

Chief Executive's Office

Chief Executive: CJ Bull

To: All Members of Cabinet:
RJ Phillips (Chairman)
LO Barnett
AJM Blackshaw
H Bramer
JP French
JA Hyde
JG Jarvis
PD Price
DB Wilcox

Your Ref:

Our Ref: CJB/SAHC

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3rd July 2008

Dear Councillor,

MEETING OF CABINET
THURSDAY, 10 JULY 2008 AT 2.00 PM
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD

AGENDA (08/03)

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 15 OF THE LOCAL
 AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS((ACCESS TO INFORMATION) REGULATIONS
 2000 (AS AMENDED)**

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Item No	Title	Portfolio Responsibility	Scrutiny Committee	Included in the Forward Plan Yes/No
4	Swimming Provision for Primary Schools in Hereford City	Children's Services	Children's Services	Yes
5	Primary Strategy for Change	Children's Services	Children's Services	Yes
6	Action Plan to Meet the Challenge of the Government's Post Office Closure Programme – Update	Economic Development & Community Services	Community Services	Yes
8	Strategic Housing Capital Programme	Environment &	Environment	Yes



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	2008/09	Strategic Housing & Social Care Adults & Health	& Adult Social Care & Strategic Housing	
10	Edgar Street Grid Development – Selection of Preferred Urban Village Strategic Partner	Economic Development & Community Services	Community Services	Yes

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

The Council’s Members’ Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

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3. MINUTES

To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 29 May and 12 June 2008. *(Pages 1 - 14)*

4. SWIMMING PROVISION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN HEREFORD CITY



To approve the closure of the St Martin's Swimming Pool with immediate effect and the subsequent capital investment in the Hereford Leisure Pool prior to the new academic year. *(Pages 15 - 28)*

5. PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

To approve a Strategy to shape capital investment in Primary Schools in Herefordshire over the next 14 years, and to determine priorities over the next 2 years. *(Pages 29 - 72)*

6. ACTION PLAN TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POST OFFICE CLOSURE PROGRAMME - UPDATE

To update the Cabinet on the Government's post office closure programme and the progress being made on an initiative to develop sustainable options for the delivery of post office services to rural communities in Herefordshire and to evaluate how Essex County Council's intervention may be applicable to a rural county. *(Pages 73 - 80)*

7. HEREFORDSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008/13

For Cabinet to endorse the Homelessness Strategy, including the associated Action Plan, prior to full publication in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG). *(Pages 81 - 206)*

8. STRATEGIC HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/9

To seek approval for the allocation of the Strategic Housing Capital Programme, which incorporates the Affordable Housing Development Programme and the Private Sector Housing Programme for 2008/09, and to inform Cabinet of external funding contributions, including National Affordable Housing Programme and Specified Capital Grant contributions. *(Pages 207 - 214)*

9. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

To seek approval for the updated Procurement Strategy. *(Pages 215 - 246)*

10. EDGAR STREET GRID DEVELOPMENT - SELECTION OF PREFERRED URBAN VILLAGE STRATEGIC PARTNER

To approve the selection of the preferred strategic partner for the Edgar Street Grid Urban Village and authorise detailed negotiations with that supplier prior to consideration of a full Development Agreement. *(Pages 247 - 260)*

Yours sincerely,



cei. 

CJ
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BULL

Copies to: Chairman of the Council
Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee
Vice-Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee
Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees
Group Leaders
Directors
Assistant Chief Executive



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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of CABINET held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD on Thursday, 29 May 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor RJ Phillips (Chairman)

Councillors: LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, H Bramer, JP French, JA Hyde, JG Jarvis, PD Price and DB Wilcox

In attendance: Councillors WLS Bowen, GFM Dawe, PJ Edwards, RI Matthews, SJ Robertson and J Stone

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from a Member in attendance, Councillor ACR Chappell.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 May 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

The Leader of the Council welcomed Councillor PD Price as the new Cabinet Member Educational Improvement and ICT.

4. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Cabinet received the final report on the Development of the Local Area Agreement for submission to Government Office and were advised the report would be submitted to the Herefordshire Partnership for approval the following day. Cabinet was reminded the Council was the accountable body and had a key leadership role in ensuring its successful delivery by partner organisations and was being driven forward by the Joint Management Team. Cabinet was informed of updates and advised that the Primary Care Trust (PCT) was in the final stages of agreeing targets for the next three years. The stopping smoking targets for 2008/09 were more challenging and the target for 2010/11 had increased by 1 to 818, which the PCT was confident would be achievable. It was added that government had given new national guidelines that the PCT was working to achieve on alcohol harm related hospital admission rates. Additionally work was being prepared on an action plan and the collation of consistent information. It was stated that the target figures presented had been agreed by all partner organisations.

In response to a question on the absence of some data in the LAA improvement targets, Members were advised that a survey of place would be conducted during the which would set some future baseline information, additionally Government was considering technical specification on some indicators and how information would be calculated.

On a point of correction, the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community Services requested that the reference to the value of tourism (page 26 paragraph 4) be amended to state £395 million.

It was stated that the LAA indicators had been negotiated over many months and that during the process and in discussions with GOWM some indicators had been amended. Due to the close working with GOWM it was expected that the indicators would be commended by the Government Office to the Minister for final sign off.

RESOLVED That: Herefordshire's Local Area Agreement be agreed for submission to Government Office for ministerial sign off in June 2008.

5. WEST MIDLANDS REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY, PHASE TWO REVISION

Prior to formally introducing the items 5, 6 and 7 (all of which were linked in part), the Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing advised Cabinet that Dr David Nicholson, Forward Planning Manager had recently been appointed on secondment to the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) and he wished him well for the future.

Additionally, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing informed Cabinet that Herefordshire Council had been asked to act as a peer for another authority by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) due to the following reasons; the advanced nature of the Core Strategy; the establishment of a Task Group with the Local Strategic partnership; the authority's receipts of PAS training, and the linkages with the Growth Point initiative. The request to act as a peer reflected well on the authority and the Cabinet Member gave particular thanks to Dr Nicholson and Andrew Ashcroft for their work on this.

The report outlined the Council's proposed response to the West Midlands Regional Assembly consultation on the current review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase Two, which looked ahead to 2026 and which focussed on housing, employment, role of centres, and waste.

The Cabinet was informed that Government had already stated that the amount of housing provision for the region outlined in the RSS Phase Two was insufficient to meet future demand and to deliver affordable housing needs, therefore a further study had been commissioned by Government to reassess the situation and to provide for additional housing figures. The Cabinet was advised that report would be provided later in the year which would outline the study's outcomes.

The report for Cabinet's consideration outlined the need to establish the Council's position on the review proposals, which would provide a basis for the Core Strategy Option (for consideration under agenda item 6). Members were advised that whilst the RSS Phase Two rates proposed were similar those indicated in the UDP, the levels and distribution of housing development proposed in the Phase Two development would have implications for the county. The implications would be that Hereford City would have a significant uplift of over 50% on UDP rates with a downturn in provision for the rest of the County, which may have a direct impact on market town growth and provision for sustainable rural settlements. Members were reminded that Hereford was one of 10 designated 'settlements of significant development' as well as being an area with Growth Point Status (one of 29 areas in England which were identified to deliver higher levels of housing growth).

The proposed response (as outlined in recommendations 1, 2, 3 and 9) generally supported the Phase Two Revisions, but suggested the need to introduce an

element of flexibility. Additionally whilst as much growth as possible would be sought for Hereford (up to the RSS figure) it was essential to emphasise that appropriate infrastructure would be required to support this. It was also stated that any residual figures from the Hereford allocation should be capable of being added to the rest of the county figure should it not be practicably met at Hereford.

Following discussion at Planning Committee on 23 May, an additional recommendation to those listed in the report (recommendation 10) had been proposed to reflect the Council's approach to climate change

The Leader advised Cabinet that Herefordshire had inputted strongly into the regional debates to ensure the strengthening of references to remoter areas (i.e those outside the market towns) and to emphasise that sustainable rural communities did not relate solely to market towns. The pressures to the infrastructure were emphasised together with the need to ensure that early considerations were given to such matters in parallel with the provision of the additional ½ million houses in the region to ensure a robust framework was in place to support infrastructure, employment and housing. Should these factors not be present, it could lead to gridlock and consequently the possibility of economic decline. The Leader additionally advised the Cabinet of the emerging agenda around the integrated regional strategy, whose focus would include the economic strategy and the urban and rural renaissance dimensions.

In response to a comment about the location of housing provision within the County, Dr Nicholson emphasised the requirement for the distribution allocated in the RSS Phase Two revision document which outlined that half the provision should be met in within the boundaries of Hereford, with the remainder being met in the rest of the county, in these cases, whilst there was a certain amount of flexibility, there would be a steer for developing within market towns and larger villages.

Councillor Edwards advised Members that in this role as a representative of the authority on the Regional Planning Partnership, he considered it his constant duty to engage with the region and to emphasise the rural dimension in the development of regional policy in order that these can best deliver the authority's needs. It was emphasised that it was important to ensure a two-way engagement with regional bodies.

In response to a comment on strengthening the public transport infrastructure, especially the rail network, to support the development of housing and employment, the Forward Planning Manager advised Members that the constructive engagement with relevant organisations to consider the possibilities of building new railway stations in the County would be for consideration by transport colleagues; this issue also linked in with other items on the agenda for consideration at the meeting. A member in attendance raised the point that it was constructive that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Community Services was engaged in dialogue with the rail companies.

It was stated that the issues raised crossed many Cabinet responsibilities and Cabinet Members worked to ensure that consideration was given to these important issues collectively.

The Leader advised the Cabinet that it was possible that draft legislation would transfer the strategic planning function to Regional Development Agencies, this position would not be supported by the administration as the key function of planning should be maintained and co-ordinated through local authorities.

RESOLVED that the Council submits representations to the Panel Secretary

generally supporting the Phase Two Revision subject to:

The Spatial Strategy should include further recognition of the infrastructure requirements at Hereford if growth is to be achieved; the peripheral expansion of market towns, and their service centre role for their rural hinterlands; and the need to plan for the renaissance of the region's remoter rural areas in a way which sustains their social, economic and environmental character;

Policy CF2 should be amended to recognise that growth may only be capable of being accommodated in some settlements of significant development if infrastructure constraints are removed. The recognition in para. 6.21 in respect of meeting housing needs in smaller settlements is welcomed;

3. In respect of policy CF3:
 - a) the total provision of 16,600 dwellings for Herefordshire be supported;
 - b) the identification of Hereford as a settlement of significant development be supported as reflecting the Council's Growth Point partnership with Government for the delivery of housing growth;
 - c) the provision for Hereford (8,300 dwellings) be expressed as a maxima, recognising that at present the extent to which Hereford can accommodate new development is limited and that the practical achievement of these levels of growth will be dependent on suitable transport and other infrastructure provision, as well as other factors;
 - d) following consideration of the distribution of growth within the County in the Local Development Framework Core Strategy and the Hereford Area Action Plan, dwellings which cannot be accommodated within or adjacent to Hereford be directed to the rest of the County in accordance with the principles in policy CF2;
4. The affordable housing targets in policy CF7 be re-assessed in the light of the emerging Housing Market Assessment for the West Housing Market Area;
5. Policy CF10 be supported and further recognise that in rural areas there are also considerations such as the relatively high proportion of small sites in the overall housing supply;
6. The comparison retail floorspace requirements set out in policy PA12A be supported, with the retail assessment work being undertaken as part of the Local Development Framework offering the opportunity to refine the Phase Two Revision figures at Examination if necessary to ensure suitable provision is made for Hereford city centre;
7. The office development requirement for Hereford in policy PA13A be supported;
8. The revisions to the waste policies be supported, subject to clarification of the implications of the existing joint arrangements for

the principle that each waste planning authority should plan to manage an equivalent tonnage of waste arising within their boundary;

9. The continuing recognition of the need to implement the package of measures identified in the Hereford Transport Review be supported, so as to allow Hereford to fulfil its role as a Settlement of Significant Development; and

10. The 'sustainable region' policies, including that on climate change, be particularly welcomed and supported.

6. HEREFORDSHIRE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY: DEVELOPING OPTIONS PAPER

The Cabinet's approval was sought for the publication of the Herefordshire Core Strategy Developing Options paper for consultation purposes, together with the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment reports. The Cabinet Member for Environment and Strategic Housing stated that the series of options for how the County could develop up to 2026 assumed the new levels of growth contained in the revised RSS (as discussed in the previous agenda item). It was emphasised that the options themselves were not for consideration by Cabinet at this stage. Initial consultation had taken place during 2007 and it was stated that the plan would be locally distinctive and relevant to Herefordshire. The Local Development Framework (LDF) would be developed in line with the emerging RSS review and links had been made to the Community Strategy through the work of the LDF task group.

A Members seminar had been held in February 2008 to outline the various options and further briefings had been held recently for all Members in Hereford City and the market towns.

The Cabinet Member outlined the four broad options which highlighted the theme of sustainable development; economy (Option A), society (Option B), and environment (Option C), together with Option D which was for a new settlement. It was emphasised that consultation would be undertaken prior to consideration of a preferred option, which could be a mix of the options outlined. It was further stated that the regional housing figures would need to be finalised prior to the consideration of the final option. The methodology behind the adoption of the final option would need to be sound to ensure it met Government's criteria.

The Cabinet Member additionally stated that a sustainability appraisal and habitat regulation assessment accompanied the report, both of which were required by national and European legislation. As part of the Habitat Regulation Assessment consideration would need to be given to cross border issues where there were Internationally important sites e.g. the river Wye (from source to mouth).

It was recommended that the consultation on the Core Strategy paper and the associated appraisals would commence on 16 June for period of eight weeks and the consultees would include parish councils.

In response to a question regarding the summary of workshop comments on within the sustainability appraisal document (appendix 1), Dr Nicholson stated that the workshop comments provided a record of one of the steps in the process of developing the options. The workshop's function was not to 'appraise options' but to demonstrate the process within which communication and consultation occurred as

the authority moved into a preferred option model, the document therefore provided information and evidence. It was emphasised that the workshop was solely an officer group.

A Member in attendance advised Cabinet that a worthwhile seminar was recently held which outlined the principles and methods required within a consultation process. The Cabinet Member for Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources stated that it had been unfortunate that as the seminar had been arranged at short notice some members were not able to attend. It was reported that those who attended rated the seminar very well and that it was intended to re-run the seminar.

RESOLVED: That the publication of the Herefordshire Core Strategy Developing Options paper be approved for consultation purposes together with the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and Habitats Regulations Assessment reports.

7. STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT

The Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing presented a report which advised of the ongoing Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which was an important part of the emerging evidence based for the LDF (see previous agenda item). It was emphasised that report's purpose was not to consider prospective development but reflected the factual position of the assessment of potential as required by the national planning policy to demonstrate the requirements of regional housing provision. It was stated that it may be required to dip into land that was eventually confirmed to be available in order to deliver the best sites for the chosen preferred option.

In referring to the maps circulated with the papers, the Cabinet Member advised that the Planning Committee raised concerns in respect of a number of protected open spaces and amenity areas which had been included as potential sites, these areas, outlined in the Unitary Development Plan, had been included in error and revised plans (which excluded these areas) were available to view at the meeting on the display boards. Officers were reminded to ensure that the website was updated with regards to the maps.

Further technical work would be gathered to inform on site suitability. The emerging work would be available to support the forthcoming Core Strategy consultation.

The Leader was advised that all Hereford City and Market Town members had been invited to attend the meeting.

In referring to the amendments to the maps, it was stated that the new maps would be made available on the web and a reference made to the fact that they had been amended to reflect the appropriate status of protected open spaces and amenity areas.

In response to a question about the input of utility services, the Forward Planning Manager advised Members that these services would be engaged as part of the next steps of consultation, following Cabinet's approval.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve:

- (a) The work carried out to date, as a basis for going forward;**
- (b) The preparation of a more detailed survey report on the identified**

land;

(c) **Technical consultation on the study when signed off by the Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing.**

8. HIGHWAYS NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN 2008/17

Cabinet was informed that the Highway Network Management Plan was a statutory requirement and should not be confused with the Highway Maintenance Plan or the Local Transport Plan. The plan considered how to manage the transport infrastructure and the roads concerned. Cabinet was referred to page 78 of the agenda, bold paragraph, with regard to the duties of a local traffic authority. It was added that the list of partners was not exhaustive and that partner organisations needed to work together to achieve appropriate efficiencies. Cabinet referred to page 86 of the agenda and the list of principle partner organisations on the board. Cabinet also examined the objectives outlined. Cabinet also referred to page 96 of the agenda and the current strategies to tackle congestion in Hereford. It was added that from surveys of the public indicate traffic congestion is the single most important issue to residents in Herefordshire.

Another key issue raised was the accountability of the Highways Agency. Cabinet was advised that officers were looking to develop an Intelligent Traffic System for Hereford building on the existing system for traffic light management. It was estimated that the cost could be in the region of £500k however; this would depend on the number of elements included. Any intelligence gained would be shared with the Highways Agency. A Member in attendance referred to page 83 of the agenda and traffic congestion in Hereford city. The Cabinet Member Highways and Transportation drew attention to page 82 of the agenda, Integrated Transport Policy and stated that all aspects of transport needed to be integrated in order to make a transport system that worked for all stakeholders.

When considering the engagement of stakeholders, the Welsh Assembly should be added.

In response to a statement that if an overarching objective of the transport plan was to provide sustainable means, investment in new road building should be discouraged, the Leader advised that such a Plan should assess and tackle the County's needs whilst also being mindful of sustainability issues. The Cabinet Member, Highways and Transportation emphasised that within an integrated transport system, all aspects of transport had a part in delivering solutions (as outlined in pages 81 and 82 of the agenda).

RESOLVED That: the Highway Network Management Plan be adopted as Council policy.

9. FINAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN REPORT 2007/08

The Cabinet Member Resources presented the Final Revenue and Capital Outturn 2007/08 report stating overall it represented a good outcome for the authority. It was added that to date Herefordshire had submitted and received one of the largest claims under the Bellwin scheme for work undertaken during the summer 2007 floods. Congratulations were expressed to the Benefits team for the amount of benefits subsidy claimed. In reviewing the financial position the Cabinet Member stated Directors should be congratulated on their overall management of budgets at a difficult time. Cabinet was referred to page 166 of the agenda to the list of specific reserves and advised that the use of the underspend to set up a specific reserve was requested to help with future accommodation changes. It was added that it was

anticipated that the financial year for 2008/09 would be challenging. Reference was made to funding in the Environment Directorate and whether reserves were at a level which would support funding for highways. Cabinet was advised that in previous years the directorate had had some underspend however this year the directorate faced significant challenges meaning the specific reserve could not be increased. It was added that within Adult Social Care improvements had been as a result of service redesign to rectify the budget position.

The Cabinet's approval was sought for the use of unspent budget as outlined on page 165, paragraphs 55 and 56 and to the approval of new specific reserves in the accounts as outlined on page 166 of the agenda and detailed in paragraph 59.

RESOLVED that Cabinet approve:

- (a) the final outturn for 2007/08;
- (b) the Joint Management Team's recommendations for carry forward of unspent budget into 2008/09 (page 165, paras 55 and 56); and the movement to new reserves as outlined in the report (page 166, para 59); and
- (c) the movements to new reserves outlined in the report.

10. MINIMUM REVENUE POSITION (MRP) STATEMENT

The Cabinet Member Resources presented the report which sought the approval of the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2008/09 in order to formally comply with the Local Authority (Capital Financing and Accounting) (England) (Amendment) Regulations. Cabinet was advised that whilst the new rules came into effect from the 2007/08 financial year, the Council was, in effect, already following these requirements and demonstrating good practice.

RESOLVED That the Minimum Revenue Provision Statement for 2008/09 be approved.

11. REVIEW OF POLLING STATIONS

The Deputy Returning Officer presented the report of the Returning Officer on the proposed changes to the number and locations of polling stations in Herefordshire as a result of the requirement within the Electoral Administration Act 2006 (EEA 2006) that relevant authorities conduct a review of all polling districts and polling places, with reviews conducted every four years. The Cabinet was informed that this was an apolitical report, and whilst approval in principle was sought from Cabinet, the Returning Officer would publish the final outcomes.

A consultation process had been undertaken between February and March 2008 which had included a number of consultees, the comments from which were attached as Appendix 1 of the report. It was a statutory duty to ensure the provision of appropriate polling stations and Appendix 2 of the report set out the outline of the review proposals, rationale and the recommendations for each ward.

In discussion the issue in finding staff to cover polling stations in very rural areas was considered. All Council employees, at all levels, should be encouraged to support the democratic process. In response, the Returning Officer stated that whilst local authorities were increasingly finding it difficult to staff polling stations, this authority should positively encourage staff to connect with the democratic process

and develop a network of staff with the appropriate skills to support the electoral processes

Specific references were made to the following polling stations:

- Page 184 - Llangarron: Cllr Hyde sought confirmation that no change was proposed; the Registration Services Officer confirmed this to be the case.
- Page 185 - Pembridge and Lyonshall with Titley: The Leader confirmed that the Parish Council supported the submission.
- Page 192 - Burghill, Holmer and Lyde Ward: Cllr Robertson spoke in opposition to the proposal which sought to transfer the polling station for the Pipe and Lyde polling district from Moreton on Lugg Village Hall to Holmer Church Parish Centre. The Registration Services Officer confirmed that the status quo would be maintained pending the conversion of a church to a community facility, which should meet the appropriate standards.
- Pages 223/224 - Upton Ward: Councillor Stone requested that the proposal for the Eye, Moreton and Ashton Polling District to be served by Luston Methodist Chapel to be reconsidered. He expressed the view that Crawley Hall, the current polling station has good access and parking, both of which were lacking at Luston Methodist Chapel. Concerns were also expressed that the change may adversely affect the number of votes cast and so have a negative impact on local democracy in addition to a detrimental impact to the environment as the distance to travel was further.
- Page 219/220 - St Martins and Hinton Ward: Cllr Oliver proposed the possibility of using Saxon Gate as an alternative to Manor Rest Home as the Putson Baptist Church polling station be accommodating in excess of a possible 3000 votes.

Members were thanked for their comments, all of which would be referred to the Returning Officer for consideration.

RESOLVED that:

- (a) **the Returning Officer's recommendations as indicated in Appendix 2 be noted; and**
- (b) **objections raised by Councillors be noted and referred to the Returning Officer for consideration**

Notifications to changes to polling stations would need to be clearly stated when sending out the polling card to minimise the consequences of change.

The Electoral Registration Officer advised the Cabinet that Parish Council vacancies were being advertised proactively through correspondence to all households.

12. REDEVELOPMENT OF DEFECTIVE CONCRETE HOMES AT WOODEDGE, ROSS-ON-WYE, AND ARCHENFIELD, MADLEY

Cabinet considered a confidential report on the replacement of Defective Concrete Homes at Woodedge, Ross-on-Wye and Archenfield, Madley.

Not for publication this information relates to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

The meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

MINUTES of the meeting of CABINET held at THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD on Thursday, 12 June 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor RJ Phillips (Chairman)

Councillors: LO Barnett, AJM Blackshaw, JP French, JA Hyde, JG Jarvis, PD Price and DB Wilcox

In attendance: Councillors ACR Chappell, PJ Edwards and SJ Robertson

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor: H Bramer Cabinet Member Resources and from Members in attendance, Councillors GFM Dawe and RI Matthews,.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor ACR Chappell declared a personal interest in Agenda item 4 Wyebridge Sports College, Determination of Statutory Notices.

15. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 29 May 2008 be deferred to the next meeting of Cabinet.

16. WYEBRIDGE SPORTS COLLEGE - DETERMINATION OF STATUTORY NOTICES

The Cabinet Member Children's Services presented the report and informed Cabinet that the Secretary of State was unable to approve the opening of an Academy unless and until there had been an agreed close of Wyebridge Sports College. The Cabinet Member added there had been no suggestion from the Secretary of State to indicate the opening of the Academy would be refused on the 1 September 2008. Cabinet raised the question on how much consultation had been carried out with other schools and colleges and in particular with Herefordshire Sixth Form College and was reassured that considerable consultation had been carried out. It was added that concern had been raised as to whether there would be enough students for the sixth form at the Academy as Herefordshire already had a high performing Sixth Form College in the county for students.

Cabinet was advised that traditionally the children from the South Wye area that had attended Herefordshire Sixth Form College in the past had left college prior to taking any exams. It was added that the Government Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) insist that every academy has a sixth form and for the proposed size of the Wyebridge Academy this would need to be for 200 students. The Head of Commissioning and Improvement stated that he had pointed out to the sponsors and the trustees that the number of children applying to take up a place might not reach the figure of 200. Continuing discussions were being held with all the colleges on course proposals. The Principal designate for Wyebridge Academy

had had discussions with local businesses with regard to the skills they would like to see that young people had prior to coming into the work place. It was hoped to reflect these skill requirements in the courses provided in the sixth form, which would provide an alternative to students who did not wish to go down the academic route. The Leader reiterated the importance of working with the existing providers of higher education in Herefordshire for a successful outcome.

Members in attendance from the South Wye area confirmed the importance of the academy and commended the Head of Commission and Improvement for the hard work and achievements he had made in the area. Cabinet was reminded of when the school had been in special measures and the great improvements that had been made since then and how important it was to do the best for the children in the South Wye area.

The Leader spoke on behalf of Cabinet and all Members of the Council on the forthcoming retirement of George Salmon, Head of Commissioning and Improvement, and thanked him for all the support and help he had given to the schools across the county and to Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the closure of Wyebridge Sports College on 31 August 2008 be approved.

17. POLYTUNNELS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Cabinet Member Environment and Strategic Housing presented the report to Cabinet and emphasised that the recommendation for the publication of the supplementary planning document was only for consultation purposes and was not final. The Cabinet Member added that extensive consultation had already taken place with representatives from the farming/growing industry, local community and interested lobby groups. The process had been helpful and suggestions and comments had been gathered from both sides, which had been summarised and could be viewed on the website.

It was added that a balanced approach had been taken in drafting the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) and set out within the policy were 21 supplementary guidelines to assist future planning applications. The Cabinet Member referred to two of the guidelines. Guideline 1: Economic Benefits – the benefits of polytunnels in enabling the production of increased quantities and qualities of soft fruit, the sustainability benefits of reducing food miles and the contribution to the rural economy. Guideline 2: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – in marginal cases where economic benefits are being weighed against landscape impact, priority would be afforded to the landscape over all other planning considerations. The Cabinet Member reiterated the need for a balanced approach and that the document was only for consultation. He added as a point of interest that Wychavon Council was seeking advice from Herefordshire on dealing with polytunnels.

Cabinet complimented officers on the report, the draft Supplementary Planning Document and for the way they had worked with the fruit growing industry and the community.

RESOLVED: That the publication of the draft Supplementary Planning Document be agreed for consultation purposes.

The meeting ended at 2.25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

Document is Restricted

SWIMMING PROVISION FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN HEREFORD CITY

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To approve the closure of the St Martin's Swimming Pool with immediate effect and the subsequent capital investment in the Hereford Leisure Pool prior to the new academic year.

Key Decision

2. This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation(s)

THAT St Martin's Swimming Pool be closed and investment be made in the Herefordshire Leisure Pool to make it more suitable for school use.

Reasons

3. The financial investment required for the longer term as outlined in Table One indicates this is a clear argument for providing better value for money and the use of the Leisure Pool sustainable whilst affordable to our schools.

Considerations

4. It is a requirement of the national curriculum that all children are able to swim 25 metres by the time they leave Primary School. In the past, 38 Primary Schools have used the pool at St Martin's, but this now requires significant capital investment in both the short and longer term to remain open.
5. The 38 Primary Schools who have used the St Martin's Pool favour its continued use as it was purposely designed to teach swimming and has dedicated school use.
6. The majority of the other Primary Schools in Herefordshire use their local swimming pool managed by Halo. The Council already invests in a partnership with Halo to provide leisure services.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Sharon Menghini, Director of Children's Services (01432) 260039

7. This paper sets out the consideration for maintaining St. Martin's Pool against the costs of using the local Leisure Pool managed by Halo.

St. Martin's Pool

8. There are significant capital and revenue costs required to maintain the use of St Martin's Pool by the 38 schools which are detailed below:
 - a. The St Martin's Pool requires capital investment to return it to use and to continue to maintain it in the longer term. The work to bring it back into use is estimated to cost £72,500. However, to improve the thermal performance of the building and install more energy efficient plant a further £210,000 would be needed in the medium term with further capital works likely to be required in the longer term.
 - b. The required capital investment, if the decision was made, to retain the St Martin's Pool has not been identified. There is a suggestion that it might be partially funded from Section 106 agreements resulting from housing developments in the South Wye area. Under one Section 106 agreement relating to Phase 1 of the Bradbury Lines development, £182,443 has been received from the developers and has been identified to support education projects in the locality. This figure alone would not be sufficient to meet the capital costs of bringing the St Martin's Pool up to a standard which would reduce running costs, and avoid further significant maintenance costs in the medium term. A possible further £100,000 contribution from developers has been discussed by the Planning Sub-Committee linked to the second phase, but the developers have subsequently withdrawn the application. It should be borne in mind that the £182,443 Section 106 monies can only be spent on education projects in the South Wye area. Therefore expenditure on either pool would be at the cost of projects elsewhere in this area. Other possible projects include Blackmarston Special School to provide additional care and teaching space for those children with severe disabilities.
 - c. Under the LMS rules it is possible to retain a central budget not exceeding 0.1% of the dedicated schools grant i.e. no more than £87,666. This figure may be used on any number of identified projects in support of our schools but in recent years has solely been used to support the Pool. Employee costs have reduced, so has income but all premises related costs have risen sharply. Even with this level of funding individual schools pay £66 per hour session at St Martin's Pool. This hourly charge is in line with the charges to schools in all other pools in the County managed by Halo.
 - d. The revenue cost of the St Martin's Pool each year has been subsidised by the centrally retained DSG funding. Over the last 8 years, the budget set for the Pool has had to be increased significantly beyond the level of inflation and even with these increases it is only in 2 of these 8 years that expenditure has been contained within budget, as the table below shows:-

YEAR	BUDGET	ACTUAL	VARIANCE	
07/08	78,456	112,968	-34,511	Over budget
06/07	81,885	104,454	-22,569	Over budget
05/06	50,083	70,372	-20,289	Over budget
04/05	64,519	81,811	-17,293	Over budget
03/04	48,000	21,104	+23,895	Under budget
02/03	30,000	61,486	-31,486	Over budget
01/02	42,452	35,508	+6,944	Under budget
00/01	26,711	38,702	-11,991	Over budget

- e. As requested by Children's Services Scrutiny Committee on 21 April 2008, an independent swimming pool specialist has been asked for their view. The consultant's report has been prepared on the basis of information provided by Halo and the Council. Staff costs have been modelled on Halo's terms and conditions. It evidences that revenue costs alone would increase to well over £137,000 per annum, considerably in excess of the maximum possible central budget set out above.
- f. In April 2006 revised management arrangements were agreed with Halo for the St Martin's Pool in order to best use their managerial and technical expertise on behalf of the Council. An annual fee of £12,500 was agreed, subject to annual review. By doing this, the Council has taken advantage both reducing Council staffing at the pool and of the economies of scale offered by Halo in order to purchase chemicals and equipment, co-ordinate lifeguard cover and to reduce management costs to achieve savings of approximately £20,000 per year since 2006. This cost has been met by the centrally retained £87,666. Despite these cost reductions, operating costs have continued to rise at the St Martin's pool due to increases in energy and water costs, repairs and reduced usage.
- g. Prior to the decision to commission the construction of the North Herefordshire Swimming Pool in 2005, an independent study of available water space in Herefordshire was conducted by Sport England, in conjunction with Sheffield Hallam University. This study concluded that there was a shortfall of 29m² of water space in relation to the population need. The subsequent provision of the pool at Leominster led to the rectification of this deficiency and an approximately oversupply of some 335m² which equates to a 6 lane x 25m pool. Should the St Martin's Pool be decommissioned the study's methodology suggests that there is more than sufficient water space capacity to cope with the resultant loss (a net surplus of over 20m²)

The Hereford Leisure Pool

9. The possibility of alternative provision being made in the Leisure Pool has been explored.
10. The majority of the 38 schools are making interim use of this during the Spring and Summer Terms of 2008 (Appendix 1), but have experienced a number of difficulties.

These are listed below which can be overcome through some capital investment, good management and negotiation with Halo. These are:

- a. The distance and time taken to move pupils from buses in the front car park, through the Leisure Pool to the changing rooms to the rear;
 - b. The limited size of the changing rooms (which were built to serve the King George V playing field pitches) for larger groups of children. Children have had to change and leave clothes in adjoining shower areas;
 - c. The inappropriate height of the coat pegs;
 - d. The distance between changing rooms and main pool and the unsuitable floor surfaces, which have led to some children slipping;
 - e. The sharing of the pool with other users;
 - f. The poor acoustics and gradient of pool floor making teaching more difficult;
 - g. The lack of toilet facilities for sole use of children other than attached to public changing areas, next to the pool; and,
 - h. The mixing of children dressed for swimming and the public using other water spaces, the sauna, or the viewing gallery.
11. Headteachers have emphasised their anxiety regarding the issue of child safety under these interim arrangements and the fact that the dimensions of the tank in the Leisure Pool are not as good as that in the St Martin's Pool for swimming tuition. No investment of capital expenditure would be able to address this problem. However, it should be noted that Halo will cease the interim arrangement of teaching children in the current pool with a beach (Leisure Pool) and transfer all schools to the main swimming pool tanks which are more appropriate for teaching swimming. Timetables for the main pool, teaching pool and leisure pool are shown at Appendix 2 together with percentage allocation by user group. This will be significantly better for all user groups including the schools.

All other schools deliver swimming instruction in their local pool and this works very well. Outside school times Halo deliver high quality swimming lessons to 1,600 children each week at Hereford Leisure Pool alone. Halo are committed to working with the Local Authority to address all of the concerns raised and are confident that this can be achieved. Halo would also wish to have regular dialogue with schools to address any issues which might arise quickly and proactively.

12. Capital investment at the Leisure Pool would be able to improve and update an internal corridor linking the changing rooms to the pools, create coach parking close to the entrance and any other minor works that are deemed appropriate.

The cost of these works has been estimated at £35,250. The Hereford Leisure Pool is in a building, which performs well in terms of energy management and is far more sustainable in this respect than the St Martin's Pool, which was completed in 1975 when such matters were of less concern. While the Leisure Pool will require planned maintenance over the next few years there is no reason why this structure and plant should not continue to provide a functional pool for the next 15 to 20 years.

13. Revenue costs to schools of using the Hereford Leisure Pool are currently £66 per session per school. Halo have submitted a proposal to the Council to standardise swimming charges at £88 per hour at all Halo managed Pools from September 2008 to

cover the loss of dedicated school usage of the Leisure Pool and to develop the swimming curriculum. If the decision is made to concentrate swimming in Hereford City at the Leisure Pool then agreement will be necessary with Halo regarding school swimming policy and operations. These increased costs could be met by delegating the £87,666 to schools which is currently retained at the centre

Table One: Financial implications

	St Martin's pool 2008 -9	St Martin's pool 2009 -10	Leisure pool 2008 -9	Leisure pool 2009 -10
Revenue				
Charge per school per hour	£66	**£66	£88	£88
Centrally held budget funded from DSG	£87,666	£87,666	Nil	Nil
Additional costs Met by underspends in other budgets funded from DSG	£34,511	Estimated by consultant over £137,000 (separating out the initial capital investment)	Nil	Nil
Capital		£182,000	£160,000	£160,000
Investment funding sources to be identified and approval to be obtained	£72,500	£182,000	£160,000 To be determined	

** The sessional charge for schools could be increased to cover revenue costs but these would be to a level of approx £106 per hour for schools if the central subsidy was maintained, or £208 per hour with no subsidy. The consultant's report indicates that even these price increases may not be sufficient and costs could rise further. These costs could be reduced if the charges to local swimming clubs were increased to an economic rate, estimated to be £85 per hour rather than the current £32.80 per hour. Some schools or clubs may decline to pay higher charges and this would either increase the losses or further increase charges. All price increases are based on schools usage of 856 hours in the last full year (Spring Term 2007 – Autumn Term 2007) and private club hire of 500 hours.

14. On 21 April 2008 Children's Services Scrutiny Committee resolved that the Cabinet Member (Children's Services) be recommended to consider:
 - a. That works within the budget of £72,500 to reopen the St Martin's Pool be undertaken, once sufficient schools had committed themselves for a 3 year period at a level of charge which would cover the net costs; and
 - b. A wider review of the financing of the pool be undertaken to ensure that it could operate within budget.

A letter was sent to all Primary Schools setting out 3 Options for the future. Although there were only three responses to this letter, other comments and views have been

collated by the Headteacher of St Mary's Primary School, Credenhill. The original letter and responses are printed in full in Appendix 3.

15. The South Wye Partnership has considered the possibility of a 'Quirk Transfer' but does not want to pursue this option. Hereford Swimming Club has also felt that they could not take any responsibility of the Pool even though they would like to see it continue to operate.
16. Schools Forum budget working group have been consulted on their willingness to support the retention of the £87,666 centrally retained element of funding from the Dedicated Schools Grant. They recommended that the budget and subsidy be delegated to schools and on financial grounds that the St Martin's Pool be closed.

Financial Implications

The financial implications of the recommendation are summarised in the Table One and clearly evidence that the better longer term financial investment is to refurbish the Leisure Pool and close St Martin's Pool.

Risk Management

From a service viewpoint, it is important to ensure children can access water facilities which allow them to learn to swim and meet National Curriculum requirements. The interim arrangements are unsatisfactory and a decision on the way forward is required urgently to inform the arrangements for a new academic year.

On the financial side and in asset management terms, the more sustainable position in the longer term is to invest in the Leisure Pool.

Alternative Options

The two options of either investing in the Leisure Pool or the St Martin's Pool are set out in the report. A further variation which has been raised is the transfer of the St Martin's Pool to another body by quirk agreement but this would be unlikely to be successful until after the Council has made significant capital investment to return it to a suitable state for use. This would not overcome the inherent high cost in operating that pool and the consequent costs to schools.

Consultees

Schools

Appendices

Appendix 1 Schools Use of Swimming Pools in Hereford City in 2007/08

Appendix 2 Timetables for Hereford Leisure Pool by user group: current and proposed with percentages

Appendix 3 Letter to Primary Schools and Responses

Background Papers

None identified

**USE OF SWIMMING POOLS IN HEREFORD CITY
ACADEMIC YEAR 2007/08**

School	St Martin's Pool	Hereford Leisure Pool	Hereford Leisure Pool
	Autumn Term 07	Spring Term 08	Summer Term 08
Barrs Court Juniors	Y	Y	Y
Barrs Court Seniors	Y	Y	N
Broadlands Primary	Y	Y	Y
Burghill Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Burley Gate CE Primary School	Y	Y	N
Canon Pyon CE Primary School*	Y	Y	N
Clehonger CE Primary School*	Y	Y	Y
Ewyas Harold Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Hampton Dene Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Holme Lacy Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Holmer Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Kingstone and Thrupton Primary	Y	Y	Y
Little Dewchurch Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Longtown Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Lord Scudamore Primary School	Y	N	N
Madley Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Marden Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Marlbrook Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Michaelchurch Escley Primary School	Y	N	Y
Mordiford Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Our Lady's RC Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Peterchurch Primary School	Y	N	Y
Riverside Primary School (Infants)	Y	N	Y
Riverside Primary School (Juniors)	Y	Y	N
St Francis Xavier RC Primary School	Y	Y	Y
St James CE Primary School	Y	Y	Y
St Martin's Primary School	Y	Y	Y
St Mary's CE Primary School (Credenhill)	Y	Y	Y
St Mary's CE Primary School (Fownhope)	Y	Y	Y
St Michael's CE Primary School (Autumn / summer)	Y	N	N
St Paul's Primary	Y	Y	Y
St Thomas Cantilupe CE Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Staunton on Wye Endowed Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Stretton Sugwas CE Primary School	Y	Y	Y
The Aconbury Centre	Y	Y	Y
The Brookfield School	Y	Y	Y
Wellington Primary School	Y	Y	Y
Withington Primary School	Y	Y	Y
TOTAL	38	33	32

*denotes two schools using Hereford Leisure Pool prior to December 2007



Children & Young People's Directorate

Director: Dr. S. Menghini

All Primary Schools

Your Ref:

Our Ref: GS/AH

Please ask for: George Salmon

Direct Line / Extension: 01432 260802

Fax: 01432 260808

E-mail: gsalmon@herefordshire.gov.uk

2 June 2008

Dear Headteacher

Many of you will be aware of the debate over the future of the St. Martin's Swimming Pool. A report on this pool will be submitted to the Cabinet on 12 June 2008. There is no doubt about the value that this facility has given in the past. The current debate centres on the capital investment needed now and in the future and the continuing revenue cost of running the pool.

