strategy, which provides a long term vision and strategy for the District, bringing together the public sector organisations operating in the District, the voluntary sector and private sector. The District's Community Strategy, while being updated, will maintain the same priorities:-
- Fear of crime;
 - Environment (biodiversity and reducing carbon emissions);
 - Town centre redevelopment;
 - Longbridge regeneration;
 - Health and well being (increasing physical activity, ageing well scheme for older people and reducing smoking);
 - Children and young people (qualifications, safety, sport and volunteering);
 - Older People (lifelong learning, transport and involvement);
 - Housing (impact of migration and affordable housing); and
 - Transport (train station, community transport and town centre).

Cabinet / CMT Away Day Partner's Feedback

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

County Council

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

West Mercia Police

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

Primary Care Trust

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

Voluntary Sector

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

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

4. Consultation

Quality of Life Survey

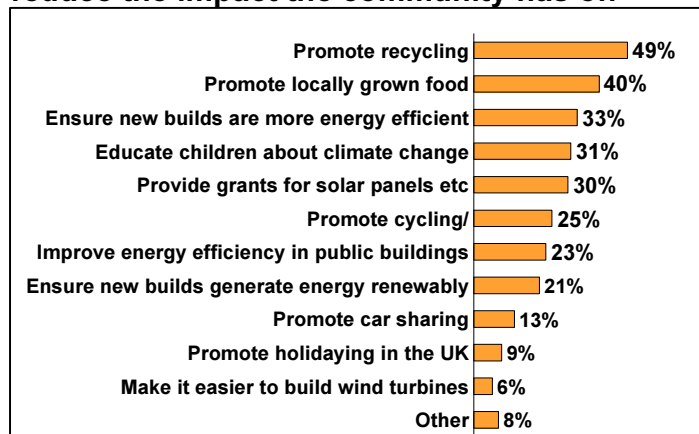
- 4.1 Earlier this year, the Council received the results of its first quality of life survey through the customer panel. The survey asked residents wider questions about what it is like to live and work in the District (compared to the customer satisfaction survey which concentrates directly on the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

Quality of Life Survey

The Environment and Climate Change

- 4.2 Respondents were given a list of areas that the Council and its partners could concentrate on to help reduce the impact that the area has on climate change. They were asked to pick up to three options.

What should organisations concentrate on to reduce the impact the community has on



Base: All respondents (677)

- 4.3 The top three priorities were to promote recycling (49%), promote locally grown food (40%) and ensure that new builds are more energy efficient (33%).
- 4.4 The Council is already in the top 50% performers nationally for recycling, whilst the "thriving market town" priority should encourage the sale of local produce and afford us with an opportunity to build new more energy efficient buildings.

Affordable Housing

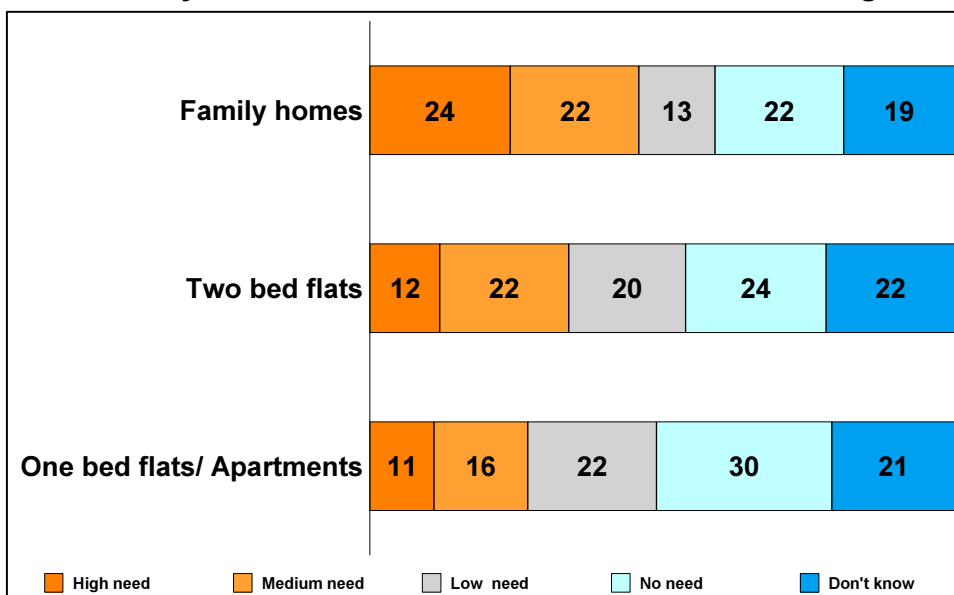
- 4.5 Respondents were shown a list of different types of housing and were asked to say for each whether there was a high need, a medium need, a low need or no need: 47% said that there was a high need or a medium need for family homes, 34% said that there was a high need or a medium

need for two bed flats, 27% said that there was a high need or a medium need for one bed flats/ apartments (the survey has a lower response rate from younger people, so this result should be treated with caution).

4.6 The next question asked whether or not respondents would be in favour of more affordable housing being built. Just over half the sample, (51%) were in favour of more affordable housing being built in the District (21% against). This is a significantly higher proportion than were in favour of affordable housing being built in their area (30% in favour and 50% against).

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

How would you describe the need for each of the following:



Base: All respondents (608~652)

apartments

Bromsgrove Town Centre

4.8 Respondents were given a list of 14 possible improvements and were asked to choose the three that they felt were most important. The option chosen by the most respondents was cheaper car parking (46%), this was closely followed by 45% supporting the introduction of some big name shops and 35% saying that more independent shops are needed.

4.9 The areas that people were least likely to select as one of their three most important areas for improvement were street entertainment (2%), more cafes and coffee shops (4%), improved road layout (5%) and improvements to buildings (also 5%).