In terms of revenue cost, an independent consultant has now reported that it is reasonable to expect that the net running costs will be approximately £137,000 per annum. This assumes that the current level of school usage would be maintained, and income would reflect charges of £66.00 per hour. This net cost is to be expected, whoever manages the pool.

There is a further complication in that it is against L.M.S regulations to retain a central budget over 0.1% of the total net Schools Budget. This equates to £87,000. The options would appear to be:

- a) Retain St Martin's Pool with a £87,000 central budget. The shortfall would be met by increasing hourly charges to schools who use it to £106.00 per hour.
- b) Retain St Martin's Pool, delegate the £87,000 to all Primary Schools, and increase hourly rates to £208.00 per hour to schools who use it.
- c) Close St Martin's Pool and delegate the £87,000 to all Primary Schools and establish an hourly charge for all HALO managed pools at a level between £66.00 and £80.00 per hour depending on services offered.

The latter appears to be the only viable way forward, but if any schools believe either option a) or b) or a variation of this is possible please let me know, as the views of schools will be reported to Cabinet on 12 June 2008 as long as they are received by 11 June 2008

Yours sincerely

GEORGE SALMON
HEAD OF COMMISSIONING AND IMPROVEMENT – SCHOOLS AND SERVICES



Appendix 3

RESPONSES FROM HEADTEACHERS COLLATED BY MR MOYNIHAN FROM ST MARY'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL (CREDENHILL)

11 responses were collated

School	Comments
Brockhampton Primary School	I don't use the LEA pool as we swim at Tenbury. However, I felt I ought to just reply to your email and support what you are doing. It would be interesting to see how many schools are considering canceling swimming altogether as this could be a powerful part of the persuasion process.
Dilwyn CE Primary School	This doesn't affect me or our school directly as we go to Leominster for our swimming. and will continue to because it's relatively local. In case it's of any use, I'll give you my general views. If we were closer to Hereford I would certainly choose the LEA pool rather than Leominster, as it is more suitable for school purposes in terms of design of both the changing facilities and the pool itself.
Holmer CE Primary School	The Leisure Pool is not suitable or satisfactory. Do the Directorate understand that? We need a solution but it has to be affordable. We cannot afford to pay an excessive hire charge because the cost of travel and tuition go on top of that. There should be a universal provision for the County and the charge should be the same for all schools. We need to find out what the DCSF expects of councils in the way of their duties to provide suitable pools. What happens elsewhere.? I also think my idea of capital expenditure to take over the pool's repairs is a possibility.
Little Dewchurch CE Primary School	As I understand it, we presently pay £32.80 for half an hour's tuition each week. Under the first option, this would rise to £53 per week. If this is the only way to retain the LA pool, then I would vote for that option. I really am not happy with the situation at the Leisure pool, despite their attempts at reassuring us that the service would improve. Would we be guaranteed in writing that the main pool and diving pool would be available every week? At present we have only the splash pool, which is really unsuitable for swimming lessons. There is no point in spending money on sub-standard provision. Is there any date for when the LA pool might be open? I presume the present unsatisfactory situation will continue in September. If I am only offered the splash pool, I am considering discontinuing swimming lessons until we have proper provision again.
Longtown Primary School	Longtown would dearly love to see the LEA pool remain open – even if the cost went up to £106 per hour. We would find some way initially of funding the increased cost of £21 per week. I spent many hours years ago trying to optimise our swimming provision – I wouldn't like to lose it now. However, we would not cancel our swimming lessons at the Leisure pool, albeit a second class option,

	but may reduce our take up.
Michaelchurch Escley Primary School	We would happily pay the higher rate to go back to the LEA pool, otherwise we shall be looking to cross the border into WALES and take our swimmers to Hay or Abergavenny and the council will lose our custom altogether.
Peterchurch Primary School	I fully support the campaign to re-open the LEA pool and will be willing to pay £106 per hour to retain it. We have our own learner pool here but value the deep water experience our children receive at the LEA pool. We would probably not use Halo next year with the arrangements as they are due too the completely unsuitable facilities for those children who have to go in the Leisure pool which is too shallow in many cases and with that big wall most unsuitable for teaching. I also remain concerned about health and safety issues and therefore have to send a very high number of staff to supervise during the sessions.
St Francis Xavier's RC Primary School	I will be writing to the parents in Key Stage Two to tell them that we will not be going swimming next year as the Leisure Pool is unsuitable. I will also canvass the parents regarding the extra cost of having to pay for the L.E.A. Pool if it is reopened. (approx. £1 a week). The suggestion has also made that we could consider going to Leominster Pool as – time wise – it is a similar journey. I will investigate this. I hope that the heads in the other 36 schools do the same. If everyone refuses to use the Leisure Pool then action might be taken.
St Mary's CE Primary School (Fownhope)	I can confirm St. Mary's total support for the reopening of the LA pool even if this means at a higher rate. You know my strength of feeling on the matter and like you and others, if the option is Leisure pool or nothing, we'll choose not to swim.
Wellington Primary School	Would wish to see the LEA pool reopened. We agree in principle with your comments, but wish to point out that with the ever increasing cost of transporting our children to the pool, along with the tuition/pool hire fees, we are asking our parents/carers to pay for a school lesson which is approaching the cost of a good 'small group' lesson.
Withington Primary School	As I said yesterday, fully supportive of LA pool and yes a small price (comparatively!) to pay if fees increase. Withington would much prefer LA pool and option of Leisure pool has at best been a 'stop gap'.

The four Headteachers representing the other Schools would like to make it known they are in favour of the St Martin's Pool being reopened

- Mr J Moynihan (St Mary's CE Primary School – Credenhill)
- Mr E McGilp (St Martin's Primary School)
- Mr A Thomas (Holme Lacy Primary School)
- Mrs A Taylor (St Mary's CE Primary School – Fownhope)

PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve a Strategy to shape capital investment in Primary Schools in Herefordshire over the next 14 years, and to determine priorities over the next 2 years.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards.

It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendations

- THAT (a) The Primary Strategy for Change document be approved for submission to the Department for Children, Schools and Families;**
- (b) Further work takes place in consultation with Leominster Infant and Junior Schools on the siting, design, and future organisation prior to a final decision from the DCSF; and**
- (c) A match funding budget of £250,000 in 2009/10 and in 2010/11 be established.**

Reasons

1. All Local Authorities are required by the DCSF to prepare a Primary Strategy for Change before Central Government release capital resources for spending in 2009/10 and 2010/11.
2. To enable the capital expenditure to be made over these 2 years, preparatory work is needed.
3. To spread the benefit to other schools.

Considerations

1. In December 2007, the DCSF launched a national programme to make all primary schools 'fit for 21st Century teaching and learning'. This is to run for a 14 year period, and complements the Building Schools for the Future programme, which aims to

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Rob Reid – Schools Planning and Access Manager Tel: 01432 260920

improve Secondary Schools.

2. The content of the Strategy has been influenced by DCSF 'Guidance for Local Authorities on Developing, Agreeing and Implementing a Strategic Approach to Capital Investment for Primary Schools'. This guidance emphasises:
 - a) The need for strategies to support the national policy agenda: Children's Plan, world class standards, Every Child Matters, diversity and responsiveness, extended services, personalisation;
 - b) That investment should 'be targeted to address deprivation';
 - c) That 'primary schools should be at the heart of the community, with ICT and children's services in reach of every family';
 - d) That there should be 'improved links between schools and early years settings e.g. co-location with Children's Centres';
 - e) The need for 'excellent design and sustainability';
 - f) The need for 'efficient procurement using best practice partnering arrangements'.

It also states that 'we would expect to see decisive plans for early action to ensure:

- a) That no school has more than 25% surplus spaces
- b) Reduce overall surplus spaces to less than 10% across the Local Authority area'

In the meeting with the Minister for Schools it was clear that this precise expectation does not apply to Herefordshire but obviously any plans we make should be prudent.

3. The guidance is also clear that all stakeholders need to be consulted over the Strategy. In particular the support of and approval by the respective Diocesan Boards of Education is required. The Roman Catholic Schools Commission in Cardiff meet to discuss the matter on Tuesday 7 July and the Hereford Diocesan Board of Education meet on Wednesday 9 July. The outcome of these discussions will be verbally reported to Cabinet at the meeting.
4. A draft Strategy was circulated to all consultees – please see Appendix 1 for full list. It was also placed on the Council's website. Comments were invited by 20 June 2008 either in paper or electronic form. All comments have been read and a summary of the responses is attached as Appendix 2.
5. There is general support for the Strategy as written. Some minor amendments have been made in light of comments received and the amended document, better reflecting the importance of the statutory role of faith schools, is included and Appendix 3. It is proposed that the Strategy is seen in Herefordshire as an evolving framework in which to coordinate investment in Primary Schools. Detailed delivery plans will be developed as appropriate, and clarification of the composition and operation of the Project Board will be resolved in the coming months. Alongside the consultation, schools were asked to check on a more complete set of data. This more complete data set, amended in light of school comments has now been included in Appendix 2 of the Strategy.
6. The five criteria to be used to prioritise investment are generally accepted although there are suggestions to ensure that more schools do receive some benefit from this

capital investment, and that greater support should be given to popular schools. These criteria do favour the larger urban schools particularly those with buildings in poor condition, surplus space or poor outcomes. To that extent feasibility work has been undertaken over possible investment at the following 5 schools: Broadlands Primary School, St Martin's Primary School, Leominster Junior School, Leominster Infants School and Ashfield Park Primary School (see Appendix), all of which meet the criteria. Our investment plans will need to reflect the limited funding available (£8,300,000) initially.

7. All of the potential schemes have been appraised as financially viable. In terms of appraising the relative merits of each option, Leominster Infant & Junior Schools provide an opportunity to do something transformational in terms of improving the organisation of primary school provision in that area (through amalgamation). They also score most highly in terms of the indicators of deprivation for the community they serve and in terms of the cost of outstanding maintenance costs on the existing buildings. As a result, it is recommended that priority be given to the total replacement of the buildings occupied by Leominster Infant and Junior Schools.
8. More detailed work is required to establish the future organisation of the Infant and Junior Schools and to determine the best siting and design for the school which will serve Leominster for the next 40 years. Initial discussions have been held with both the Governing Bodies of Leominster Infants and Leominster Junior Schools. In principle both have resolved to support the proposal, with their formal positions being:

a) Leominster Infants

'It was agreed that the prospect of this investment in Leominster should be looked upon favourably. It would be good for the people of Leominster and for the education and educational environment of the future generations of children in Leominster.

The inference was that a new build may only take place if it was linked to an amalgamation of the schools. As the Junior School desperately need a new building, it was agreed that we would support investment in a new build and amalgamation.

When/if cabinet pass this, lengthy discussions should take place with the schools having an input on deciding the outlay of any new school, on how the project is to be moved forward, how it is to be managed during the build, and how and when any amalgamation should take place.

The Governors felt that it was imperative that the rebuild should encompass at the very least two buildings and preferably three buildings

Leominster Infant School Governors would put to Mr Salmon our agreement to the proposal for a re-build on the existing site, to house children from age 3-11 under a management structure to be discussed.

The conclusions reached following this meeting were unanimously agreed by all Leominster Infant School Governors present. (Three absent)'

b) Leominster Junior

'The full Governing Body of Leominster Junior School met yesterday, Monday 23rd June and, following lengthy discussions, agreed to be nominated by the LA Officer for a new Primary School in an amalgamation with Leominster Infant School. This

decision has today been verbally communicated to Mr George Salmon. The Governing Body feel this is a fantastic opportunity for the current and future children of Leominster, and very much appreciate the Council pursuing this investment at the school.

The Governors feel that serious consideration would need to be given to key points raised during the meeting, seen as intrinsic for any new build and amalgamation.

- *The Health and Safety and security of children and adults is paramount and that use of present accesses is impossible for any new build on the current site.*
- *Both schools must be fully communicated with and involved in every step of the process.*
- *For amalgamation to be successful there must be a single unity of building and purpose and creation of a positive identity for all staff within one Primary School.*
- *Great consideration needs to be given to alternative, adjacent sites which would allow smooth transfer following the new build and thereby ensuring 'good' educational standards are maintained throughout the building period. Also that any new school/ site must not have any less land area than current sites.*

The Governing Body viewed this as a very positive and exciting development for the school and the town of Leominster and a wonderful opportunity to create a flagship educational facility for the County of Herefordshire.'

9. An initial feasibility study suggests that the replacement of Leominster Infant and Junior (630 place) would cost £7,800,000. This includes building costs, fees, ICT, furniture and equipment, based on the anticipated construction costs in the 6th quarter of 2009. The achieved cash flow would be dependant on the timing of approach, and care would be needed to manage this against the £3,000,000 allocation in 2009/10 and £5,300,000 in 2010/11. This compares to the £8,300,000.
10. The draft Strategy suggested the creation of a match funding pot, to which all schools whatever their status could apply by retaining centrally £500,000. Schools would then be expected to match fund against this from their delegated budgets. This will allow benefits to be shared more widely, and could be used in conjunction with S.106, aided schools programme, maintenance programme to achieve significant improvements in schools. It is proposed that the £500,000 resource remaining in 2009/11 be used to establish a match funding scheme, which would aim to achieve at least £1,000,000 level of investment in our schools serving primary aged children.

Financial Implications

DCSF approval of the Strategy will release a grant of £3,000,000 and £5,300,000 in 2009/10 and 2010/11 respectively. The new build project cost at Leominster has been estimated to cost £7,800,000 assuming that a contract was let at the 4th quarter of 2009. It is anticipated that payments for such a scheme would be over a 36 month period, and there would need to be careful management of cash flow to reconcile grant and expenditure

Risk Management

In terms of the Strategy, there is a risk that the technical appraisal undertaken by DCSF consultants will require amendments prior to approval. The policy on extended school services, school meals and ICT within the Strategy has been constrained by an assessment

of what can be sustained in revenue terms. The Council's approach to surplus space is unlikely to achieve the nationally stated target.

However, it is felt that these issues could be resolved through discussion, and approval would only be delayed.

There are risks associated with a project to replace the Leominster Junior and Infant Schools which range from planning, highway design matter to those linked to maintaining the smooth running of the schools and the service to children in Leominster. These will be managed as part of the project itself.

Alternative Options

The Strategy could be amended or withdrawn. DCSF will not release the £8,300,000 capital investment to Herefordshire until the Primary Strategy for Change is presented to and approved by them.

Other priorities could be chosen. Some additional work and therefore delay would be incurred in working up these proposals.

Consultees

Please see Appendix 1

Appendices

Appendix 1 – List of Consultees

Appendix 2 – Consultation Summary Responses

Appendix 3 – Amended Draft Primary Strategy for Change

Appendix 4 – Assessment Criteria for the five schools

Background Papers

- (a) Draft Primary Strategy for Change;
- (b) DCSF Guidance.
- (c) Letter dated 24 June 2008 from Chair of Governors and Headteacher Leominster Junior School
- (d) Email including meeting minutes dated 19 June 2008 from Headteacher of Leominster Infants School

LIST OF CONSULTEES FOR PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

All Schools – Headteachers and Staff

- Primary, Secondary, Special and PRU's

Diocese and Archdiocese

Teaching and Non Teaching Trade Unions

Learning and Skills Council

Connexions

All 138 Parish Councils

Herefordshire Association of Local Councils

Herefordshire Association of Governors

The Children's Trust

West Mercia (Police)

Government Office West Midlands

Disability Working Group

Local MPs

Primary Care Trust - PALS

All Herefordshire Councillors

Department for Children, Schools and Families

All Herefordshire Libraries and Info Shops

Sir Clive Richards OBE

Hereford Association of Secondary Headteachers

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

77 RESPONSES RECEIVED FROM THE CONSULTATION

Question 1

It is proposed that the Primary Strategy for Change provides a framework for co-ordinating capital investment from various sources over the 14 year period. Do you agree with this proposal?

Agree 66 (86%)

Disagree 9 (12%)

- This is a costly, expensive process
- Proposals insufficiently precise
- Consider community cohesion
- 14 years to long. A lot will change in this time
- Maximum 5 years with regular review
- No money for ICT
- Project Board Terms of Reference not stated
- Short term plan to 2011 – no 14 year strategy
- Devolve capital to Cluster for Governors to decide on investment
- Strategy should address issues during period of falling rolls (Dr Boden's Report) are next 6 years. Alternative strategy to be considered when rolls are steady or rising after 6 years
- Re-evaluate Strategy every 4 years
- The policy principles are unexceptional and do not advance the debate or confront the dilemmas of the previous school review proposals
- Principles should include high standards in all schools with support to achieve and quality assure this
- Principles should include commitment to maximise parental choice
- Funding should be free from conditions and constraints

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 2

The Strategy proposes a Project Board to oversee the implementation of the programme.

Do you agree with the proposals for this Board?

Agree 56 (73%) Disagree 20 (26%)

- Represent all communities
- Should be democratically elected panel
- Make sure another layer of bureaucracy – existing structures should suffice
- This is expensive
- Should be elected project Council, represent Towns and Rural
- Board should have broad representative of schools including small primaries
- Recommendations of Project Board should go straight to Cabinet, not through DCS
- Project Board should not lead to new appointments – use existing staff
- Members must declare interests
- Parent should have place on Project Board
- Project Board should include Elected Members who are not School Governors
- Reporting line is confusing – difficult to identify who is accountable
- Independent, non-executive Chair for Project Board
- How will Project Board members be appointed?
- How does this Board relate to Cabinet, Schools Forum etc?
- Should have Headteacher/Governor majority
- How will the Board be funded?
- Board members must have appropriate skills and experience

Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the Draft Primary Strategy for Change

Question 3

In the early part of the programme, the basis for selecting projects is where the capital investment would:

- **Make a major difference to education achievement**
- **Provide a means to reduce surplus space**
- **Support the more vulnerable pupils**
- **Address the worst buildings and improve the educational estate, thus reducing on-going running costs**
- **Provide opportunities to deliver wider services e.g. through Children's Centres**

Do you agree with the criteria?

Agreed 53 (69%) Disagree 14 (18%)

Criteria for "make a difference to education achievement"

- Needs of rural communities must be paramount
- Disagree with criteria 'as a means to reduce surplus space' x10
- All school should have fair amount of investment
- Criteria should be ranked or weighted
- Criteria needed for judging 'major difference to educational achievement'
- Judges on 'worst building' would be objective
- Add criteria – support gifted and talented children
- Add criteria – support local needs
- Rural schools would not get investment if prioritised on areas of deprivation, but rural school buildings are some of the most dated and inappropriate
- Capital should be devolved to Clusters
- Review net capacity to ensure correct
- What sort of considerations make a school 'viable'?
- Take account of educational and community considerations
- Investment programme should not adversely affect any other school
- Need further communication and consultation on planned expenditure

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 4

It is proposed that the strategy would focus investment on a limited number of strategic projects rather than attempt to distribute the relative small allocation over many schools

Do you agree with this approach?

Agree 35 (45%)

Disagree 38 (49%)

- Priority – consider needs of the community
- Allocation should be spread across more schools – small amount will mean more to a small school x 9
- Keep some budget for small schools
- Depends on which projects
- Enhance existing buildings and community needs
- Yes, provided investment does not adversely impact on neighbouring small schools
- Evaluate all projects – smaller amount of money could make a big difference at a small school
- Need must be the criterion, no matter where a large or smaller project
- Key aims for investment must be in a SMART format so that decisions can be measured against the key criteria
- Rural schools will lose out to bigger urban schools

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 5

A number of schools are constrained in what they offer by the overall size of the building or the site.

Do you agree that these should be the major considerations to influence the choice of schools to be totally replaced?

Agree 25 (32%)

Disagree 44 (57%)

- Many rural schools offer high quality education with constraints of building/site. Schools are not just buildings
- Go with criteria in Question 3 (pg 12)
- No other factors e.g. distance to other schools, how valued it is and how important to the community
- Standard of education should be the major factor x3
- Don't replace unless a health and safety concern – use money to add/build to existing buildings
- Make catchment areas smaller to match reducing demand
- Concerned that data on this is not accurate
- Only if demand for places warrants it
- Good staff/small classes more important than buildings
- Also include road safety issues and parking
- Agree so long as capacity of schools, not increased to detriment of other schools
- Schools should operate in clusters to share facilities. Therefore individual circumstances should be taken into account

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 6

To encourage investment under this programme, the Strategy proposes to establish a central fund of £100,000 per annum which can be used to attract match funding from other sources.

Do you agree with these proposals?

Agree 62 (80%)

Disagree 14 (18%)

- Sum should be higher to assist more schools across the County x8
- This economic emphasis ignores the stated principle in Section 1

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 7

The DCSF raises the question of giving priority to investment to build additional school kitchens to encourage healthy living. Where there are insufficient funds to run these kitchens, for example, at smaller primary schools, the current policy is to invest in high school kitchens and supply primary schools from the centres when it is needed.

Do you agree with this approach?

Agree 50 (65%)

Disagree 26 (34%)

- Invest in high school kitchens first
- Logistics cost more than building kitchens
- Existing primary school kitchens should also receive investment
- Healthy living should be promoted through investment in food preparation facilities in primary schools, where pupils can learn to prepare own meals
- Use some funding to improve primary school services/dining areas/furniture and receiving/storage/transportation
- All schools should have their own kitchen – funding should be sought
- Proposals ignores the convictions expressed in Section 1
- Explore innovative community based solutions to providing healthy food, rather than transport large distances
- High School kitchens do not provide best options for Primary pupil meals
- Is this practical in a rural area?

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 8

The national guidance seeks information about the Local Authority's approach to surplus spaces. In Herefordshire, it is proposed to remove surplus spaces where possible by removing temporary accommodation and re-assessing school capacities, especially in terms of what alternative use can be made of space within schools.

Do you agree with this approach?

Agree 35 (45%)

Disagree 29 (37%)

- Strategy is unclear – apply to individual schools or at Cluster level?
- Removing temporary classrooms will not save money. Keep surplus places
- Temporary accommodation to be removed only when surplus to need
- Critical that definition of 'surplus space', 'surplus places' and 'net capacity' are defined and aligned for all schools in order in inform process of selection of schools for investment
- Must take into account local population trend and social and educational benefit of temporary accommodation
- Good schools should not have their capacity reduced
- Agreed, so long as schools stick to their PANS
- Not if this reduces parental choice
- Capacity calculation must be robust and all schools must adhere to approved admission numbers

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Question 9

The national guidance seeks to ensure that parental needs and preference are met. In 2007 and 2008, around 95% of parents applying for places in Herefordshire were offered their first preference. The strategy does not propose to make any changes in this regard.

Do you agree with this proposal?

Agree 70 (88%) Disagree 4 (5%)

- Provided schools continue to offer high quality choice
- Local Authority maintain a diverse range of school options
- Colwall not on Appendix 1 list
- Backdoor way to close rural schools – badly written/throw out paper
- Ill advised to make multi-year determination based on fluid situation – review annually to ensure balance of supply/demand maintained at current level
- Consider re-draining some catchment areas to provide more equitable distribution of pupils
- Council should promote parental choice and involvement in local schooling

**Summary of Responses Received in the Consultation on the
Draft Primary Strategy for Change**

Other comments:

- Avoiding cost of transporting pupils out of their communities should be a high priority
- Concern with forecasts – families and businesses moving into Herefordshire, attracted by the life-style
- Housing policy does not support rural schools
- Questionnaire should have included option to say 'neither agree nor disagree'
- Primary school children shouldn't have to travel far to school
- Questionnaire has loaded questions
- Rural life being undermined by closure of rural schools
- Strategy is not detailed enough
- Strategy does not address the real issues
- Support rural schools with this funding
- Investment should reward successful schools as well as helping to improve lesser achieving schools
- The Strategy must include explicit reorganisation of the significant statutory role played by the Churches in education provision in Herefordshire, given that around 50% of Primary Schools are Church Schools



PRIMARY STRATEGY FOR CHANGE

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INTRODUCTION

This strategy has been prepared in response to the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) invitation to Local Authorities to set out the needs of all Primary Schools in their area to ensure that provision is 'fit for purpose' particularly in supporting the provision of teaching and learning in the 21st Century. It reaffirms the vision for the provision of primary education in Herefordshire, in terms of the desire to improve outcomes under 'enjoy and achieve' and also under the wider Every Child Matters agenda. It emphasises the importance of working with partners to ensure the effective use of resources. The document provides specific information sought by the DCSF to enable the release of a capital allocation for 2009/11 in terms of:

- The local perspective
- The baseline analysis of need in Herefordshire
- Long term aims
- Approach to change
- Initial investment priorities

With limited capital resources available until 2011 it is imperative that we set out a strategic vision of how the initial funding but also any subsequent allocations would be used in Herefordshire.

1. LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

In the autumn of 2007 the schools and Local Authority agreed nine key principles to guide education provision in Herefordshire were agreed. They are:

- *The Best for All of Herefordshire's Children and Young People*
We place the child/young person, his/her needs and the development of his/her potential, at the centre of all we do. We base our strategies and decisions on what will benefit the education and welfare in the widest sense of all Herefordshire's children and young people.
In line with the holistic approach under Every Child Matters, we believe that, with consistent nurture, support and encouragement from their schools, peers, family and community, our children/young people can succeed in their learning and grow into mature, healthy, well-rounded individuals who contribute positively to society.
We seek the greater involvement of children and young people, individually and collectively, in the development of their learning and self-esteem by taking account of learner voice, opinions and assessments in a variety of forms. We value their contribution to developing provision and appropriate educational pathways.
- *Equity*
We believe that all children and young people should be equally valued and should have a common entitlement in their school, settings and in the communities. We believe that educational strength, expertise and experience should be shared for the benefit of all and the enterprise and innovative capacity of individual schools must contribute to the collective resources in the County.
- *Partnership*
With other agencies, we positively embrace responsibilities set out in the Children Act 2004 and this is reflected in our Children and Young Peoples' Plan and the work of the Children's Trust. We believe in open and constructive partnership working with and between schools, key agencies and parents/carers to ensure we deliver a first

class education service that meets the individual needs of learners. Indeed in a rural area, partnership working between schools is likely to be the only way in which some specific needs of individual learners can be met.

- *Diversity*
We recognise the benefits of considering diversity of provision in pursuit of equity, inclusion, improvement and innovation, so that provision can be shaped to meet the particular circumstances of various areas of the County.
- *Leadership*
Strong leadership from the Local Authority, Headteachers and school governing bodies is essential to meet the evolving agenda and to manage the changes. We recognise the strength of leaders in Herefordshire and will continue to support and challenge them to ensure a high quality experience for learners and further improve outcomes for children and young people.
- *Additional Needs*
We believe in equal opportunities and in positive, active intervention for children with additional needs and those who are vulnerable.
- *Resources*
We recognise that a high quality of teaching and learning exists in Herefordshire schools. However, we also acknowledge the need to continue to raise standards and the contribution that resources can make to this. It is important for schools to be appropriately resourced in terms of finance, staffing, materials, equipment and accommodation.
- *A Community of Schools*
We are committed to maintaining a community of schools in Herefordshire that primarily serve their local area but may also allow for parental preference, accessing the curriculum and extended services on a strategic countywide basis. We also acknowledge the benefit that working together collaboratively can bring in sharing expertise and good practice.
- *Schools within their Community*
The valuable role and contribution that schools have in their community is acknowledged. Every effort should be made to improve and support that relationship. First and foremost schools should be valued for presenting excellent education for children living in the area they serve. Through the Extended Schools initiative schools should increasingly offer additional experiences to their children, services for their parents and to their community. As publicly funded and maintained buildings schools are one of the most valuable assets in the public domain in Herefordshire. Full use of these assets should be sought in a way which does not undermine their core role.

As well as seeking improved standards of teaching and learning for all children and the provision of wider services, the Council is also committed to maintaining school provision across the county by working with schools, the Diocesan Boards and other partners to ensure their continuing sustainability at a time of falling rolls.

Around half of the Primary Schools in Herefordshire are Church Schools owned by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Anglican Diocese of Hereford and therefore play a significant role in education provision in Hereford.

2. BASE LINE ANALYSIS

a) Current Primary School Provision

Herefordshire is a predominantly rural county, covering some 218,283 hectares. The City of Hereford is the major centre of population and there are five market towns; Ledbury, Leominster, Ross on Wye, Kington and Bromyard. Its usual resident population is 177,800 and the average population density is 0.8 persons per hectare, giving Herefordshire the fourth lowest population density in England.

Sixty-five areas in the County, 56% of the total, fall within the 25% most deprived when assessed in terms of Access to Services (Index of Multiple Deprivation), which measures road distances to a GP, supermarket, Primary School and Post Office. The potential role of village schools to deliver wider services is of particular importance.

Seven areas in Herefordshire are in the 25% most deprived in England when measured against all indicators in the Index of Multiple Deprivation. Six in Hereford City and one in Leominster. Two of these areas also fall within the 20% most deprived – the Ridgemoor areas in Leominster and the Golden Post-Newton Farm area in Hereford City. However, there are significant areas of deprivation in small pockets throughout the County.

There are 81 Primary Schools in the County with a capacity of 14,714 serving 12,226 pupils (January 2008 excluding nursery). 12 of these schools serve the 3 to 11 age range (with 415 pupils registered in Local Authority nursery), 67 schools serve the 5 to 11 age range and there is one Infant (3 to 7) and one Junior School (8 to 11).

As at 1 April 2008, the status of these schools is as follows:

Community	41
Voluntary Controlled	16
Aided	23
Foundation	1
TOTAL	81

In the aided sector, three schools are associated with the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff, and a further 19 schools are Church of England Schools within the Anglican Diocese of Hereford. There are two aided schools with independent foundations.

Two primary schools have taken formal steps towards Foundation Status, with one completing the process in March 2008. It is anticipated that the Waldorf Steiner School at Much Birch, which serves the 3 to 16 age range, will enter the maintained sector as an Academy in September 2008. One primary school is federated with an adjoining High School.

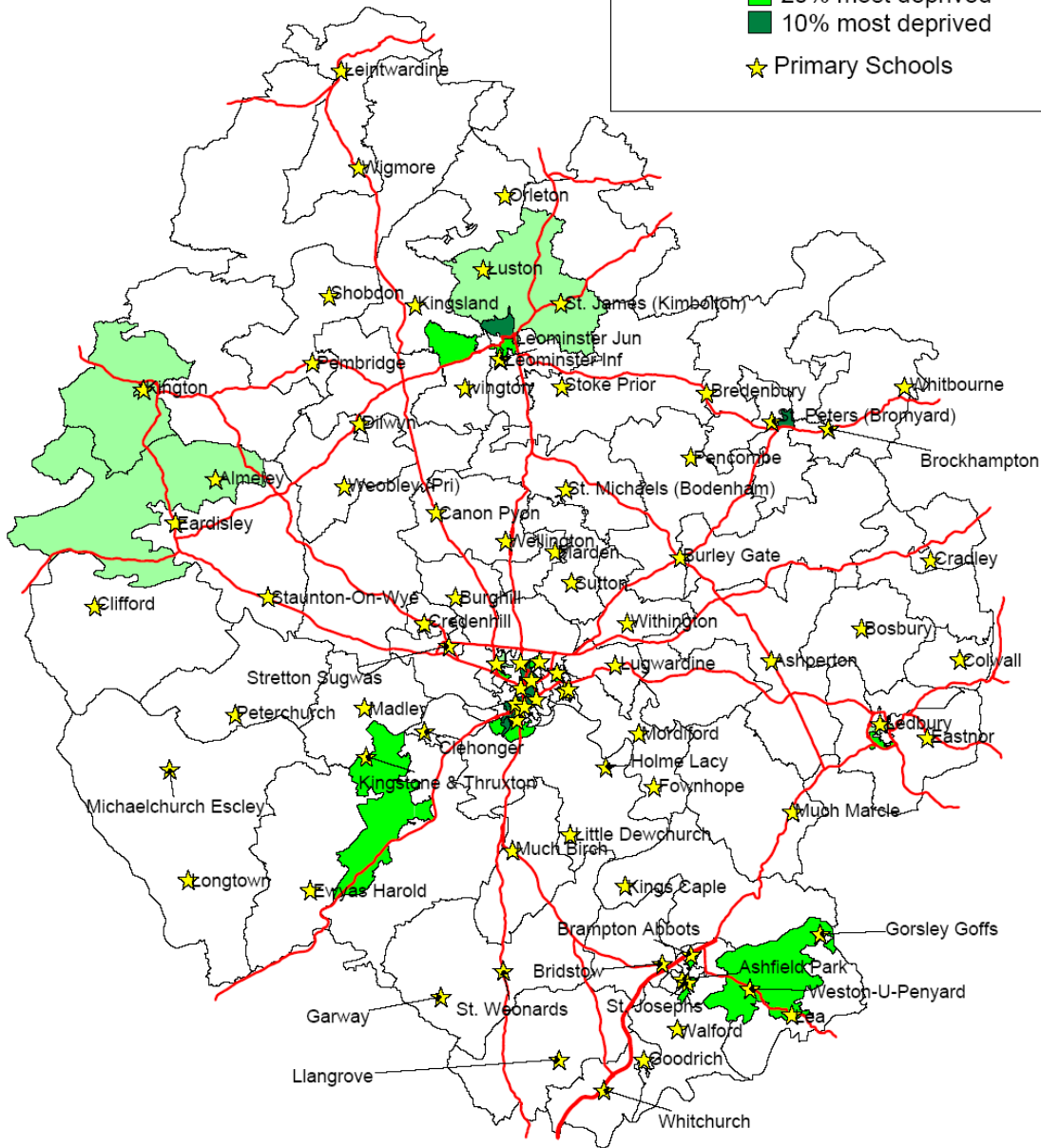
In terms of special schools and pupil referral units (PRUs), provision for primary aged children is made at one 60 place (3 to 11) Special School, at one 40 place (5 to 16) Special School and in a unit based at an Educational and Behavioural Difficulties School. There is no dedicated PRU provision for primary aged children.

The primary schools in the county range in size from 35 to 546 (January 2008), with over 40% having fewer than 100 pupils on roll. This reflects the rural nature of the County. The Department for Children, Schools and Families has defined a total of 61 schools as being

rural which fall under the presumption against closure. This is the highest percentage of all Local Authorities with the exception of Rutland and the Isles of Scilly. A full list of schools defined as rural is given in Appendix 1. Below are maps showing the location of schools and also areas of income deprivation. Due to the rural nature of the county the distance between most schools is significant. Approximately 9% (1,100) of primary school pupils are provided with free transport.

**ID 2007 Hfds Context - Primary Schools
Income deprivation affecting children**

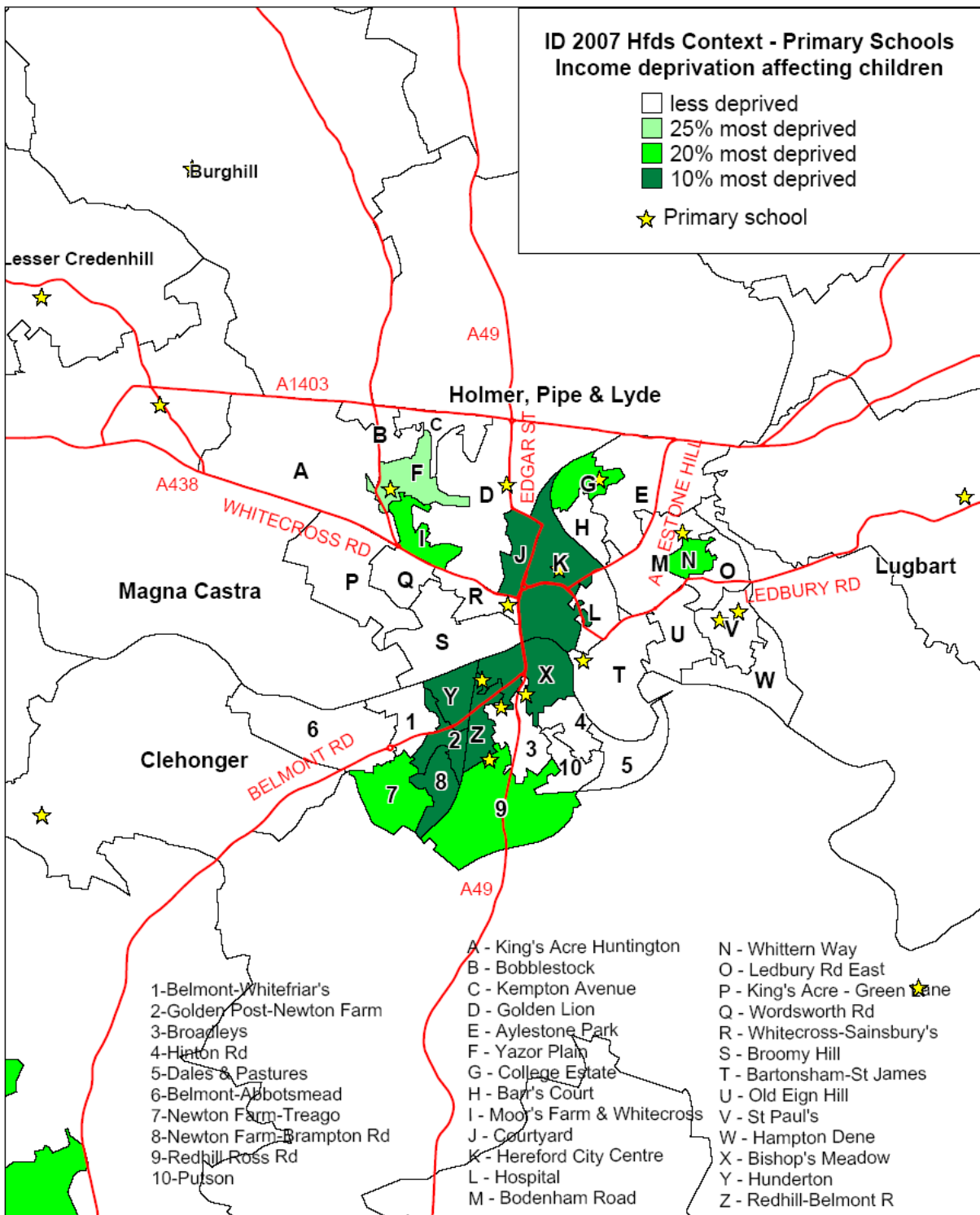
- less deprived
- 25% most deprived
- 20% most deprived
- 10% most deprived
- ★ Primary Schools



**Location of primary schools
Income deprivation affecting children from ID 2007
(Lower SOA Level)
Source: DCLG Scale 1:325,000**

Herefordshire Council
Research Team
PO Box 4, Plough Lane
Hereford, HR4 0XH
Tel.: (01432) 260000
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Location of primary schools
Income deprivation affecting children from ID 2007
(Lower SOA level)
Source: DCLG Scale 1:60,000

Herefordshire Council
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b) Sparsity

The sparsity of population in the County has been a major consideration in delivering Extended School services. On the one hand, because of the geographic spread of public facilities of the County, the school is a very important community asset. On the other hand, the numbers of potential users are often small, making both full-time and part-time provision unviable in some cases. Some schools have overcome this by working within a collaborative model. Solutions involving mobile provision have been offered under the rural Sure-Start pilot and within the Youth Service. Whilst it has been possible to secure capital funding to support some of these initiatives involving mobile provision, it has been more difficult to secure revenue funding thus affecting their sustainability. However, the greater likelihood of space being available in schools does suggest that there will be opportunities for the delivery of wider services.

c) Service Delivery: Healthy Living

At present only 10 Primary Schools provide hot lunches that are prepared on the premises. The statutory requirement to provide a hot nutritious meal for all pupils has been answered by creating a system whereby kitchens in High Schools can prepare hot meals for transport to smaller Primary Schools. Prior to any capital investment to provide or upgrade kitchens in Primary Schools, the ongoing viability of such facilities does need to be tested.

Twenty-five of the County's Primary Schools have shortfalls in terms of indoor and outdoor sports pitches and games area. This does make it more difficult to increase children's and young people's participation in high quality physical education and sport (N.B. this is a Local Area Agreement target). Many schools rely on innovative solutions using off-site village halls, playing fields etc. A very large capital investment involving the provision of new school accommodation on new sites would be required to bring all schools up to the standard set out in Building Bulletin 99.

d) Special Educational Needs

The needs of the majority of primary aged children with Special Educational Needs are met within mainstream schools. Funding provided under the Access Initiative has been used to meet the particular needs of children in mainstream schools successfully. The majority of Primary Schools are single storey and it has been possible through adaptations for schools to be very inclusive. In terms of providing for those with severe or more complex disabilities at in-county special schools there are significant accommodation requirements emerging to meet the needs of these children. A countywide Special Educational Needs Strategy is concluding that improved and extended accommodation is required for primary aged pupils in Special Schools. The Authority has received an £8,000,000 target capital fund allocation for special education and 14-19 in the three-year allocation 2008/11. The use of this targeted capital will be considered to meet needs arising from the SEN strategy.

e) Capacity

In January 2008, there were 12,226 pupils in years Reception (R) to Year 6, in 81 schools with a total capacity of 14,714 i.e. the overall level of surplus space is 16.9%. By 2012 it is projected that this number of pupils will fall to below 11,500 and the amount of surplus space will rise to over 22%. An independent consultant has confirmed that:

- The principal population forecast to 2026 suggests that there will be a substantial further fall in the **number of school-age** (i.e. both Primary and Secondary) children for a number of years, but that is likely to stabilise over the longer-term.

- For **primary school age**, a fall in pupil numbers has been estimated to occur of between 7 and 8% between 2006 and 2012, with broadly stable numbers at this lower level thereafter.

It is, therefore, proposed for this Primary Strategy covering the next 14 years that it should be assumed that provision for approximately 11,500 pupils should be planned.

Whilst the DCSF remain concerned over the number of individual schools which have more than 25% surplus space and more than 30 places surplus the DCSF have recently stated that in rural areas there would be no target set for reducing surplus spaces and this matter would be left for local discretion. At present 18 schools fall into the category of having more than 25% surplus. Of these 11 are defined as rural schools. The Local Authority is confident over the pupil projection at County level, but it recognises that the operation of parental preference and the fact that changes involving small numbers can have a significant impact on pupil numbers at individual schools. With this caveat it is anticipated that the number of schools falling into this category could increase to 29 by 2012 (20 of those 29 schools being defined as rural).

The Audit Commission has recently issued a 'toolkit' for Local Authority's 'falling school rolls and their link to education capital investment'. This does show that, relatively, there are more surplus places in Herefordshire compared to 10 statistical neighbours, other Authorities in the West Midlands, other unitary Authorities in England and compared to all Authorities in England.

A large amount of surplus space does lead to questions whether resources are being put to best use and this is apparent in the toolkit. It is therefore proposed that capacity should be reduced by removing temporary classrooms where no longer required and by encouraging schools to secure alternative use of the facilities by local communities at a viable cost.

f) Future Housing

At this stage in the development of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), which will dictate the level of housing development in Herefordshire between 2011 and 2026, at least 16,600 additional housing units have been agreed. There is a discussion about the possibility of increasing this. The proposed outcome should be known by January 2009, but it will not be confirmed until the inspection process has been completed in 2009. However, the 16,600 allocation assumes that over 50% will be developed in or around Hereford City, the latter having been defined as a settlement for significant development. As it stands, the average rate of housing development under the RSS will only be 17 more per annum than under the Unitary Development Plan (UDP), which is the planning framework for development in the county until 2011. However the rate of growth is likely to be more in Hereford City and less in villages than previously experienced. If these policies remain unchanged, it is unlikely that new housing in rural areas will bring significant net additional pupils to schools in these areas. With the recent international credit crisis the future of investment in new housing may be further affected.

g) Diversity and Parental Preference

In the admission rounds for entry to Year R in September 2007 and September 2008, 95.26% and 94.98% of parents were offered their first preference. Forty-four schools have vacancies for September 2008. Applicants at ten schools were oversubscribed but only one was unable to provide for children from its catchment area.

Given the level of parental preference met, the current choice of community, Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided (Roman Catholic, Anglican and Independent) schools available and the likely extension to Trust and Academy status, the Local Authority is not minded to advance other changes. The Local Authority would, however, give consideration to change in status and organisation, which maybe promoted by schools themselves, or as a result of parental representations.

h) Standards

In terms of **standards** of teaching and learning and performance of schools, the section 5 inspections of Herefordshire Primary Schools show that generally the majority of schools are seen as good or better. There remain five more schools to be inspected under the new framework.

Category	Number	Percentage
1 (Outstanding)	5	6.6%
2 (Good)	35	46.1%
3 (Satisfactory)	34	44.7%
4 (-ve Category)	2	2.6%

Foundation Stage

In 2007 the percentage of children achieving the expected level (average of 78 point or more across all 13 Foundation Stage Profile scales) is 77% compared to the England average of 71%. The equivalent figure for the children attending the schools in the area of higher deprivation (South Wye) is 63.5%.

Key Stage 1

Over the past 5 years the percentage of pupils achieving level 2+ in reading has remained generally static at an average of 86% which put the Local Authority into the upper third of Local Authorities. Writing has declined over the past 5 years from a high of 84% to 80%, which places the Local Authority broadly inline with the England average. In Maths there has also been a decline in percentage of pupils achieving level 2+ from 92% to 89%.

The key issue is the difference between boys and girls in reading and writing where the 9% of girls 'out perform' the boys 9% in reading and by 13% in writing.

The difference between children between those entitled to Free School Meals and those not entitled is in the order of 20% average over the past three years in reading and writing. In Maths the difference is 18%.

Key Stage 2

At key stage 2 the attainment of pupils has improved in English and Maths achieving level 4+ with Herefordshire schools remaining above the national. The combined English and Maths level 4+ attainment for 2007 show that Herefordshire schools are 1% above England. The percentage of pupils achieving level 5+ in English and Maths is also above the English average by 1% in English and 2% in Maths.

In writing the difference between boys and girls in writing remains an issue with the percentage of girls achieving level 4+ being 13% greater than the boys. In Maths the difference is reversed with 4% more boys achieving level 4+.

The gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils is 13% for English and 12% for Maths. This compares favourably with England where the difference was 22% for English and 21% for Maths.

Priority has been given in the local Children and Young People's Plan and in the Council's Corporate Plan to improving the educational attainment of children and young people particularly at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.

Capital investment is seen as one element of a broader strategy to make these improvements in standards of teaching and learning. The creation of environments which encourage, stimulate and aid better teaching and learning is seen as critical.

i) Capital Position

Since Herefordshire was formed as a unitary authority in 1998, four new Primary Schools have been built, two are nearing completion and a further one is at the detailed design stage. Others have benefitted from significant refurbishment. However, it does mean that the majority of Primary Schools occupy buildings and sites that were provided from Victorian times onwards and their suitability for both 21st Century teaching and learning and providing wider services is limited. Under the suitability assessments 65% of teaching spaces in Primary Schools were identified as 'inhibiting teaching methods'. This is largely due to the small size of classrooms. The lack of halls, multi-use spaces, kitchens, areas self-contained in heating and security also constrain schools in what they can deliver. Assuming that the Primary Strategy for Change was delivered in full over the 14-year period, with 5% of schools in new accommodation and another 45% in refurbished, it is unlikely that all of these problems will be overcome. All schools are affected to some degree. The Strategy will aim to resolve the most pressing needs.

The Local Authority is currently reviewing its Asset Management Planning processes including the more effective use of suitability and condition surveys to better inform the prioritisation of capital needs across the county. Consultation with schools will begin later this term including through Schools Forum.

3. LONG TERM AIMS

Teaching and learning to improve outcomes

The overriding aim in planning Primary School provision is to secure continued improvement in standards of teaching and learning and to provide a personalised curriculum for every child. In parallel with this every attempt will be made to provide good quality, enriching and broad experience for children beyond that measured through Key Stage testing. In the knowledge that a child's development is very much dependant on family circumstances and community experiences, the extended schools agenda will be pursued so that each school is able to offer wider services to meet the needs of parent and community.

Capital investment has a major part in translating this approach into practice. In terms of maximising improvement in educational outcomes, the schools serving areas of high social deprivation (whether measured at the level of wards or super-output areas) will be given higher priority for capital investment. An analysis has been done in terms of these schools where less than 65% of pupils are achieving Level 4+ at Key Stage 2. There are great dangers in drawing conclusions on this data when the size of the cohort in some of the schools is so small. It will therefore not be used to prioritise capital investment. Improvement in schools falling into this category will be sought through other means.

A more balanced assessment of school standards is provided by the Local Authority's intervention model. Although this often identifies other issues which cause poor performance, in a number of instances the quality of the teaching spaces has a significant negative impact on the popularity of the school and on the quality of teaching and learning. The need for improvements will be identified in the suitability assessments, which are being re-examined in the Summer and Autumn Terms of 2008.

As buildings, schools in Herefordshire will range in size from the 2 and 3 class school to the larger ones with 2 and 3 forms of entry (14 or 21 class schools). The smaller buildings may be run as part of larger schools, or as partnership of schools. In these circumstances, the use of ICT to enable remote learning either as individual pupils or within a group does need to be exploited to its full potential. At present all Primary Schools have a 2mb/s Broadband connection. A remote learning platform is being developed.

At present there would appear to be sufficient capital funding to support ICT needs in the Primary Sector. There is however a concern over the adequacy of revenue funding being able to maintain support and renew the systems which are being established.

Community involvement

In many instances the retention of the school in the community and the development of community use, beyond that which is already happening, will be the critical element of the strategy.

Partnership working

Over the next 14 years, it will be challenging to achieve these aims given that primary pupil numbers are projected to fall in the first 5 years before stabilising. Although funding levels per pupil may increase, the demographic change is likely to result in a reduction in overall resources. The delivery of improved and broader services can only be achieved through more cost effective use of those resources. The widely shared imperative to maintain the current number of schools in this rural area suggests that real improvement can only be achieved through partnership working between Primary Schools, between Primary and High Schools, between Primary Schools and Statutory Agencies and between Primary Schools, the Voluntary Sector and Community Groups.

In principle, Herefordshire is well-placed to pursue these various partnerships. Schools have worked well together and there is evidence to suggest that there is greater commitment to further partnership working. It is hoped that the option of trust status would enhance these arrangements rather than create additional barriers. The Council and Primary Care Trust are working closely together and through these arrangements combined services for children shaped by the local Children and Young People's Plan could be delivered from school sites. Multi-professional teams will be established and these could be based in or use school sites in providing support to children and families. Three of the nine Children's Centres are already based on Primary School sites. In any further development of that programme, the siting of these centres will consider school sites first before alternative sites are assessed.

In terms of Federations and Third Party Use of School Premises, the Local Authority believes that successful solutions cannot be imposed on schools and encourages schools to consider the potential for change with local communities and partner schools.

Given the political commitment that no school will close outside of the Council's long established Small Schools Policy, surplus spaces in rural and urban schools alike will be reduced through the removal of temporary accommodation and the reassessment of schools capacities (especially in terms of what alternative use can be made of space within schools).

A fundamental principle of the school organisation plan was that the school should serve its community. At a time of falling rolls, expansion of schools will only be considered when a school, because of its size, is unable to fulfil that fundamental role. The number of places available in school compared to the number of children and the variety of types of school allows parents a reasonable choice. There is no demand for establishing a new school. The strategy, however, will welcome different forms of organisation such as Federation and All-Age Schools, if parents demonstrate that this is what is wanted and that such change will deliver better outcomes. The Local Authority is open to Schools making choices about Foundation Status.

Best use of limited capital resources against priorities

The strategy assumes that all Primary Schools will be maintained where possible subject to the Small Schools Policy. The DCSF target to provide new buildings for five percent of schools equates to 4 schools in Herefordshire and the national strategy would suggest that 36 others could be substantially refurbished. It is proposed that schools be selected on the basis that:

- a) capital investment would make a major difference to education achievement
- b) it would provide means to reduce surplus space
- c) it would support the more vulnerable pupils
- d) it would address the worst buildings and improve the educational estate, thus reducing ongoing running costs
- e) it would provide opportunities to deliver wider services to meet the ECM agenda and provide more local service provision e.g. through Children's Centres

There will be some instances in which continued investment on the existing school site will be short-sighted, due to inherent problems of that site. In such cases consideration of a new school should be given. The information in Appendix 2 relating to size of schools and other factors will be checked with schools. This data will then inform decisions on capital projects.

Given the modest size of the programme (£8,300,000 total across 2009/10 and 2010/11) the following is proposed:

1. The bulk of the allocation will be used on a limited number of strategic projects. This would mean centrally reserving a sum (say £100,000 per annum) to support a number of small schemes. Each of these would be match funded by schools from devolved capital or some other additional source in order to benefit a wider number of schools. The five criteria listed above would also be used to prioritise match funded schemes.
2. The three-year school capital allocation 2008/11 made to Herefordshire is set out in Appendix 3. Schools will be asked to demonstrate how their devolved capital expenditure of devolved sums will meet the aims of the Primary Strategy.
3. The allocation of the modernisation sum (£4,825,726) and basic need (£1,374,468) will be decided when the revised suitability assessments have been completed in the Autumn of 2008. A large element is likely to support the Schools Maintenance Programme which in 2008/09 has a budget of £1,200,000. Maintenance programmes will be coordinated with the Primary Capital investment to maximise impact.
4. Similarly, the School Access Initiative (£857,713) and Extended Schools sum (£790,925) will be subject to similar coordination. The needs of individual pupils to consider on the former and commitments from previous years will have to be taken into account prior to making new commitments.
5. The Locally Controlled Voluntary Aided Programme (LCVAP) budget (£2,805,699) will be discussed with Governors and the respective Diocesan Directors of Education to establish the priorities to be given to Primary Schools in the 2 year period.
6. The outcome of the review of Special School provision in the County will influence the use of the £8,000,000 targeted capital fund. At this stage the strategy will assume resources for any development of Primary Special School provision will not be a call on the Primary Capital Programme but considered as part of the proposed £8m allocated for special education and 14-19 or through the raising of additional resources.

Schools not benefiting from large capital investment would continue to be supported through the Devolved Capital, Section 106 agreements, the Voluntary Aided programme (where applicable) and generic funding from maintenance programmes and the Access Initiative.

The use of capital receipts, prudential borrowing and funding from any regeneration initiatives will be considered where possible and within council policy. However, it is to be noted that there are no regeneration programmes currently operating in Herefordshire from which resources could be invested in schools. The challenge will be to ensure that the Primary Strategy funding is invested in parallel with other funding streams e.g. maintenance programme to ensure that maximum impact is achieved.

4. APPROACH TO CHANGE

To seek maximum effect and the coordination of all programmes, a Project Board will be established to implement, monitor and review investment over the 14 year life of the strategy. The Board will include representations from various Directorates within the Local Authority, from both Anglican and Roman Catholic Dioceses and from Schools both at Headteacher and Governor level. If in the fullness of time other providers operate in Herefordshire, they will be included.

This board will report through the Director of Children's Services to the Children's Trust Board and also to the Chief Executive and Cabinet Member. The Board will be served by a smaller project team, which will act as the executive arm to the Board.

Given the modest size of the programme (£8,300,000 total across 2009/10 and 2010/11) the proposed Project Board will have an important role in ensuring that the strategy of partnership working to maintain and improve existing provision is supported by all using devolved capital and other resources as the opportunity arises. It is envisaged that this will require an ongoing dialogue with all stakeholders to adjust the broad strategy as change and opportunities present themselves.

5. INVOLVING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

The Children and Young People's Shadow Board will be consulted on this strategy and we hope that Schools will consider engaging their local Councillors, governing bodies and local community. However, when work begins on individual projects Schools Council's and Pupils will be involved in shaping the design brief and the design, using similar processes adopted in the Building Schools for the Future, Pathfinder Initiative and Academy Status national programmes.

6. CONSULTATION

Consultation will be primarily through email and written response though direct discussion will take place with schools through head teacher forums and other existing meeting structures. If you would like to discuss this in more detail please contact Rob Reid on 01432 260920; email: primarystrategy@herefordshire.gov.uk.

7. HAVE YOUR SAY:

If you would like to comment on Herefordshire's Primary Capital for Change then you can do this:

- On-line at www.herefordshire.gov.uk
- By email to primarystrategy@herefordshire.gov.uk
- By sending written comments to:
Primary Strategy for Change
Children and Young People's Directorate
FREEPOST SWC3010
Blackfriars, PO Box 185
Hereford HR4 9ZR

All comments must be received by 20 June 2008

APPENDIX 1 – LIST OF RURAL SCHOOLS

DCSF Number	School	Postcode	VA/VC/Community
2001	Almeley Primary School	HR3 6LH	Community
2005	Ashperton Primary School	HR8 2SE	Community
3006	Bosbury CE Primary School	HR8 1PX	Voluntary Controlled
2011	Bredenbury Primary School	HR7 4TF	Community
3307	Bridstow CE Primary School	HR9 6PZ	Voluntary Controlled
2014	Brockhampton Primary School	WR6 5TD	Community
2029	Burghill Community Primary School	HR4 7RP	Community
3010	Burley Gate CE Primary School	HR1 3QR	Voluntary Controlled
3015	Canon Pyon CE Primary School	HR4 8PF	Voluntary Controlled
3021	Clehonger CE Primary School	HR2 9SN	Voluntary Controlled
2031	Clifford Primary School	HR3 5HA	Community
3315	Cradley CE Primary School	WR13 5LL	Voluntary Aided
3030	Dilwyn CE Primary School	HR4 8HR	Voluntary Controlled
3035	Eardisley CE Primary School	HR3 6NS	Voluntary Controlled
3037	Eastnor Parochial Primary School	HR8 1RA	Voluntary Controlled
2046	Ewyas Harold Primary School	HR2 0EY	Community
2053	Garway Primary School	HR2 8RQ	Community
3046	Goodrich CE Primary School	HR9 6HY	Voluntary Controlled
3047	Gorsley Goffs Primary School	HR9 7SE	Community
2077	Holme Lacy Primary School	HR2 6LW	Community
3049	Ivington CE Primary School	HR6 0JH	Voluntary Aided
3341	Kimbolton St James CE Primary School	HR6 0HQ	Voluntary Aided
2094	King's Cuple Primary School	HR1 4TZ	Community
3342	Kingsland CE School	HR6 9QN	Voluntary Aided
2095	Kingstone and Thrupton Primary School	HR2 9HJ	Community
3347	Lea CE Primary School	HR9 7JY	Voluntary Aided
2098	Ledbury Primary School	HR8 2BE	Community
3348	Leintwardine Endowed Primary School	SY7 0LL	Voluntary Aided
3071	Little Dewchurch CE Primary School	HR2 6PN	Voluntary Controlled
3351	Llangrove CE Primary School	HR9 6EZ	Voluntary Aided
2101	Longtown Primary School	HR2 0LE	Community
2102	Lugwardine Primary School	HR1 4DH	Community
2103	Luston Primary School	HR6 0EA	Community
2104	Madley Primary School	HR2 9PH	Community
2115	Marden Primary School	HR1 3EW	Community
2116	Michaelchurch Escley Primary School	HR2 0PT	Community
3078	Mordiford CE Primary School	HR1 4LW	Voluntary Controlled
3079	Much Birch CE Primary School	HR2 8HL	Voluntary Controlled
3363	Much Marcle CE Primary School	HR8 2LY	Voluntary Aided
3083	Orleton CE Primary School	SY8 4HQ	Voluntary Controlled
3366	Pembridge CE Primary School	HR6 9DU	Voluntary Aided
3367	Pencombe CE Primary School	HR7 4SH	Voluntary Aided
2122	Peterchurch Primary School	HR2 0RP	Community
2146	Shobdon Primary School	HR6 9LX	Community
3325	Fownhope, St Mary's CE Primary School	HR1 4PG	Voluntary Aided
3026	Credenhill, St Mary's CE Primary School	HR4 7DW	Voluntary Controlled
3304	St Michael's CE Primary School	HR1 3JU	Voluntary Aided
2024	St Peter's Primary School	HR7 4UY	Community

2152	St Weonard's Primary School	HR2 8NU	Community
3378	Staunton-on-Wye Endowed Primary School	HR4 7NF	Voluntary Aided
2148	Stoke Prior Primary School	HR6 0ND	Community
3102	Stretton Sugwas CE Primary School	HR4 7AE	Voluntary Controlled
2154	Sutton Primary School	HR1 3AZ	Community
2155	Walford Primary School	HR9 5SA	Community
2157	Wellington Primary School	HR4 8AZ	Community
3384	Weston-under-Penyard CE Primary School	HR9 7PA	Voluntary Aided
3109	Whitbourne CE Primary School	WR6 5SP	Voluntary Controlled
3385	Whitchurch CE Primary School	HR9 6DA	Voluntary Aided
2159	Wigmore Primary School	HR6 9UN	Community
2160	Withington Primary School	HR1 3QE	Community

APPENDIX 2- PROVISIONAL SCHOOL DATA – TO BE CHECKED WITH SCHOOLS

School	Capacity	Spring 2008 Census NOR	Actual Surplus	% Surplus	FSM %	Level of Deprivation IDACI	Buildings Conditions Survey April 2008			
							Building & Site Survey DATE	M & E Survey DATE	Total Uplifted Cost	TOTAL COST
Almeley Primary School	63	80	-17	-27.0	3.8%	0.109972	18/11/2005	01/04/2004	31,680.56	28,350.00
Ashfield Park Primary School	476	320	156	32.8	10.9%	0.119995	02/11/2006	20/10/2005 (13/02/2002 ?)	205,609.00	190,946.00
Ashperton Primary School	175	161	14	8.0	2.5%	0.107944	27/09/2007	30/09/2005	82,593.46	78,616.00
Bosbury C E Primary School	140	128	12	8.6	8.6%	0.100728	27/09/2007	28/04/2004	18,842.74	18,340.00
Brampton Abbots CE Primary School	140	118	22	15.7	16.9%	0.214433	05/10/2006	01/09/2007	32,756.00	30,400.00
Bredbury Primary School	70	62	8	11.4	19.4%	0.11777	08/10/2003	26/04/2004	42,205.20	35,185.00
Bridstow CE Primary School	105	96	9	8.6	2.1%	0.10015	18/10/2007	03/10/2005	13,000.00	13,000.00
Broadlands Primary School	420	282	138	32.9	11.7%	0.190921	30/09/2005	09/01/2007	308,718.70	273,867.00
Brockhampton Primary School	182	153	29	15.9	5.9%	0.102285	11/10/2007	13/12/2006	51,629.47	50,606.00
Burghill Community Primary School	105	89	16	15.2	0.0%	0.082449	03/11/2006	03/10/2005	16,801.82	15,529.00
Burley Gate C E Primary School	140	94	46	32.9	9.6%	0.099231	07/10/2003	28/09/2005	85,044.01	69,618.00
Canon Pyon C E Primary School	91	83	8	8.8	2.4%	0.104713	11/10/2005	14/12/2006	18,304.85	16,549.00
Clehonger C E Primary School	196	160	36	18.4	2.5%	0.135691	19/10/2006	01/09/2007	21,711.63	20,150.00
Clifford Primary School	70	67	3	4.3	4.5%	0.059617	20/09/2005	30/03/2004	77,608.97	65,143.00
Colwall C E Primary School	196	180	16	8.2	3.9%	0.086234	14/11/2007	18/12/2006	62,170.46	59,835.00
Cradley C E Primary School	140	107	33	23.6	1.9%	0.079931	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00
Dilwyn C E Primary School	56	36	20	35.7	5.6%	0.164074	23/11/2006	01/09/2007	9,977.65	9,260.00
Eardisley C E Primary School	105	72	33	31.4	5.6%	0.10551	02/12/2005	30/03/2004	77,093.81	64,625.00
Eastnor Parochial Primary School	84	83	1	1.2	2.4%	0.095598	16/10/2007	14/12/2006	8,660.76	8,642.00
Ewyas Harold Primary School	140	113	27	19.3	5.3%	0.089886	23/11/2006	23/03/2004	51,668.88	44,240.00
Garway Primary School	105	77	28	26.7	3.9%	0.093817	16/11/2006	03/10/2005	8,398.22	7,762.00
Goodrich C E Primary School	119	117	2	1.7	0.9%	0.074459	14/09/2007	14/02/2003	29,828.00	29,828.00
Gorsley Goffs Endowed Primary School	175	152	23	13.1	2.6%	0.084442	10/10/2006	01/08/2007	34,334.75	32,250.00

Hampton Dene Primary School	210	232	-22	-10.5	3.4%	0.089063	14/11/2005	08/01/2007	31,189.35	28,560.00
Holme Lacy Primary School	70	58	12	17.1	8.6%	0.167988	23/09/2005	18/12/2006	22,128.10	19,622.00
Holmer C E Primary School	420	272	148	35.2	5.5%	0.132901	10/11/2005	18/12/2006	81,306.84	73,897.00
Ivington C E Primary School	105	86	19	18.1	12.8%	0.184002	09/06/2004	03/10/2005	26,207.26	22,540.00
Kings Caple Primary School	70	43	27	38.6	2.3%	0.078568	17/10/2006	28/09/2005	16,340.97	15,069.00
Kingsland C E Primary School	119	131	-12	-10.1	4.6%	0.128991	07/10/2005	26/04/2004	25,613.93	22,710.00
Kingstone & Thrupton Primary School	210	176	34	16.2	11.4%	0.143245	30/11/2006	23/03/2004	96,877.75	86,900.00
Kington Primary School	210	191	19	9.0	10.5%	0.160721	16/11/2005	01/09/2007	114,581.84	107,869.00
Lea C E Primary School**	105	83	22	21.0	21.7%	0.103315	N/A	N/A	0.00	0.00
Ledbury Primary School	420	445	-25	-6.0	8.8%	0.161917	08/12/2006	01/09/2007	72,106.44	69,175.00
Leintwardine Endowed Primary School	105	101	4	3.8	5.9%	0.103083	04/10/2005	31/03/2004	49,084.08	40,670.00
Leominster Infants' School	330	212	118	35.8	26.4%	0.251468	08/11/2005	27/04/2004	66,861.07	58,390.00
Leominster Junior School	440	338	102	23.2	18.0%	0.23934	19/09/2007	13/12/2006	141,774.60	134,244.00
Little Dewchurch CE Primary School	63	56	7	11.1	0.0%	0.1587	17/10/2006	01/09/2007	10,613.38	9,850.00
Llangrove C E Primary School	105	58	47	44.8	0.0%	0.094101	12/01/2007	01/08/2007	24,737.90	23,650.00
Longtown Primary School	56	41	15	26.8	0.0%	0.086712	11/10/2006	24/03/2004	15,410.19	13,477.00
Lord Scudamore Primary School	616	544	72	11.7	2.4%	0.166677	27/02/2007	26/09/2005	223,849.94	208,089.00
Lugwardine Primary School	210	153	57	27.1	1.3%	0.079307	01/12/2006	27/09/2005	15,553.71	14,435.00
Luston Primary School	140	109	31	22.1	9.2%	0.207992	20/10/2005	18/12/2006	81,694.77	75,420.00
Madley Primary School	168	172	-4	-2.4	4.7%	0.120401	09/11/2006	24/03/2004	46,821.25	42,425.00
Marden Primary School	119	92	27	22.7	6.5%	0.1109	30/07/2003	28/04/2004	9,194.25	7,282.00
Marlbrook Primary School	350	384	-34	-9.7	21.4%	0.300278	19/12/2006	28/09/2005	24,459.25	22,700.00
Michaelchurch Escley Primary School	56	62	-6	-10.7	1.6%	0.093369	07/12/2006	24/03/2004	24,401.01	21,695.00
Mordiford C E Primary School	105	113	-8	-7.6	2.7%	0.115579	29/11/2006	01/09/2007	754.25	700.00
Much Birch C E Primary School	196	183	13	6.6	1.6%	0.119474	01/03/2007	01/08/2007	38,595.50	37,250.00
Much Marcle C E Primary School	119	90	29	24.4	4.4%	0.094838	18/10/2005	15/11/2006	36,333.55	33,382.00
Orleton C E Primary School	210	178	32	15.2	2.2%	0.070295	23/09/2003	01/09/2007	127,370.38	101,913.00
Our Lady's R C Primary School	210	203	7	3.3	7.9%	0.217239	03/10/2003	14/12/2006	27,454.03	21,415.00
Pembridge C E Primary School	91	99	-8	-8.8	4.0%	0.104358	11/10/2005	18/12/2006	14,036.78	12,706.00
Pencombe C E Primary School	56	53	3	5.4	1.9%	0.096811	10/09/2003	18/12/2006	13,792.56	10,945.00
Peterchurch Primary School	105	63	42	40.0	11.1%	0.120198	31/10/2006	25/03/2004	180,386.38	153,700.00
Shobdon Primary School	70	59	11	15.7	16.9%	0.110176	09/11/2006	03/10/2005	25,558.30	23,720.00
St Francis Xavier's R.C. Primary School	210	210	0	0.0	4.8%	0.173788	12/05/2004	01/09/2007	119,637.23	102,980.00
St James' C E Primary School	210	201	9	4.3	7.0%	0.142124	31/10/2006	20/04/2004	98,548.03	88,158.00
St James' C E Primary School, Kimbolton	105	91	14	13.3	0.0%	0.155642	08/10/2003	05/05/2004	29,557.32	24,485.00

St Joseph's R C Primary School	140	109	31	22.1	3.7%	0.111788	22/01/2007	01/08/2007	120,028.50	114,750.00
St Martin's Primary School	490	351	139	28.4	14.5%	0.233085	15/09/2005	18/12/2006	60,962.63	53,892.00
St Mary's C E Primary School, Credenhill	210	157	53	25.2	12.7%	0.075691	20/09/2005	22/06/2000	107,135.50	79,350.00
St Mary's C E Primary School, Fownhope	105	92	13	12.4	2.2%	0.172393	31/07/2003	28/09/2005	55,565.21	44,099.00
St Michael's C E Primary School, Bodenham	119	106	13	10.9	8.5%	0.099885	13/10/2005	13/12/2006	17,122.43	15,480.00
St Paul's C E Primary School	420	432	-12	-2.9	2.8%	0.098565	20/05/2004	01/09/2007	250,064.25	215,135.00
St Peter's Primary School, Bromyard	210	189	21	10.0	4.2%	0.181945	29/09/2005	18/12/2006	31,956.40	28,250.00
St Thomas Cantilupe C E Primary School	210	217	-7	-3.3	10.6%	0.217711	09/10/2003	09/01/2007	85,489.10	76,450.00
St Weonards Primary School	105	52	53	50.5	5.8%	0.092433	22/09/2005	22/03/2004	132,774.83	108,576.00
Staunton-on-Wye Endowed Primary School	70	59	11	15.7	5.1%	0.084354	05/12/2005	27/09/2005	251,081.30	225,000.00
Stoke Prior Primary School	77	75	2	2.6	0.0%	0.140559	01/09/2003	01/08/2007	15,172.45	12,041.00
Stretton Sugwas C E Primary School	105	99	6	5.7	0.0%	0.105039	01/10/2003	13/12/2006	22,895.67	17,956.00
Sutton Primary School	84	51	33	39.3	2.0%	0.112737	28/11/2001	11/02/2003	45,583.11	33,122.00
Trinity Primary School	588	545	43	7.3	8.1%	0.120498	05/12/2005	10/01/2007	155,958.12	142,729.00
Walford Primary School	196	184	12	6.1	1.6%	0.08542	10/10/2006	01/09/2007	37,308.44	34,625.00
Wellington Primary School	196	121	75	38.3	9.9%	0.090113	28/09/2005	09/01/2007	56,600.91	51,322.00
Weobley Primary School	210	154	56	26.7	12.3%	0.170919	26/09/2007	13/08/2002	27,050.00	27,050.00
Weston-under-Penyard C E Primary School	91	82	9	9.9	6.1%	0.107482	12/10/2006	01/08/2007	56,030.00	52,000.00
Whitbourne C E Primary School	70	67	3	4.3	0.0%	0.089153	08/08/2003	03/10/2005	25,920.76	21,105.00
Whitchurch C E Primary School	119	101	18	15.1	4.0%	0.072856	14/05/2004	22/03/2004	91,018.81	75,455.00
Wigmore Primary School	210	139	71	33.8	8.6%	0.106783	12/09/2007	31/03/2004	23,620.00	23,620.00
Withington Primary School	105	72	33	31.4	1.4%	0.150926	04/10/2005	14/12/2006	23,359.28	20,650.00
Riverside Primary	630	347	283	44.9	16.1%	0.314431			0.00	0.00

Total	4,914,168.78	4,365,421.00
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Notes:

1. Percentage of pupils taking Free School Meals, and the IDACI (Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index) has been used as a measure of deprivation in the area served by the school
2. The condition of Building, Site and Mechanical and Electrical Services have been assessed within a 5 year rolling programme of surveys

The date of each survey is given, the costs of remedial work being calculated to the 2nd Quarter 2008 according to BCIS (Building Costs Information Services) data.

Information is also being collected on the size of school buildings and playfields compared to DCSF standards, and the overall size of the school site to judge whether schools can be brought up to standard on that site. This information will be checked with schools before including in the strategy document

APPENDIX 3 – SCHOOLS CAPITAL ALLOCATIONS

Schools Capital Allocations

Local Authority (884) Herefordshire
Region West Midlands

Produced on 07/11/2007

	2008-09 (£)			2009-10 (£)			2010-11 (£)			2008-11 (£)
	Grant	Supported Borrowing	Total	Grant	Supported Borrowing	Total	Grant	Supported Borrowing	Total	3 Year Total
Devolved Formula Non-VA Schools	2,795,429		2,795,429	2,745,429		2,745,429	2,745,429		2,745,429	8,286,286
Devolved Formula VA Schools	843,599		843,599	843,599		843,599	843,599		843,599	2,530,796
DFC Academies			0			0			0	0
* City Technology Colleges			0			0			0	0
* Non-Maintained Special Schools			0			0			0	0
DFC Total	3,639,027	0	3,639,027	3,589,027	0	3,589,027	3,589,027	0	3,589,027	10,817,082
- Primary Capital Programme			0			3,000,000			5,378,000	8,378,000
Modemisation Allocation	340,603	1,608,575	1,949,179	340,603	1,608,575	1,949,179	1,797,544	151,635	1,949,179	5,847,536
Modemisation Advance (paid 07-08)	340,603		340,603	340,603		340,603	340,603		340,603	1,021,810
Modemisation Net	0	1,608,575	1,608,575	0	1,608,575	1,608,575	1,456,941	151,635	1,608,576	4,825,726
Basic Need		458,156	458,156		458,156	458,156		458,156	458,156	1,374,468
Schools Access Initiative		285,904	285,904		285,904	285,904		285,904	285,904	857,713
Extended Schools	303,368		303,368	321,426		321,426	166,130		166,130	790,925
ICT										
Harnessing Technology Grant	1,317,758		1,317,758	1,224,968		1,224,968	1,091,001		1,091,001	3,633,727
Other ICT		0	0		0	0		0	0	0
LCVAP Allocation	1,032,422		1,032,422	1,032,422		1,032,422	1,032,422		1,032,422	3,097,267
LCVAP advance (paid 07-08)	97,189		97,189	97,189		97,189	97,189		97,189	291,568
LCVAP Net	935,233	0	935,233	935,233	0	935,233	935,233	0	935,233	2,805,699
TCF			0	2,000,000		2,000,000	6,000,000		6,000,000	8,000,000
# Kitchens										
# Standards and Diversity										
TOTAL	6,195,387	2,352,636	8,548,023	8,070,655	2,352,636	13,423,290	13,238,333	895,695	19,512,028	41,483,341

Notes DFC Totals for 2009-10 and 2010-11 are provisional. TCF projects, including One School Pathfinders, already announced are not shown here.
 * These figures are based on January 2007 School Census. Grants will be paid directly to the institution.
 # TCF, Kitchens and Standards and Diversity will be announced in due course.
 - PCP allocations are indicative until the LA's primary strategy for change has been agreed with the Department. Allocations are capex values. LAs with a LEP will be expected to deliver part of their primary programme through the PFI.

Devolved Formula Capital Allocation Formula							
Un-modernised school				Modernised school			
Per School	Per Secondary Pupil	Per Primary Pupil	Per Special School or PRU Pupil	Per School	Per Secondary Pupil	Per Primary Pupil	Per Special School or PRU Pupil
18,500	94.50	63.00	189.00	9,250	47.25	31.50	94.50

LA_ID: 884 LA_name: Herefordshire

Region: West Midlands

Appendix 4

School	Level of Deprivation					Building Conditions Survey April 2008				
	Capacity	Spring 2008 Census NOR	Actual Surplus	% Surplus	FSM %	IDACI	Building & Site Survey DATE	M & E Survey DATE	Total Uplifted Cost	TOTAL
Broadlands Primary School	420	282	138	32.9	11.7%	0.190921	30/09/2005	09/01/2007	308,718.70	273,876.00
St Martin's Primary School	490	351	139	28.4	14.5%	0.233085	15/09/2005	18/12/2006	60,962.63	53,892.00
Leominster Junior School	440	338	102	23.2	18.0%	0.23934	19/09/2007	13/12/2006	141,774.60	134,244.00
Leominster Infants' School	330	212	118	35.8	26.4%	0.251468	08/11/2005	27/04/2007	66,861.07	58,390.00
Ashfield Park Primary School	476	320	156	32.8	10.9%	0.119995	02/11/2006	20/10/2005 (13/02/2002?)	205,609.00	190,946.00

ACTION PLAN TO MEET THE CHALLENGE OF THE GOVERNMENT'S POST OFFICE CLOSURE PROGRAMME- UPDATE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To update the Cabinet on the Government's post office closure programme and the progress being made on an initiative to develop sustainable options for the delivery of post office services to rural communities in Herefordshire and to evaluate how Essex County Council's intervention may be applicable to a rural county.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

THAT the action plan proposed in the report be agreed.

Reasons

Following on from the announcement in December 2006 by the Government on the closure of up to 2,500 post offices nationally, the DTI issued a consultation document on its future proposals for the post office network. Herefordshire Council co-ordinated a response to this consultation and has used the opportunity to examine alternative and sustainable options for delivering post office services in the County. The State of Herefordshire Report indicates that 85% of residents found it easy to access post office services in 2006. The Council has a commitment to at least maintain this level of access.

Considerations

Background

1. In December 2006 the Government announced the closure of a maximum of 2500 (compensated) Post Offices that were deemed to be unprofitable. It is likely that these closures will be spread equally between urban and rural areas. To offset partly these closures Post Office Ltd (POL) will introduce up to 500 "Outreach" facilities (eg mobile post offices).