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

What improvements would you like to see in



Base: All respondents (655)

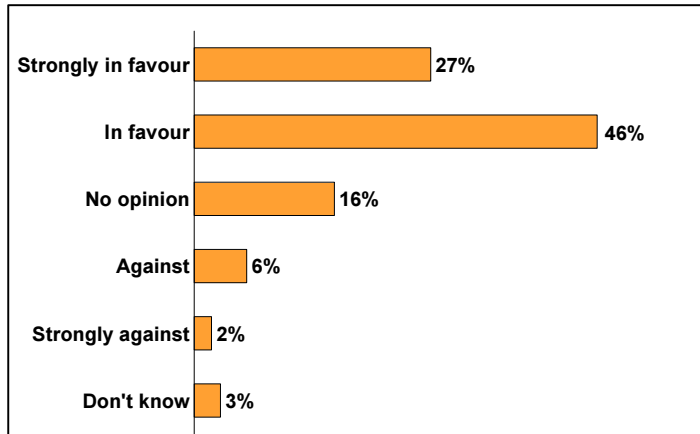
- 4.11 Around three quarters of the sample (74%) had not been to the Artrix in the last year, and of those that had been to the Artrix in the last year, 16% had only been once or twice. The Artrix is a very nice venue and is underwritten by the Council (£120,000 per annum). The Council has recently established an SLA with the Artrix to improve these figures.

Transport

- 4.12 Over three quarters of the sample (77%) either rarely or never use public transport in the area. Only one in twenty respondents (5%) use it daily and around one in ten (12%) used it weekly.
- 4.13 Respondents were asked to rate the public transport in their area. Overall, 11% rated it as excellent or good, with 36% rating it as poor and 25% rating it as OK. 29% said that they did not know, which is not surprising given that 44% never used the service.
- 4.14 The Council and its partners are thinking of introducing a Community Transport Service for residents with disabilities. Residents were asked whether they would be in favour or against such a scheme. Nearly three

quarters (73%) claimed that they were in favour of the scheme. There is strong support for a budget bid in this area through the 2009/2010 cycle.

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



Base: All respondents (690)

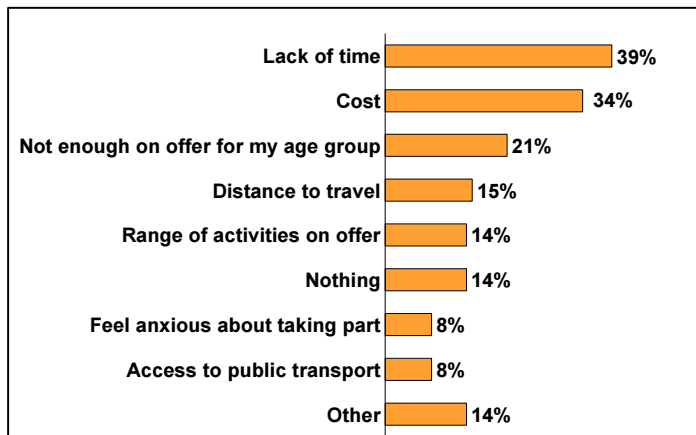
- 4.15 The Council is now working closely with the County Council on transport issues. A District wide study of public transport is already underway, negotiations for the funding of a new Bromsgrove train station are at an advanced stage and an accessibility study for the town centre is about to be commissioned.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

Health and Well Being

- 4.16 Respondents were asked how much physical activity they participate in. 20% described themselves as very active 42% described themselves as reasonably active; 30% claimed to be not very active and the remaining 8% admitted to being inactive.
- 4.17 All respondents were asked what could be done to help them be more active, and were given a list of possibilities. 39% said that they would like cheaper entry fees to leisure centres, 35% thought there more should be done to promote the countryside, 31% felt that there should be more information about walks etc.
- 4.18 Respondents were asked what prevents them from participating more in sports/activities on offer in the District. The main factor was lack of time (39%). This was followed by cost (34%), and lack of choice (21%).
- 4.19 39% said that they have enough information to make choices about leisure activities, sessions and clubs on offer in the District and 61% said that they did not.

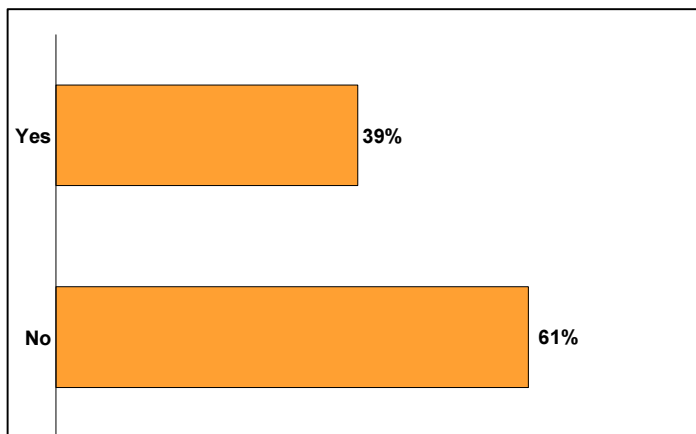
4.20 Marketing and pricing policies for the proposed new charitable leisure trust could help address these issues.