2. This latest Government action highlights a problem that has been occurring over the last thirty years, that is, the closure of village shops and post offices due to changing shopping patterns, government action and other external factors. Many of the remaining rural retail outlets are struggling with some being unprofitable such that when the owner/manager retires no one is willing to take on the enterprise. This is the case with Hope under Dinmore Post Office that has remained closed since the sub-postmaster retired despite efforts by the parish council and others to find a replacement.
3. In June 2007, completely separate from the Government's closure programme, three Herefordshire post offices closed on "temporary basis", Colwall, Bartestree and Brampton Road in Hereford. (Note: a temporary closure is an 18-month window, which Post Office Ltd establishes whilst seeking a replacement location/sub postmaster/mistress). All three post offices closed due to change in ownership. Colwall re-opened on Monday June 23rd 2008, with considerable support from the parish council. Also in June 08 Bosbury post office closed on a temporary basis. The future of all three remains questionable (Note that there are concerns at the loss of Brampton Road as it lies in an area of multiple deprivation).
4. These recent closures suggest that the number of post offices to close nationally over the next two years is likely to exceed the 2,500 compensated closures, such is the low morale amongst Sub-postmasters and mistresses and the general state of the sector. The Rural Shops Alliance (RSA) reports that many post offices are waiting on their chance to get compensation before closing their business. If they fail to be one of the 2,500 compensated closures, it is possible they will close anyway. In addition, in early May the National Federation of Sub-postmasters warned that a further 3000 small post offices could close within 2 years if the Post Office Card Account was awarded to a supplier other than the Post Office, a decision the Government has to make this year.
5. At the end of 2006 there were 14,250 post offices nationally. When 2,500 post offices close, by the end of 2009, this figure will be 11,750, a drop of 17% (excluding any outreach introductions). If this position was replicated in Herefordshire with 88 post offices (see appendix 2), 15 post offices could close by the end of 2009, though some of these could be replaced by outreach facilities. This is thought to be a minimum figure, bearing in mind the state of the sector. (Note that in Shropshire 20% of offices are set to close which if replicated in Herefordshire would mean 18 would close).
6. Apart from the rural areas a recent mapping exercise would suggest that some of the 10 post offices in Hereford City are at risk, including those in the areas of multiple deprivation. In addition, and separate from the closure programme, the Post Office have been trialling the transfer of some main post offices into branches of WH Smith. To date over 70 post offices have been moved including the main post office in Shrewsbury. It is the intention of Post Office Limited to continue this "roll out" and thus it is anticipated that at some time in the future the main Hereford City post office could be relocated into W H Smith with a possible reduction of customer service levels unless an alternative more cost effective site can be found
7. The Government's closure programme impacting on Herefordshire started in May and during the period leading up to the public consultation the closure plans will be developed by POL and independently scrutinised by PostWatch. We have been advised that post offices that are not affected by the closure plans (either through closure or by receiving additional volume business from closed post offices) will be confidentially advised in the week commencing July 7th by POL.

8. Public consultation (including Local Government consultation) on these recommendations will then take place in the six weeks from 27th August until October 7th with closures starting in November 2008. It has been reported that MPs will be advised of the proposed closures 7 working days before the 27th August.
9. Following these forced closures there will also be a need to identify any post offices that are due to close independently of Government action.

Proposed Course of Action

10. Against this background, it is proposed to develop and evaluate sustainable options for use in Herefordshire to deliver these services. These options will address needs in communities that currently have a post office but they can also meet those latent needs in communities that currently do not have any service post office provision (e.g. Tillington).

Post office Services:

11. Herefordshire Council has been working with the Rural Shops Alliance (RSA) and has been joined by Business Link to investigate the provision of three essential services in the event that they are not provided locally by a post office:-

- Parcel Post
Parcel post is easily set up requiring an initial investment of approximately £1,500 with an on-going annual fee of £450 payable to Royal Mail.
- Bill payment
Payment of bills can be organised at community level (eg village hall) over the internet but there may be an issue regarding confidentiality in which case options/costs of installing more Paypoint/Payzone are currently being investigated. There are currently 70 Payzones and 19 Paypoints in Herefordshire.
- Access to cash
With regard to access to cash, if there is a shop or a pub in a village, cashback facilities on an informal basis to known residents is not usually an issue. In the absence of any retail outlet, options are limited. The use of community transport also needs to be evaluated.

Support for Village Shops

12. The closure of a village post office not only deprives the residents of a valuable facility. If combined with a village shop, the closure of the post office may precipitate the closure of the shop as well. Village shops are important to communities in their own right and, as has already been pointed out, they could deliver some of the services that a post office would have delivered prior to closure. It is therefore important to support and promote the village shop as an important part of the ongoing strategy for improving access to services in rural areas. Herefordshire Council and the RSA are holding a series of Information (training) evenings to inform Village shop proprietors on the latest market trends and give them an opportunity to network and share good practice. In addition, a further initiative has sourced funding to provide support, through HASP, to village shops by providing retail development advice to 16 shops in 2008/9 (15 shops supported in 2007/8) to co-incide with the Government's post office closure programme. At a later stage we would aim to add to this business advice package by providing matched funded capital grants (subject to funding availability).

13. The Essex "Model"

In February 2008 Essex County Council announced that they were opening discussions with Post Office Ltd with a view to re-opening and taking over the running of some of the 31 post offices that were to be or had been closed in Essex. The Council's aim was to evaluate 15 of the "more viable" offices and establish whether, by combining them with Council services, they could be returned to viability within a 3 year period. This initiative was to be supported by £1.5m over the 3 years. (Note: this expenditure was justified as the Council spends £500m on "elderly" services a year and as the elderly were to be the main losers in this closure programme, it was logical to allocate some monies to save this vital service for that group). On April 24th Lord Hanningfield (Leader of the Council) announced in the House of Lords that progress had been hampered as Post Office Ltd had not provided any financial information on the identified offices. In a LGA conference on May 14th Essex confirmed they were hoping to announce the takeover of 2 offices within a month.

However, at the same conference Post Office Ltd confirmed that the Essex Model must be seen as a separate exercise from the closure programme. Any Post office service facility opened under the Essex Model would be additional to the Government's requirements and would have to be totally locally funded (by the local authority or other organisation but not POL) until at least 2011. A full analysis of the situation in Essex is to be found in appendix 1.

Despite claims in the media, therefore, it would seem that the developing Essex Model cannot be used to "save" any post offices as POL have confirmed that 2500 offices will close. We will however monitor the Essex situation while we work up alternatives in time for the August announcement.

14. Proposed Actions

- To audit and survey all post offices in Herefordshire to establish key facts associated with outlet and how many are connected to a village shop by July/August 08
- To monitor developments in Shropshire/Staffordshire and
- To establish key learning points for Herefordshire closure plan. July 08
- To hold a meeting with Members and Parish Council Clerks and Chairs for the Post Office Ltd to explain the closure programme and answer questions – July 16th 08
- To discuss with the Post Office plans for the main Hereford Post Office and discuss with ESG and HC Asset Management options for partnering the Post Office with Council services. (Timing to be agreed)
- To consider the alternative options for communities in the event of post office closure. by July 08
- To make communities and businesses aware of the impending public consultation and the various development options, signposting them to the relevant support organisations (Press Release and general communication). by end July 08
- Meeting with MPs on release of closure plans August 18th - 27th August, 2008

- Publication of Closure Plans starts – 27th August, 2008
- Meeting with Post Office Ltd to discuss plans 29th August, 2008
- Meeting with Members and Parish Councils – 2nd September, 2008
- Ad hoc meetings with affected communities to offer support – September, 2008
- Consultation period ends – 7th October, 2008
- Monitor all closures and support affected communities with information and funding advice. October 08 onwards

Legal Implications

The Council has no statutory duty to protect post office services. There are potential issues around State Aid and I understand this is one of the reasons why Essex have had second thoughts as well as the significant costs involved. If it is considered State Aid to either Post Office Limited or another organisation which could also be construed anti competitive and place the Council at risk of legal challenge

Section 2 Well being powers have been construed as being used by Councils in way which is ancillary to a specific statutory power. There is no statutory power that exists for the Council to support financially such arrangements. Specialist legal advice ought to be considered if the Council wishes to explore such options.

Financial Implications

There is minimal cost implication to the Council, other than through existing officer time and costs of surveying the existing post office base in the county. The provision of specialist advice to communities may be considered.

Risk Management

The action plan (see paragraph 14) is a proactive response from the Council. Failure to be proactive in co-ordinating proposals for the future delivery of key services in the County, may affect the credibility of the Council in terms of its community leadership role.

It will be important to ensure that unrealistic expectations are not raised in communities particularly in regard to the Essex Model, as Herefordshire Council may be unable to meet these expectations due to cost restraints. We will try to mitigate this risk by informing communities what sustainable and achievable options for delivery of post office services are available to them.

Alternative Options

There is the alternative of doing nothing proactive to support the continuation of postal services in Herefordshire. However, there is good evidence that disadvantaged groups are further disadvantaged when rural services, such as post offices and village shops, are closed. By being proactive, the Council can demonstrate that it is fulfilling its community leadership role.

Consultees

Communications Unit

Joint Management Team

Rural Shops Alliance

Parish Councils

Parish Plans

Appendices

1. Analysis of the “Essex Model”

Background Papers

- None identified.

APPENDIX 1

Supporting Rural Post Offices.

BRIEF

The “Essex Model”

Following a Post Office Ltd announcement that it was to close 31 post offices in Essex, the Leader of Essex County Council, Lord Hanningfield, launched an initiative in February 2008 to “keep open a number of post offices previously earmarked for closure”. Furthermore Lord Hanningfield called on the Government to halt the closure programme and consider the Essex offer to fund some of these offices over a 3 year period. Essex argued that these offices could become financially self-sufficient and cost neutral to the council over this time by, for instance, co-locating some of the council services within each branch to turn them into community centres. At that time Essex hoped to “save” 15 out of the 31 post offices set to close.

To fund this initiative Essex has allocated £1.5m (£500K per year for 3 years). This funding was allocated from the £500m expenditure per year Essex spends on provision for the Elderly (the identified main beneficiaries of this initiative). It was the hope of Essex that this initiative could be a “model” for other councils to follow.

As of June 20th 2008 all 31 post offices have been closed and Essex are still negotiating with the Post Office and await the outcome of State Aid rules compliance. Essex hope to re-open 2 post offices in some form or other (possibly as outreaches from another post office) within a month. It is their hope that other post offices will follow subject to them meeting their viability criteria.

The Essex “Model” from the perspective of the Post Office Ltd- Local Funding

At the LGA conference on May 14th 2008 the Post Office Ltd (POL) outlined its position with regard to the Essex “Model”, seeing it as “an emerging opportunity”.

POL refers to this opportunity as the “Local Funding Model”. Crucially, any post office service developed will be treated as **additional** to the Governments requirements and **completely separate to the Network Change Programme. POL stress that 2500 post offices will close under this programme.** (And this is borne out by the Essex experience)

For the development of these “additional” facilities the following criteria will be enforced by POL:

- POL’s costs must be covered as they do not have funding to cover the infrastructure costs of “Extra” branches. It should be noted that these costs are both set up and on-going costs and should not be under estimated.

- POL would expect there to be a guarantee of this local funding to cover the period up to at least 2011.
- Any arrangement would have to meet State Aid rules in the case of local authorities taking on this commitment.
- Like for Like will probably not be possible or optimal (that is: re-opening a closed post office is not an option). A cheaper service delivery model will be offered, this is likely to be one of the outreach options (mobile/hosted/partner/home service).

POL warns that a high level of commitment is necessary to make this work on an on-going basis. This will have significant resource implications for local authorities or sponsoring organisations.

POL will consider all locations but:

- will not support the introduction of a facility in any community with an outreach facility
- will not support any the introduction of a facility into a community which would involve taking customers from another post office and threaten the viability of that post office.

Summary

POL are adamant that the “Essex Model” should be viewed separately from the Network Change Programme and the model will not affect the outcome of the closure plan, that is, 2500 post offices will close..

POL will support the setting up of additional facilities (probably based on the outreach models) subject to certain criteria, the most important being that all costs are borne locally with a guarantee of continued funding until at least 2011.

END

HEREFORDSHIRE HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008-2013

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

For Cabinet to endorse the Homelessness Strategy, including the associated Action Plan, prior to full publication in accordance with the requirements of the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG).

Key Decision

This is not a Key decision.

Recommendation(s)

- THAT** (a) **the Homelessness Strategy 2008–2013 be agreed, including the associated appendices and action plan, to meet the national and local targets; and;**
- (b) **annual update reports be presented to Cabinet on progress against the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan.**

Reasons

The Council is required, under the statutory requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, to carry out a review of homelessness and to write a new five-year Homelessness Strategy by 31st July 2008, setting out an action plan to meet specific outcomes.

Considerations

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Homelessness Act 2002, the Strategy and Review has considered:
 - a) The levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the County;
 - b) The activities, services, resources and teams provided within the County which:
 - help to prevent homelessness;

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Tara Roche, Homeless Strategy on (01432) 261851

- will secure accommodation or ensure it is available for people in the area who are or may become homeless;
 - will provide support for people who are or may become homeless or who have been homeless and need support to prevent homelessness re-occurring.
2. The objectives and plans of the Homelessness Strategy comply with those set out in the Homelessness legislation, which are:
- a) the prevention of homelessness;
 - b) ensuring there is sufficient accommodation available for people who are, or who may become, homeless;
 - c) ensuring there is satisfactory support for people who are, or who may become, homeless.
 - c) Herefordshire Council has incorporated these aims into a multi-agency Homelessness Strategy for Herefordshire, delivered by a partnership of statutory, voluntary and private sector organisations. This Strategy seeks to address the accommodation, health, support and other needs of homeless people and ensure the provision of high quality homelessness advice and other services to prevent the likelihood of homelessness occurring in the County.
 - d) As is the case in most local authorities areas, Herefordshire experiences a substantial demand for affordable housing, and there is every indication that this trend will continue, locally and nationally, in the future.
 - e) The shortage in the supply of affordable housing for vulnerable single people and homeless families is a significant issue in Herefordshire. Levels of homelessness in the County could rise without an effective and targeted homelessness prevention approach. Increasing the supply of affordable accommodation is also an important factor in tackling potential homelessness.
 - f) As the Homelessness Strategy indicates, a range of agencies concerned with the provision of services to homeless people, or those at risk of homelessness, have demonstrated a high commitment to work together with the Council to prevent homelessness in the County. The Homelessness Strategy has been jointly developed with them, and is a multi-agency response to the needs of vulnerable households in Herefordshire.
 - g) The Herefordshire Community Strategy is the overarching strategic document for Herefordshire Council and its public, private and voluntary sector partners. The Community Strategy sets out a shared vision for the County to 2020. This links with the Herefordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities and is managed by the Herefordshire Partnership. The Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group has ensured that this Strategy has considered the themes set out in the Community Strategy and ensures that there are links from the actions required within this Strategy to the themes within the Community Strategy, the Corporate Plan, the Local Area Agreement and the Service Plan along with the national indicators. Developing these links will be important if the Council is to meet its LAA Ni 156 target to reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation to 82 by 2010.

- h) To achieve a successful implementation, the aims, objectives and actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy link to the main strategies, including the Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011, Supporting People Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. The
- i) links to the strategies are discussed in the attached document.
- j) As part of the review process we have aimed to establish, as comprehensively as possible, a profile of homelessness in Herefordshire. We also recognise that the profile of homelessness locally can change over time, as new housing market pressures develop, or new opportunities arise, so the collection of data and information must be an ongoing and shared process. This, in turn, will inform continued Strategy development and the annual monitoring and evaluation process.
- k) The following have been identified in the Homelessness Strategy as the six main outcomes:
- The prevention of homelessness through the effective targeting of housing options and services;
 - To end the use of bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation and to continue to reduce the overall number of households in temporary accommodation;
 - To ensure sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who are, or who may become, homeless;
 - Improve joint working amongst all agencies concerned with homelessness and prevention;
 - To reduce homelessness and its related impacts amongst vulnerable client groups including young people and children;
 - To maximise the effectiveness and targeting of homelessness services through the use of improved data collection and intelligence gathering.
- l) Due to the issues that have been identified within the Strategy and review, it is recommended that the Action Plan be monitored regularly and reviewed annually. The annual review will enable: -
- a) The regular and consistent monitoring of performance against targets;
 - b) An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Strategy;
 - c) The tackling of homelessness trend data and preventative activity.
- m) The Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG), composed of selected members of Herefordshire Council, relevant staff and members from the Homeless Forum, will undertake the review, evaluation and monitoring process. HSIG will meet on a quarterly basis and the resulting annual review will be presented to Cabinet.

Legal Implications

The Council has a statutory obligation to publish a Homelessness Strategy.

Financial Implications

The Action Plan includes reference to the resource implications of individual actions. Where possible proposals have been limited to working within existing financial resources however, the cost implications of a number of proposals will be subject to further evaluation involving the Resources Directorate. Where such evaluation identifies additional revenue costs, some will be considered within relevant corporate revenue budget setting programmes. A number may be subject to funding bids through other programmes including, for instance, through the Supporting People programme where appropriate, or through CLG homelessness grant opportunities.

No new financial commitments will be entered into until the funding has been approved in line with the Council's Financial Procedure Rules

Risk Management

The onus of responsibility for managing homelessness and implementing the Homelessness Act 2002 in Herefordshire falls on the Council. Failure to carry out the actions detailed within the Homelessness Strategy 2008 will result in the Council being unable to respond to the growing problem of homelessness in the County.

Consideration will need to be given to the resources available to implement the action plan, as although every effort has been made to contain the plan within existing or available resources, some of the necessary actions may incur costs above and beyond these resources.

In the absence of a planned response to the issue of homelessness, the Council faces risks around community sustainability, increased financial costs associated with the provision of temporary accommodation, and rising numbers of people living in such environments across the county.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options.

Consultees

Consultation on the Homelessness Review and the Homelessness Strategy 2008 was carried out in partnership with the following: -

Shelter; Supported Housing for Young People (SHYPP); Home Point – Choice based lettings agency; Probationary Service; RSL Forum representative; Marches Housing; Women's Aid; West Mercia Police; Mental Health Services; Drugs agencies; PCT; Supporting People, Herefordshire Council; Children Social Services, Herefordshire Council; Housing Needs and Development, Herefordshire Council; Homelessness Team; Citizens Advice Bureau; Homeless Forum; Private Sector Housing; Kemble Housing; Adult Social Services; Housing Benefit; Shropshire HSIG; Community Safety and Drugs Partnership, Herefordshire Council; 67 Service Users.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Homelessness Strategy for Herefordshire 2008-2013

Background Papers

None

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY
for
HEREFORDSHIRE
2008-2013



FOREWORD

**By Councillor O Barnett
Cabinet Member for Social Care Adults & Health**



Since Herefordshire Council published its last Homelessness Strategy in 2003, a great deal has changed in the English housing market. Nationally, the number of households registered with housing waiting lists across the country has risen steadily, creating additional pressures on the availability of affordable housing in England. At the same time, the wider housing market has also changed. More people own their own homes, and house prices have increased year on year, presenting considerable challenges for young people wishing to take their first step on the housing ladder by renting or purchasing a property. In Herefordshire, we have seen very similar themes develop in our local housing market. Rents and property prices have also risen across the county, and affordable housing remains in short supply too. There are around 5,500 households registered with the county's Home Point choice-based lettings scheme, bidding for around 795 properties a year. So, in this context, it is crucial that the Council works hard to help tackle the housing pressures faced by Herefordshire residents. If it doesn't do that, homelessness could become a bigger issue in our community, and that's not something anyone wants to see here.

As you read through the strategy, you will also see another big change in the way that homelessness is tackled, which is taking place nationally and locally. For the next five years, the Council's Homelessness Strategy emphasises the need to prevent homelessness whenever possible as homelessness prevention is the key to protecting the people of Herefordshire in a challenging housing market. In 2006, government advisors visited the authority, and led us through a range of initiatives being encouraged across the country, in their bid to prevent homelessness nationally. Herefordshire Council subsequently launched its own homelessness prevention approach on the basis of this advice, and the results to date have been impressive. Since 2006, in line with government guidance, homelessness has been significantly reduced in Herefordshire. New initiatives, such as mediation and sanctuary, have helped young people remain in the family home, and protect women from the threat of domestic violence. Interventions from the Homelessness Prevention Fund have also enabled people to remain housed without moving into temporary accommodation, an environment often associated with issues such as declining health, falling school attendance, and limited employment opportunities. Further reducing the use of temporary accommodation is a key target inside the Council's Local Area Agreement, and achieving this will enhance the wellbeing of households and communities across the county.

The Council is delighted to be able to work together with a number of agencies across the county to tackle homelessness and this new strategy shows just how important our partners have become in helping prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. Their role is central to protecting vulnerable people from the risk of homelessness and in helping the Council develop its broader strategic approach to this issue. I would like to express my thanks to our partners for their continued support and for their considerable input, together with that of their customers, during the consultation phase associated with this latest strategy. I would also like to thank the staff in the Homelessness and Housing Advice team who continue to work hard to prevent homelessness.

The Homelessness Strategy sets out how the Council aims to achieve better outcomes for the people it serves, and I look forward to hearing of continued improvements over the next five years.

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SECTION ONE - CONTEXT, OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

1.1 The National Context

In 2002, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) produced “More than a Roof: a report into tackling homelessness.” It concluded there needed to be a shift from a reactive approach to homelessness provision, towards a greater emphasis on preventing homelessness. Planning for prevention involved developing research and monitoring work that would lead to the development of evidence based strategy.

The Homelessness Act 2002 introduced a number of changes, which reflected this new approach. The Act brought in a range of changes to the way local authorities deliver their homelessness service. A major change was the requirement for local authorities to carry out a homelessness review – mapping current needs and services - and then to produce a strategy, setting out how homelessness would be tackled in the future. The ODPM guidance laid out three key aims that were needed to underpin all homelessness strategies:

- Prevention of homelessness
- Provision of appropriate accommodation
- Provision of support to ensure sustainment of tenancy and avoid repeat homelessness

These aims remain the foundation of central government’s 2005 document “Homeless Strategy Sustainable Communities: settled homes: changing lives”, along with the “Code of Guidance - Local Authorities” from 2006, which gives local authorities advice and assistance on measures for tackling homelessness.

1.2 The Regional Context – The West Midlands

It is recognised that in addressing homelessness, housing need and support issues, local authorities need to work together to identify and tackle overall regional trends and develop a broad cross-authority approach rather than work in isolation. To this end a Regional Housing Strategy, a Regional Supporting People Strategy and Regional Homelessness Strategy Smart Action Plans have been produced. Herefordshire Council is an active member and attends the Regional Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (R.HSIG).

1.3 Sub Regional Context (West Housing Market Area –WHMA)

The West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy identifies four sub-regional housing market areas (HMA’s) in the West Midlands Region: North, South, Central and West. Herefordshire forms the West Housing Market area with neighbouring Shropshire.

Herefordshire and Shropshire local authorities aim to move towards cross-boundary working, information sharing and best practice along with research and development work, much of which is co-ordinated through the West Housing Market Area Partnership. Both in 2006 and March 2007, a homelessness conference was attended by both Shropshire and Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy Implementation group (HSIG) members to discuss the possibilities of cross-boundary working and homeless-related services in both counties. The results from these conference away-days have been used to influence the sub regional ‘Smart Action Plans’ that outline the expected achievements within the next 5 years with Shropshire partners. See appendix 6 for the sub regional Smart action plans; these actions are also included in the main action plan.

West Housing Market Assessment (WHMAs)

The West Housing market assessment (WHMA'S) has been undertaken by external consultants during 2007 and is due to be finalised during 2008. The assessment will identify local housing market areas, what the local needs are and what types of housing will be required to ensure a balanced housing market. The final recommendations will inform National, sub regional and local policies and strategies for both housing and planning.

1.4 Our Strategic Vision

The Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy 2008 -2013 and its appendices identify the current position on homelessness and lays out Herefordshire Council's key strategic outcomes and actions in tackling homelessness in the county. The Strategy and action plan detail how the six outcomes will be achieved, and maps out a delivery deadline, detailing each action's links to performance indicators in the county, see appendix 7 for the relevant performance indicators. The Strategy has been developed in partnership with key stakeholders, the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG), service users and staff. It is a stand-alone document but has intrinsic links to other strategies as detailed in the strategic links section.

1.5 The Strategic Outcomes

Our overall objective for this strategy is to achieve the following 6 outcomes:

Six Outcomes

- **The prevention of homelessness through the effective targeting of housing options and services.**
- **To end the use of bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation and to continue to reduce the overall number of households in temporary accommodation.**
- **To ensure sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who are, or who may become, homeless.**
- **Improve joint working amongst all agencies concerned with homelessness and prevention.**
- **To reduce homelessness and it's related impacts amongst vulnerable client groups including young people and children.**
- **To maximise the effectiveness and targeting of homelessness services through the use of improved data collection and intelligence gathering.**

1.6 Strategic Links

The Herefordshire Community Strategy is the overarching strategic document for Herefordshire Council and its public, private and voluntary sector partners. The Community Strategy sets out a shared vision for the county to 2020. This links with the Herefordshire Local Area Agreement (LAA) priorities and is managed by the Herefordshire Partnership.

The Community Strategy divides its vision into 4 themes as detailed below: -

- **Economic Development and Enterprise**
- **Healthier communities and Older people**
- **Children and Young People**
- **Safer and Stronger Communities**

The Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group have ensured that this Strategy has considered these themes and ensures that there are links from the actions required within this

Strategy to the themes within the Community Strategy, the Corporate Plan, the Local Area Agreement and the Service Plan along with the national indicators.

This Strategy is well integrated within the Herefordshire Community Strategy along with the Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011 which sets out how the Council intends to achieve the shared vision for Herefordshire. Within its seven themes, those relevant to this Homelessness Strategy are listed below with an outline of their relevance:-

Theme: Safer and Stronger Communities / Sustainable Communities.

Council Priority: To secure sufficient affordable housing to meet the needs of local people

The Homelessness Strategy and action plan sets out the work required to increase the numbers of affordable housing units over the next five years along with improving the quality of temporary accommodation and links to support services to prevent homelessness for the future.

Theme: Children and Young People.

Council Priority: To maximise the health, safety, economic wellbeing, achievements and contribution of every child

This Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan sets out the work required in the next five years, to ensure zero families with children are accessing bed & breakfast accommodation. The actions also aim to provide a range of accommodation and housing support solutions to assist vulnerable young people and care leavers in the transition to independence.

Theme: Health and well-being / Older People.

Council Priority: To reshape adult social care, enabling many more older and other vulnerable people to maintain control of their lives

The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan sets out the work required to provide a homelessness and prevention & options service for older people, to enable older people to remain in their own home or to access private sector accommodation with support.

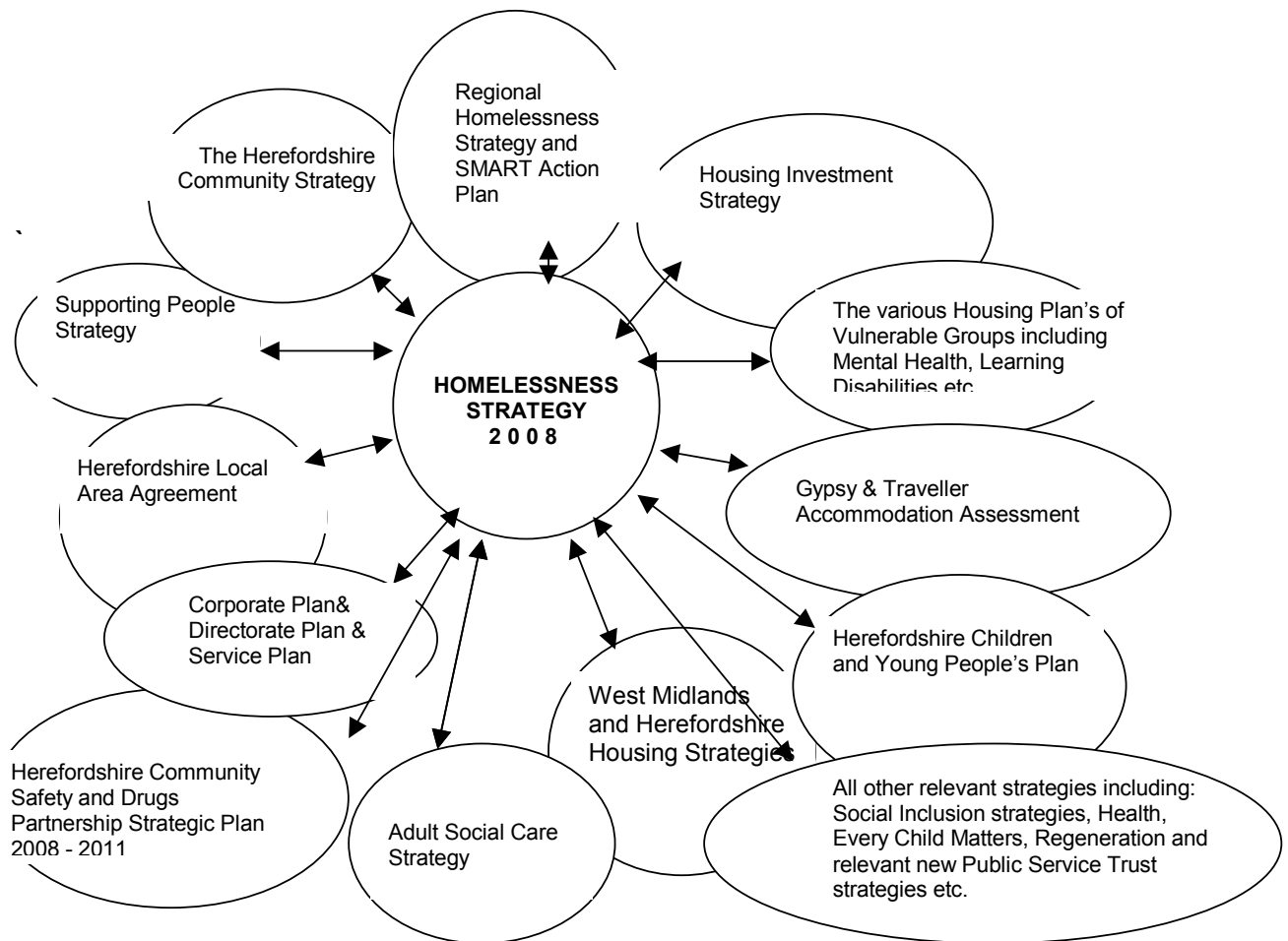
Theme: Economic Development and Enterprise.

Council Priority: To secure the essential infrastructure for a successful economy, enabling sustainable prosperity for all.

The Homelessness Strategy and Action Plan sets out the work we will achieve to encourage previously unemployed homeless service users back into work.

1.6.1 Links to relevant Strategies

To support the joint working approach to tackling homelessness set out in the Strategy, it is essential that, homelessness is viewed as an integral part of the wider strategic and policy framework promoting social inclusion, community safety and developing sustainable communities. To achieve a successful implementation, the aims, objectives and actions set out in the Homelessness Strategy aim to reflect the relevant community and corporate plan priorities. The diagram below has outlined the key strategies and plans that have influenced the development of the Homelessness Strategy and that will impact on its implementation.



1.7 How will we do this?

We will aim to deliver and continually develop our Homeless Strategy Action Plan, which includes a range of prevention measures, advice and advocacy services along with actions to reduce the use of temporary accommodation and increase housing options for vulnerable groups in Herefordshire to meet the needs identified.

In conjunction with Supporting People, we intend to ensure that housing related support is available to address the needs of vulnerable households and work with stakeholder agencies to devise and deliver individual support packages. We will also strive to ensure that support assists individuals in working towards remaining independent.

In developing new ways of working, we will investigate and utilise research and best practice examples drawn from service users along with voluntary and statutory agencies nationwide.

Where an assessment of need identifies a requirement, we will work in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and other accommodation providers to develop new or improved accommodation options. We will also be working to identify ways to remove the barriers to access existing accommodation through initiatives to address issues of exclusion due to a history of vulnerability e.g. Rent arrears or anti-social behaviour.

1.8 The development of the Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy

The development of the Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy has been influenced by the statutory requirement arising from the Homelessness Act 2002. The Act came about from a

realisation that the causes of homelessness are often complex and inter-related and that, with the provision of effective preventative action and joint working between voluntary and statutory agencies, people could be helped before they become homeless. A multi-agency development group produced Herefordshire's first Homelessness Strategy in 2003. In order to implement the 2003 – 2008 Strategy, a Homelessness Strategy co-ordinator was employed in September 2005 by Herefordshire Council and the *Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG)* was established in 2006.

The HSIG includes approximately 16 lead officers from the main relevant Council departments along with the major stakeholders throughout the county. The main aim of this group is to lead on, complete and review the current strategy action plans and develop the 2008 Homelessness Strategy.

Equally importantly it has been prepared in consultation with a wide range of other organisations and draws on the public consultation with service users undertaken to establish the priorities within the Action Plan. The results of the consultation are included throughout the document. Consultation techniques and results are discussed within Section Four of this strategy. Along with consultation, the information on National, Sub regional, County and homelessness trends have also informed the Strategy and the results are included in the review section at appendix two and throughout this Strategy. HSIG is responsible for the Homelessness Strategy and meets quarterly to be updated on the work completed by the lead officers along with progressing the development of the 2008 Homelessness Strategy.

Please see appendix 4 for members of the Herefordshire Homeless Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG).

SECTION TWO - RESOURCES, ISSUES AND SERVICES

This section of the Strategy outlines the main homelessness service provision and comments on the key issues in Herefordshire. Each sub section incorporates the relevant results from the review and consultation (see appendix 1, section 4, appendix 2 and 3). It should be noted that to gather a full picture of this strategy, that the reader will need to review all appendices, particularly appendix one, two and three.

With this information, Herefordshire Council have identified the key gaps in services and set out our actions to achieve the six strategic objectives (detailed in section one) These actions are also displayed on our comprehensive Action Plan, please see appendix 7.

An overview of the current provision of Homelessness Services

The Homelessness and Housing Advice team is based at Herefordshire Council's Garrick House, in the centre of Hereford city. The fourteen members of this team are employed by Herefordshire Council and provide housing advice, signposting and support to vulnerable households across the County. In addition to these duties within office hours, they also provide a nightly out-of-hours and weekend emergency homelessness service on behalf of the Council.

This team receive thousands of enquiries a year from members of the public who have a range of housing issues, as well as from other professionals who may refer their clients to the service for focussed assistance and support. Incoming contacts are made by telephone, email, and in person, if a situation is at crisis point.

When the team receives a call, a Housing Options Officer carries out an initial assessment of the urgency of the situation and makes contact with the enquirer to gather further information, and undertake an assessment of housing need, which is recorded by the team for future reference. Often, callers require advice and assistance over the telephone, and this helps them solve their housing situation without any further help from the team itself. However, incoming housing enquiries can also require a more detailed and intensive response from the service, and in these circumstances, Housing Options Officers will quickly refer the situation onto a Homelessness Prevention Officer, who provides longer-term support, which aims to prevent households becoming homeless in Herefordshire.

There are 4.5 FTE Homelessness Prevention Officers in the team, which will be supported by a Senior Homelessness Prevention Officer, who also carries a caseload, and provides supervision and guidance to colleagues on a regular basis. Homelessness Prevention Officers carry out home visits to vulnerable households in the community, usually within a week of receiving a referral from a Housing Options Officer. During this visit the Homelessness Prevention Officer explains the broader housing context in Herefordshire, and helps devise an action plan, designed to avoid homelessness, and find a suitable housing solution in every case. Prevention Officers are able to call upon the Council's Homelessness Prevention Fund in order to help customers secure housing solutions, and the fund provides help around rent-in-advance, deposits, damages, and rent arrears, together with a range of other incentives designed to increase community stability locally.

Most importantly the team includes two homelessness officers who will undertake formal Homelessness assessments under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002). These two officers are supervised and supported by a Senior Homelessness Officer - together, they help the Council determine what short term and long-term housing duties may be owed to callers in housing crisis.

Support to this team is provided by two administrators, along with strategy development from a Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator.

2.1 Prevention of homelessness

2.1.1 Current picture

The broad focus of this Strategy is to prevent homelessness. Prevention not only involves the development of new initiatives but demands a particular approach to planning and service delivery. Herefordshire's preventative approach to homelessness includes two overarching features: - an efficient Prevention team, coupled with a prevention fund.

The Prevention team working alongside Housing Options and Homelessness officers provide advice, basic support, loans of goodwill including payment of rent arrears, bidding on properties, a rent deposit scheme, sanctuary scheme, mediation scheme and representation, and also develop further accommodation options or initiatives that are available for service users. Where prevention is unachievable, the Prevention team aim to work with other agencies to try to minimise the disruptive impact of homelessness on individuals and households.

In addition to the Homelessness Prevention officers, Supporting People provide essential assistance to many of the Council's prevention objectives and service plan themes and indicators. By providing housing related services to empower clients across all tenures including homeowners and caravans. Supporting People fund the prevention services such as Shelter and SHYPP, which link directly to the count of BVPI 213 for preventing homelessness.

The homelessness prevention related services currently available for people in Herefordshire include: -

- Prevention Officers offering intervention services, advice, home visits, action planning, bidding on properties and signposting with the aim of preventing homelessness.
- A prevention fund, of £168,710 in 2007/2008, is used in many ways, including: - making goodwill payments to parents and friends to maintain a place for someone to stay, paying off rent arrears to ensure that a service user can remain or start a new tenancy.
- Shelter offers a housing related support service for the homeless, both in temporary accommodation and into the first year of their tenancy. This service is funded by Supporting People.
- A rent deposit scheme, which offers the first month's rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables those that may be vulnerable to seek and accept a private sector tenancy.
- The mortgage rescue and low cost home ownership schemes offer assistance to service users to purchase or remain within their own home with the aim of preventing homelessness.
- Increasing awareness of homelessness and prevention by training and awareness days along with attendance at team meetings at many support agencies.
- The Sanctuary scheme offers additional and intensive security measures and equipment to victims of abuse. This scheme is offered in partnership with West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Council and Women's Aid to enable the victim/s to remain within their own home
- Supported Housing for Young People Project (SHYPP) provide a drop in service to all young people under 25 years old providing housing advice and support.
- The Citizens' Advice Bureau offers a general advice service to all clients across Herefordshire on all housing issues.
- CAB also offers a specialist Housing Caseworker to all clients qualifying for legal help, funded by the LSC. This position provides level advice on housing issues including homelessness, possession orders and security of tenure matters.

- Women's Aid offer drop-in surgeries and a free phone number for women experiencing domestic abuse. The support officers will offer housing related advice and signpost to the relevant agencies.
- Home Point offer assistance and advice on registering for affordable housing.
- A mediation service is offered to 16 – 17 year olds and their parents or guardians to improve relationships and encourage a return home or a planned move from home with the aim of preventing youth homelessness.

Ongoing developments

- The re-specification of the rent deposit scheme, with the potential of a dedicated rent deposit scheme officer, funded by Supporting People.
- Supporting People to re-specify the homeless housing related support services in the county, which are to be funded by Supporting People.
- The specification of a service to deal with the Hard to House families to be potentially funded by Supporting People (potentially the family intervention model).
- The research into the provision of an RSL Tenancy Support Officer to assist existing RSL tenants maintain their tenancies with the position to be funded through Supporting People.
- To embed the good practice set out in the Herefordshire RSL homelessness protocol, which lays out the agreement of the county's RSL's to assist Herefordshire Council with the prevention of homelessness.

2.1.2 Prevention issues

The introduction of the Rent Deposit Scheme provides many people, particularly those households that have been found intentionally homeless, with an option and opportunity to access the private rented sector. This vital service can prevent people from becoming rough sleepers or 'sofa surfers' and provides an opportunity for a decent home. However it is noted by the Homelessness team, stakeholders and service users that this service is getting busier. With this in mind, it has been agreed that a dedicated Rent Deposit Scheme Officer is required, in order to improve access, waiting times and avoiding the loss of accommodation. Research is currently being carried out by Supporting People into the possibility of a dedicated officer to run the scheme.

Evidence is currently unavailable to detail the numbers accessing the Homelessness and Prevention service. This is an essential requirement of planning of services and future prevention strategies, and so HSI strongly recommends that this be rectified. BVPI 213 return recorded that the teams carried out 301 prevention cases in 2007 / 2008. However this is not recording the full extent of the work being carried out by the team every day. In 2002, the CLG document 'More than a Roof' concluded that there needed to be a greater emphasis on planning for prevention, which should involve developing research and monitoring that would lead to the development of evidence based strategy.

In 2008/2009, the Homelessness and Prevention team will increase in number as part of an overall structure. However, stakeholders and service users have expressed concern about their access to the service. This may be due to the increased numbers of service users trying to access the service because of increases in house and rental prices, or the increased number of support workers within the county trying to access the team. With these factors unconfirmed and without a recording system, the evaluation of staff is difficult to assess.