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



Base: All respondents (685)

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

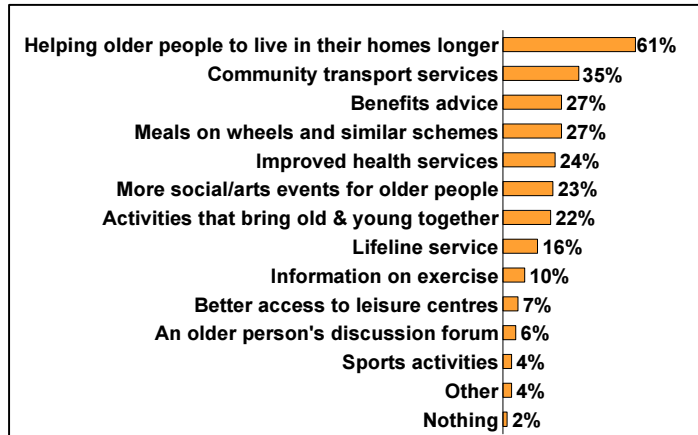


Base: All respondents (668)

Older People

4.21 The majority (61%) of respondents felt that the Council should be doing more to help older residents to live in their homes for longer. 35% felt that community transport services and concessionary fares would help improve the lives of older people. Benefits advice (27%) and good neighbours schemes and meals on wheels (also 27%) were also thought to be good initiatives.

Which of the following would help improve the lives for older people?



Base: All respondents (651)

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

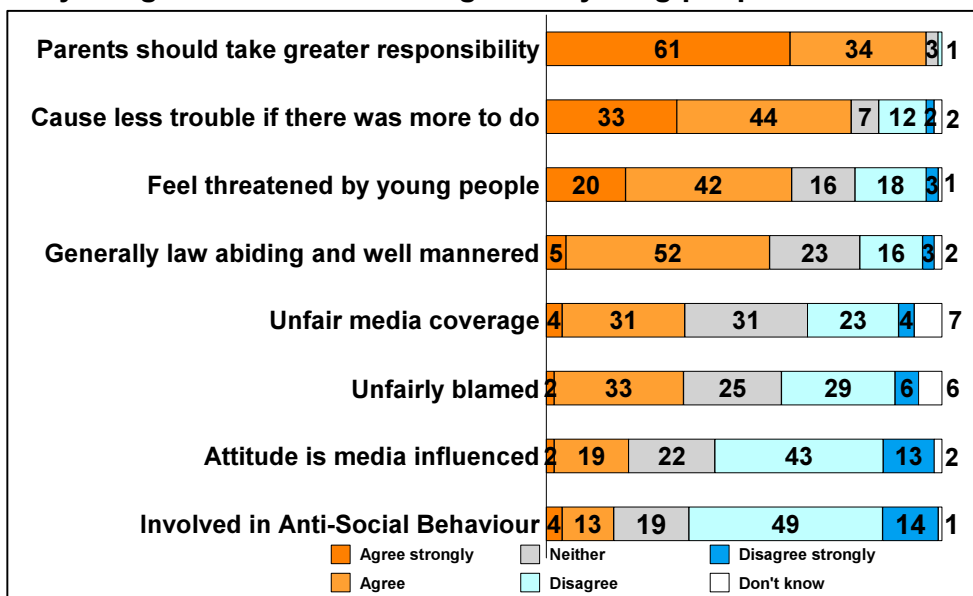
Children and Young People

4.23 Respondents read a list of statements about children and young people and were asked to what extent they agreed or disagreed with each. 95% agreed that parents should take more responsibility for their teenage children, 77% agreed that young people would cause less trouble if there was more for them to do and 62% felt threatened by young people hanging around on streets.

4.24 57% said a lack of things for young people to do was one of the main problems facing young people, 56% said that alcohol was one of the main issues affecting children and young people problem and 49% said that a lack of strong role models was a problem.

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

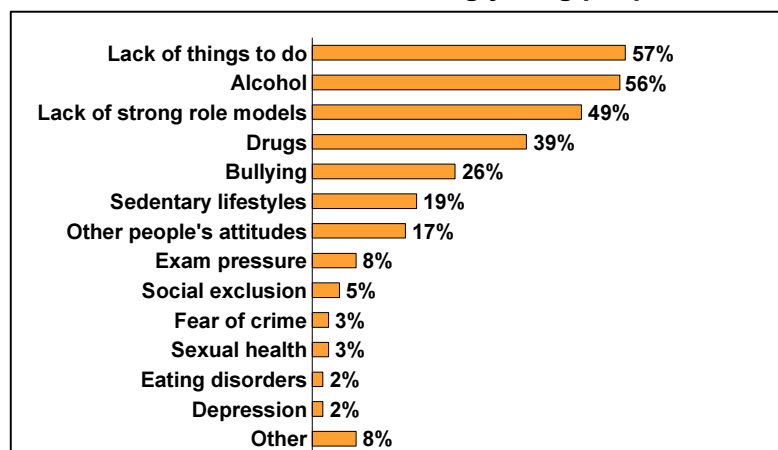
Do you agree with the following about young people in the



Base: All respondents (600~660)

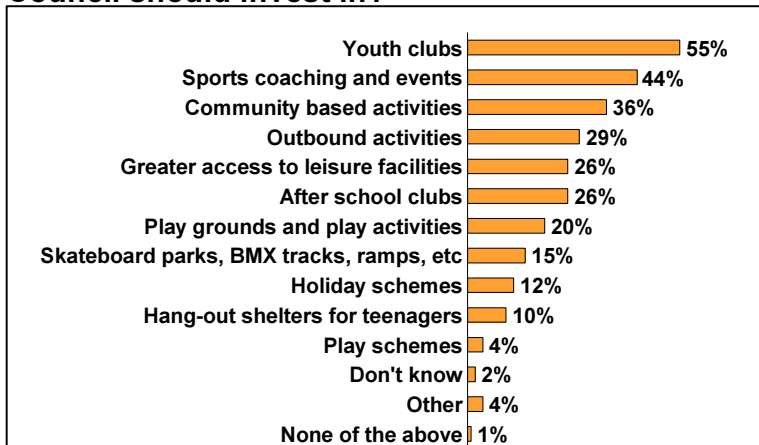
4.26 The Council has been investing in play facilities and through PPG17 is assessing the play areas for each ward. The Police are taking a strong line on underage drinking, actively confiscating alcohol and pouring it away in front of the underage drinker.