In line with the Audit Commission's requirements for an organisation delivering an excellent service, it is important that homelessness services in Herefordshire are to have clearly defined, accessible and regularly updated procedures to ensure that prevention cases are dealt with appropriately, consistently and speedily in line with the relevant guidance. 2008 consultation results have specified a requirement for homelessness and prevention procedures to be produced.

In addition to the direct prevention services offered by the local authority, it is understood that there needs to be joint partnership working for prevention services to be effective. The Homelessness Forum and HSIG both provide forums for the sharing of ideas, planning and information along with individual work with agencies on joint training, which have proved to be very successful. However, it is noted that there is a requirement to improve our partnership working, particularly with local churches. The churches provide essential services to the homeless and may offer the local authority assistance to prevent or reduce the effects of homelessness. We would welcome assistance from the group 'Churches Together' along with other voluntary groups to assist in reducing and preventing homelessness and its effects in the county.

With recent communication from CLG, there should be an assumption that a new request will ask for a Homelessness Prevention Court desk. This is to assist people who are experiencing mortgage repayment difficulties. Previously CAB in Hereford, provided a court desk, with approximately 5 visitors per week. However, as this was not separately funded, the service was discontinued. In the light of the CLG discussions it should be noted that Herefordshire Council will attempt to action this request.

2.1.3 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions: -

- The re-specification of the rent deposit scheme, with the potential of a dedicated Rent Deposit Scheme Officer, funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS3
- Supporting People to re-specify the homeless housing related support services in the county, which are to be funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS23
- To seek the development of a housing related support service to deal with the challenge of Hard to House households whose tenancy history is preventing an offer of settled accommodation.
- Associated with this, to set up a new Homeless Case Panel Action Group to review individual Hard to House cases and to drive forward ideas and solutions with long term planning, potentially using the family intervention model. REF HOS1 and HOS2
- To seek in partnership with the Supporting People programme, the development of an RSL Tenancy Support service to work closely with the Homelessness and Housing Advice team assisting existing RSL tenants to maintain their tenancies. REF: HOS4
- To review the procedures and customer service standards of the Homelessness team to ensure that all homeless and prevention applications are dealt with appropriately, consistently and efficiently. To ensure that the procedures are clearly defined, accessible and followed by staff in line with the Audit Commission Key Line of enquiries requirements. REF: HOS45
- To work in partnership with the voluntary sector including charitable and church organisations working with the homeless, to develop appropriate solutions for Herefordshire to enable emergency access to food and shelter for homeless individuals particularly during periods of cold weather. REF: HOS46 (when temperatures fall below zero degrees for three consecutive nights in line with CLG guidance.)
- An IT system to record prevention and homelessness service users accessing the local authority Homelessness and Prevention service. This system is to record client information. It is a requirement that other agencies such as Home Point and RSL's, Shelter and SHYPP can access and add into this information. REF: HOS39
- To keep under review the resources applied to providing homelessness and housing advice services in Herefordshire in responding to national developments and local demand to housing advice. REF: HOS54
- To develop a court desk service in Herefordshire aimed at preventing homelessness by ensuring households are appropriately advised and supported in cases where repossession proceedings are being taken against them. REF: HOS9

2.2 Advice

2.2.1 Current picture on housing advice

Herefordshire Council recognise that the provision of timely appropriate and accurate housing advice is a crucial part of homelessness prevention as well as a legislative requirement under s166 of the Housing Act 1996. As recently outlined in the CLG paper 'Expanding Choice, Addressing Need', the Enhanced Housing Options approach is a new way of providing housing advice, which empowers clients and transforms lives. This housing option approach fundamentally transforms the way that those in housing need interact with providers of housing advice, therefore the CLG would like to see a wider range of advice being provided across a wider range of clients, including the traditionally hard to reach groups.

The housing related advice services currently available or being developed for people in Herefordshire include: -

- A dedicated Options and Prevention team provided by Herefordshire Council, offering housing options advice, prevention support and funding, along with homelessness advice.
- SHYPP provide a drop in service to all young people under 25 years old providing housing advice and support.
- The Citizens' Advice Bureau offers a general advice service to all clients across Herefordshire on all housing issues.
- CAB also offers a specialist Housing Caseworker to all clients qualifying for legal help, funded by the LSC. This position provides level advice on housing issues including homelessness, possession orders and security of tenure matters.
- Employment and training advice is offered at Connexions for those under 25 years.
- West Mercia Women's Aid have trained support staff who provide housing advice and support, advocacy and emergency accommodation to women experiencing domestic abuse via their free phone helpline, and at Outreach appointments.
- Home Point offer assistance and advice on registering for affordable housing as well as video guides for non-nationals and the hard of hearing.

Ongoing developments

- Investigate the creation of a specialist Advocate Worker position, to work with vulnerable adults, offering assistance through the Home Point systems.

2.2.2 The main issues about advice in Hereford

Within the recent consultation sessions with 23 service users and 66 surveyed service users, the main request made by those surveyed was for improved information and advice from the local authority as well as debt advice. The main requirement is the preparation of leaflets and a directory on homelessness services (including audio and other relevant media). Those consulted requested that this information should be circulated to public, prevention officers and support agencies along with uploading to the web sites.

In addition to these requests by service users, stakeholders requested that a Housing Advice Strategy and Customer Services Charter be prepared with the aim of continuously improving housing advice services to the public.

In order for Herefordshire to ensure the delivery of an excellent service, it is recommended that we should produce a Homelessness Advice Strategy. The updated Audit Commission's key lines of enquiry (KLOE's) will need to be considered along with the Enhanced Housing Options approach.

Although many of the KLOE's have been filtered into this document, it is also recommended that Herefordshire Council review each KLOE and produce a planning document to facilitate Herefordshire's intention to ensure it is delivering an excellent service.

Within recent consultations with service users, requests were made for a one stop shop or information hub for housing and homelessness advice, with some of the comments including: -

"I would like a drop in centre - like the info shops where you can get your (homelessness & housing) advice under one roof."

"So we can get leaflets there and watch information and talk to someone."

"All the forms are in one place."

"So I could see everyone under one roof."

"Someone to see me."

"Somewhere that is open when I come home from work"

"Somewhere I could get benefits, homelessness and Home Point advice"

2.2.3 Key Actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In recognising the important role that timely and appropriate housing advice can play in preventing homelessness, the Council will work with its partners on the following actions in taking forward the Homelessness Strategy.

- To research the benefits advice within the county and produce a signposting pack to the relevant benefits advice services. REF: HOS47
- To produce a number of information leaflets as well as a directory of services in a range of formats appropriate to service users' needs. These need to be circulated to all agencies supporting many client groups. To ensure this information is available on the Council web pages. REF: HOS11
- Investigate the creation of a specialist Advocate Worker position, to work with vulnerable adults offering assistance and advice through the Home Point system. REF: HOS49
- To produce a document outlining and reviewing the requirements of KLOE's (key lines of enquiry). This planning document should detail how Herefordshire will achieve these requirements over the next five years. REF: HOS50
- To produce and implement a Housing Advice Strategy taking into account the latest requirements of the Audit Commission KLOE's along with CLG and relevant guidance. To build in procedures for routine monitoring and staff training on delivering this advice. This is linked to action HOS 50. REF: HOS51
- To review the procedures and customer service standards of the Homelessness team to ensure that all homeless and prevention applications are dealt with appropriately, consistently and efficiently. To ensure that the procedures are clearly defined, accessible and followed by staff in line with the Audit Commission Key Line of enquiries REF: HOS45 and HOS51
- To work jointly with 'Info in Herefordshire' centres to expand their role in the front line provision of homelessness and housing advice supporting the specialist role of the Homelessness team. REF: HOS12
- To research the need and possibility of a one-stop shop / info hub or one conduit for housing related and homelessness advice. This would involve the major agencies, i.e. housing benefit, Home Point, Homelessness and support agency representatives. This will need to be considered in the context of the accommodation strategy REF: HOS56
- To work with Citizens Advice Bureau on the development of a specialist debt advice service in support of homelessness prevention. REF: HOS16

2.3 Affordable housing

2.3.1 Current picture of affordable housing

Since 2003, the Council has secured an additional 683 units of affordable housing; this includes 220 units for low cost home ownership. In addition, 326 empty units around the county have been brought back into use.

In an era of poor affordability in the private sector, many people approach the local authority for advice on how to find a home that is right for them. Herefordshire has experienced significant house price increases in recent years by comparison to wage levels in the County. As a result of this, there is a significant shortage of affordable housing, which increases pressure on the Homelessness services.

Demand for affordable housing is high with approximately 5,500 people on the Home Point housing register. Further statistics and information on affordable housing is provided in appendix one – Review of Homelessness.

Consequentially, addressing the high demand for affordable homes has become a key government priority. In recognition of this demand, the government are investing £8bn in new affordable housing over the next three years and will be providing 70,000 new affordable homes per annum by 2010/2011. To secure sufficient affordable housing is a theme of the Herefordshire Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, in order to meet the needs of local people. The regional spatial strategy partial review has identified increasing housing numbers within the West Midlands region, and Strategic Housing will be working to ensure that this leads to an increase in the supply of affordable housing for Herefordshire. Hereford City's identification as a new growth point and the opportunities within the proposed Edgar Street Grid regeneration will be key to achieving the higher targets set for the county.

The Strategic Housing Service Plan outlines the new supply of housing that will be developed that is accessible to the community, taking account of earnings to house-price pressures within the county As well as making best use of the existing affordable units.

The targets for the oncoming years for additional units are detailed below: -

Targets for affordable housing built or acquired	Total units
2008/2009	200
2009/2010	300
2010/2011	350

Plus the Targets for empty properties back into use	Total
2008/2009	110
2009/2010	120
2010/2011	130

*** This includes the use of a range of initiatives.**

As from May 2008, the Housing Minister announced that new support to help first time buyers into affordable home ownership would be offered. These measures are a key part of the government's priority to ensure a strong, stable economy, and to provide opportunities for all first time buyers with a household income of £60,000 a year or less to apply to buy a share of a home, under a major expansion of the government's Home Buy programme.

The affordable housing and related options / schemes available in Herefordshire include: -

- Affordable homes to rent and shared ownership properties are advertised through the Home Point agency created through a partnership with the largest RSL's in the County. This choice based lettings scheme manages the housing register and covers over 97% of RSL stock in the County.
- The Mortgage Rescue Scheme
- The Low Cost Home Ownership Schemes – providing assistance to people to access the property ladder.
- The Empty Property Strategy ensures that empty properties are brought back into use within the county. Check with NG that is happy with this comment.
- The Local Authority Housing Needs and Development team assess housing needs and work in partnership with RSL's, developers and the housing corporation to increase the supply of affordable housing in the county.

Ongoing developments

- The LAA target to deliver 850 affordable homes over the next 3 years.
- Re-provision of the Women's Aid refuge with a potential of 2 further units.
- The securing of additional 6 – 7 properties for the provision of additional dispersed units of safe accommodation for women experiencing domestic abuse.
- The review of existing initiatives to bring empty properties back into use.
- The Housing Needs and Development team are currently undertaking research around the 'Development of Initiatives to Incentivise Tenants to downsize.' This work is reviewing under occupancy in Herefordshire to encourage and facilitate households that are under occupying to move to more suitable sized properties, and to make better use of the existing housing stock.
- The development of a new Landlords focus group. This will include a group of private sector landlords who will influence the Landlords event bi annually. It is hoped that this group will assist the accreditation scheme.

2.3.2 the main issues of affordable housing

In recent consultation sessions with service users, 15 individual comments were made about the lack of affordable housing within the County including:

"There are not enough private sector properties"

"I keep bidding with Home Point, but there are just not enough properties in Hereford."

"When you rent in the private sector, it is too expensive"

"Landlords do not take benefits or the rent deposit scheme"

"The increase in migrant workers means less private houses are available for rent"

"The Council should offer incentives to landlords to take people"

2.3.3 Key actions

The provision of a range of affordable housing options in working towards a balanced housing market is fundamental to reducing homelessness levels in Herefordshire. In addition to the current range of affordable housing options described above, the Council will work with its partners on the following actions in taking forward the Homelessness Strategy.

- Herefordshire Council will develop a private sector landlord incentive scheme, with the aim of encouraging private sector landlords to offer more homes to vulnerable client groups for a longer period of time, along with taking people on benefits or the rent deposit scheme.
REF: HOS53

- The acquisition and build of targeted affordable housing units as well as empty properties brought back into use.
- The ongoing action by the Housing Needs and Development team.
- To continue to develop the report 'Development of Initiatives for Tenants to downsize.'

2.4 Temporary accommodation

2.4.1 Current picture of temporary accommodation

In light of the Government target to halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010, the provision of affordable housing in the county is critical. This objective has been reflected within Herefordshire's Local Area Agreement and represents the main homelessness target as well as a key objective within this Strategy.

In addition to this target, the council aims to reduce to zero the use of B & B for all 16 and 17 year olds as well as for families with children. Herefordshire Council are working with local specialist youth housing providers on a set of initiatives to minimise the use of Bed and Breakfast for 16 – 17 year olds to ensure that the CLG target is reached by 2010. Stonham have agreed that 16 - 17 year olds will be able to access Pomona Place temporary supported housing in Hereford. Along with this, 7 units of accommodation completed in 2007, with support, are provided to young people leaving care.

2.4.2 Issues about temporary accommodation

16 of those consulted had stated their concerns about the location and quality of temporary accommodation. These concerns included that families with children may be placed away from schools in another town, resulting in children travelling miles to school. The main concern about bed and breakfast is that there are no cooking or washing facilities, which causes families hardship. Those consulted expressed concerns that if they complained about the quality or safety of the temporary accommodation, this may affect their homelessness decision.

16 and 25 individual service users during consultation stated their concern, that there was no facility for single homeless adults within the county, resulting in their sleeping rough or sofa surfing and unable to wash. This issue is reflecting the broader shortage of affordable housing and the fact that the majority of adults over 18 years of age who are homeless will have no duty owed to them in respect of temporary accommodation. The 16 and 25 service users interviewed had requested a direct access hostel or washing facilities.

2.4.3 Key actions

The provision of sufficient accommodation for people who are or may become homeless is a key objective for the Homeless Strategy, it is recognised that the overriding target for temporary accommodation is contained within the Local Area Agreement i.e. – 82 units by 2010/2011. In recognising this, it is important to ensure that the range and quality of temporary accommodation is appropriately matched as far as possible to the needs of those households requiring temporary accommodation. In working towards these objective the council will work with its partners to achieve the following actions: -

- To develop a Temporary Accommodation Strategy with action plan. This Strategy and action plan is to review all current temporary accommodation usage, location and quality, and the facilities for washing and cooking. It also aims to reduce to zero the number of 16 - 17 year olds and/or families with children in bed and breakfast by 2010, also with securing an easily accessed emergency bed in temporary accommodation. REF: HOS6
- To undertake a "Hidden Homeless and Rough Sleeper Needs Analysis" to include a needs mapping exercise to ensure a strategic approach to tackling, managing and reducing homelessness amongst this client group. This Strategy should review the appropriateness and requirement of a direct access hostel or provide alternative solutions. This action links to HOS18. REF: HOS20

- To complete temporary accommodation procedures for staff to follow when placing people in temporary accommodation. These should include a complaints procedure if the temporary accommodation is not adequate. REF: HOS52

2.5 Local Housing Allowance

2.5.1 Current picture

The introduction of the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) is a new factor that needs to be considered in monitoring homelessness. The LHA is a new way for Housing Benefit to be calculated and paid. This scheme introduces a flat rate of maximum benefit based on the area where the applicant lives and the number of occupants in their household. A potential issue is that this benefit is paid directly to claimants unless they are deemed vulnerable.

2.5.2 Main issues

During the initial evaluation of the pilots using the LHA, welfare agencies reported that the LHA appears to have had little impact on existing tenants. However, there is some evidence to suggest that landlords were pulling out of the Housing Benefit market due to a reluctance to rent to new tenants with an unknown housing history, if direct rent payments to the landlord cannot be guaranteed. This could result in homelessness amongst the vulnerable groups showing an increase.

As of April 2008, the Housing Benefits team have reported no changes in number of claims or other issues.

2.5.3 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In recognising the important role that timely and appropriate housing advice can play in preventing homelessness the council will work with its partners on the following actions in taking forward the Homelessness Strategy.

- The review and monitoring of the impact of Local Housing Allowance on the sustainment of tenancies, particularly among vulnerable groups. REF: HOS14

2.6 Health and homelessness

2.6.1 Current picture and issues

There are strong links between the experience of homelessness and poor health. In some cases poor health can be one of the trigger factors leading to homelessness, while in other cases medical problems are caused or exacerbated by sleeping rough or living in cramped or unsuitable temporary accommodation.

Coupled with this, research has shown that people experiencing homelessness have often had greater difficulty accessing primary medical care, this has laid down a number of local priorities for tackling health inequalities, which include improving NHS primary care services and strengthening disadvantaged communities.

We intend to reflect these priorities and seek to reduce the impact of homelessness on individuals' and households' health.

2.6.2 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local

Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers,
the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to reduce the health risks amongst homeless households: -

- To ensure that homeless households in temporary accommodation have continued access to GP / dentist by placing them, if appropriate, in temporary accommodation as close as possible to their last residence. REF: HOS6
- By requesting all temporary accommodation providers inform people of the nearest GP and dentist. REF: HOS6

2.7 Education

2.7.1 Current picture

A history of poor education has been identified as one of the factors that increase an individual's chance of becoming homeless, and in turn children who experience homelessness are highly likely to have a disrupted education. It is important to develop a range of interventions that break this circle.

Research has shown that homeless children can lose a quarter of their schooling during their homeless period, and families often find it difficult to maintain their children's schooling, especially when placed in temporary accommodation. It is imperative, therefore, that the Council maintains its performance in meeting its statutory obligations, using emergency accommodation only for a short while before households are housed in permanent accommodation.

Herefordshire SHYPP began the 'Schools Education Project' in 2006 with the aim of providing homelessness education in schools. SHYPP officers, along with young volunteers or mentors who have accessed the SHYPP service, aim to provide valuable housing and homelessness education to 14 and 15 year olds. This is expected to reduce and prevent homelessness for the future amongst young people and is linked to the LAA indicators.

2.7.2 Main issues

There is a requirement in Herefordshire from those consulted that additional support or advice is provided to homeless families in temporary accommodation, to ensure that children are able to continue attending school wherever possible. Service users requested the possibility of developing links with schools near temporary accommodation, to ensure that the schools are able or willing to take children on a temporary basis along with ensuring that support is available to assist parents in approaching a new school where necessary.

2.7.3 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve education amongst homeless households: -

- To continue to fund a tenancy support service for families with children.
- To continue to fund the Schools Education Project and review the opportunities for expansion.
- To ensure that families accessing temporary accommodation reside as close to their last residence as possible. To link into the Temporary Accommodation Strategy – to ensure a good spread of accommodation around the county to minimise the disruption to education or unrealistic demands for travel. REF: HOS6

2.8 Employment and life skills

2.8.1 Current picture

1,517 people were claiming unemployment benefit in Herefordshire in January 2008, in comparison to 1,634 in January 2007. Employment within Hereford is identified as a strategic centre in the current Regional Spatial Strategy. In line with the HQN Strategy Excellence Network advice on Strategies, it is important that Herefordshire builds on the links to other Strategies, particularly those that are built on the links being made at national level. An example of this to be considered within Herefordshire is to work with long-term hostel residents to move successfully into work and settled accommodation.

Women's Aid currently offer a rolling programme of group work for their service users, groups focus on life skills such as budgeting, cooking on a budget, returning to work, legal workshops, parenting under stress, DIY, confidence and assertiveness.

2.8.2 Main issues

During recent consultation sessions, 36 service users requested life skills and employment advice services. In addition to this result, consultation with 67 service users in Hereford revealed that 62% of those surveyed were not working part time or full time or attending any government schemes.

The link between unemployment and homelessness is shown to be significant. It is vital therefore, for all agencies concerned to target, encourage and enable service users to aim to access employment and training.

2.8.3 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSI officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve employment and life skills amongst homeless households: -

- To develop links with the Learning & Skills Council and Job Centre, encouraging attendance at HSI. REF: HOS58
- To investigate in discussion with Childrens services the need for a 'life skills training service.' With life skills trainer rolling training sessions on subjects such as budgeting, child care, time management for household responsibilities, debt advice, anger management, nutrition and cooking, finding a new house, assertiveness, employment and education advice. The trainer can signpost to other services within the training session. This should aim to be a direct access service. REF: HOS55

2.9 Crime and community safety

2.9.1 Current picture

Anti-social behaviour can lead to homelessness for both the perpetrator and victim. However, information gathered indicates that a range of measures are being used in Herefordshire, which tackle anti-social behaviour before it leads to homelessness. Herefordshire's Registered Social Landlords have developed an extensive range of interventions aimed at dealing with anti-social behaviour with eviction being seen as the last resort. These interventions include the use of neighbourhood mediation schemes, tenancy support, tenant involvement officers, signing up to the RSL homelessness prevention protocol and also the use of Anti-social Behaviour Orders.

The Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership tackle anti social behaviour through multi-agency tasking and co-ordination. Their priority to deal with anti social behaviour is one of five priorities set out with their strategic plan 2008 – 2011.

2.9.2 Main issues

There are a low number of people accepted as homeless by the Council after leaving their homes due to non-domestic violence or threats of violence.

Main Reason for Homelessness Priority	2003 /2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/2008
Fleeing violence excluding domestic violence	5	7	2	3	1

Although numbers are small, it is still necessary to consider what is available to households who are evicted or have to leave due to anti-social behaviour, and whether specialist support is available to reduce the possibility of repeat homelessness.

2.9.3 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIIG officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improving opportunities to those excluded from housing in the county due to crime and anti social behaviour: -

- To continue to take a multi agency approach in addressing anti-social behaviour.
- To ensure that support is available to those who may be at risk of homelessness through perpetrating anti-social behaviour. REF: HOS33
- To seek the development of a housing related support service to deal with the challenge of Hard to House households whose tenancy history is preventing an offer of settled accommodation. Associated with this, to set up a new Homeless Case Panel Action Group to review individual Hard to House cases and to drive forward ideas and solutions with long term planning, potentially using the family intervention model. REF: HOS1

2.10 Research

2.10.1 Current picture

This Strategy bases the assessment of the levels of need on a combination of returns the Council has to make to government, along with statutory agencies' own data, and on the outcomes of specialist research and monitoring exercises that have been carried out. However, in order to prevent future homelessness, it is important to gain a fuller picture of need in the county, and to monitor the numbers of people who could not be accommodated or supported, what their support needs were, and make some assessment of why they were unable to access suitable services.

2.10.2 Main issues

It is recognised that there is a necessity for a comprehensive needs mapping system to be developed which would gather both qualitative and quantitative information about service users, and also about those who were unable to access services. It is also acknowledged that there are a number of identified gaps in our understanding of homelessness in Herefordshire. Gaps include levels of homelessness, especially for single homeless or those not presenting to the local authority, key reasons for homelessness and needs of specific groups. It is also necessary to consider the effectiveness of current provision, particularly with regard to tackling repeat homelessness.

2.10.3 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local

Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve data collection and targeting of homeless services: -

- The development of an IT system to record service users accessing the local authority Homelessness and Prevention service. This system is to record client information. It is a requirement that other agencies such as Home Point and RSL's, Shelter and SHYPP can access and add into this information. REF: HOS39
- A 'hidden homeless' or presenters survey to review the true numbers of homeless single people presenting to agencies within Herefordshire. Links to action HOS20. REF: HOS18

SECTION 3 - REVIEW OF THE MAIN NEED GROUPS IN HEREFORDSHIRE

This section of the Strategy reviews the main need groups in Herefordshire, outlining the current services available within the county. Results from the consultation are inherently considered throughout this section with the key gaps or issues for that need group recorded. These views are taken to formulate the set of key proposals and actions to be achieved in the next 5 years to form the Homelessness Strategy. The key issues and consequent actions suggested within each need group are linked to performance indicators and other relevant strategies within the attached Action Plan. This is to ensure a flow of the document and ease of reading.

3.1 BME groups including migrant workers

Nationally, people from BME groups are more likely to experience homelessness. In 2005, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimated that 3.7% of Herefordshire's total resident population was from an ethnic minority (6,600 people).

Homelessness figures for 2007/2008 show that out of a total of 206 decisions, 5 were from households describing themselves as BME. This represents a low number of 2.5 % of applications. We aim to ensure that BME communities are not disproportionately affected by homelessness, and where a household is threatened with homelessness, the advice, accommodation and support offered is culturally and ethnically appropriate and appropriate services are provided for both newly arrived and established BME communities.

In addition to the BME statistics, it should be noted that all population estimates are based on the concept of 'usual residence'; therefore a short-term migrant will not be included in any estimates of resident population. The figures for migrant workers in Herefordshire can be represented with the annual registrations for a national insurance number, which have increased dramatically to 2,120 in Herefordshire in 2007. Anecdotal evidence from the Homelessness team state that migrant workers are not currently accessing the Homelessness service in large numbers. However it is recommended that the evidence and needs of this group are reviewed regularly by Herefordshire Council to ensure that these groups are catered for in the event of increasing numbers or crisis.

The housing services currently available for BME groups in Herefordshire: -

- Migrant workers' schemes and advice
- Diversity workers in council
- A "Welcome to Herefordshire" web site offering housing and homelessness advice to migrant workers, which is translated into 4 languages
- The video "talking guides" provide housing advice and information in video format to 6 languages including English, Russian, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese and British Sign Language. This ensures Home Point advice is available to the BME groups and those that are unable to read English easily.
- West Mercia Women's Aid is currently recruiting a Polish speaking support worker to work with Polish and eastern European women affected by domestic abuse.

3.2 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice and opportunities for BME groups.

- To improve Information - prepare leaflets on homelessness services (including audio and other relevant media) to be prepared and circulated to public, prevention officers and support agencies, along with uploading to the web sites, the circulation of these leaflets should also be made specifically to BME groups in conjunction with the Diversity team at Herefordshire Council. Groups. REF: HOS11
- Research and prepare a Housing Advice Strategy to be prepared with the aim of improving housing advice services to the public. REF: HOS51
- To prepare a Directory of Homelessness and Related Services - to be used by service users and support teams. REF: HOS13
- To prepare an annual review of key information particularly for migrant workers, BME groups, teenage pregnancies and care leavers. This information will be reviewed by HSI and any appropriate actions planned. REF: HOS14

3.3 Care Leavers

Those young people that are ‘looked after’ are eligible for continued support from Social Services to help them towards independence up to the age of 20 years. The Children (Leaving Care) Act 2002 sets out how this process should be achieved. The Homelessness Act 2002 states that care leavers aged 18 and under 21 who are “former relevant children” that become homeless are the responsibility of the local authority and are automatically in the priority need category.

The number of ‘looked after’ children in Herefordshire averages around 170 per year, the majority of which are placed in local authority foster care. Care leavers aged 16 – 21 are able to access supported lodgings through providers approved by the Children and Young People’s Directorate. In addition to this, care leavers are encouraged to remain with their foster parents.

As we can see from the table below, 3 homeless acceptances were made for this group in 2007/2008, these three care leavers were from out of county arrangements. It is suggested that the low number in acceptances in this group was due to the ‘Home Point Care Leavers’ Protocol’. This protocol ensures that care leavers are given priority status on the Housing waiting list, 6 months prior to their 18th birthday. This provides enough time to find accommodation before the young person has to leave the care system, along with the introduction of the 7 Supported Housing After Care units in 2008 (SHAC) and dedicated support officer. This has assisted indirectly in the reduction of homelessness.

Priority Reason for Homelessness	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Care leaver aged 18 to 20	6	10	8	11	1	3

What homelessness and housing services are currently available for care leavers in Herefordshire?

- Priority status is given to care leavers, 6 months prior to their 18th birthday to ensure they can find housing
- 7 units within general needs housing with housing related support are available to care leavers.
- A dedicated SHAC (Supported Housing for After Care) support officer based at SHYPP provides outreach support to those living in the 7 independent after care units
- 4 units available within the SHYPP foyers for after care young people
- New Dawn agency offers intensive support for young people. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people leaving care or with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health or previous housing difficulties.
- Supported lodgings through approved providers
- To remain with foster parents
- Pomona Place temporary supported housing accepts homeless young

- people aged 16 years and over.
 - Under the Homelessness Act 2002 if care leavers aged 16 or 17 who are “relevant children” become homeless, Social Services have the responsibility for providing them with accommodation and support.
- Ongoing developments**
- Strategic Housing with the assistance of Supporting People plan to roll out the Move On Planned Protocol (MOPP) to their providers in Herefordshire. This will inform strategic considerations in relation to accommodation needs and provide an aid to strategic planning.

3.4 Key actions for Care Leavers

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to prevent homelessness amongst those fleeing violence: -

- Due to the provision of additional units and the successful protocols between Aftercare, SHYPP and Home Point, it is not considered that any further units are required. However it has been suggested this be monitored and reviewed as part of the Action Plan and that accommodation services as detailed above should continue if appropriate.
- The number of care leavers applying as homeless will be reviewed by HSIg annually to ensure that any appropriate actions are planned. REF: HOS14
- Strategic Housing with the assistance of Supporting People plan will aim to roll out the Move On Planned Protocol (MOPP) to their providers in Herefordshire. This will inform strategic considerations in relation to accommodation needs and provide an aid to strategic planning.

3.5 Domestic abuse and those fleeing violence

Domestic abuse has a devastating effect on the people and the families who experience it. The Homelessness Act 2002 recognises this and has extended the provisions of the existing legislation and specified that anyone suffering violence or at risk of suffering violence within or from outside the home would be categorised as a priority need group.

Reasons for loss of last home	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Relationship breakdown (violent)	77	89	114	103	37	46
Main reasons for priority need						
Fleeing violence	20	35	44	30	10	17
Of which, domestic violence *	17	30	37	28	7	16

* This is the main reason for priority. However, if a family with children were fleeing domestic abuse, they would be placed in a different category with the main reason as a ‘family with children.’

Although there has been a drop in 2007/2008 to 46 acceptances, those giving the reason of ‘violent relationship breakdown’ form the third largest group of people reporting the loss of their settled home. The reason for the decline to 46 acceptances since 2005/2006 is not quite clear. However, it is important to note that the overall number of acceptances in all categories had remained fairly constant over the period, with violent relationship breakdown remaining at 25% in 2006, 25% in 2007 and 22% in 2008, if shown as a percentage of all homeless acceptances.

Women's Aid and Herefordshire Refuge Statistics	2002/ 2003	2003 /2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007
Number of Women's Aid helpline calls from Herefordshire callers	498	503	541	563	630
Numbers of women accommodated in refuge	56	47	46	30	23
Number of requests for space when refuge is full from Herefordshire applicants	36	46	57	62	70

As can be seen from the table above, the numbers of women and children accommodated has been decreasing, with a corresponding and considerable increase in the number of local requests for space when the refuge was full. It seems the demand is there, but the refuge has been unable to meet this demand because families have been staying in the refuge too long. This may mean that the refuge is effectively 'blocked' with families waiting for general needs accommodation. It is suggested that Herefordshire Council review these women's waiting times and their homeless applications, in light of the decrease in Homeless acceptances from women fleeing domestic abuse.

Anecdotal evidence suggests that there are increasing calls to the police and Women's Aid from same sex couples, with one of the couple claiming domestic violence. At this point, there is no statistical information to back up this evidence, but it should be noted that figures might need to be collected from Women's Aid, the police and Homelessness team to provide information on needs assessment in the future.

The homelessness and housing related services currently available for people experiencing domestic abuse in Herefordshire: -

- Women's Aid 24hr free phone helpline, offering advice and support as well as arranging emergency accommodation.
- Women's Aid floating support is a county wide specialist service for women and children affected by domestic abuse.
- Women's Aid refuge offering 7 units of accommodation, which housed 35 households in 2007/2008 (plus 10 emergency admissions on the sofa bed)
- Sanctuary Scheme offering security measures and equipment with the assistance of West Mercia Police, Herefordshire Council and Women's Aid to enable the victim or family to remain within their own home
- A pilot IDVA (Independent Domestic Violence Advisor) from 2008 – 2011, funded by Supporting People and managed by Women's Aid. Provide support to victims who are assessed as being at high risk.
- Dedicated domestic abuse time allotted every Friday in Hereford magistrates courts
- The Freedom Programme providing domestic abuse prevention and recovery training to victims of domestic abuse. This service is managed by Women's Aid and provided by accredited Freedom trainers.

Ongoing developments

- With a housing needs analysis completed, the planned re-provision of the Women's Aid refuge in Hereford City requesting two additional units of accommodation
- A proposal to secure 5 or 6 dispersed properties at any one time from the County RSL stock. These properties will provide move-on or safe alternative accommodation from the Women's Aid refuge and will also enable grown up children to live with their families. Intensive floating support will be provided

by Women's Aid. (As per Homeless Strategy 2003)

- The establishment and set up of a service called MARAC in Herefordshire (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference). This multi agency panel provides support and assistance for victims of serious domestic abuse. The panel includes members such as the Police, Women's Aid, Probation, Health and the local authority and aims to offer a joined-up approach to assisting high risk victims of domestic abuse
- The update of a Domestic Abuse Strategy to be completed by the DA forum in 2008.
- To employ a dedicated DA / MARAC co-ordinator within Herefordshire Community Safety and Drug Partnership (included in their strategy 2008 – 2011)
- A proposal to further expand the Women's Aid outreach support service to offer increased support to children living in the community who are affected by domestic abuse with the assistance of Supporting People funding.

3.6 Key actions for those fleeing violence.

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to prevent homelessness amongst those fleeing violence: -

- The planned retroversion of the Women's Aid refuge in Hereford City, with a potential of two additional units of accommodation. REF: HOS 31
- A proposal to investigate with RSL's the provision of 5 or 6 properties at any one time, from the county RSL stock. These properties will provide move-on or alternative accommodation from the Women's Aid refuge. This will also enable grown up children to live with their families. Women's Aid will provide intensive floating support. REF: HOS32
- To co-operate in the setting up and implementation of a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) panel in Herefordshire, to provide joined-up approach to assisting high-risk victims of domestic abuse. REF: HOS33
- The completion of a Domestic Abuse Strategy to be completed by the DA forum in 2008. REF: HOS34
- To support the employment of a dedicated DA / MARAC co-ordinator. To be managed by the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership (included in their strategy 2008 – 2011) REF: HOS35
- To review the proposal to further expand the Women's Aid outreach support service to offer support to children living in the community affected by domestic abuse. REF: HOS36
- To promote joint working between the Homelessness & Prevention Service and Women's Aid. Women's Aid to support and advocate for service users wanting to access the Homelessness team. REF: HOS37.
- To review the decrease in numbers of women fleeing domestic abuse accessing the Homeless team. REF: HOS9

3.7 Excluded from services due to multiple and complex needs

Case Scenario;

'John' says, "I have had a rocky past, I have been evicted from a few places a number of years ago as I was loud and took drugs and built up a fair bit of debt. I also go into prison sometimes. I can't find work or anywhere to live. I mainly sleep rough."

Excluded groups are by their very nature difficult to describe. However this group could include households who have been excluded from accommodation and/ or services due to anti-social or violent behaviour, substance misuse or history of offending. Those who are excluded are often

deemed to have "multiple and complex needs." The term in this instance is used to describe an individual that is not owed a legal duty by any team or Act or may be excluded from a services support because of their past actions with support workers. These individuals often have more than one type of support need, which may include minor mental health problems, anti-social behaviour, anger management, debt problems etc.

A significant number of those who find themselves excluded from services sleep rough whilst others stay temporarily with friends or family, or in temporary accommodation supplied by the local authority. One support worker stated "that these clients take up the time of many agencies, trying to 'make them fit in', they must cost the system a fortune."

Herefordshire does not have a specialist and specific accommodation project dealing with those excluded from the services for various reasons and consequently staff and stakeholders have reported that there is a lack of appropriate accommodation or intensive support for some of these clients excluding those with drug or substance misuse issues.

In addition to the problems accessing accommodation for this group, there are also statements that there is a lack of clarity about exclusions from accommodation along with the over-ruling of clients on waiting lists. Agencies have stated that sometimes when individuals are banned or over-ruled from using particular services or applying for housing, it can be unclear why the skip or exclusion has occurred, whether there is an appeal procedure, and when the ban can be reviewed. This might result in individuals who believe themselves to be banned not accessing services or applying for housing when in fact, the ban has expired or is no longer relevant.

The housing services currently available for people that have been excluded from services in Herefordshire: -

- Carr Gomm service based within FACT and the Assertive Outreach Team provide housing related support and floating support to users of the Mental Health service
- The local authority offers a rent deposit scheme, which offers the first month's rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables those that may be vulnerable to seek and accept a private sector tenancy
- Shelter offer a housing related support service for those with multiple and complex needs excluded from services both in temporary accommodation and into the first year of a tenancy.
- Women's Aid provide refuge and housing related floating support services to women affected by domestic abuse, who also have additional complex needs.

Ongoing developments

- Supporting People to re-specify the homeless housing related support services in the county, which are to be funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS23

3.8 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers,

the Council will work with it's partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice and opportunities for those excluded from services: -

- A 'hidden homeless' or presenters' survey to review the true numbers and reasons of homelessness presenting to agencies within Herefordshire. REF: HOS18
- To seek the development of a housing related support service to deal with the challenge of Hard to House households whose tenancy history is preventing an offer of settled accommodation. Associated with this, to set up a new Homeless Case Panel Action Group

to review individual Hard to House cases and to drive forward ideas and solutions with long term planning, potentially using the family intervention model. REF HOS1

- To encourage agencies including Home Point landlords to have a statement of their exclusion policies, which include the right of appeal and process for review of exclusion. HOS24

3.9 Ex-offenders

There is a general lack of information about the levels of homelessness amongst ex-offenders. Under the Homelessness Act 2002 ex-offenders should be accepted as being in priority need if it is established that they are vulnerable as result of their time spent in prison. In the year 2006/2007, Herefordshire Council accepted zero ex-offenders as being owed the full duty on this basis. It is highly likely, however, that those individuals who had an offending background were accepted on other grounds of vulnerability including substance misuse and mental health as they quite often chose not to disclose their criminal history.

The initial support service available to ex-offenders is West Mercia Probationary Service. This service is responsible for managing ex-offenders who have been in custody and now are on licence or are serving community sentences.

An offender management programme also exists to support prolific offenders defined as those who have been in the criminal justice system three times or more in the space of three years. The Prolific and Priority Offenders (PPO) scheme deal with a small number of offenders in the locality who are responsible for committing the majority of crime. The aim of this scheme is to reduce the risks of re-offending.

Brailey House in Worcester currently offers high surveillance 'approved premises' (bail hostel) for those returning to the area. A number of clients living at this hostel have found it difficult to find move-on to accommodation in Herefordshire. The probationary manager recently reported that one offender had been unable to find somewhere to live for the past 6 months and was still looking. This leads to the approved premises being blocked. In addition to this issue, Bridge House, supported transitional housing for ex-offenders in Hereford is currently reporting a waiting list of 9 as of May 2008; it should be considered that this figure may not be the full picture of those waiting, as referrals may not arrive if the accommodation is already full.

In addition to these services available to ex-offenders, Herefordshire has a record of excellent engagement with the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPAs) processes and has successfully managed the risk posed by some offenders through the provision of appropriated accommodation. The MAPPAs panel ensure that all applicants who may pose a serious risk to the public have access to the social housing providers. The purpose is two-fold - to minimize the risk to an individual or the public as a whole, and also to minimise the risk to the offender. The ability to find this settled accommodation makes monitoring safer and can reduce the risk of further offences being committed.

In 2007, The Regional Offender Management Delivery Group analysed the volume and range of offender housing need data in this region. GOWM commented that the amount and quality of data relating to housing need is growing and will increase significantly over the next three years.

Pathway Delivery Group results of housing need assessment of ex-offenders (through probation)	% of assessments that record a significant housing need inc short term accommodation required	% of those with a housing need that include a housing objective in the sentence plan	% of those with a housing need that record a housing intervention in the sentence plan
Herefordshire Probationary Services	36%	23%	17%

The table above details 59% of offenders have accommodation issues. In 36% of cases, the accommodation problem is directly linked to offending, for example in the case of sex offending. This information has never been translated into strategic priorities

With this in mind, a full needs analysis is required to assess the need for housing solutions for this group and the relevant support required. However any future investment in this area in common with all other client groups will be subject to the availability of Supporting People funding.

Some of the key housing services currently available for ex-offenders in Herefordshire are:

- Bridge House offer units of supported accommodation for ex offenders
- Carr Gomm provide tenancy support service in partnership with FACT
- Rent deposit Scheme
- Low cost home ownership schemes in the County
- New Dawn is a support agency offering intensive support for young people. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health needs or previous housing difficulties
- Floating support service provided by Stonham to offenders to assist with issues such as housing related support.
- Brailey House in Worcester is the 'approved premises' for offenders.

Ongoing developments

- Prison leavers' discharge protocol is currently being used in Shropshire, this is planned to be extended to Herefordshire in 2008/2009.
- A creation of a wrap around service for drug and alcohol service users along with offenders. The housing related support element is to be funded through Supporting People.
- The re-specification of the housing related support service funded by Supporting People.

3.10 Key actions

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSI officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice and opportunities for ex-offenders: -

- To develop and implement a joint housing and probation services protocol for the assessment and referral of offenders to homeless services which is to provide a housing link scheme to work with offenders due for discharge to assist them in attaining appropriate housing and support. REF: HOS22
- Supporting People to re-specify the homeless housing related support services in the county, which are to be funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS23
- A creation of a wrap around service for drug and alcohol service users along with offenders. The housing related support element is to be funded through Supporting People. REF: HOS15
- A housing needs analysis to be carried out to identify the numbers and housing options required for ex-offenders. REF: HOS57

3.11 Gypsies and travellers

One of the intentions of Government policy towards Gypsy and traveller accommodation is to 'mainstream' provision as far as possible. Thus the Housing Act 2004 makes it clear that Gypsy and traveller accommodation needs are to be assessed just as all other needs are, and are to be

included in local authority Housing Strategies as well as in local planning documents. However, it is clear that Government policy is not to encourage Gypsies and travellers to live in mainstream housing but to make culturally acceptable provision in the form of caravan sites.

Government policy and the courts have accepted that some Gypsies and travellers have a strong cultural aversion to living in bricks and mortar, and that their wishes should be met as far as possible.

The 2006 Homelessness Code of Guidance refers specifically to Gypsies and travellers, reminding authorities of their duties. Someone is homeless when they live in a moveable dwelling (caravan) and have nowhere they can legally live in it. This means that, for a Gypsy and traveller with an evidenced marked cultural aversion to bricks and mortar, 'suitable' accommodation would be a place on a caravan site if at all possible.

The Housing Strategy for Herefordshire 2005-2008 requests for a strategy in reply to the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment of 2007, which reviewed the current accommodation provision and the future needs in Shropshire, Herefordshire, Telford & Wrekin and Powys.

Anecdotally, Gypsies and travellers do live in bricks and mortar housing. However, there is no source of information, which provides the numbers of Gypsies and travellers that currently live in housing. This is true nationally, regionally and locally.

In April 2008, of the 5,314 applicants on the Home Point client database, only 13 identified themselves as 'Gypsy/Romany traveller', and 4 as 'other traveller'. About 20 families are thought to have moved from sites to housing over the past 5 years. Most will not identify themselves as travellers for fear of discrimination, so these figures are not reflective of the true situation.

There are also issues around appropriate service delivery and potential support needs for Gypsies and Travellers in housing. Specialist support is required. A number have had 'run-ins' with authorities because they do not feel that anyone is listening to them or taking account of their cultural needs. Many Gypsies and travellers are very 'private' people and do not like to discuss personal issues with outsiders they do not trust.

Housing services currently available for travellers and Gypsies in Herefordshire: -

- The Herefordshire Council Gypsy and traveller liaison officer offering support and advice in the county to local authority site residents and housed Gypsies and travellers.
- A Herefordshire Traveller Health project worker.
- A pilot scheme providing housing related floating support funded by Supporting People. This service provides a specialist Gypsy and Traveller Housing Support Officer to offer housing related support services to Gypsies and travellers living or looking to move into bricks and mortar accommodation. The current caseload has been increased to 8 cases.
- In addition, a number of generic Supporting People housing related support services and other mainstream housing support and related services which Gypsies and travellers may be able to access including the Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

Ongoing developments

- A working group at local level are taking forward the actions of the housing assessment, in order to secure 100 pitches throughout the County by 2012 and improve the quality and methods of allocating pitches.

A sub regional group will look at cross boundary working.

3.12 Main issues for Gypsies and Travellers in Herefordshire

More recently, a representative of the Herefordshire Traveller Health Project noted that the project case log reveals growing accommodation problems (usually concerning moves to or between housing) being faced by traditional Gypsies and travellers. The Project is finding these problems harder to solve.

3.13 Some of the main issues noted in stakeholder interviews are:

Gypsies and travellers are obviously affected by housing market pressures on social housing like everyone else. This means longer waits for everyone, especially for larger families who need 4 bedroom properties.

General access issues will affect Gypsies and travellers. For example, increasing emphasis on homelessness prevention increases the importance of private tenancies where Gypsies and travellers may face discrimination.

The Herefordshire Gypsy Liaison Officer works to support housed Gypsies and travellers. The main issues she comes across are neighbor problems, discrimination and harassment, anti-social behavior, filling in forms, and liaison with education, health and other services. A few Gypsies and travellers do not manage in housing even with her support.

A number of stakeholder interviewees raised concerns about a general lack of awareness amongst generic service staff of Gypsy and traveller issues and cultures. This was reaffirmed in the Gypsy and traveller interview survey: over 50% of interviewees felt people working in different services needed to be more aware of Gypsy and traveller cultures, ways of life and issues affecting them. Comments offered in the interviews with Gypsies and travellers illustrate this.

Consultees have requested that information on site/plot availability is easily accessed and that the outcome of applications and the assessment process is transparent. There has been a request that the advertising of plots / sites go through Home Point with a board approving the placement.

In September 2007, Supporting People commissioned Shelter to launch a pilot service supporting Gypsies and travellers with a diverse range of issues including homelessness, arrears, and neighbor and landlord disputes. The largest reported problems are unsuitable accommodation and tenancy support requirements. Due to the complexity of the cases, the new officer's caseload is currently 8 clients, however a waiting list is in operation with 3 households waiting to access support as of April 2008. Along with this detailed support, Shelter have put in place a service that will offer immediate support to signpost clients to other specialist services where appropriate, to ensure that immediate needs are being met.

3.14 Key actions for Gypsies and Travellers

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSI officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for Gypsies and Travellers: -

- The progression of the 'Housing Needs of Gypsies and Travellers Working Group' to deliver the findings of the 'Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment 2007'. This could support the needs analysis and commissioning framework for the future. Links to HOS41 REF: HOS40
- The 'Housing Needs of Gypsies and Travellers Working Group' to request discussion, consideration and review of the allocation procedures of allocating pitches or site placements. REF: HOS38
- To investigate the possibility of housing allocation teams throughout the county registering on the Home Point system a Gypsy or traveller being housed in bricks and mortar. REF: HOS41
- To continue to consider the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in developing housing-related support services throughout Herefordshire.

3.15 Homeless families

The “applicant with children” homeless category is the largest category in Herefordshire, making up 129 acceptances out of 206 in 2007/2008. Homeless couples or individuals who have responsibility for dependent children would be assessed as having a priority need by the local authority, depending on their circumstances, they are likely to be eligible for the full housing duty. Families, where a duty has been accepted, usually receive a priority status and would have a short stay in temporary accommodation until they secure accommodation through Home Point or other permanent accommodation. Whilst it is recognised that any time spent in temporary accommodation can be difficult and disruptive for the households involved, in 2004 the Government passed regulations prohibiting the accommodation of homeless households with dependent children in bed & breakfast accommodation for more than six weeks, this target has been further extended with a CLG target of zero families in bed & breakfast by the year 2010.

The Herefordshire team are committed to complying with this target and have reduced the average length of time spent in temporary accommodation to 5 weeks in bed & breakfast. In addition to this target, the majority of those interviewed during consultation in Herefordshire, requested research around placements in temporary accommodation including the locations, the quality and the suitability. A key priority of Herefordshire Council is that a Temporary Accommodation Strategy is researched and implemented.

County wide, homeless families are to be treated as a priority in line with the Local Area Agreement performance indicators and the themes of the Herefordshire Community Strategy. A relevant Council Priority is: To maximise the health, safety, economic wellbeing, achievements and contribution of every child

Supporting People and Herefordshire Council commissioned the Shelter housing support service in August 2005, to work with families and individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The clients that have been referred to the Shelter service require intensive support in a broad range of housing related areas. Since its launch, Shelter has received 378 referrals for support and in April 2008, there were 27 households on the Shelter waiting list. It has also been noted by Herefordshire Council that the Herefordshire figure for relationship breakdown (violent and non violent) of 35% is higher than the national average of 20% in 2007. It is suggested that the Homeless Strategy Co-ordinator investigates this and targets work accordingly.

Homeless Families	2002/ 2003	2003 /2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/2008
Applicant with children	206	236	245	235	92	129
Average length of stay in bed and breakfast for FWC						5 weeks
Shelter Waiting List	April 2007	April 2008				
Number on waiting list	0	27				
Current case load	60	70				

Housing services currently available for families with dependent children in Herefordshire: -

- Emergency temporary accommodation for applicants with children if required.
- Shelter offers a housing related support service for families with children both in temporary accommodation and into the first year of a tenancy.
- Women’s Aid provides intensive housing related support to families who have been affected by domestic abuse, both in temporary accommodation and own tenure.
- The local authority offers a rent deposit scheme. This scheme offers the first month’s rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables those that may be vulnerable to seek and accept a private sector tenancy.

- Housing advice along with home visits by the Council's homeless prevention officers.
- Application to the local authority prevention fund offers an opportunity for previous rent arrears to be paid to allow for a new tenancy to begin or bills to be paid to maintain a tenancy.
- The mortgage rescue and low cost home ownership schemes with the aim of preventing homelessness.
- A potential priority status on the local Home Point register to enable families to find accommodation as quickly as possible.

Ongoing developments

- The re-specification of the rent deposit scheme, with the potential of a dedicated rent deposit scheme officer, funded by Supporting People.
- The re-specification of the homeless services in the County funded by Supporting People.
- The specification of a service to deal with the Hard to House families to be potentially funded by Supporting People (potentially the family intervention model).
- Research into the provision of an RSL Tenancy Support Officer to assist existing RSL tenants to maintain their tenancies, with the position to be funded through Supporting People.

3.16 Key actions for homeless families

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for homeless families: -

- To seek the development of a housing related support service to deal with the challenge of Hard to House households whose tenancy history is preventing an offer of settled accommodation. Associated with this, to set up a new Homeless Case Panel Action Group to review individual Hard to House cases and to drive forward ideas and solutions with long term planning, potentially using the family intervention model. REF: HOS1
- To improve homelessness prevention for families, to potentially acquire a small number of appropriate properties to provide intensively supported transitional housing for families with children who have been found intentionally homeless or who are hard to house. Potentially to research the family intervention model with the assistance of supporting people. REF: HOS2
- The re-specification of the rent deposit scheme, with the potential of a dedicated rent deposit scheme officer funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS3
- To seek in partnership with the Supporting People programme, the development of an RSL Tenancy Support service to work closely with the Homelessness and Housing Advice team assisting existing RSL tenants to maintain their tenancies. REF: HOS4
- To develop a joint Housing and Social Services protocol for early intervention where children are at risk of homelessness. REF: HOS5
- To develop and implement a 'Temporary Accommodation Strategy' with action plan. This strategy should review all current temporary accommodation usage, location and quality, and seek to improve the quality of temporary accommodation, particularly to ensure washing and cooking facilities. The Strategy is to reduce to zero the number of 16 / 17 year olds and families with children in B&B by 2010, encompassing the specialist advice for reducing youth homelessness. REF: HOS6
- To commission additional research into the increased number of relationship breakdowns in Herefordshire, with the aim of reducing the percentage of numbers in this homeless category as compared to the national statistics. REF:

- To review the housing related support service in response to emerging needs. It is envisaged that the re-specified service will work with both families and single people. (Shelter). REF: HOS23

3.17 Learning Disabilities

People with learning disabilities who become homeless may be found in a priority need group for the purposes of a homeless application. This would depend on the nature of their learning disability and its effect on their daily life. Adult Social Care learning disability services will take the lead in finding appropriate accommodation where an individual is assessed as having severe learning disabilities and is homeless or vulnerably housed. However for individuals with mild to moderate learning disabilities, the Homelessness and Prevention team would assess them and establish if they are in a priority need group and offer assistance in accordance with statutory requirements.

Learning disability services are undergoing radical changes to meet the changing needs and expectations of individuals who access services. This is mainly focussed on ensuring that individuals stay within their local community and access mainstream services. In relation to housing this may result in more individuals becoming homeless as Adult Social Care move away from a paternalistic response in providing accommodation and support solutions to one of supporting the individual to access mainstream services.

Some individuals with learning disabilities may require specialist housing services due to specific issues such as substance misuse, mental health issues etc. Where this is the case individuals would access these through mainstream service provision with additional support provided by the learning disability service if appropriate.

Housing related services currently available for people with Learning Disability issues in Herefordshire: -

- The Shared Ownership scheme is available to assist individuals with the purchase of their own home; this is called “SOLD” (Shared Ownership for people with a learning disability) and is offered through the Council’s Housing Needs and Development team.
- The Herefordshire Adult Placement Service offers accommodation with support to vulnerable adults who would not be able to maintain their own tenancies.
- Floating Support is provided via four approved providers funded through the supporting people grant who specialise in supporting people with a learning disability within their own homes.
- Transitional accommodation is provided in eight units of cluster accommodation in Hereford City. This is designed to ensure that younger individuals develop the skills and experience over a two year period to live as independently as possible
- Many people with a learning disability continue to live with family carers. However, this often breaks down when the family carer is no longer able to offer support, resulting in homelessness.
- A high percentage of people live in registered care placements. This is expected to decrease dramatically over the next few years as individuals begin to take more control over their lives and access ordinary housing solutions with support.
- Learning Disability Services have appointed a Housing care Manager, who will assess individuals wanting to live more independently and who are eligible for Social Care.
- The Supporting people Grant have funded a Housing move on worker for two years to ensure that individuals live as independently as possible and access appropriate housing and support options.

Ongoing developments-

- 5 New cluster flats in Ross are being developed in partnership with Strategic Housing to support people to move on from registered care placements.

- 2 new developments of 6 cluster flats are being developed in Hereford City to support people to move on from registered care
- 6 new cluster flats are being developed in Hereford City to support people who currently live with older family carers (aged 70-+)
- Herefordshire Council is entering into a partnership with Midland Heart Care and Support to reconfigure existing Learning Disability services to offer more tenancies and ordinary living situations. This will include services for younger people with a LD who without the right provision may become homeless. It will also include the development of a transitional service to offer more intensive support to individuals to get them into tenancies and ensure they have the necessary skills to maintain them.

3.18 Key actions for service users with learning disabilities

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSI officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for those with learning disabilities: -

- To ensure the Learning Disability Housing Plan remains under review.

3.19 Mental health

Agencies report that individuals with mental health problems are one of the groups who find it hardest to access appropriate accommodation if they become homeless. Without a suitable home, their mental health can deteriorate.

It is essential that people with mental health problems have an appropriate place to live, with somewhere they can feel at home and secure. In addition to housing difficulties, this need group are likely to have a low and unstable income, have periods of great vulnerability, and experience discrimination in the community. It is therefore understood that many will need active assistance to secure and sustain appropriate housing. The Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) found that, compared with the general population, people with mental health problems are: -

One and a half times more likely to live in rented housing, with higher uncertainty about how long they can remain in their current home

Twice as likely to say that they are very dissatisfied with their accommodation or that the state of repair is poor

Four times more likely to say that their health has been made worse by their housing

As detailed in the table below, there has been a reduction in homelessness acceptances to clients with mental illness or disability over the past 3 years, in contrast with the steady numbers of Mental Health clients supported by the mental health services in Herefordshire. However, there has been a greater amount of prevention work carried out before a person makes a Homeless application, which has resulted in the general number of applications being reduced.

A concern voiced amongst Mental Health care co-ordinators is that the medical agency used by the Homelessness team may be stricter on the assessment of the vulnerability of Mental Health when assessing homelessness acceptances. However, improved services in the past 3 years to supporting people services such as the Carr Gomm housing related support services may have a bearing on part of the reduction. In light of this information, Herefordshire Council have made key proposals to ensure that Mental Health service users are able to access the support and advice they require.

Reason for Homelessness	2002/	2003	2004/	2005/	2006/	2007/2008
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	2003	/2004	2005	2006	2007	
Mental illness or disability	41	51	48	28	9	8
As a % of Homeless Applications	6.74	8.63	6.68	4.86	3.81	2.2

In 2008, and in addition to the Housing Plan, Mental Health will be carrying out a further housing needs analysis to establish the accommodation requirements of their service users.

Housing related services currently available for people with Mental Health issues in Herefordshire: -

- Mental Health has a range of transitional housing support schemes in the county. This transitional supported housing is provided at Ferncroft and Madonna House. These 2 schemes are managed by MIND or Carr Gomm and funded by Supporting People.
- Herefordshire MIND offers a floating outreach support scheme for people living in their own homes.
- Carr Gomm service based within FACT and the Assertive Outreach Team provides housing related support and floating support to service users of the Mental Health service. This service is funded by Supporting People.
- MIND provide day services, which include a number of support programmes for people with a range of mental health issues.
- A Mental Health Housing Development Officer. This Officer works with a range of agencies both strategically and operationally to assess service users' needs and identify appropriate accommodation.
- New Dawn is a support agency offering intensive support for young people. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health needs or previous housing difficulties.
- A shared ownership scheme called "Own Home" in partnership with Advance, which is specifically designed for mental health service users. This scheme provides the possibility for service users to purchase their own home.

Ongoing developments

- Mental Health will carry out a detailed housing needs analysis in 2008/2009.
- The introduction of an 18-month pilot by Supporting People providing a floating support service for the resettlement of Mental Health Service users including those from Stonebow to access accommodation and maintain tenancies.

3.20 Key actions for service users with mental health needs

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers, the Council will work with it's partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for those with mental health needs:

To set up six-monthly meetings / good practice forums between mental health service and housing providers, and organise joint training to raise awareness and develop joint working. REF: HOS7

A detailed accommodation needs analysis will be carried out in 2008 / 2009 by Mental Health to support their Housing Plan. The local authority will ensure the results and requests are filtered into their housing strategies and planning of resources if applicable. REF: HOS8

A review of the Supporting People funded pilot service offering a floating support service for those mental health service users who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. REF: HOS10

3.21 Older people

Demographic trends and projections show that we have an aging population in Herefordshire, there is an estimated population increase by 2011 for the older age brackets with 18% increase within the 65 – 74 years and 20% increase in ages 85+. As older people make up an ever-increasing section of our community, the need to provide planned and co-ordinated services to meet their needs will continue to grow. Older people have varying needs in terms of their abilities to live independently and the choices they wish to express. There is a need to provide a range of options for older people, including supported schemes and floating support, and this is reflected in a theme within the Community Strategy: -

“To reshape adult social care, enabling many more older and other vulnerable people to maintain control of their lives.”

The number of homelessness presentations from the elderly within Herefordshire is relatively low, with 4 applications from those above 65 years in 2007/2008.

It is important, however, to ensure that homelessness amongst the elderly is not hidden by their living with family or in unsuitable accommodation or taking up a hospital bed whilst alternative housing is found.

Herefordshire Council is currently reviewing its position with regard to housing provision for older persons and although an overarching strategy for older people was published in August 2007, any future development of extra care provision is dependent upon the outcome of an Older Persons' Housing Plan.

In the interim, work is evolving around the development of services through Supporting People, including telecare and low-level handy-person services, and through developing the village warden pilot service into an enhanced countywide service.

In January 2008, the Leadon Bank extra care scheme in Ledbury opened. This was commissioned by the Council as part of a redevelopment of care home stock and is a purpose built facility providing 52 units of accommodation (both one and two bedrooled) supported by a dedicated domiciliary care and supporting people service along with a range of communal facilities. The facility includes a registered re-ablement centre and community day care resource, which tenants may also benefit from, according to future needs. Communal facilities are available to the wider local community as a means of supporting community involvement and integration.

The housing related options currently available for older people in Herefordshire: -

- The local authority offers a rent deposit scheme. This scheme offers the first month's rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables those that may be vulnerable to seek and accept a private sector tenancy.
- Shelter offer a housing related support service for those older people both in temporary accommodation and into the first year of a tenancy
- The Home Improvement Agency offer a Handy Man service to enable older people to remain in their own home with improvements and adaptations to their homes to live more independently, part funded by Supporting People.
- The extra care scheme at Leadon Bank in Ledbury providing 52 units of accommodation for older people.

Ongoing developments

- Work will be completed in 2008 on Hereford City's first Extra Care scheme, which will enable over 91 older people to live independently in their own homes with support matched to their individual needs.
- The preparation and development of the hospital discharge protocol between the County Hospital, Community Hospitals and Herefordshire Council.



3.22 Key actions for older people

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers, the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for older people: -

- To complete in 2008, Hereford City's first Extra Care scheme, which will enable over 91 older people to live independently in their own homes with support, matched to their individual needs. REF: HOS42
- The preparation and development of the hospital discharge protocol between mental health, County Hospital, Community Hospitals and Herefordshire Council. REF: HOS43
- To develop a register of adapted properties within the county. REF: HOS44
- To improve information - prepare leaflets on homelessness services (including audio and other relevant media) to be prepared and circulated to public, prevention officers and support agencies along with uploading to the web sites. These should also take account of BME Groups and Older People. REF: HOS 11
- To prepare a Directory of Homelessness and Related Services, to be used by service users and support teams. REF: HOS13
- To develop an older persons housing plan, in alignment with the aims and objectives of the Older Person Strategy for Herefordshire "Growing older In Herefordshire"

3.23 Rough sleepers

The term "rough sleeper" covers anyone who is homeless and sleeping outside or in buildings not designed for habitation such as warehouses or car parks.

In spring 2004, a rough sleeper count took place in Herefordshire, which returned a zero count. It should be noted that this is a "snapshot" exercise, which takes places on one night using volunteers who go out on to the streets and literally count the number of rough sleepers.

Housing services currently available for rough sleepers in Herefordshire: -

- There are several drop-in centres in the City. None of these restrict their facilities exclusively to homeless people or rough sleepers. They offer meals, washing and laundry facilities. They also offer advice, support and sign posting to other agencies.
- The drop-in centres are, between them, open regularly throughout the week.
- Open Door is a city centre based drop-in facility. It is open two mornings a week. Run by volunteers, it offers breakfast, some basic life skills training, befriending and sign posting.
- New Dawn is a support agency offering intensive support for rough sleepers. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health needs or previous housing difficulties

Ongoing developments

- St Peter's Church ('Sheepfold') has started research into the provision of a direct access shelter for those who find themselves unexpectedly homeless.
- A planned rough sleepers count for Autumn 2008.

3.24 Key actions for Rough Sleepers

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers, the Council will work with it's partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for rough sleepers: -

- A rough sleepers count as per the CLG guidelines in Autumn 2008. REF: HOS19
- A 'hidden homeless' or presenters survey to review the true numbers of homeless single people presenting to agencies within Herefordshire. REF: HOS18
- With the results from the 'hidden homeless' count, to develop a "Hidden Homeless and Rough Sleeper needs analysis" to include a needs mapping exercise, to ensure a strategic approach to tackling, managing and reducing homelessness amongst this client group. This should review the need for a Direct Access Hostel or offer alternative solutions. REF: HOS20

3.25 Singles and couples over 25 years old

The term 'single homeless' is generally used to indicate single people or couples who do not have dependent children. Single homeless people would not have a priority need for accommodation under homelessness legislation unless they were found to be vulnerable in line with the criteria laid down in the legislation. If registering with Home Point, this group are likely to be Gold Band at the highest. Statistical evidence for this group is vague, and the rough sleepers count in 2003 returned a zero count. However, consultation from stakeholders and service users, suggests that there is a large number of singles and couples 'sofa surfing'.

This group report a difficulty in finding affordable single unit housing in the county that they are likely to be able to access, and can often be jumping from house to house to secure a bed for the night. Other problems discussed are the difficulty of accessing affordable housing through Home Point if you are in the lower bands, along with a difficulty accessing the private rented sector, as many agents do not accept housing benefit tenants.

Results from the consultation specify a requirement for a direct access hostel in Hereford, this gap was identified in the 2003 Homelessness Review: -

“Insufficient managed temporary accommodation and support services for vulnerable single homeless people”

Housing related options currently available for single homeless people in Herefordshire: -

- The local authority offers a rent deposit scheme. This scheme offers the first month’s rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables those that may be vulnerable to seek and accept a private sector tenancy.
- Low cost home ownership schemes.
- Open Door and Salvation Army offering meals and blankets.
- Shelter provides dedicated housing support to a small number of singles and couples who are homeless. (10% of this caseload is the maximum)
- Housing advice detailing options from the Local Authority prevention team.
- Registration on the Home Point waiting list for affordable housing.
- New Dawn is a support agency offering intensive support for young people. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health needs or previous housing difficulties.
- Pomona Place temporary supported housing provides units of accommodation for single homeless with priority need.

Ongoing developments

- St Peter’s Church (‘Sheepfold’) has started research into the provision of a direct access shelter for those who find themselves unexpectedly homeless.
- A planned rough sleepers count for Autumn 2008.

3.26 Key actions for homeless single people and couples

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIG officers, the Council will work with it’s partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for single people and couples:

- A ‘hidden homeless’ or presenters survey to review the true numbers of homeless single people presenting to agencies within Herefordshire. REF: HOS18
- A rough sleepers count as per the CLG guidelines in Autumn 2008. REF: HOS19
- With the results from the ‘hidden homeless’ count, to develop a “Hidden Homeless and Rough Sleeper needs analysis” to include a needs mapping exercise, to ensure a strategic approach to tackling, managing and reducing homelessness amongst this client group. This should review the need for a Direct Access Hostel or offer alternative solutions. Links to HOS18. REF: HOS20
- Supporting People to review the housing related support service in response to emerging needs. It is envisaged that the re-specified service will work with both families and single people. (Shelter). REF: HOS23

3.27 Substance misuse

Anecdotal evidence from stakeholders and support agencies state that individuals with substance misuse and dual diagnosis issues make up a significant amount of single homeless people in Herefordshire. The current report from DASH states a caseload of approximately 360 service users as of April 2008. Homeless individuals with substance misuse issues often have dual diagnosis of problems and are people whom agencies can find it very difficult to assist in finding accommodation. Nationally, many accommodation projects will not accept individuals who they suspect are using illegal drugs or are likely to bring drugs onto the premises. However, agencies

do acknowledge that some of their residents may be concealing their drug use and that excluding them when drug use is discovered is not always the most positive approach.

Approval is currently being sought to provide relevant statistics of drug users and their housing needs and to commission an analysis. This information will be fed up to the Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group when completed, prompting a review of this needs group and a potential to assess the action planning.

Accommodation providers have recently reported that information sharing from the drug support agencies is sometimes very difficult and this may influence their offer of accommodation.

Housing services currently available for people with substance misuse issues in Herefordshire: -

- DASH offers outreach support to those dealing with substance misuse.
- Community Alcohol Service (CAS) offers a range of support and counselling services to people with alcohol dependency.
- The Rent Deposit Scheme to assist people into the private sector rented accommodation.
- SHYPP will house those with drug or alcohol difficulties aged between 18 – 25 years old, in conjunction with the relevant support packages.
- Women's Aid will accommodate in refuge, and support via floating support, women who have a drug or alcohol difficulties in addition to their experience of domestic abuse.
- Low cost home ownership and mortgage rescue schemes enable people to part or fully purchase their own home.
- New Dawn is a support agency offering intensive support for young people. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health needs or previous housing difficulties.
- Drug Intervention Programme (DIP) is a dedicated team of low criminal justice drug workers who as part of their service and provide advice and assistance with accommodation.

Ongoing developments

- A creation of a wrap around service for drug and alcohol service users along with offenders. The housing related support element is to be funded through Supporting People.
- Approval for the commissioning of a housing needs analysis for this group.

Key actions for clients who substance misuse

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers,

the Council will work with it's partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for those clients with substance misuse needs: -

- A creation of a wrap around service for drug and alcohol service users along with offenders. The housing related support element is to be funded through Supporting People. REF: HOS15
- To commission a housing strategy for people with substance misuse problems, which will identify the housing needs of those with drug and alcohol problems. REF: HOS17
- To develop information-sharing procedures and a pro-forma care package that landlords can view. REF: HOS18

3.28 Teenage and young parents (from 16 to 25 years old)

Teenage and young parents, particularly single mothers, can find themselves homeless for a range of reasons including a relationship breakdown with partners or with their own parents. Overcrowding is reported as a major issue and nationally there is a high level of repeat homelessness amongst this group. Young People over 16 years old who are parents or are pregnant would be in a priority need category for the purposes of making a homeless application to the local authority. Herefordshire accepted 22 pregnant women as homeless in 2007/2008, comprised of 12 teenagers, and 9 under the age of 25, and 3 pregnant women over the age of 25.

In November 2007, Every Child Matters in Herefordshire carried out a needs assessment. It was reported that current teenage pregnancy levels are relatively low. The conception rate for girls aged 15 – 17 years was 32.9 per 1,000 girls, compared with 45.8 in the West Midlands region. However, the overall low rates mask 'hot-spots' in the Belmont, St Martins, Hinton and Leominster South wards.

Reason for Homelessness	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Pregnant – no other children	49	65	65	55	18	22
Parents not willing / able to accommodate	90	122	113	97	38	63
Total number of young parents accessing SHYPP support services within the year		34	47	82	112	101
Young parents (16-18 years) accessing SHYPP support services within the year.			12	26	26	36

It is reported that the availability of support for young parents is poor in the pre-tenancy stages. SHYPP can only really start to work with young parents once a tenancy commences (within reason) and a young parent and child are likely to have three or four moves from 1st homes to emergency bed and breakfast, into more suitable temporary accommodation, then into their own flat, all of these moves occurring whilst the young parent is trying to cope with a new baby. A support worker may be with them, but this transition may be difficult, however.

It is important to ensure that, when accommodation is offered, there is an assessment of need, and that steps are taken to ensure support is available for every young parent.

What homelessness and housing services are currently available for young parents in Herefordshire?

- Pomona Place, temporary supported housing accepts pregnant young women aged 17 years prior to the seventh month of their pregnancy.
- Women's Aid accepts young women from the age of 16 into the refuge, including pregnant or young mums. Women's Aid has dedicated children and young people support and advocacy worker, who also provides parenting support.
- SHYPP provide two young parent support workers supporting 101 young women in 2007/2008.
- Sure Start help young people with parenting skills. Also provide a starter pack. (Ross and Leominster)
- Connexions run a training session – "Young Mums-to-be" group over 10 weeks to

- develop skills for life including budgeting and IT skills.
- Free counselling service available through SHYPP.
- Shelter offers a housing related support service for teenage/young parents, especially if they are a couple, both in temporary accommodation and into the first year of a tenancy.
- A weekly post natal group for teenage parents, run by health visitors, at the Greencroft centre.

Ongoing developments

- A survey to investigate the needs of SHYPP's young parents is underway.
- Discussion of a third lone parent worker at SHYPP is planned.
- The Schools Homeless Education Project sessions are to be re-written to include education and information for young parents or potential parents aged 14 – 15 years old.

3.29 Key actions for teenage and young parents

- To ensure that ALL teenage or young parents accessing the Homelessness and Prevention team are referred to housing related support where needed. REF: HOS27
- That all teenage parents accessing temporary accommodation undergo a needs assessment and are instantly referred to the relevant support services. REF: HOS27
- To work in conjunction with SHYPP to prepare a Teenage Parents Homelessness Needs Analysis, to assess current housing needs and ensure solutions for accommodation and support. REF: HOS30
- To promote the Schools Education Project for Young Parents. ONGOING
- Supporting People to re-specify the homeless housing related support services in the county, which are to be funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS23

3.30 Young people aged 16 – 17 years

Since the Homelessness Act 2002, the priority need categories were extended to include 16 – 17 year olds due to their potential vulnerability. Young people who are aged 18 – 25 years are not a priority by virtue of their age, unless they are a care-leaver aged 18 - 20 years old.

The CLG guidance also recognises the vulnerability of this group and have set every local authority the target of zero 16/17 year olds in bed and breakfast by 2010, this target is referenced within the Herefordshire Local Area Agreement and cross-referenced into the Strategic Housing Plan.

As of 2007/2008, there had been an increase in Homeless acceptances in Herefordshire from 16 – 17 year olds to a total of 14 acceptances. This increase may be explained by several factors including Supporting People extending the number of support services for these vulnerable young adults in the past year including additional workers within SHYPP (Supported Housing for Young People), Shelter, and the introduction of the New Dawn agency along with the independent services of the Schools Education Project as well as Connexions. This increased awareness may contribute to the rise in numbers, along with an increase in home visits by prevention officers to the family home, to encourage the young person to go through the proper route.

Main Reason for Priority – Homelessness	2002/ 2003	2003 /2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/2008
Aged 16 or 17	27	36	48	33	5	14
Numbers of 16/17 year olds as main applicants in bed and breakfast (age at entry)					Not known	4

Prevention officers have also been given the responsibility and freedom to offer small goodwill payments to help alleviate parents' financial concerns and to encourage the young person to

remain at home. This low level of homelessness may also be due to young people approaching other agencies directly.

However, the increase in 2007/2008 is in line with SHYPP's figures reporting a steady increase of 16 – 17 year olds within the Foyer accommodation to 19 in 2007/2008. SHYPP also provide advice and information that is helping young people to return home or find alternatives to making a homeless application. The SHYPP duty team report that they prevent homelessness amongst approximately 50% of young people they see following a few interviews. After that, they will attempt a reasonable number of interventions (Foyers, Nightstop, family & friends) before they refer the young person to the Homelessness service.

SHYPP STATISTICS FOR 16 – 17 YEAR OLDS	2001	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Referrals to the SHYPP service	168	714	630	592
% of referrals that are 16/17 years old	42%	38%	48%	34%
Number of referrals that are 16/17 years old	69	268	302	199
Number of 16/17 year olds accommodated in the Foyers (age at entry)		7	10	19
Numbers of 14-15 year olds attending the Schools Education Project.			127	145
Total numbers on Foyer waiting list				84

What homelessness and housing services are currently available for young people aged 16 – 17 years in Herefordshire?

- SHYPP offer a drop-in surgery, with a duty and crisis team offering housing related advice and support along with sign posting to young people aged 16 – 25 years. SHYPP has 20 staff across the whole team.
- An outreach support service for young people and young parents is offered by SHYPP.
- Three accommodation Foyers in Hereford, Ross and Leominster, managed and supported by SHYPP officers. These units currently supply 29 units of transitional supported accommodation.
- 7 units of shared accommodation in Union Street and Newtown road. These shared houses provide a 'stepping stone' for people leaving supported housing but in need of peer support.
- New Dawn agency offers intensive support for 60 young people with multiple and complex needs. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health or previous housing difficulties. This service is funded through Supporting People.
- The Schools Education Project is part funded by the local authority and aims to provide valuable housing and homelessness education in schools to 14 and 15 year olds in the county. SHYPP officers along with young volunteers run this training. In 2007/2008, it was conducted within 5 Herefordshire schools and reached 45 pupils with the aim of reducing homelessness in the future.
- Advice and assistance provided by the Local Authority prevention officers including home visits if appropriate along with the offer of prevention funds for goodwill payments or top-up of rents to parents, guardians or landlords.
- Pomona Place temporary supported housing accepts homeless young people aged 16 years and over, although Pomona Place do not have a set number of bed-spaces for this age group, however they do accommodate this age group.
- Mediation service is offered to 16 – 17 year olds and their parents or guardians to improve relationships and encourage a return home or a planned move from home.
- Shelter operates an intensive housing related support service, which may be offered to

16 – 17 year olds

- Connexions based in Hereford City offer assistance and support into education and employment to 16 – 26 year olds.
- Nightstop is a service providing overnight emergency accommodation placement with a volunteer household to young people for a very short period. This service is managed by SHYPP.
- Close House is a youth drop-in facility in Hereford city centre, catering for 16-25 year olds. Offering a safe environment with support, guidance and counselling, as well as signposting to other relevant agencies.
- Various sports, training, volunteering and healthy living projects are provided by SHYPP, which are designed to support formerly homeless young people and reduce chances of repeat homelessness.
- The local authority offers a rent deposit scheme, which offers the first month's rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables 16 – 17 year olds to seek and accept a private sector tenancy.

Ongoing developments

- With the amount of 84 on the SHYPP waiting list, there is a further needs analysis being carried out by SHYPP with suggested accommodation and support solutions.
- Expanding the Nightstop project to take on longer stays with the aim of reducing young people in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- Currently the MOPP (Move-on Planned Protocol) is used by Pomona Place- Stonham and Home Point. However it is planned that this protocol will be extended to other supported housing providers in the County.

3.31 Key actions for Young People aged 16 – 17 years need group

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSIg officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for young people: -

- To produce a Young People's Homelessness Strategy to include people aged 16 – 25 years. Providing evidence of information, ideas and services along with the proposed need for new preventative solutions as well as accommodation and support solutions for young people leaving home as well as those found intentionally homeless. REF: HOS25
- The numbers using the Mediation Service have declined in the past year. Research with Prevention Officers suggests that it takes time to encourage parents and young people to take part in the service. Prevention Officers may not have this time due to larger case loads, therefore it is suggested by Herefordshire Council that research into another young people's agency reviewing the 'take-over' of this prevention service and potentially extending the mediation service to include young people above the age of 18 years. REF: HOS26
- Statistics outlined in this section have shown that there were four young people aged 16 – 17 years in bed and breakfast at the end of March 2007. With this in mind, Herefordshire Council recommend a system of needs assessment to be integrated into any accommodation referral procedure, particularly regarding any young people moving into bed and breakfast or temporary accommodation, to ensure that each young person's needs are identified, and that support is available as appropriate. REF: HOS27
- With the aim of developing further accommodation options for young people, the Nightstop scheme is to be developed further, to encourage supported lodgings for 3 months until Foyer places may become available or alternative accommodation can be sought. REF: HOS28
- To develop a joint Housing and Social Services protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds and those at risk of homelessness. REF: HOS29

- To research an easily accessible emergency bed in a temporary accommodation provision to prevent 16/17 year olds being placed in bed and breakfast. REF: HOS6
- To produce a Temporary Accommodation Strategy with action plan. This Strategy and action plan is to review all current temporary accommodation usage, location and quality, to seek to improve the quality of temporary accommodation with the aim of using clean and decent self contained temporary accommodation with washing and cooking facilities. To reduce to zero the number of 16 / 17 year olds in bed and breakfast by 2010 - encompassing the specialist advice for reducing youth homelessness. REF: HOS6
- To develop information sharing procedures and a pro-forma care package for 16 - 17 year olds that Home Point landlords can view - with the aim of assuring Housing Associations that may offer a tenancy to this client group. REF: HOS18

3.32 Young People aged 18 – 25

Young people aged 18 – 25 are not deemed as priority due to age unless they are leaving care or have mental health difficulties. The local authority provides housing advice to this group along with the financial support to young people’s agencies including SHYPP and New Dawn. There is local support from other voluntary and statutory organisations including Connexions.

Within consultation from service users and stakeholders, this group report a difficulty in finding affordable single unit housing in the county that they are likely to be able to access, and can often be jumping from house to house, to secure a bed for the night. Other problems discussed are the difficulty of accessing affordable housing through Home Point if you are in the lower bands along with a difficulty accessing the private rented sector, as many agents do not accept housing benefit tenants or the rent deposit scheme.