What are the main issues affecting young people?



Base: All respondents (636)

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

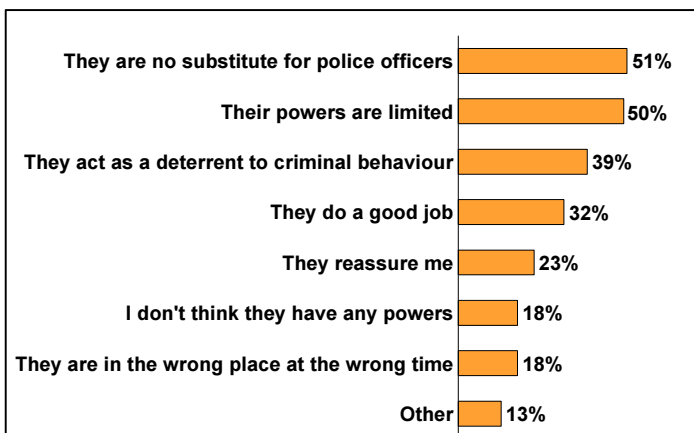


Base: All respondents (659)

Be Safe and Feel Safe

- 4.27 Residents were given a list of possible problems and were asked whether each was a very big problem, a fairly big problem, not a very big problem or not a problem at all. The main issues were speedy/noisy motorists (54% saying this was a very big or fairly big problem), followed by underage drinking (38%) and vandalism (29%).
- 4.28 Opinions towards neighbourhood wardens were very mixed, with 51% saying that neighbourhood wardens are no substitute for police officers and 50% saying that their powers are limited, but 39% said that they act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour. This contrasts with anecdotal evidence from PACT meetings that do have neighbourhood wardens. A report is currently being produced on giving wardens and CSOs the power to issue fixed penalty notices.

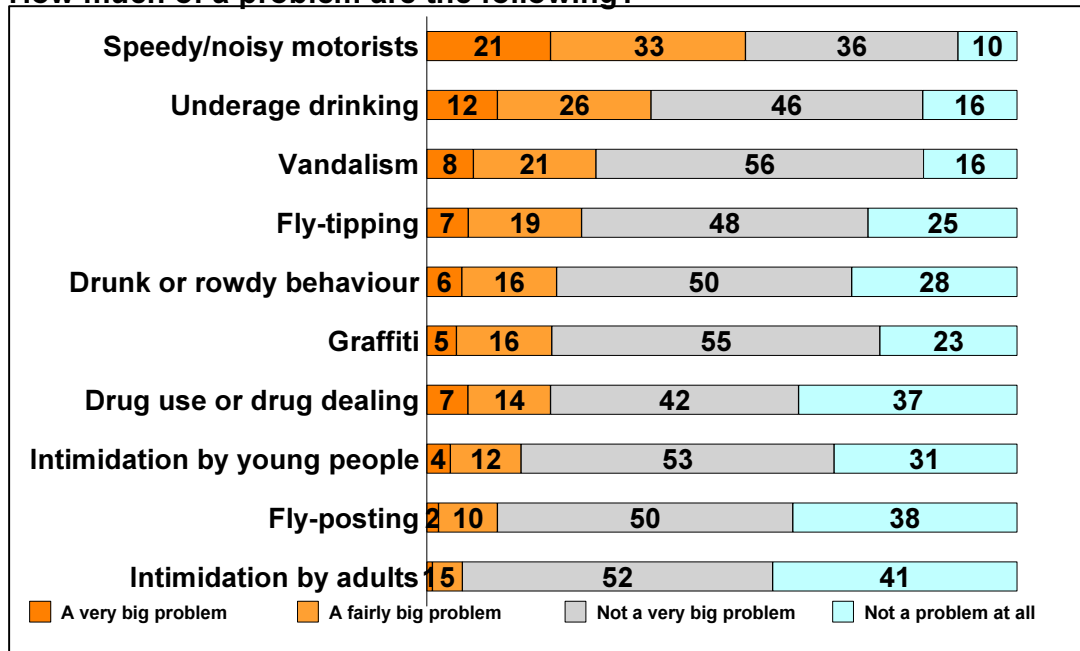
What do you think about community support officers and neighbourhood wardens?



All respondents: (690)

4.29 Speeding motorists are tackled locally through PACT meetings.

How much of a problem are the following?



Base: All respondents (586~643)

Your Local Area

4.30 Respondents were asked whether or not they thought their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together. Only a small proportion of the sample disagreed (7%) while 43% agreed that people from different backgrounds get on well together. 65% of residents said that they felt they belong in their local area, 8% said that they did not really feel as if they belong in their local area, and 2% said that they did not feel like they belong at all.

4.31 Respondents were asked which of a number of options they felt best described their local area. 64% said that their area is a nice place to live, 12% said that there is a sense of community in their area and 12% said they would recommend it to others. Generally, these are positive results.

Budget Jury

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

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

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

- 4.33 Interestingly, the jury generally felt the Council's customer service was good. No one voted for customer service to be a priority. This is consistent with staff, who have suggested that customer service being deleted as priority, but retained as a value of the Council.
- 4.34 Looking at each of these priorities in turn, an improved retail offer and Christmas lights were by far the most voted for key deliverables for the town centre priority. For Sense of Community, the jury voted surprisingly for the better advertisement and marketing of events as their top priority (they were surprised at the number of things the Council does and were not aware of them) followed by more activities for children and young people. Car parking was a particular concern, the jury looking for greater flexibility in the charging regime e.g. reduced or no charges after 6pm, reduced charges for residents etc. For clean streets the key concern for Bromsgrove residents was the state of the Spadesborne Brook.
- 4.35 When the jury first met, without considering the financial information, they wanted to suspend the charging for green waste; however, having received a presentation from the Head of Financial Services on the Council's budget, in particular, the budget headroom in any given year, this idea only received only 5 out of the 146 votes cast.
- 4.36 Further information can be found in **Addendum C**.