Results from the consultation specify a requirement for a direct access hostel in Hereford. This gap was identified in the 2003 Homelessness Review: -
 “Insufficient managed temporary accommodation and support services for vulnerable single homeless people”

SHYPP’s criteria ensure that their teams will support 18 – 25 year olds with the offer of limited accommodation placements within the Foyers. It is being reported that there are a large number of ‘sofa surfers’ by the stakeholder agencies, and that these young people can be in very vulnerable situations. SHYPP can take these young people but with a waiting list of approximately 84 people, there are a number who will be waiting for a while.

SHYPP STATISTICS FOR 18 – 25 YEAR OLDS	2001	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Referrals to the SHYPP service	168	714	630	592
% of referrals that are 18 – 25 year olds	58%	62%	51%	64%
Number of referrals that are 18 – 25 year olds	99	446	326	383
Number of 18-25 year olds accommodated in the Foyers (age at entry)	N/A	40	50	32
Numbers of 14-15 year olds attending the Schools Education Project.	N/A	N/A	127	145

Total numbers on Foyer waiting list	84
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It should be noted from the information in the previous table that the referral numbers in 2007/2008 had dropped; this figure includes only those people who were referred to the Supporting People services including SHAC, Young Parent, and Foyers etc. However, in previous years all referrals were counted including non-supporting people services such as Nightstop and prevention work.

Housing related services currently available for Young People aged 18 – 25 years: -

- The local authority offers a rent deposit scheme, offering the first month's rent and deposit as a loan to those that require financial assistance. This enables those that may be vulnerable to seek and accept a private sector tenancy.
- Low cost home ownership schemes.
- Open Door and Salvation Army offering meals and blankets.
- Shelter provide dedicated housing support to a small number of single homeless people (10% of their caseload is the maximum)
- Housing advice detailing options from the Local Authority prevention team.
- Registration on the Home Point waiting list for social housing.
- New Dawn is a support agency offering intensive support for young people. New Dawn support, advise and signpost young people with complex needs including being released from prison, mental health needs or previous housing difficulties

Ongoing developments

- St Peter's Church ('Sheepfold') has started research into the provision of a direct access shelter for those who find themselves unexpectedly homeless.
- A planned rough sleepers count for Autumn 2008.

3.33 Key actions for Homeless Young People aged 18 – 25

The aim of the Homelessness Strategy is to reduce or prevent homelessness in Herefordshire. In light of this information, and taking into account the statutory requirement, CLG guidance, local Strategy requirements and the results of consultation with service users, stakeholders, staff and the HSI officers,

the Council will work with its partners in taking forward the following actions to improve housing advice, opportunities and housing related services for young people: -

A 'hidden homeless' or presenters survey to review the true numbers of homeless single people presenting to agencies within Herefordshire. REF: HOS18

A rough sleepers count as per the CLG guidelines in Autumn 2008. REF: HOS19

With the results from the 'hidden homeless' count, to develop a "Hidden Homeless and Rough Sleeper needs analysis" to include a needs mapping exercise, to ensure a strategic approach to tackling, managing and reducing homelessness amongst this client group. This should review the need for a Direct Access Hostel or offer alternative solutions. REF: HOS20

SECTION FOUR - CONSULTATION WITH SERVICE USERS, STAFF AND STAKEHOLDERS

4.1 Introduction

This section outlines the consultation that has occurred in the preparation of the Homeless Strategy 2008. The more detailed consultation reports and results are attached to the Homeless Strategy 2008 in appendix 2 and appendix 3.

4.2 Consultation with Stakeholders, HSIG, Staff and Sub regional partners.

Herefordshire Council and stakeholder staff were interviewed throughout 2007 and 2008 in preparation for gathering information for the writing of the Homelessness Strategy 2008. Those interviewed were asked for their opinions and comments on levels of need, gaps in provision and how gaps could be filled. In addition to these individual meetings, requests and interviews, a Homeless Conference was held in autumn 2007 where Councillors, stakeholders and staff attended and provided their expert opinions, ideas and requests. An away day was also held in February 2008 with the Homelessness and Prevention team to discuss the gaps in provision and requirements for the new Strategy.

Two further away days at sub regional level with our Shropshire partners, the West Housing Market area occurred in 2006 and 2007 with approximately 60 representatives attending both events. Colleagues from Herefordshire and Shropshire detailed the provisions of service in each county and detailed potential services that could be shared. Attendees discussed ideas for the future, gaps in service and potential trends for each authority area as well as the services that can be shared across the County borders. The West Housing Market Area sub regional information is included within the Homelessness Strategy.

In addition to the consultation with individuals, the Herefordshire Homeless Strategy Implementation group (HSIG) was formed in 2006 and includes 16 members from a wide range of statutory and voluntary agencies. This group has continuously reviewed the 2003 Homeless Strategy and have been the driving force in providing information of the levels of need and gaps in provision for the 2008 Homeless Strategy. The ideas, opinions and comments of staff and stakeholders have been fed inherently throughout the Homeless Strategy 2008 and its associated documents.

4.3 Consultation with Service Users

Two forms of consultation exercises were carried out with Service Users and those experiencing housing difficulties in the County: -

Individual face-to-face interviews were conducted with 67 service users throughout the County. Five consultation sessions of 3-hour duration with over 21 people experiencing housing difficulties.

Face-to-Face interviews with service users

The Homelessness Strategy questionnaire was sent to over 20 housing related support agencies in Herefordshire in February 2008. Eight agencies agreed to conduct the face-to-face interviews with their Service Users over a period of four weeks resulting in the agency staff returning 67 questionnaires. The results provided information on the family compositions, their current and past housing situation and difficulties, along with the agencies that had been contacted and the quality of support or usefulness of that service. The Service Users were also asked to comment on the gaps in the current provision.

For a more detailed report of this survey, please see appendix 3 attached to the Homelessness Strategy 2008.

Consultation Sessions with service users

Five consultation sessions were held on the 7th March 2008 with over 21 service users and those experiencing housing difficulties. The 21 individuals and their children volunteered from requests from over 20 support agencies in the County. The aim of the consultation sessions was to gather the comments, opinions and ideas of those experiencing housing difficulties in the County. Throughout the 5 sessions, the attendees were asked to discuss their ideas on housing difficulties in the county and ways in which to either improve or provide new homelessness or related support services.

For a more detailed report and analysis of the results of the day, please see appendix 2. However the ideas, opinions and comments of these service users have been fed inherently throughout the Homeless Strategy 2008 and its associated documents.

SECTION FIVE - IMPLEMENTATION AND FUTURE REVIEW

5.1 Implementation of Strategy

Cabinet will endorse the Homelessness Strategy. Consequentially the implementation of this Strategy will continue to be overseen by Herefordshire's Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG). This group meets quarterly and they will use the attached action plan. It is anticipated that work groups will be set up to action specific projects that require a multi agency approach. These groups will be led by the lead officer or a member of HSIG and comprise of representatives from appropriate agencies. The day-to-day co-ordination of the implementation of the Strategy will continue to be the role of the Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator, employed by Herefordshire Council.

Monitoring

Ongoing Strategy implementation will be monitored by HSIG using a range of criteria detailed in the Action Plan. Outcomes will also be monitored using information gathered from specific monitoring exercises as well as a range of existing sources. These would include local authority homelessness statistics and national and local performance indicators, and statistical information collected by other statutory and voluntary sector agencies.

5.2 Sub Regional Strategy

Workshops were held in each sub-region during March 2006 to discuss the implementation of the regional strategy. The material collated at these workshops as well as discussions in 2007 in each sub-region have helped to shape the results and sub regional SMART action plan (see appendix 6). The Regional Homeless Strategy Implementation group (*RHSIG*) and the sub-regional groups all contributed to identifying and agreeing the outcomes that need to be delivered.

Each sub-region has a SMART action plan, which has a small number of actions and results for us to achieve over the next 3 years.

As we note above the results and action plans were arrived at through analysis of the workshop material, reference to the Regional Strategy and through local consultation via the sub-regional leads.

For example the workshops in each sub-region all identified sharing of data and good practice as one of the key things that needs to be developed to help reduce homelessness; therefore both data sharing and best practice sharing feature as results for some of the sub-regions. The numbers of results and actions for each sub-region are small at this point so that progress can be made and an atmosphere of success generated around regional and sub-regional working.

Once actions and results are being delivered they will be reviewed and other emerging results and actions may be added. However, no one sub-region's set of results or action plan covers all the outcomes that need to be delivered but collectively they are addressing all the key areas and outcomes for the West Housing Market area.

The sub-regional action plans have been developed in a way that takes account of the practical application of the strategy; this means that there are a limited number of results and actions for each sub-region.

It should be noted that the Strategy and SMART Action plan is not a statutory document and as such reporting is not directly linked to any financial or formal inspection regime. Herefordshire see this as an opportunity for the Regional Homelessness Strategy Implementation Group (RHSIG) to take an approach to monitoring which is based on mutual trust and light touch evidencing.

Ongoing review of Homeless Strategy and Action Plan

This Strategy contains an overview of Herefordshire's priorities for the next five years. It is proposed that the action plan is reviewed annually by HSIG, to determine any amendments that are required in the light of new evidence or data. HSIG should continue to be regarded as a strategically recognised group in response to the regional and sub regional agenda. A progress report will be produced annually and submitted to the Head of Strategic Housing and Cabinet.

SECTION SIX - ACTION PLAN

Please see the Action Plan, which is separately bound and attached to this document

APPENDIX ONE – Review of housing needs and homelessness from 2003 – 2008

1.1 Introduction

The purpose of this review is to establish the extent of homelessness in the County of Herefordshire, assess its likely extent in the future and identify some of the services that are currently being carried out. A further review of more specific information has also been carried out for each individual need groups including learning disabilities, substance misuse and single homeless people etc. This specific review data is reported within the need groups or service titles within the Homelessness Strategy 2008. Therefore it is important to consider this document in conjunction with the Homeless Strategy and other appendices including that on consultation.

As part of the review process we have aimed to establish as comprehensively as possible, a profile of homelessness in Herefordshire. We recognise however, that there are existing gaps in our knowledge and that the collection of data and information must be an ongoing and shared process. This, in turn, will inform continued Strategy development and the annual monitoring and evaluation procedure.

It should be noted that in reviewing Homelessness statistical information and quantitative data, further work will be carried out in completing work commenced in assessing the support needs of socially excluded groups including vulnerable people experiencing homelessness in Herefordshire. The Supporting People commissioning plan is to be completed very shortly. With this in mind, the Homeless Strategy includes provision for further work to be undertaken on assessing the gaps in provision and needs of all the vulnerable groups in Herefordshire. However the HSIg recommended that a number of consultation events should be conducted for service users and stakeholders to assess the gaps in services utilising the statistical information that has been obtained. These results have been considered throughout this review and Strategy and it is believed that the sample sizes of consultation provide robust findings.

1.2 Consultation considerations

This review and strategy also considers those surveyed: - over 88 service users were interviewed by individual face-to-face interviews with set questions, along with service users attending various consultation sessions, which requested their opinions on key issues with their housing difficulties and their thoughts on the gaps in provision of services. The robust results from these surveys are reflected throughout this review and strategy and the appendices detailing the consultation results. In addition to service users surveys,

1.3 What has been achieved so far?

- **Reconfiguration of Herefordshire Council's Homeless Service.**

The Homelessness and Housing Advice team returned to Herefordshire Council in April 2006. A number of the Homelessness Team have changed job titles and are currently working as prevention officers. The staff structure was remodelled in 2008. This is currently awaiting approval. Please see appendix 5 for the detail of numbers within the new staff structure.

- **Prevention Fund**

Cabinet approved this funding in 2005 with the key objective of preventing homelessness and the use of bed and breakfast in the county. The Prevention Fund provides the facility to the Homelessness Team to 'offer' financial support to homeless or potentially homeless citizens. The funds may be used for a range of solutions including rent deposits, goodwill payments to relatives to maintain accommodation, storage of furniture, kennel fees, the payment of rent arrears and

many other solutions in order to prevent a person from becoming homeless. Much of this money is paid to clients as a loan but can offer a second chance to help them secure accommodation.

- **Affordable Housing**

Since 2003, Herefordshire Council have reported the securing of an additional 683 units of affordable housing, these include 220 units of low cost home ownership, bringing the total of affordable housing stock in the county to 10,759 (as at 1st April 2007).

- **Housing related support from Shelter**

The intensive housing related support service was set up in Herefordshire in 2005 in conjunction with Shelter, Supporting People and the Homelessness Service at Herefordshire Council, to offer intensive support for a maximum of one year to approximately 60 homeless or potentially homeless families with multiple and complex needs. This service aims to prevent future homelessness and enable service users to maintain their tenancies. Currently stakeholders are working in partnership to commission a revised housing related support service in response to emerging needs. It is envisaged that the re-specified service will work with both families and single people.

- **Mediation Scheme for 16/17 year olds**

This new scheme was introduced into Herefordshire in 2006, and offers mediation services to young people and their families. The mediators will work both with the parents/guardians and the young person to work out their problems at home, with the aim of preventing homelessness or to potentially facilitate a planned move on for 16 and 17 year olds from their home.

- **The Sanctuary Scheme**

This new scheme was established in 2006, offering domestic abuse or harassment victims a security service, which may enable them to choose to remain within their own home. Herefordshire Council staff work with the Police and Women's Aid to offer security advice and equipment such as alarms, locks and in extreme cases, a panic room. The aim of the Sanctuary Scheme is to prevent homelessness for the victims and their children.

- **Schools Education Project**

Herefordshire 'SHYPP' (*Supported Housing for Young People*) began this project in 2006 with the aim of providing homelessness education in schools. SHYPP officers, along with young volunteers or mentors who have accessed the SHYPP service, aim to provide valuable housing and homelessness education to 14 and 15 year olds. This is expected to reduce and prevent homelessness for the future amongst young people and is linked to the local area agreement (LAA) indicators.

- **RSL Homeless Prevention Protocol**

This protocol was developed and signed in 2007 by Herefordshire Council and the Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) operating within the County. This protocol is the first of its kind in the Country. The aim of the protocol is to set out the agreement between the Local Authority and the major Housing Associations in the County for working together to prevent homelessness in Herefordshire by establishing partnership working and early warning systems to prevent homelessness.

- **Hospital Discharge Homelessness Protocol**

This protocol is currently being presented to the PCT, Mental Health and the community's hospitals with the aim of reducing homelessness amongst those leaving hospital.

- **Home Point – additional partners**

Following the successful addition of two further partners to the Home Point board during 2006 – 2007, South Shropshire Housing Association also joined the partnership during 2007 – 08. The addition of three partners to the Home Point choice based lettings scheme in the past four years have enabled those service users registered for affordable housing, more choices around the County.

- **Home Point Video “talking guides” and SMS bidding**

The text message bidding service was launched in mid 2007, to enable applicants on the waiting list to ‘bid’ for properties quickly and easily. The video “talking guides” were launched in February 2008 and provide housing advice and information in video format to 6 languages including English, Russian, Polish, Spanish, Portuguese and British Sign Language. This ensures that Home Point advice is available to the BME groups and those that are unable to read English easily.

- **Gypsy and Traveller Officer at Shelter**

Devised in partnership with Supporting People and provided by Shelter. A dedicated support worker was employed in September 2007, to work with gypsies and travellers who had adopted or were seeking to adopt a settled life-style. This pilot specialist service aims to support housed gypsies and travellers to maintain their tenancies along with working with those families who wish to move into bricks and mortar accommodation.

- **Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment**

The assessment was undertaken during 2007 by external consultants, in partnership with the Shropshire and Powys Local Authorities (housing, planning and environmental services). The assessment highlights the future needs of site provision, housing and housing related support for this group. It incorporates the work previously undertaken in Herefordshire around G & T currently occupying settled traditional housing.

- **Empty Property Strategy**

The former strategy is currently being updated to cover the period 2008 -11, which will outline the tools and resources available to the local authority and private landlords to bring empty properties back into use. Since 2003, 296 properties have been brought back into use.

- **Mortgage Rescue service**

Herefordshire Council has been operating the scheme with limited resources for a number of years and have prevented over 24 households from homelessness. The scheme operates in partnership with a housing association and allows the owner-occupier to remain in their existing property purchasing a share of the property and renting this back at an affordable rent.

- **Rural Housing Enabler (RHE)**

Herefordshire council, its preferred RSL partners and Community First have jointly funded the post of a Rural Housing Enabler to raise awareness and deliver affordable housing across the remoter rural areas of the county. This officer visits parishes and undertakes housing need surveys. It is anticipated that the RHE will contribute in providing additional affordable homes over the next 18 months, by identifying potential development sites to meet the need identified in the surveys.

- **West Housing Market Assessment (WHMAs)**

This assessment has been undertaken by external consultants during 2007 and is due to be finalised during 2008. The assessment will highlight local housing market areas and what the local needs are and what types of housing will be required to ensure a balanced housing market. The final recommendations will inform National, Sub regional and local policies and strategies for both housing and planning.

- **Herefordshire Housing Needs Assessment 2005**

This provides an overview of the current needs across the county using a range of methodologies. It is envisaged that this will continue to be updated as a summary document of housing need across the county, collating data from the various assessments and local housing needs surveys.

- **CAB**

From March 2008, the Citizens Advice Bureau began operating a contract awarded by the Legal Services Commission (LSC). This contract funds a part time Specialist Housing Caseworker whose remit includes helping clients on a range of housing issues including homelessness or threatened homelessness, possession orders, security of tenure matters, property bidding and many other legal housing issues. This service is available to all clients qualifying for legal help. In

addition to this specialist service, the CAB offers a general advice service to all clients on all housing issues.

- **Mental Health Accommodation Development Officer**

This position was employed in late 2007 with the aim of assisting - both strategically and operationally - the accommodation needs of mental health clients. It is hoped this position will reduce the numbers of homelessness amongst mental health service users.

- **Care Leavers' Protocol**

This protocol was developed by Home Point and Herefordshire Council's After Care team in 2007 to ensure the efficient processing of aftercare referrals. These new procedures ensure that those young people leaving care are provided with a high priority status on the County's housing waiting list. This status is given to them 6 months prior to their 18th birthday and leaving the care system. This enables the County's care leavers to secure timely, suitable and permanent accommodation through the housing waiting list before they leave the care system.

- **Support Housing for Young People Leaving Care - After Care (SHAC)**

7 single person self contained properties in Hereford were purchased across the city specifically for young people leaving care. A new post was created within SHYPP to provide support to these young people. The aim of this project is to develop independent skills for young people leaving care within a 2-year period before moving into their own accommodation.

- **Move on Accommodation for Young People**

4 self-contained flats at Newtown Road were redeveloped as move on accommodation for the SHYPP foyers. This project is run in conjunction with the Aftercare team who can recommend young people to move into the vacancies created by foyers residents moving to Newtown Road. SHYPP have also developed a property with Kemble Housing in Union Street that provides 3 rooms in a shared house environment for people leaving supported housing but in need of peer support.

1.4 Levels of Homelessness

As of 2008, the number of homelessness applications and acceptances to Herefordshire Council has reduced since the end of 2005/2006, as detailed in Table 1.

Table 1 – Number of Homeless applications and acceptances	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Applications	608	591	719	598	236	358
Acceptances	417	490	510	416	148	206

The ultimate decline in the figures since the return of the Homelessness and Housing Advice team in 2006 to Herefordshire Council reveals that the actions that have been adopted by the local authority and support agencies around the county concerning prevention and housing options had succeeded overall in turning around the rising tide of homelessness acceptances. The increase in 2007/2008 by 58 acceptances may potentially be explained by a number of theories including the increase in interest rates, which has anecdotally caused private sector landlords to sell or for people to lose their homes. These increases traditionally create an increase of number of clients accessing the service.

The various prevention activities carried out by the local authority and support agencies to reduce levels of homelessness are detailed throughout the various sections in the Homeless Strategy. These activities along with the use of the prevention fund to 'offer' financial support to homeless or

potentially homeless citizens will enable the local authority to maintain homelessness at a reasonable level.

1.5 Levels of Intentional decisions

The number of applicants found intentionally homeless in Herefordshire has remained approximately steady over the last 3 years with 41 cases in 2007/2008. Statistics show that in the past year the proportion of those found intentionally homeless has decreased to a level of 11.45% as shown as a percentage of Homeless applications, however there has been an increase in Homeless applications which points to this figure remaining reasonably steady.

Table 2 – Number of applicants found intentionally homeless	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Found intentionally homeless	21	20	28	42	39	41
Found intentional as a % of Homeless Applications	3.5%	3%	4%	7%	17%	11.45%
Applications	608	591	719	598	236	358

Support workers within agencies around the County along with the increased work of the prevention officers dealing with 301 BVPI prevention cases in 2007/08 have assisted to ensure that the numbers found intentionally homeless remain constant in the past few years. In addition to intentionality, 67 applications were made in 2007/2008 to the team from households that were not homeless or were not in priority need as compared to 49 in 2006/2007. It is suggested that it would be useful to reduce the percentage of those found intentionally homeless along with the level of applications through joint working, improving knowledge and options to service users and support agencies with the aim of reducing the levels of unsuccessful or inappropriate applications. It is important to consider that this education would be useful in terms of providing guidance to clients and stakeholders but not to pre-determine status. See action point references on the Action Plan: HOS 1,7,18 and 37

1.6 Levels of Repeat Homelessness

There are a number of factors why individuals or households experience repeat homelessness, these include being vulnerable due to issues that may repeat themselves such as substance misuse, poor mental health, and a history of offending or a background of institutionalisation. Tackling repeat homelessness has been flagged up by the CLG as a key objective for local authorities nationally. Therefore the importance of the provision of appropriate accommodation, assessment of need and availability of support are all key to ensuring that this objective is met. Within Herefordshire the number of repeat homeless cases have decreased over the past 4 years as detailed in the next table.

Table 3 – Number of repeat homelessness cases	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Number of Repeat Homelessness cases	12	12	8	3

This can be explained in some part with the introduction of improved and/or increased services from Supporting People, Mental Health, Women's Aid, SHYPP and the Local Authorities prevention team. However it is the aim of this strategy to reduce the numbers of repeat homelessness cases further, the actions set out in the section "excluded from services" within the

Homeless Strategy and the other need groups aim to deal with some of the sub issues that relate to repeat homelessness in an attempt to maintain or decrease the numbers in this group further.

1.7 The Main Reasons for Priority Need and Accepting Homelessness

The largest reported group in 2007/2008 is from applicants with children and pregnant, this issue is addressed within the two need groups: Homeless Families and Teenage Parents within the Homeless Strategy. It has been noted within the section that a teenage pregnancy strategy is required, particularly focussing on the age of the pregnant women and if move-on accommodation should be an option available in the County for these young women if applicable. The increase within the 16 – 17 year old category has been addressed in the relevant sections within the Strategy, particularly in light of the CLG target of reducing homelessness and its effects amongst this group.

Table 4 Main Reason for Homelessness Priority	2002/ 2003	2003 /2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/2008
Applicant with children	206	236	245	235	92	129
Pregnant – no other children	49	65	65	55	18	24
Aged 16 or 17	27	36	48	33	5	14
Care leaver aged 18 to 20	6	10	8	11	1	3
Old age	15	17	14	14	4	4
Physical disability	17	13	18	6	6	7
Mental illness or disability	41	51	48	28	9	8
Other special reason	31	18	15			0
Emergency	1	6	4	1	3	0
Previously in care	4			3	0	0
Served in HM forces		2	1			0
Been in custody / on remand		1				0
Fleeing violence	20	35	44	30	10	17
Of which, domestic violence	17	30	37	28	7	16
TOTAL	417	490	510	416	148	206

The reason 'fleeing violence' has shown an increase in the past year but a decrease from 2005/2006. This is addressed within the 'domestic abuse' section within the Strategy along with associated actions.

1.8 Reasons for Homelessness

The key reasons for homelessness in Herefordshire are listed below in table 5 and closely follow the national trend for the top three reasons. There has been a dramatic decrease in homelessness applications since the introduction of the prevention team and prevention funds since 2005. However, it is noted that the Herefordshire figure for relationship breakdown (violent and non violent) of 35% is higher than the national average of 20%. It is suggested that the HSI group investigates this and targets work accordingly.

Surprisingly, rent arrears as a reason for loss of last settled home is a lower than expected percentage, however it should be noted that most Homeless applicants with rent arrears are found intentionally homeless. Consequentially the figure below will not be representative of the national trend. It is therefore recommended that the Homeless team record those applicants with rent or mortgage arrears for future monitoring information.

Table 5 - Main reason for loss of last settled home	2002/ 2003	2003 /200	2004 /	2005 /	2006 /	2007 /	2008% of total
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		4	2005	2006	2007	2008		
1	Parents not willing / able to accommodate	90	122	113	97	38	63	34%
2	Loss of rented accommodation	102	108	104	95	29	42	20%
3	Relationship breakdown (violent)	77	89	114	103	37	46	19%
4	Relationship breakdown (non violent)	54	46	51	39	15	22	12%
5	Other relatives / friends not willing / able to accommodate	34	29	36	19	5	17	9%
6	Other (emergency, rough sleeping)	19	39	46	18	8	4	2%
7	Mortgage arrears	11	5	3	8	2	4	2%
8	Leaving institution / care	12	17	17	16	7	5	1%
9	Other forms of harassment	13	22	23	19	4	1	1%
10	Rent arrears	5	13	6	2	3	2	1%
	TOTAL	417	490	510	416	148	206	100

1.9 Homeless Households in Temporary Accommodation

The Local Authority has a statutory duty to provide housing to those that have been accepted, as priority need. If appropriate these households may be placed in various forms of temporary accommodation, which may include bed and breakfast or another type of temporary accommodation. The government has set targets to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010. The target figure for temporary accommodation for Herefordshire is 83. With three years remaining, a working group has taken up the gauntlet to reduce temporary accommodation by 20 units per annum, along with reviewing the location and property type of accommodation available within the County. This group review the schedule identifying the planned closures of temporary accommodation. The council is aiming to use bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children only in emergencies; this is in line with the CLG target of zero families in this type of accommodation by 2010. Herefordshire have reduced the average length of stay for families from 11 weeks in 2005/2006 to 5 weeks by the end 2007/2008.

Table 6 - Households in temporary accommodation at the end of quarter 4	2003 /2004	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/2008
Total households in temporary accommodation at year end	134	193	173	135	133
Numbers included in above, but in the Bed and Breakfast category	N/R	69	65	23	40
Breakdown of all households in Temporary Accommodation					
Of which are pending or intentional decisions	35	49	34	51	45
Of which are households with children	86	116	117	94	80
Snapshot – Number of families with children in bed and breakfast at end of quarter 4	N/R	N/R	N/R	7	14
Snapshot – Number of 16 / 17 year olds in bed and breakfast at end of quarter 4.	N/R	N/R	N/R	N/R	4

The results from the above table have been fed into the Homeless Strategy with the aim of reducing the numbers within temporary accommodation from 133 to 83 by 2010, along with reducing the numbers of families and 16 – 17 year olds in bed and breakfast to zero.

1.10 Homelessness and Prevention team (Housing Advice Services)

The Homelessness and Housing Advice Services returned in house on the 1st April 2006 following the end of the contracting out arrangements. The Service had been re-modelled to ensure a preventative approach to tackling homelessness leading to the significant reductions in the levels of homelessness acceptances and the use of temporary accommodation.

The Homelessness and Housing Advice team is based at Herefordshire Council's Garrick House, in the centre of Hereford city. The fourteen members of this team are employed by Herefordshire Council and provide housing advice, signposting and support to vulnerable households across the County. In addition to these duties within office hours, they also provide a nightly out-of-hours and weekend emergency homelessness service on behalf of the Council.

This team receive thousands of enquiries a year from members of the public who have a range of housing issues, as well as from other professionals who may refer their clients to the service for focussed assistance and support. Incoming contacts are made by telephone, email, and in person, if a situation is at crisis point.

When the team receives a call, a Housing Options Officer carries out an initial assessment of the urgency of the situation and makes contact with the enquirer to gather further information, and undertake an assessment of housing need, which is recorded by the team for future reference. Often, callers require advice and assistance over the telephone, and this helps them solve their housing situation without any further help from the team itself. However, incoming housing enquiries can also require a more detailed and intensive response from the service, and in these circumstances, Housing Options Officers will quickly refer the situation onto a Homelessness Prevention Officer, who provides longer-term support, which aims to prevent households becoming homeless in Herefordshire.

There are 4.5 FTE Homelessness Prevention Officers in the team, which will be supported by a Senior Homelessness Prevention Officer, who also carries a caseload, and provides supervision and guidance to colleagues on a regular basis. Homelessness Prevention Officers carry out home visits to vulnerable households in the community, usually within a week of receiving a referral from a Housing Options Officer. During this visit the Homelessness Prevention Officer explains the broader housing context in Herefordshire, and helps devise an action plan, designed to avoid homelessness, and find a suitable housing solution in every case. Prevention Officers are able to call upon the Council's Homelessness Prevention Fund in order to help customers secure housing solutions, and the fund provides help around rent-in-advance, deposits, damages, and rent arrears, together with a range of other incentives designed to increase community stability locally.

Most importantly the team includes two homelessness officers who will undertake formal Homelessness assessments under the Housing Act 1996 (as amended 2002). These two officers are supervised and supported by a Senior Homelessness Officer - together, they help the Council determine what short term and long-term housing duties may be owed to callers in housing crisis.

Support to this team is provided by two administrators, along with strategy development from a Homelessness Strategy Co-ordinator.

Herefordshire Council are committed to Prevention and have increased the numbers of Homelessness and Prevention staff in 2008 pending recruitment. However consultation with service users and stakeholders has made some of these comments: -

- “Not enough people to pick up the phones at Homelessness and Home Point”
- “More phones please”
- “It is difficult to communicate if there are not enough people to pick up the phones “
- “More prevention officers please”

Recruitment to vacant posts following a re-structure of the Homelessness team should enable increased capacity to respond to service demands. Service standards have been developed which set out the service responses people contacting the service should expect. This process will be enhanced by further work with the council’s Info in Herefordshire one stop shop approach to enable appropriate responses depending on the nature and urgency of each case. A review of customer feedback obtained through the monitoring of compliance with the service standards will further inform the development of service responses. It should also be noted that new procedures have been developed for the team associated with the move to prevention, and a review of the table below, indicates that the team are completing a larger quantity of prevention cases.

Table 7 – Homelessness and Prevention team information	2002/2003	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Homeless Applications made to team	608	591	719	598	236	358
Prevention cases completed by team (BVPI 213)	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	213	301
Prevention Cases uncounted as not matching exact criteria within BVPI 213	N/a	N/a	N/a	N/a	102	50
*Approximate number of Clients that went into temp accommodation or prevention officer was unable to complete case paperwork etc						
TOTAL CASES – THROUGH THE HOMELESS AND PREVENTION TEAM	608	591	719	598	551	709

If we also consider that support agencies such as Shelter, SHYPP and Women’s Aid state that their waiting lists are increasing, then we could assume that the numbers approaching the Homeless team may be increasing. It should be noted that the population in Herefordshire is not increasing markedly and anecdotal evidence from the Homeless team suggest that there are very few cases from the migrant workers population.

However one potential cause of increases in numbers accessing the service may be the increased awareness. There has been an increase in support workers within the County to reflect the increase in need and provision for the socially excluded client groups as indicated by Supporting People. Couple these increases with two stakeholder consultation events. Therefore the knowledge of the public and capacity of stakeholders may be increasing and causing more phone calls into the team. It should also be considered that the team have a number of responsibilities that were not occurring in 2006 including the running of the rent deposit scheme, mediation scheme, sanctuary scheme, bidding officer and prevention count.

It would be useful to further review the potential increasing numbers accessing the Homelessness and Prevention team, however it is difficult to deduce due to the lack of an IT system or adequate electronic recording of client information, consequentially information on client numbers and the quantity of people approaching the Homelessness team is unable to be gathered

It is the view of HSI that a re-evaluation of the staffing numbers is considered along with an IT system to record the number of cases administered by the team each year.

1.11 Supporting People

Supporting People currently supports in excess of 3500 vulnerable people to maintain and sustain their independence through the provision of effective housing related support services. Supporting People provides services to vulnerable people throughout Herefordshire. The clients that are supported include homeless people and those at risk of homelessness, women escaping domestic

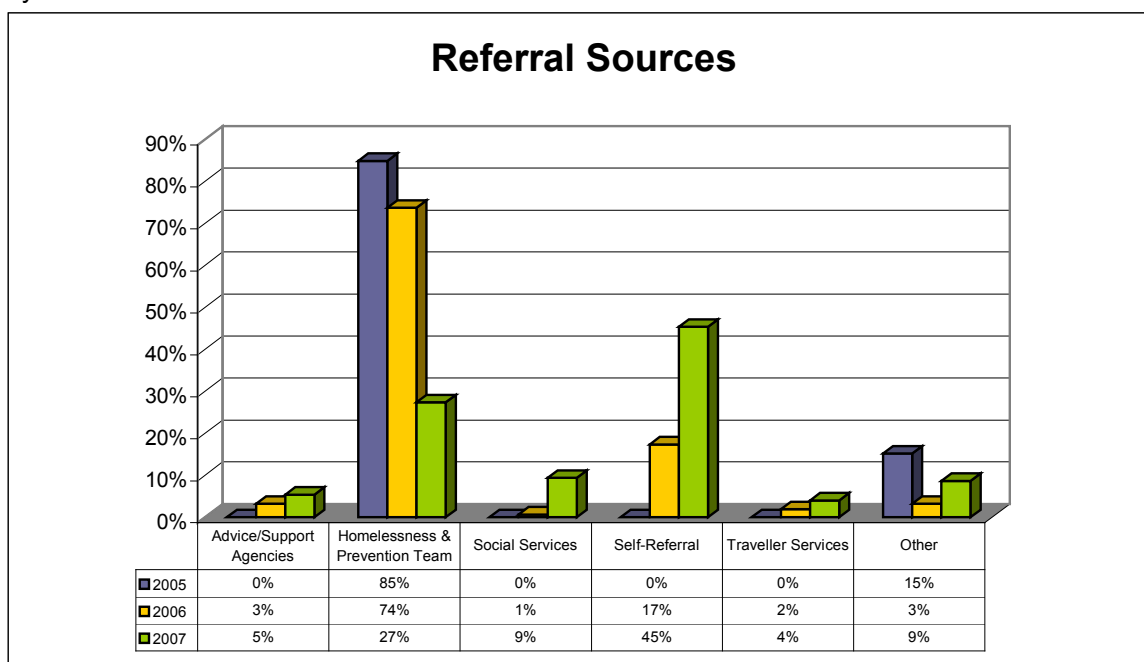
abuse and vulnerable young people. The funding for these services is in excess of £2 million and represents a third of the annual Supporting People grant. In addition to the current services the Supporting people Partnership are considering the introduction of further initiatives including a Rent Deposit Scheme.

1.12 Shelter statistics for families and single people.

Supporting People and Herefordshire Council commissioned the Shelter Housing support service in August 2005 to work with families and individuals who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. The clients referred to the Shelter service require intensive support in a broad range of housing related areas.

Since its launch, Shelter has received 378 referrals for support from Homeless families and single people. In April 2008, its current caseload is 70 households, amongst 6.5 support workers with 27 households on the Shelter waiting list.

As of April 2008, the Shelter service received 45% of its referrals through self-referrals by clients, most of whom have been directed to the service via existing or former clients. Referrals from the Homeless and Prevention team had fallen to 27% as detailed below. However with 27 households on the waiting list, it is currently not possible to increase the number of referrals to the team but it may be noted as a consideration for future service consideration.



1.13 BME and Migrant Workers Homelessness Statistics

Several sources of anecdotal evidence exist that allude to an increased influx of European workers in Herefordshire post accession. In particular, local service providers in the county such as the police, council, health services and voluntary organisations (such as the Citizens' Advice Bureau) have noticed an influx of people from Eastern European states.

No comprehensive estimates exist of the number of migrant workers in Herefordshire at any one time, which could assist us in predicting potential homelessness issues; however, we can draw on the data source of National Insurance Number registrations and the Worker Registration Scheme (WRS). It should be noted that they provide inflow data only, as there is no requirement to de-register if a person leaves the UK. They also do not include people migrating for the purpose of studying or other reasons.

Annual registrations for a national insurance number doubled for the UK over the past five years from 2002 to 2007, but in Herefordshire, they increased from 270 to 2,120, a staggering 685% increase. Of all individuals registered on the Worker Registration Scheme in Herefordshire, 99% were in full time employment. However, the most striking observation is the relatively large proportion of 29% intending on staying for duration of between 6 – 11 months in Herefordshire compared with the national figure of 3%. Although these figures are potentially increasing in Herefordshire, it seems that seasonal and migrant workers are not presenting as Homeless at the current time. However it is recommended that HSI review the information from local sources annually.

Table 10 – BME information	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007 /2008
Number of homeless applications from BME groups	16	25	7	5
Number of Homeless acceptances from BME groups	10	13	4	2
Number of general Homeless acceptances	719	598	236	206
% Of BME acceptances, shown as a percentage of homeless acceptances	1.3%	2.1%	1.7%	0.9%
Numbers of BME groups registered with Home Point (Snapshot)	288	219	189	286

Within the results in Table 10, there is a reduction in the number of BME service users accessing the Homelessness services for the past two years with a decrease from 2.1% to 0.9% in 2007/2008 of homeless acceptances made from BME clients. However with increases in population of BME groups and numbers on the Home Point register, further investigation is required and action to ensure BME groups feel that they may access the services available in the County.

It is suggested that the figures of BME groups and migrant workers and the services available for these groups should be reviewed annually by the HSI to ensure that these groups are catered for in the event of potential homelessness and that the marketing of the services available within the county is actioned for these particular groups.

1.14 Future Need of Herefordshire Citizens

This strategy bases the assessment of the levels of need on a combination of returns the Council has to make to Government along with statutory and voluntary agencies' own data and on the outcomes of specialist research and monitoring exercises that have been carried out. However, in order to prevent future homelessness, it is important to gain a fuller picture of need in the County and to monitor the numbers of people who could not be accommodated or supported, what their support needs were, and make some assessment of why they were unable to access suitable services. It is recognised that there is a necessity for an IT system to be used by the Homelessness and Prevention teams to ensure this data is readily available for the future and to ensure that a comprehensive needs mapping system may be developed which would gather both qualitative and quantitative information about service users, and also those who were unable to access services. This issue is discussed further in the Research section within the Homeless Strategy.

1.15 Home Point

The shortage in the supply of affordable housing for vulnerable single people and homeless families is a critical issue nationally. The Local Government Association has predicted that approximately five million people are estimated to be on waiting lists by 2010 across the whole of

the country. Consequentially continued effective and targeted programmes of intervention are required to decrease the levels of homelessness. This will need to be balanced by continued initiatives to increase the supply of accommodation, which is affordable to local people.

With 5314 applicants registered for affordable housing with Home Point, the choice based lettings agency in Herefordshire as of April 2008 along with 145 priority status holders, Herefordshire has seen a decrease since 2004 in the numbers registered for affordable housing. However it should be noted that numbers on the Home Point register could depend on when the waiting list review was completed and it is assumed that the numbers remain fairly constant. Reviewing the table below, Herefordshire has shown an increase in the numbers of applicants housed in the year 2007/2008 from 735 to 795, due to the small increase in numbers of properties advertised every week.

Table 11 – Home Point key data	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
Numbers on Waiting List	5686	7740	5377	4193	5314
Number of priority status applicants (snap shot)	213	240	288	130	145
Number of gold status applicants (snap shot)	1585	1871	1047	816	955
Number of Priority Status (Homeless) housed in year	368	363	285	246	236
Number of Total applicants housed in year	813	772	696	735	795
Average No of properties per week	16	15	13	14	15

Home Point currently report that Priority Status holders wait an average length of time of 5 months to be housed. This may cause financial concerns if there is a family waiting in bed and breakfast for permanent housing. Therefore it is the aim of the Homelessness and Prevention team to reduce this time further over the next few years.

1.16 Affordable Housing

Since 2003, Herefordshire Council have reported that an additional 697 units of affordable housing have been secured; this includes 220 units for low cost home ownership. In addition to the 326 empty units around the county that have been brought back into use.