Staff Feedback

- 4.37 Last year, the speed at which the Council was moving and the lack of senior officer time meant that we were not able to consult staff in the way we would have liked on the Council's priorities. This year, we have been able to consult staff through staff forums and the managers' forum, at the inception of the process for thinking about next year's strategic priorities. Two middle managers, who have been through the County Council leadership development programme, presented staff and managers' views to Cabinet/CMT at their recent away day.
- 4.38 Staff have concluded that the priorities should be further reduced from five to three:-
- A thriving market town;

- Sense of community and well being; and
- Street scene and environment.

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

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

1. A thriving market town;

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

2. Sense of community and well being; and

- Entertainment and leisure
- Healthier communities
- Housing

- Events
- Safer communities

3. Street scene and environment.

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

Equalities and Diversity Conference

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

Housing

- Affordable housing for all sections of the population, including those with special needs;
- A concern about younger people moving away due to the lack of affordable housing; and
- The need for more properties which are shared ownership.

Town Centre

- A general view that the "physical appearance of the town centre is very poor", but that Bromsgrove is basically a nice town;
- The Conference, like residents in general, clearly want a better retail offer and improved town centre layout, particularly, access between ASDA/shopmobility and the rest of the town;
- Access to the town centre was a key issues, in particular, improved public transport, a better bus interchange and a high dependency unit (toilets);
- Proper kerbing that is suitable for shopmobility scooters has also been highlighted as an issue to correct in any future changes to the highways.

Transport

- Storage facilities for personal mobile vehicles whilst users use public transport.
- Community transport provision.
- Removing charges for blue badge holders.
- Extension of the shopmobility hours.

Customer Service

- The Hub was considered a “great service”.
- Increased marketing and awareness of this service were considered key.
- The existence of the customer feedback system was not widely understood.

Sense of Community

- More group events.

Clean Streets and Recycling

- Street cleaners following on from refuse collection was identified as an improvement (the same issue has come out of the customer panel);
- Regular attention to litter hotspots.
- The desire for co-mingled recycling collections.

5. Performance Position

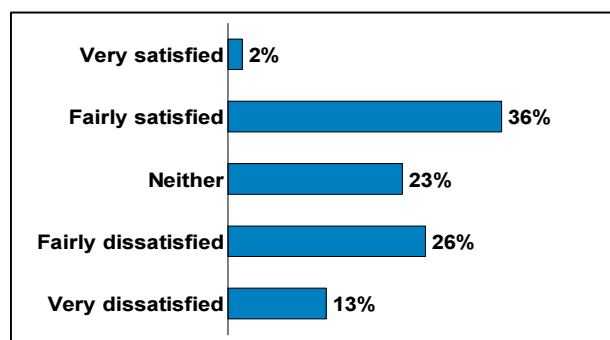
Customer Panel Survey Results

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

5.2 Key findings of the satisfaction survey were:-

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

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things



Base: All respondents (602)

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

- Residents living in 'Urban 2' (Hollywood & Majors Green, Drakes Cross & Walkers Heath and Wythall South) were generally less positive about the Council's cultural and recreational offer than those living elsewhere although they were the most positive about the Bonfire Night event. This may indicate that the Council is not providing enough in their local areas
- 83% of respondents were satisfied with the ease of getting in contact with the Council (this is up from 54% in 2007), an excellent improvement.
- 84% of respondents felt that phonecalls should be answered within 35 seconds or less, which suggests faster answer times are required.
- 73% would recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend
- 62% remembered receiving Together Bromsgrove (up from 41% in 2007) and 62% of these found it useful
- 80% remembered receiving the Council tax leaflet and 55% found it useful
- Very few respondents use the Council's website (7% for once a month or more and about 19% for once or twice a year)

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

Council's Performance Outturn 2007/2008

- 5.3 The Council's performance against its BVPIs, which are critical to the forthcoming CPA have significantly improved. In 2005/2006 we may well have been the worst performing council in England with 74% of our indicators being worse than average. Our outturn for 2007/2008 shows this figure has improved to 40% or more positively 60% of our indicators are now above the All England median.
- 5.4 Although the BVPIs have now been replaced by NIs, we are continuing to report many of them through the corporate KPI set, so considering them into 2009/2012 remains important. Performance Management Board recently examined the Council's Annual Report and recommended to Cabinet that the following indicators remain an area of focus:-
- Sickness;
 - Crime figures;
 - Domestic violence;
 - The Local Government Equality Standard;
 - Affordable housing targets;
 - Small business start ups;
 - Percentage of recoverable housing benefit; and
 - Disabled facilities grants, in particular, the capital underspend.
- 5.5 Whilst not an indicator, progress on the town centre, was also highlighted as an issue. Most of the above indicators are in the corporate KPI set, which will ensure a continued focus by Members and senior officers. Domestic violence and recoverable housing benefit are monitored at a Portfolio Holder/DMT level. None of the above need further investment to improve and are not priorities for budget investment (they are either already in receipt of planned investment through the MTFS e.g. affordable housing, CCTV, or have new processes that need to further embed e.g. sickness monitoring, improved DFG processes).

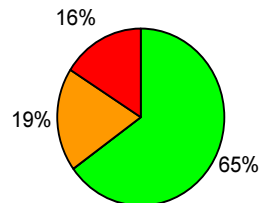
Summary of performance

Performance against targets

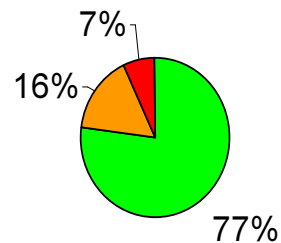
The following table and graph provides information on how the BVPIs are performing against targets set by the Council, where the data is available.

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

2006/07



2007/08

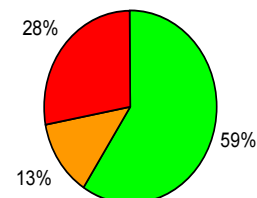


Performance Trends

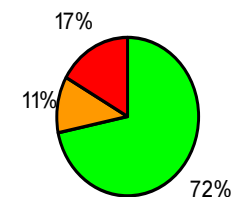
The following table and graph provides information on how BVPIs are performing against previous year's performance, where comparable data is available.

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

2006/07



2007/08



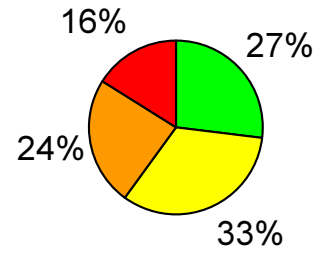
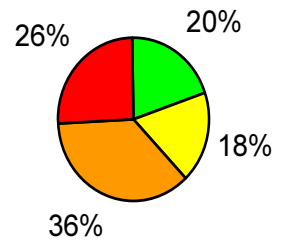
Performance Comparison

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 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



Audit Commission – Direction of Travel Report

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

- continue to improve priority services such as refuse collection to provide a value for money service;
- embed VFM mechanisms so the Council can build and develop a value for money and efficiency culture;
- keep focussed and develop robust plans to deliver against its priorities in the Town Centre and Longbridge areas. This is challenging agenda and the Council needs to ensure it has assessed its current capacity and what it needs to deliver;
- boost capacity through considering the business case for shared services with partners and more innovative funding such as sponsorship;
- continue to manage the Spatial project closely;
- embed the changes that are helping to improve member capacity and decision making to ensure the Bromsgrove agenda can be delivered effectively; and
- respond positively to the findings of the ongoing re-inspection of the Council's housing services in February 2008.

6. Strategic Direction

Vision

6.1 The Council's Vision is:-

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

6.2 This Vision is still considered appropriate.

Objectives

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

Priorities

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

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

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

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

Key Deliverables

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

Priority	Outline Performance Measures
A thriving market town.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased strategic capacity for economic development of town centre to deliver area action plan (and bring benefits to wider District). • Car parking (more flexible charging regime). • Christmas lights. • Town centre redevelopment including preferred option, retail offer and accessibility (transport infrastructure, traffic management, road layout).
Housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable housing (numbers, shared ownership and rental market). • Extra care/independent living for older people. • Private sector housing strategy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery a three star housing service.
Sense of Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Neighbourhood Partnerships/PACT • Neighbourhood wardens. • Activities for all ages (including intergenerational ones). • Community transport.
Streetscene and Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change strategy/officer. • Water course management. • Targeted street cleansing e.g. town centre, hot spots. • Town centre perception (gateways, extra cleaning, enforcement, Spadesborne Brook).

Enablers

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

- ✚ Value for money;
- ✚ Financial management
- ✚ Financial strategy
- ✚ Financial reporting
- ✚ Customer processes
- ✚ Improved governance
- ✚ Spatial business project
- ✚ Improved partnership working

- ✚ Planning
- ✚ Learning and development
- ✚ Human Resources modernisation
- ✚ Positive employee climate
- ✚ Performance culture

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

Council Objective Definitions

Council Objective 1 - Regeneration

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

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

Council Objective 2 - Improvement

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

- Providing an excellent customer experience including choice where possible.

- Maintaining a clear focus on our customers' priorities.
- Making the best use of new technologies to improve services whilst reducing costs.
- Driving out efficiency savings (3% cashable per annum) and making the best use of our assets in order to further invest in our priorities.
- Using systems theory and other management tools to help deliver these efficiency savings and working with the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership.
- Making appropriate use of management systems e.g. risk management, performance management and project management.
- Ensuring we recruit the right staff and retain and develop their skills.
- Achieving public confidence in our prudent financial management, service delivery and corporate governance through positive external audit and inspection feedback.
- Maintaining a level of council tax from which the public feel we make good use of the money we spend and reflects the quality of services they receive.
- Ensuring we seek out, listen, respect and represent the views of our diverse customers and communities.
- Communicating consistently to our customers and communities.
- Actively involve our customers and communities in the design and delivery of our policies, strategies, plans and services.
- Joining up and integrating services both within the Council and with our partners making the best use of new technologies.
- Tailoring the mix of customer service, community leadership and democratic engagement to fit the particular circumstances of each community.
- Ensuring people are able to access services whatever their circumstances.

Council Objective 3 - Sense of Community and Well Being

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

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

Council Objective 4 - Environment

This Council Objective can be defined as:-

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

- Sustaining this quality living environment for future generations.
- Waste collection, recycling and disposal that supports a reduction in landfill.
- Ensuring high levels of environmental cleanliness.
- Maintaining and fostering the District's biodiversity.
- Reducing carbon emissions, both as a Council and a District.
- Adapting to climate change, in particular, flood mitigation measures, flood risk identification and mitigation and improved drainage.
- Developing a modern transport infrastructure and services which encourage modal shift from car to public transport, walking or cycling.
- Maintaining our rural communities.
- Balancing our green belt whilst responding to the economic development needs of the District.

Addendum B

LAA Targets. See separate attachment.

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI 2 % of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	Not available until Place survey is conducted in autumn 2008				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils West Mercia Constabulary Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium
	NI 17* Perceptions of anti-social behaviour Deferred	Target setting delayed until 2009				* Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary, District Councils VCS.
	NI 18* Adult re-offending rates for those under probation supervision – deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*West Mercia Probation, West Mercia Constabulary

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)	
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11		
	*NI 20 Assault with Injury crime rate	7.12 (2007/08)	*7.12	*7.00	*6.91	*West Mercia Constabulary, Worcestershire County Council, District Councils	
	NI 21* Dealing with local concerns about anti-social behaviour and crime by the local council and the police - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*West Mercia Constabulary Worcestershire County Council District Councils, VCS	
To reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs	NI 39* Alcohol - harm related hospital admission rates	1245 per 100,000 population 2006/07	*+8% (1518)	*+3% (1564)	*-2% (1533)	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary	
To promote economic growth and enable the economy in targeted sectors and locations	*NI 166 Average earning of employees in the area	Baseline period 93.4%	—————→			*94.3%	*Worcestershire County Council Chamber of Commerce H&W District Councils
	* NI 169 Non-principal roads where	11.02%	*9.8%	*8.9%	*8.4%	* Worcestershire County Council	

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	maintenance should be considered	(Based on 2007/08 outturn)				
	* NI 171 VAT registration rate - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009				*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils LSC, Chamber of Commerce Connexions
To remove barriers to employment and improve skills in education, employment and training	*NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	4.7% (This figure excludes college leavers)	08/09 *0%	09/10 4.6% (*0.1% reduction)	10/11 4.4% (*0.2% reduction)	*Worcestershire County Council, Connexions
	*NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits.	9.2% (May 2007)	*9.0%	*8.9%	*8.4%	* Worcestershire County Council, LSC, District Councils, Connexions, Job Centre Plus
	*NI 163 Working age population qualified to at least	69.9% for those qualified to at least level 2 in	*+2% (2006 base)	*+3% (2006 base)	*+4% (2006 base)	*LSC Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)	
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11		
	Level 2 or higher	2006 Annual Population Survey				Business Link	
To improve accessibility by addressing congestion and improving public transport	* NI175 access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	93%	*93%	*93%	*94%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils	
To improve and support the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	*NI 8 Adult participation in sport	21.5% (2005/06)	—————→			*25.5%	*Sport England Worcestershire County Council District Councils
	*NI 54 Services for disabled children - deferred	Target setting deferred until 2009	Not applicable			*Worcestershire County Council District Councils VCS, PCT	
	*NI 56 Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6	15.2% (2006/07)	*15.3%	*15.4%	*15.5%	*Worcestershire County Council, PCT, District Councils	
	*NI 110 – Young	Target setting				*Worcestershire	

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	people's participation in positive activities - deferred	deferred until 2009				County Council, District Councils, PCT, VCS, Diocese of Worcester
	*NI 112 Under 18 conception rate	35.1 (1998)	*29.4	*26.1	We have omitted the year 3 target in line with advice from DoH and DCSF. This issue will be revisited at the first LAA Refresh.	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council
	*NI 116 – Proportion of children in poverty	13.9%	*13.9%	*13.0%	*12.0%	*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils, Jobcentre Plus
	*NI 117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, employment or training (NEET)	4.7% (This figure excludes college leavers)	08/09 *0%	09/10 4.6% (*0.1% reduction)	10/11 4.4% (*0.2% reduction)	*Worcestershire County Council, Connexions

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	*NI 121 Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75	69.15 per 100,000 population in 2006.	*54.9	*51.6	*48.6	*PCT, Worcestershire County Council
	*NI 123 16+ current smoking rate prevalence	681 per 100,000 population aged 16+ 3 year average 2004/07	*682 per 100,000	*682 per 100,000	*682 per 100,000	* PCT, Worcestershire County Council District Councils, West Mercia Constabulary
	*NI 133 Timeliness of Social Care Packages	85% (2007/08)	*87%	*89%	*92%	*Worcestershire County Council PCT
	*NI 142 Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living	97.52%	*98.01%	*98.01%	*98.02%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils, West Mercia Probation Trust, PCT, VCS
	*NI 146 Adults with learning disabilities in employment -	Target setting deferred until annual refresh				*Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	deferred					
	*NI 150 Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment - deferred	Target setting deferred until annual refresh				*Worcestershire County Council PCT
To provide decent and affordable housing which meets the diverse needs of Worcestershire	*NI 154 Net additional homes provided	1910	*1830	*1830	*1830	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council
	* NI 155 Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	316(HSSA 06/07 outturn)	*345	*380	*500	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council
	*NI 187 Tackling Fuel Poverty - % of people receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency	Target setting deferred until review stage				*District Councils

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	rating - deferred.					
To improve accessibility by addressing congestion and improving public transport	* NI175 access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling	93%	*93%	*93%	*94%	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils
To increase energy efficiency and increase the proportion of energy generated from renewable sources	*NI 186 Per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area	7.2 tonnes per capita (2005)	*3.0% reduction compared with 2005 (2.4% from national measures, 0.6% from local measures)	*6.0% reduction compared with 2005 (4.7% from national measures, 1.3% from local measures)	*9.0% reduction compared with 2005 (7.1% from national measures, 1.9% from local measures)	*Worcestershire County Council District Councils
To improve flood mitigation measures and improve drainage	*NI 188 Adapting to climate change	Level 0	*All Districts & County to achieve at least level 1	*All Districts to achieve at least level 1 & County to achieve level 2	*All Districts to achieve at least level 2 & County to achieve level 3	*Worcestershire County Council, District Councils
To maximise the diversion of waste away	*NI 193 Municipal waste land filled	57%(2006-07)	*53%	*51%	*48%	*Worcestershire County Council

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
from landfill through prevention, reuse, recycling/composting and recovery						District councils
To continue to improve community safety and build confidence in communities	*NI195a Improved street and environmental cleanliness (levels of litter)	2007/08 - 11% of transects across Worcestershire surveyed below acceptable standard as measured by NI195a	*10%	*9%	*8%	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council
Worcestershire Local Indicators						
To reduce the risk of flooding (both fluvial and pluvial) throughout the county.	All vulnerable areas identified, integrated flood risk management plans developed and implemented. Improved flood-	0	5% of total	50% of total	100% of total	*District Councils, Worcestershire County Council Environment Agency, Parish Councils, land owners, Severn

Priority	Indicator(s), including those from national indicator set (shown with *)	Baseline	LAA Improvement Target, including those to be designated (shown with a *), and including education and early years targets			Partners who have signed up to the target and any which are acting as lead partner/s (shown with a *)
			2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	
	warning system in place at parish level.					Trent Water
To support and improve the leading of healthy lifestyles and well-being of adults and children and young people	Children who have experienced bullying	35% (TellUs2 Survey) New wider Baseline from late 2008	Unchanged	Improvement of 1% (34%)	Improvement of 2% (33%)	*Worcestershire County Council West Mercia Constabulary District Councils, VCS
To reduce levels of inequality within the community	Successful new claims generated for pension credit, attendance allowance and disability living allowance (as a percentage of population of pensionable age)	To be set during year 1	Establish baseline	To be set during year 1	To be set during year 1	*Pension Service, Worcestershire County Council District Councils, CAB, Age Concern

Budget Jury Feedback – Priorities

Priority	Votes
Town Centre	10
Housing	4
Customer Service	0
Clean Streets (and recycling)	6
Sense of Community	8
Green Issues	1
Car Parking	8
District Wide Regeneration (the jury decided to merge this with sense of community)	3

Budget Jury Feedback – Key Deliverables

Priority – Clean Streets and Recycling

Key Deliverable	Votes
Spadesborne Brook	9
Town centre cleaning including weekends	4
Respect for town centre (enforcement)	5
Reduction in green waste charge	5
Total	23

Priority – Town Centre

Key Deliverable	Votes
Improved retail offer including Xmas lights	18
Attract investors and improve night time economy (less takeaways)	6
Street Markets	5
Change road layout of town centre	7
Total	36

Priority – Sense of Community

Key Deliverable	Votes
Neighbourhood wardens	3
Educating youth	6
More for kids to do	12
More for everyone to do (inter-generational activities)	9

Develop pride in community	5
Advertise and market events better	14
Total	49

Priority - Housing

Key Deliverable	Votes
Affordable housing	13
Homes for all ages – families, older people to live at home	7
Total	20

Priority – Car Parking

Key Deliverable	Votes
More flexible regime on charging times e.g. free evenings	6
Reduced charges for residents/workers in Bromsgrove	7
Improved public transport	5
Total	18

Addendum 4

HISTORICAL BENCHMARKING

Satisfaction with the Council's performance against priorities				
	2008 % Positive	2007 % Positive	2008 % Negative	2007 % Negative
Clean Streets and Recycling (2008) Clean District (2007)	46	30	38	36
Improving customer service	32	36	21	19
Sense of community	27	n/a	38	n/a
Increased availability of housing	18	27	16	17
Regenerating Bromsgrove town centre	12	18	50	39

Satisfaction with contacting the Council				
	2008 % Positive	2007 % Positive	2008 % Negative	2007 % Negative
How easy it was to contact the Council	83	54	10	15

Would you recommend the Customer Service Centre to a friend?		
	2008	2007
Yes	73%	72%
No	11%	28%
Don't know	15%	n/a

How often do you visit www.bromsgrove.gov.uk?		
	2008	2007
Daily	0%	0%
At least once a week	1%	1%
Once per week	0%	n/a
Once per fortnight	1%	1%
Once a month	5%	7%
Once every 6 months	10%	16%
Once a year	9%	8%
Less often	12%	8%
Never	63%	59%

What prompted you to use the Council's website?		
	2008	2007
Info. about the local area	52%	34%
Info. About the Council/services	51%	51%
To make a request for a service	18%	18%
To make a complaint/compliment	18%	10%
Nothing in particular	8%	n/a
To make an application	8%	6%
To pay a bill	8%	n/a
To chase progress on a query	6%	10%
To book facilities or events	3%	1%
To apply for grants or benefits	2%	1%

Can't remember	1%	n/a
Other	7%	20%

How useful did you find Together Bromsgrove?		
	2008	2007
Very useful	11%	4%
Useful	50%	37%
Neither	24%	19%
Not useful	9%	7%
Not at all useful	6%	2%
Did not read/receive	n/a	32%

How useful did you find the Council Tax Leaflet?		
	2008	2007
Very useful	6%	3%
Useful	49%	48%
Neither	32%	23%
Not useful	8%	4%
Not at all useful	5%	2%
Did not read/receive	n/a	20%

How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the refuse collection service in general?		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	29%	27%
Fairly satisfied	42%	41%
Neither	5%	6%
Fairly dissatisfied	15%	18%
Very dissatisfied	9%	7%

Satisfaction with entertainment offered at Bromsgrove's Artrix Centre		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	12%	13%
Fairly satisfied	25%	33%
Neither	10%	47%
Fairly dissatisfied	4%	4%
Very dissatisfied	2%	2%
Don't know	47%	n/a

Satisfaction with cultural and recreational activities				
	2008 % Positive	2007 % Positive	2008 % Negative	2007 % Negative
Parks and Open spaces	67	71	10	7
Libraries	61	69	8	6
Nature trails/country paths	48	60	13	8
Christmas Lights	35	49	29	9
Bandstand	33	36	5	3
Street Theatre	30	32	7	2
Cultural & rec. activities	28	n/a	27	n/a
Indoor sports facilities	27	34	18	12
Outdoor sports facilities	22	26	17	12
Bonfire Night	22	36	24	5
Range and Quality of Shops	18	n/a	65	n/a

Satisfaction with the way the Council runs things		
	2008	2007
Very satisfied	2%	2%
Fairly satisfied	36%	34%
Neither	23%	36%
Fairly dissatisfied	26%	19%
Very dissatisfied	13%	9%