In an era of poor affordability in the private sector, many people come to the local authority for advice on how to find a home that is right for them. 42 (20%) of Homeless acceptances in 2007/2008 were due to loss of rented accommodation.

Addressing the high demand for affordable homes has become a key government priority. In recognition of this demand, the government are investing £8bn in new affordable housing over the next three years and will be providing 70,000 new affordable homes per annum by 2010/2011. In addition to this, the aim of securing sufficient affordable housing is a theme of the Herefordshire Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement, in order to meet the needs of local people.

The regional spatial strategy partial review has identified increasing housing numbers within the West Midlands region, and Strategic Housing will be working to ensure that this leads to an increase in the supply of affordable housing for Herefordshire. It is hoped that Hereford City's identification as a new growth point and the opportunities within the proposed Edgar Street Grid will be key to achieving the higher targets set for the county.

Within Herefordshire, 697 affordable housing units have been acquired or built since 2003 and it is noted that with recent changes to the staff structure in the Housing Needs and Development

department, higher targets of affordable units have been set and are likely to result in an increasing number of units being attained in the next 3 years as detailed in table13 below.

Table 12 - No of affordable housing units built or acquired	Rented	Home Ownership	Total
2003/2004	63	41	104
2004/2005	30	52	82
2005/2006	63	125	188
2006/2007	64	118	182
2007/2008	58	83	141

Table 13 - Targets for affordable housing units built or acquired	Total
2008/2009	200
2009/2010	300
2010/2011	350

The Strategic Housing Service Plan outlines the new supply of housing that will be developed that is accessible to the community, taking account of earnings to house-price pressures within the county.

At the date of publication of this strategy, the West Midlands regional spatial strategy preferred option proposes the delivery of 16,600 new homes in Herefordshire between 2006 and 2026. Hereford City has been identified as a new growth point with the expectation that approximately 50% (8,300) of these new homes will be delivered within the City itself. The above target proposing the delivery of 850 affordable homes over the next 3 years has been agreed as a Local Area Agreement (LAA) target for Herefordshire, slightly above the assumed affordable housing numbers expected to be delivered in the County through the RSS preferred option.

1.17 Property statistics

The facts and statistics mentioned below are taken from the fourth quarter of 2007/2008, unless otherwise specified.

- The median price of a property in Herefordshire was £190,000. However, the median property prices in England and Wales were £179,950 in comparison with £145,850 for the West Midlands. Herefordshire exceeds the West Midlands median price of a property by around £40,000.
- Herefordshire has a high proportion of detached properties than is the case regionally or nationally and detached properties tend to be more expensive than non-detached.
- The lower quartile price of a property in Herefordshire for the 4th quarter of 2007 is reported as £144,000. Assuming a 5% deposit, the earnings needed to secure a mortgage if the amount borrowed is calculated at 3.25 times earnings, would be approximately £42,100 per annum or £36,500 for single earners using a rate of 3.75 as a multiple.
- The median gross annual earnings for Herefordshire are £20,000.
- As of January 2008, the minimum private sector rent for a 3-bedroom house in Herefordshire was between £500 - £600 per calendar month. If a family has an income of £20,000 and were paying normal tax deductions, they would have a balance of approximately £650 remaining for all living expenses.

1.18 Economic Information

1.18.1 Unemployment

- 1,517 people were claiming unemployment benefit in Herefordshire in January 2008, in comparison to 1634 in January 2007.
- Over two thirds of claimants were male (71%)
- The numbers of claimants who claimed unemployment benefit for 12 months or longer has increased to 155 in January 2008 (110 in Jan 2006). Source: Office for National Statistics Monthly Unemployment claimant counts

1.18.2 Earnings and affordability

- Median annual earnings for people who work full time in Herefordshire was £20,000 in 2007, 11% below the regional median figure and 17% lower than earnings across England as a whole. (*QER – February 2008)
- The preferred measure of affordability is quoted as the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings (the lower the figure, the more affordable the area is). Herefordshire was set at 9.40 for 2007, as compared to 6.88 for the West Midlands region and 7.25 for England as a whole.

1.18.3 Housing stock in the county

- The number of affordable units in the county including low cost home ownership is 10,759 as at 1st April 2007.
- 7 properties were sold in 2007/2008 under the Right to buy scheme.

1.18.4 Population

- The most recent population figure for Herefordshire is 177,800
- The population grew by 500 between mid 2005 – 2006, however this does not include international migrants unless they change their country of residence for at least a year.
- The total population of Herefordshire is forecast for 2011 to be 182,400, this is a 2.6% increase (an increase of 4,600 people)
- The total population of Herefordshire is forecast for 2026 to be 193,600.
- There is an estimated population increase by 2011 for the older age brackets – 18% increase within the 65 – 74 years and 20% increase in ages 85+.
- There is an estimated population decrease by 2011 of 12% for the age groups 35 – 44 along with a decrease of 3% for 25- 34-year age bracket.

*Source: The office for National Statistics (ONS 2006 mid year estimate and the E & W – ONS 2006 based national population projections)

1.18.5 Local information

- 62% of children in Ridgemoor and 49% in Golden post (Leominster and Newton Farm respectively) live in income-deprived households and feature in the Top 10 % nationally.
*Source: QER – February 2008

1.18.6 Financial

A result of the new Homelessness Prevention Fund can be seen within the detail in the table below. The information reveals a large increase in expenditure in 2006/2007. With many potentially homeless people encouraged to make use of the prevention fund to avert homelessness, at the same time as significantly decreasing temporary accommodation costs. This had led to a dramatic reduction in homeless acceptances from 416 to 148 in that year.

As mentioned in line 2 within the table below, there is a significant decrease in expenditure on temporary accommodation since 2005/2006. This was largely due to the appointment and effectiveness of the new Homelessness & Prevention team, manager and fund. There is a clear correlation between staffing levels in key areas and the levels of temporary accommodation costs. It should be considered, that these costs could continue to be reduced by increasing prevention staff levels further.

Table 14 – Homelessness and Prevention expenditure		2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
1	Prevention Fund	N/r	N/r	£33,742	£262,737	£168,710
2	Temporary accommodation	£141,082	£485,353	£1,471,727	£629,923	£599,836

1.18.7 Partnership Working

Partnership working is critical to the success of a strategy. The majority of agencies concerned with the provision of services to homeless people, or those at risk of homelessness, have demonstrated a high commitment to working together to maximise the capacity to respond. The Homeless Strategy has been jointly developed and is a multi-agency response to the needs of homeless people in the county.

1.18.8 Consultation

There has been widespread consultation in the production of the Herefordshire Homelessness Strategy 2008 involving a wide range of local partners, including customers, stakeholders, local authority and PCT staff, registered social landlords along with related HSIG members in Shropshire (Our West Housing Market Area partner). The key issues of these consultation sessions formed the basis of the Homeless Strategy and Action Plan.

The review of stakeholders and service users has been completed using the following methods:

- Desk research
- Interviews with staff members and stakeholders
- Visits to area offices to observe working practices
- Survey of those using housing related services
- Consultation discussion sessions with service users of Homelessness and Housing services.
- Input from Herefordshire and Shropshire Homeless Strategy Implementation groups
- Comments from the Homelessness Conference workshops

The consultation results are shown within reports attached as appendices to the Homeless Strategy 2008, with the relevant requests for services being incorporated within the need groups within the Strategy.

APPENDIX TWO - A report on the findings of the Homelessness Strategy consultation sessions with service users, March 2008

Organiser Lead: Tara Roche, Homeless Strategy

Aims

The aim of the consultation sessions was to gather the comments, opinions and ideas of those experiencing housing difficulties in the County. Throughout the sessions, people were asked to discuss their ideas on housing difficulties in the county and ways in which to either improve or provide new homelessness or related support services.

The results from the consultation day along with the face-to-face surveys will feed into the 2008 Homeless Strategy.

Methodology

The consultation day was held on Friday 7th March 2008 at the Green Dragon hotel, Hereford. This event was advertised by sending circulation emails to over 25 support agencies and local authority departments to encourage their service users to attend. Emails were sent to Shelter, SHYPP, Homeless Forum, Mental Health, Home Point, RSL Forum chair, Probation, Stonham Housing Association, Police, Social Services, Women's Aid, Herefordshire Council Info teams for advertising in reception areas etc. The event was also advertised for two weeks in the Admag newspaper, this paper was chosen as it advertises the local housing stock.

Five individual consultation sessions were run with small groups of service users throughout the day. Each group were given the following questions/subjects to discuss over a period of 3 hours. 21 people attended these sessions.

- What housing difficulties do you think people have in the County?
- Why do you think we have these problems?
- What services do you think are needed in the County to help people with housing difficulties
- How important is this service – please prioritise each of the services on their importance (1 is important, 5 is not very important)

An example was provided to the group, as follows: -

What housing difficulties do you think people have in the County?	Why do you think we have these problems?	What services do you think are needed in the County to help people with housing difficulties	How important is this service – please prioritise each of the services on their importance (1 is important, 5 is not very important)
They get into rent arrears and loose their home.	People are not taught how to budget anymore. So credit cards get people into debt	To get this type of education in schools	3
	Loan sharks up on the estates	Debt management advice on the estates	1

Methodology – continued

The facilitators ensured that each group member had their right of say and they did not have to read or write.

Facilitators of the event were supplied by the support agencies. This was to ensure a friendly, non-authoritarian voice whilst asking intrinsic questions. The facilitators were from Shelter, SHYPP and Stonham.

Each group were given the subjects to consider, they then discussed the subject and the facilitator wrote down their comments. Due to confidentiality issues and to encourage forthright discussion, the comments were not registered against a person, but kept as a group return.

Headline summary

- 21 people attended the event
- 12 were female / 9 male
- Ages of service users ranged from 17 to 70.
- Breakdown of ages of people attending the consultation sessions were: -

Age group	
16-17 years	2 attendees
18-25 years	8 attendees
26 – 40 years	7 attendees
41 – 69 years	3 attendees
70+ years	1 attendees

- Five sessions were run throughout the day with approximately 4 people in each session to allow for detailed discussion

Current and past housing difficulties of the attendees

- 13 consultees had been or are currently homeless,
- 5 attendees had been or were rough sleepers
- 2 are currently homeless at home
- 1 attendee was waiting to be decanted from their home.
- 6 of the consultees have now found somewhere to live- although 1 cannot afford the rent.
- 2 attendees are currently rough sleeping
- 2 attendees are about to be made homeless
- 1 attendee is sofa surfing
- 8 attendees are currently living in temporary accommodation supplied by the local authority and are awaiting a permanent property.
- 2 of the attendees are currently sleeping rough.
- 1 of the attendees was from a traveller background
- 1 of the attendees was from a probationary background
- 1 of the attendees noted to us that they had had mental health problems caused by street homelessness over many years.
- 1 of the attendees was an ex alcoholic
- 9 of the attendees had children

Results

Within the table below, a synopsis of the comments from the attendees have been grouped together for ease of reading and put into the relevant sections. The most commented requirement is at the top of the table. From these comments, an action is provided, that will feed into the Homeless Strategy 2008 along with the link of the action.

ANALYSIS OF COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC CONSULTATION EVENTS - ON HOMELESS STRATEGY - MARCH 2008
21 Service users and 5 facilitators attended during a day long consultation event on current homeless services

Headline Description of comments	Number of comments	Synopsis of Service Users comments	Actions required - to add to Action Plan in Homeless Strategy 2008	Priority (if priority number was mentioned)	Links to other Strategies
Information and leaflets	23	<i>"I do not know where to go / we need help and information / we cannot get information / We need clearer communication and access to prevention fund/ I do not understand homelessness and what I am supposed to do/ I need help/ We need a directory of Homelessness services available"</i>	1. To improve Information - prepare leaflets on Homelessness Services (including audio and other relevant mediums) to be prepared and circulated to public, prevention officers and support agencies along with uploading to the web sites 2. Research and prepare a Housing Advice Strategy to be prepared with the aim of improving housing advice services to the public 3. To prepare a Directory of Homelessness and related services - to be used by Service Users and support teams	1	In reply to the qualitative data supplied by the number of surveys from service users along with information from support agencies along with requests from Homeless Forum and HSIg group members
Customer Services Charter	16	<i>We want the Homelessness service to answer their phones / to have targets on responses to service users / to treat service users with respect and empathy/ be able to contact team for advice</i>	Customer Services Charter detailing response rates and targets for performance along with customer care standards for Homeless service users	1	In reply to the qualitative data supplied by the number of surveys from service users along with information from support agencies along with requests from Homeless Forum and HSIg group members

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<p>Direct Access Hostel including Washing facilities for clothes and showers</p>	<p>16</p>	<p><i>No where for single adults to get some sleep / sleeping rough - you cannot wash / cant get work / more likely to go back to prison or re-offend and take drugs. Need somewhere to sleep and wash</i></p>	<p>1. To carry out a needs analysis for a Direct Access Hostel with facilities to wash clothes etc 2. To carry out hidden homeless count</p>	<p>LAA priority for NI154/NI155 along with Economic reasons - to increase the economic potential and address worklessness - NI152 along with decent homes for stronger communities/ Along with links to LAA NI19 - rate of re-offending and N130 and N146 and NI143 - settled homes for ex offenders. Many reports from homeless forum agencies about numbers of people sofa surfing within the County. There is no quantitative evidence for a new direct access hostel, but we suggest that a needs analysis is carried out to identify potential numbers and the potential support from Supporting People agencies to</p>
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				enable people to move-on from the Direct access hostel.
Complaints about Temporary accommodation	16	<i>Families with children being placed away from schools in another town, Cleanliness and no washing or cooking facilities</i>	<p>1. For a Temporary Accommodation Strategy with action plan - This strategy and action plan is to review all current temporary accommodation usage, location and the quality - to seek to improve the quality of temporary accommodation with the aim of using clean and decent self contained temporary accommodation with washing and cooking facilities.</p> <p>2. To complete Temporary Accommodation Procedures -for staff to follow when placing people in temporary accommodation, this should include a complaints procedure about temp accommodation etc</p>	<p>LAA - Children and YP - N150, NI117, Along with Stronger communities NI175 - access to services, along with increase the availability of appropriate decant housing / Every child matters / Government Teenage parents strategy /</p>

Landlord incentive Scheme	15	<i>Not enough private sector properties / when you rent in the private sector - it is too expensive/ landlords do not take benefits or rent deposit scheme/ increase in migrant workers means less private houses are available for rent/ offer incentives to landlords to take people</i>	To develop a private sector landlord incentive scheme with the aim of encouraging private sector landlords to offer more affordable homes for a longer period of time along with taking people on benefits or using the rent deposit scheme	1	Links to the LAA - NI154 - More affordable homes
Affordable Housing	15	<i>"We need more affordable houses" " bigger houses required" not enough private sector houses"</i>	To develop affordable housing units as targeted by Local Authority and Government	1	LAA NI155 and NI154 and NI156 - To increase the availability of appropriate decent and affordable housing - increasing the number of affordable homes
Debt and Benefits advice	10	<i>"It is too easy to get into debt" /" we request a debt and benefits advice in one place" " someone to advice and offer guidance."</i>	To review the current Debt Advice in the county, to provide a needs analysis and requirement for Debt Officer. A potential request through Supporting People. To assist service users maintain their tenancies	Not marked	In reply to the qualitative data supplied by the number of surveys from service users along with information from support agencies along with requests from Homeless Forum and HSIg group members

One Stop Shop	8	<p><i>A drop in centre - like the info shops / where you can get your (Homelessness & Housing) advice under one roof. So we can get leaflets there and watch information and talk to someone. All the forms are in one place. Someone to see me. Somewhere that is open when I come home from work</i></p>	<p>To research the possibility of a One-stop shop for housing and Homelessness advice with major agencies involved i.e. -housing benefit, home point, homelessness, support agencies representatives. This will have to be considered in the light of the accommodation strategy</p>	<p>1</p> <p>In reply to the large number of comments from service users for this type of service links to LAA - Stronger Communities - - Where people can influence decisions in their locality. This action may clash with the Accommodation Strategy</p>
Single person move on accommodation	9	<p><i>“A young person growing up causes overcrowding there is no where for young people to move to” pregnant young girl has no where, when she needs to move out of home.” “ No affordable single unit accommodation for young people to move out of home and be safe”</i></p>	<p>To review the need of Single young person move on accommodation. This action to be linked to the action for "direct access hostel review and the teenage pregnancy strategy." Needs analysis to be carried out in conjunction with Supporting people and the young persons agencies as well as probation and DASH</p>	<p>Links to LAA - Increase the availability of appropriate, decent and affordable housing NI156 - reducing street homelessness - along with Every Child matters and N146 -, N119 and N1143 - Offenders living in settled accommodation to build safer communities</p>

Improve communication - IT system	6	<i>"The staff in Council departments don't know our cases, we have to tell them over again each time we call." And "The Council departments don't know what other departments are doing"</i>	1. Homeless client IT system to be developed or expand the Home Point system, with the aim that Herefordshire Council relevant staff members can access the database and share relevant key information 2.The Project workers forum - to discuss the requirement of special cases panel		In line with the corporate commitment to progress modern technology - Herefordshire Connects
Re-evaluation of Homeless staff quantities and staff roles	5	<i>"Not enough people to pick up the phones at Homelessness and Home Point" and " more phones please" and "it is difficult to communicate if there are not enough people to pick up the phones " and " more prevention officers please"</i>	Evaluation of staff requirement and staff roles within Homeless team.	1	In reply to the qualitative data supplied by the number of surveys from service users along with information from support agencies along with requests from Homeless Forum and HSIg group members
Improve the procedures for 'Skipping' on Home Point shortlist	4	<i>"People should be informed, if they are being black-listed (skipped) by the landlords of Home point, so that we can do something about it AND I have mental health problems and bi polar, I kept bidding but no one told me I had rent arrears and was being skipped."</i>	To review with Housing Associations and Home Point whether they can inform client that they are being skipped	1	In reply to the qualitative data supplied by the number of surveys from service users along with information from support agencies along with requests from Homeless Forum and HSIg group members

Rent deposit scheme	3	<i>"The Rent deposit scheme is not being accepted by landlords / We need someone dedicated to run the service"</i>	To ensure commitment along with a dedicated officer to process and promote the Rent Deposit Scheme		LAA - To increase the availability of affordable housing for stronger communities
Downsizing incentive scheme	3	<i>"There is too many Older people living in large houses whilst families live in too small houses"</i>	Downsizing incentive scheme	2	This has an effect on Families being able to move to the appropriate house size for their group, thus allowing children to have their own bedrooms - links to Every child matters and LAA - Younger age group - mental health. Increases Childs potential to study in their own bedroom
Advocate at Home Point	2	<i>We do not know how Home Point system works - what is the banding?</i>	To prepare evidence and paper for Supporting People to consider a Vulnerable Applicants officer - working on behalf of Home Point. Officer to assist service users with the process of Home Point, the bandings and bidding	1	In reply to the qualitative data supplied by the number of surveys from service users along with information from support agencies along with requests from Homeless Forum and HSIg group members
Gypsy and Traveller Sites	2	<i>The allocation of pitches for Gypsies and Travellers sites is not fair - it should be advertised through Home</i>	A request for a review of the site allocation process to be made to Environmental Health	Not marked	

		Point			
Teenage Pregnancy and Young Parents Strategy	1	<i>Girls are getting pregnant younger - so they can get a place to live / benefits. They then get drunk; they do not work - as they are afraid of working and going into real world. This is down to lack of education</i>	1. Teenage Pregnancy Housing strategy to evaluate the needs of Young Parents for accommodation and support	1	Teenage Parents Next steps by Department of health / Every Child matters / reducing teenage pregnancy is a government priority / teenage pregnancy: accelerating the strategy to 2010. Links to LAA N150 - emotional health of the newborns and young children / along with the mental and physical health
Charity request - to set up a furniture store and food and blankets hand out	1	<i>I moved into accommodation, but there is no furniture</i>	To request to Homeless Forum - for a charity to run a furniture / and blankets and food hand out for new tenancies and rough sleepers	3	

*For detailed listings of the service users comments at this event, please contact the Homeless Strategy Co-ordinator.

Appendix Three - The results of the Service Users Homelessness Strategy survey 2008

Aims:

The aim of this face to face survey was to question people in the county who have experienced housing difficulties. The questions asked for their views and ideas on what services have helped them and what services would have helped them with their housing issues.

The survey also asked what help and support (if any) may have helped to prevent the worsening of their housing issues. The aim of these questions were to highlight that perhaps certain housing issues could have been helped or be prevented prior to escalation.

The results from the survey along with the associated consultation day sessions involving those who have experienced housing difficulties would feed into the Homelessness strategy 2008 onwards.

Methodology:

The survey was sent to over 17 agencies in Herefordshire who provide support to those who are experiencing housing difficulties in the county. Eight of the 17 agencies agreed to assist. The agencies staff conducted face to face interviews with 67 service users in the county. The survey asked the following:

- The composition of the respondent (to help gauge the sample base was reflective of the overall picture of Herefordshire)
- To suggest which organisations they had contact with and the usefulness of the support they received
- To suggest services that may have prevented the housing issues they have found themselves in.
- To suggest what is missing in Herefordshire with regards to services and support for those with housing difficulties.

Headline summary:

- 67 Surveys were returned.
- The highest proportion of respondents were single males who were experiencing homelessness and support needs, prominently within the 18 – 24 age range (43.5%)
- 59.70% of respondents were male.
- 2.0 % were pregnant
- 18.4% are experiencing mental health problems
- 44.3% are homeless (Living with friends on a temporary basis, street homeless, B&B, living in the Foyer)
- 4.8% had fled home due to violence or threat of violence
- 20.7% of respondents had accessed the Homelessness and Housing advice team.
- 9.7% of respondents were older people (65 and over)
- 62 of respondents are not working or attending training schemes

The free text questions allowed the respondent to inform us 'in their own words' the following:

- Their current housing difficulties
- How the support and services they have accessed have helped them
- Reasons as to why they could not access services needed
- What services they would personally like to see in the future

The **most common themes** for each free text question are broken down below full responses can be found below in the free text results.

Q15 Please briefly outline your current housing difficulties

Current housing difficulty	Count
Eviction or family breakdown	10
Currently in temporary accommodation/ temporary accommodation coming to an end	10
Currently homeless	7
Difficulty with rent/ bills or other financial issues	6

Q22 Please outline briefly how these services have helped you

These answers are service specific and could therefore not be grouped, revision of the full results are listed below and provide the data for these.

Q24 Please provide reasons why you could not access the services you needed:

Reason	Count
Services not offered/ lack of information on services and where to go for information	18
The service does not currently exist in Herefordshire	11
Regulations preventing access or age restrictions preventing access to services	5
Currently not able to access accommodation due to waiting list size and/ or banding	3

Q25 What services would you personally like to see available in the future?

Service	Count
Hostel/ Drop in centre/ Overnight shelter/ Access centres	20
More accessible/ better advice – Raised awareness of services and support	11
More properties- Social/ sheltered/ affordable	10

Free text summary

The most common themes from the survey free text results show there is a need for greater access to emergency information and support.

There is no provision in Herefordshire for one conduit for all available information and if a person finds themselves unintentionally homeless there is very little support in terms of where to go for information or emergency accommodation available.

The free text comments above (in full – see below) confirm that ‘Services not offered/ lack of information on services and where to go for information’ was the primary reason as to why people did not access the services they needed.

Q25 the most requested service was more provision for a ‘Hostel/ Drop in centre/ Overnight shelter/ Access centres’.

Appendix 1- Tabulated results

Please tick the client groups by which the client is defined. Please tick ALL those that are appropriate to your client:	
Base	147 100.00%
Older People with support needs	3 2.00%
Older people with mental health	3 2.00%
Frail Elderly	2 1.40%
Mental health problems	27 18.40%
Learning disability	2 1.40%
Physical or sensory disability	3 2.00%
Single homeless with support needs	18 12.20%
Alcohol problems	5 3.40%
Drug problems	11 7.50%
Have been in prison or at risk of offending	10 6.80%
Pregnant	3 2.00%
Aged 16 or 17 years old	5 3.40%
Have been "in Care" or leaving care	2 1.40%
Have fled home because of violence or threat of violence	7 4.80%
Are a homeless family with support needs	5 3.40%
A family experiencing housing difficulties	11 7.50%
Former asylum seeker or refugee	0 0
Teenage parents	3 2.00%
Rough sleeper	12 8.20%
Traveller or Gypsy	1 0.70%
Have served in the armed forces	1 0.70%

Sofa surfing (living with friends temporarily)	13 8.80%
Have no recourse to public funds (due to immigration status)	0 0

Your Gender:	
Base	67 100.00%
Male	40 59.70%
Female	27 40.30%

Your age:	
Base	62 100.00%
17 and under	5 8.10%
18 - 24	27 43.50%
25 - 44	17 27.40%
45 - 64	7 11.30%
65 -74	5 8.10%
75+	1 1.60%

What is the family composition of this client?	
Base	67 100.00%
Single	43 64.20%
Couple	9 13.40%
Single with children	5 7.50%
Couple with children	5 7.50%
O.A.P	3 4.50%
Pregnant	2 3.00%

Do you have a disability, long term illness or health problem (12 months or more) which limits daily activities or the work they can do?	
Base	63 100.00%
Yes	34 54.00%
No	29 46.00%

If YES, please specify (tick all that apply):	
Base	35 100.00%
Deaf/ hard of hearing/ acute hearing	1 2.90%
Blind/ partially sighted/ sensitive to light	0 0
Learning disability or difficulty (e.g. dyslexia)	0 0
Mental health	28 80.00%
Progressive/ Chronic illness (e.g. MS, cancer)	3 8.60%
Mobility difficulties	3 8.60%

How would you describe yourself?	
Base	66 100.00%
White (British, Irish any other white background)	64 97.00%
Mixed (White and Black Caribbean, White and Black African, White and Asian, any other mixed background)	0 0
Asian or Asian British (Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, any other Asian background)	0 0
Black or Black British (Caribbean, African or any other Black background)	0 0
Chinese	0 0
Gypsy/ Romany Traveller	2 3.00%

Where are you currently living:	
Base	70 100.00%
Supported housing	11 15.70%
Residential care home	0 0
Adult placement	0 0
Supported lodgings	0 0
Woman's refuge	0 0
Foyer	5 7.10%
Teenage parent accommodation	0 0
Hostel	0 0
Living with family	6 8.60%
Living with friends-Permanent	1 1.40%
Living with friends-Temporarily	10 14.30%
Street Homeless	9 12.90%
Renting property	14 20.00%
Own my own property	3 4.30%
Hospital	4 5.70%
Prison	0 0
Bed and Breakfast	7 10.00%
Mobile Home/ Caravan	0 0

Could you choose the best option below

that outlines your current housing difficulties:-	
Base	66 100.00%
Parents no longer willing or able to accommodate you	19 28.80%
Other relatives or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	11 16.70%
Non- violent breakdown of relationship with partner	2 3.00%
Violent breakdown of relationship, involving partner	5 7.60%
Violent breakdown of relationship involving associated persons	3 4.50%
Racially motivated harassment	1 1.50%
Other forms of harassment	2 3.00%
Mortgage arrears (repossession or other loss of home)	0 0
Rent arrears	1 1.50%
Debt problems	5 7.60%
Loss or rented or tied accommodation due to termination of assured short hold tenancy	4 6.10%
Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office as asylum support	0 0
Leaving/ left prison	5 7.60%
Left hospital	7 10.60%
Left other institution or LA care	1 1.50%
Flood/ fire	0 0
Left HM Forces	0 0

Please outline the services you have accessed to help you with your	Which services did you find most useful? (Local Authority/ NHS and
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housing difficulties (Local Authority/ NHS and Police services):		Police services):	
Base	164 100.00%	Base	63 100.00%
Homeless and Prevention Team	34 20.70%	Homeless and Prevention Team	11 17.50%
Home Point	39 23.80%	Home Point	13 20.60%
Mental Health teams inc crisis team	16 9.80%	Mental Health teams inc crisis team	13 20.60%
GP	13 7.90%	GP	6 9.50%
Local Health visitors	5 3.00%	Local Health visitors	1 1.60%
Social Worker/ Social services	10 6.10%	Social Worker/ Social services	5 7.90%
FACT	1 0.60%	FACT	1 1.60%
Probationary services	6 3.70%	Probationary services	3 4.80%
Housing Benefit Office	11 6.70%	Housing Benefit Office	4 6.30%
Welfare/ Benefit Office	5 3.00%	Welfare/ Benefit Office	1 1.60%
Job Centre	13 7.90%	Job Centre	2 3.20%
Police	10 6.10%	Police	3 4.80%
Gypsy and Traveller Support Officers	1 0.60%	Gypsy and Traveller Support Officers	0 0

Please outline the services you have accessed to help you with your housing difficulties (External or voluntary agencies):		Which services did you find most useful? (External or voluntary agencies):	
Base	91 100.00%	Base	68 100.00%
Shelter	11 12.10%	Shelter	7 10.30%
SHYPP	26 28.60%	SHYPP	25 36.80%
Women's Aid	1 1.10%	Women's Aid	1 1.50%
Mediation services	1 1.10%	Mediation services	0 0
Open Door	12 13.20%	Open Door	10 14.70%
MIND	4 4.40%	MIND	3 4.40%
Citizens Advice Bureau	10	Citizens Advice Bureau	4

	11.00%		5.90%
CARR GOMM tenancy support services	4 4.40%	CARR GOMM tenancy support services	4 5.90%
Stonham floating support	6 6.60%	Stonham floating support	5 7.40%
Connexions	16 17.60%	Connexions	9 13.20%

Please outline the services you have accessed to help you with your housing difficulties (Hostels):		Which services did you find most useful? (Hostels):	
Base	9 100.00%	Base	3 100.00%
Hostel Support staff	2 22.20%	Hostel Support staff	2 66.70%
Bridge House	3 33.30%	Bridge House	0 0
Pomona Place	4 44.40%	Pomona Place	1 33.30%

What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future:	
Base	236 100.00%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	32 13.60%
A new hostel is needed	25 10.60%
Accessibility to hostels	23 9.70%
Benefits advice	22 9.30%
Better transport links	18 7.60%
Employment advice	18 7.60%
Life Skills	18 7.60%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	16 6.80%
Debt management	13 5.50%
Mediation services	10 4.20%
Links to health service	10 4.20%

Debt counselling	9 3.80%
Domestic violence advice	8 3.40%
Accessibility to buying your own property	7 3.00%
Links to mental health teams	7 3.00%

Are you working (part time or full time or any government training schemes)?	
Base	67 100.00%
Yes	5 7.50%
No	62 92.50%

Are you in full or part time education?	
Base	65 100.00%
Yes	6 9.20%
No	59 90.80%

Appendix 2- Key client groups service and support identification.

The results below are to be used to show services identified by specific client groups which they would have liked to have received in response to their housing issues and needs.

A family experiencing housing difficulties	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future.	
Base	51
Life Skills	6 11.80%
Benefits advice	6 11.80%
Employment advice	6 11.80%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	6

	11.80%
A new hostel is needed	5 9.80%
Better transport links	4 7.80%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	4 7.80%
Accessibility to hostels	3 5.90%
Debt management	3 5.90%
Domestic violence advice	2 3.90%
Debt counselling	2 3.90%
Mediation services	2 3.90%
Links to health service	1 2.00%
Accessibility to buying your own property	1 2.00%
Links to mental health teams	0 0

Sofa surfing (living with friends temporarily)	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	59
Accessibility to rented accommodation	9 15.30%
Accessibility to hostels	6 10.20%
Employment advice	5 8.50%
A new hostel is needed	5 8.50%
Better transport links	5 8.50%
Life Skills	4 6.80%
Benefits advice	4 6.80%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	4 6.80%
Links to health service	4

	6.80%
Accessibility to buying your own property	3 5.10%
Mediation services	3 5.10%
Debt management	2 3.40%
Debt counselling	2 3.40%
Links to mental health teams	2 3.40%
Domestic violence advice	1 1.70%

Alcohol problems	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	30
Accessibility to hostels	5 16.70%
A new hostel is needed	5 16.70%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	4 13.30%
Better transport links	3 10.00%
Domestic violence advice	2 6.70%
Life Skills	2 6.70%
Benefits advice	2 6.70%
Employment advice	1 3.30%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	1 3.30%
Links to health service	1 3.30%
Links to mental health teams	1 3.30%
Debt management	1 3.30%
Debt counselling	1 3.30%
Mediation services	1 3.30%

Accessibility to buying your own property	0
	0

Pregnant	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	11
Accessibility to hostels	2 18.20%
Life Skills	2 18.20%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	2 18.20%
Benefits advice	1 9.10%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	1 9.10%
Mediation services	1 9.10%
A new hostel is needed	1 9.10%
Accessibility to buying your own property	1 9.10%
Employment advice	0 0
Better transport links	0 0
Debt management	0 0
Debt counselling	0 0
Links to health service	0 0
Links to mental health teams	0 0
Domestic violence advice	0 0

Have fled home because of violence or threat of violence
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do

answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	27
Benefits advice	4 14.80%
Debt management	3 11.10%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	3 11.10%
Domestic violence advice	3 11.10%
A new hostel is needed	3 11.10%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	3 11.10%
Better transport links	3 11.10%
Accessibility to hostels	2 7.40%
Debt counselling	1 3.70%
Life Skills	1 3.70%
Employment advice	1 3.70%
Links to health service	0 0
Links to mental health teams	0 0
Accessibility to buying your own property	0 0
Mediation services	0 0

Aged 16 or 17 years old	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	13
Life Skills	2 15.40%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	2 15.40%
A new hostel is needed	2 15.40%

Accessibility to rented accommodation	2 15.40%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	2 15.40%
Better transport links	2 15.40%
A new hostel is needed	2 15.40%
Benefits advice	1 7.70%
Employment advice	1 7.70%
Domestic violence advice	1 7.70%
Accessibility to buying your own property	0 0
Debt management	0 0
Debt counselling	0 0
Mediation services	0 0
Links to health service	0 0
Links to mental health teams	0 0
Accessibility to hostels	0 0

Are a homeless family with support needs	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	13
Accessibility to rented accommodation	3 23.10%
Debt management	1 7.70%
Debt counselling	1 7.70%
Domestic violence advice	1 7.70%
Accessibility to hostels	1 7.70%
A new hostel is needed	1 7.70%

Better transport links	1 7.70%
Life Skills	1 7.70%
Benefits advice	1 7.70%
Employment advice	1 7.70%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	1 7.70%
Links to health service	0 0
Links to mental health teams	0 0
Mediation services	0 0
Accessibility to buying your own property	0 0

Teenage parents	
What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future	
Base	25
Debt management	2 8.00%
Debt counselling	2 8.00%
Mediation services	2 8.00%
Life Skills	2 8.00%
Better transport links	2 8.00%
Employment advice	2 8.00%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	2 8.00%
Links to health service	2 8.00%
Domestic violence advice	2 8.00%
A new hostel is needed	2 8.00%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	2 8.00%
Accessibility to buying your own	1

property	4.00%
Accessibility to hostels	1 4.00%
Benefits advice	1 4.00%
Links to mental health teams	0 0

Appendix 3 Full free text results
Q15 Please briefly outline your current housing difficulties

Current housing difficulty	Count
Eviction or family breakdown	10
Currently in temporary accommodation/ temporary accommodation coming to an end	10
Currently homeless	7
Difficulty with rent/ bills or other financial issues	6
Currently waiting/ bidding with Home Point	5
Need some support mental or physical	5
Violence or threat of violence	4
Present accommodation no longer suitable	3
Drink problems	1

“Have been in B&B accommodation since August 07 after fleeing violent partner. Myself and my 4 Children are still waiting to be housed in our own tenancy.”

“Living in a B&B and bidding each week via Home Point for a property”

“Will need intensive support both physically and mentally”

“Low priority with Council”

“Homeless due to being kicked out of accommodation. The accommodation was leased to me with added employment, false complaints were made to the lease holder and thus was made homeless”

“Too long waiting list, plus I am not very interested in single council accommodation as I would probably mess it up”

“Living in temp B&B”

“If K returns home parent will beat her again”

“Need help and support due to violent relationships”

“Money, lack of accommodation”

“Homeless”

“NFA Lack of help with Drink Problems”

"Trying to find anywhere that will take the rent deposit scheme. Private landlords not interested and B&B's full. Home Point have flags on system due to past offending"

"Been in Bed and breakfast but due to unsocial behaviour asked to leave"

"Without own accommodation since 2002 on coming out of prison. Lived with various relatives but now unable to do so. Spent 6 weeks in Stonebow, diagnosed with Bi Polar disorder. On discharge accommodated in B&B. Now awaiting independent accommodation"

"No where to live staying with other drug users and where ever I can."

"Pomona Place full at the moment. My History of prison goes against me. I bid every week through Home Point"

"None of the above. Need more home help, cleaning, cooking etc my illness at the moment prevents me from housing associations"

"Recent confusion/ Poor self care resulting in problems at home"

"Lived in ex partners house"

"In Pomona Place but would like a flat in Hereford or Ross"

"Difficulty paying bills and rent"

"Looking for supported housing"

"Flat is very cold and not enough money for rent"

"Difficult living alone, hoping for supportive accommodation"

"Currently selling my own home to downsize to smaller home to release capital"

"None due to living in foyer"

"Living in rent arrears and have rent arrears"

"Living in supported housing and have rent arrears"

"In temp, just found unintentionally homeless- facing street homeless"

"After being homeless just over a year ago, we got 1st tenancy July 07 and we have just completed an exchange"

"I can only live at Foyer for 2 years - up this year"

"Living in a Foyer"

"In 2 bed 2nd floor flat - temp accommodation with son and daughter"

"Ready for move on from supported housing"

"I am 19 weeks pregnant and at the foyer you can't have children so need accomm before I give birth"

"17 yrs old had to leave Mums due to family problems and now living in foyer"

"Homeless - sofa surfing with friends"

"Made to leave by parents 2.5 months homeless and sleeping in a tent girlfriends not allowed to stay - now sleeping in a car. Unable to afford private rent"

"Family breakdown"

"Breakdown in relationship with Mum"

"Couldn't get on with Step Mum in Hereford. Moving to Mums in Plymouth"

"Family breakdown"

"NFA and sofa surfing"

"Domestic violence from partner. I left our home and moved to my sisters/ sofa surfing. Moved to Ross foyer 5 months ago."

"Tiny one bedroom house - share with one young son - 9 months"

"Lost job after fiancé committed suicide last November and everything has spiralled down"

"Living with friends in one bed flat. Overcrowding an issue. (2 couples living in flat, 2 females both pregnant) Landlord has issued a letter to tenants - asked non tenants to vacate in 2 weeks"

"Couple with 4 children, living in rented 2 bed property with Herefordshire Council. Does have rent arrears which is on a payment plan of £5/ week"

"Living in a house co-op, having difficulties with new group of people who have moved in. Fear of harassment."

"4 Children aged 12-3 yrs. relationship breakdown - Oxfordshire. Oxfordshire Council have yet to contact Hereford Council to make a referral"

"Now permanently housed"

"Too young to get a flat"

"Living in private rented accommodation and have been given 1 month to leave"

"Homeless"

"I am currently Homeless, sleeping rough and I'm occasionally able to stay with friends"

"I have been at the foyer now for 16 Months. My situation has changed very much and I now have a full time job which will be my chosen career. I will be looking to move out in the next 2 months to my own accommodation where I will live independently"

"Housing unsuitable due to stairs"

The following free text responses include in brackets **all** the services the respondent marked as having accessed and found to be useful.

Q22 Please outline briefly how these services have helped you:

"They have talked to Housing on my behalf and helped to keep me in Hereford" (G.P, probationary service, shelter)

"Homeless Team helped with rent arrears ensuring they are paid.
Home Point - Taking Bids.
Mental Health - Medication, having someone to talk to.

Stonham- making Phone Calls, filling in forms, chasing up housing, Homeless team”
(Homelessness and prevention team, Home Point, mental health team inc. crisis team, Stonham floating support)

“Patient - not well enough to leave hospital as yet”
(N.A)

“Open Door has helped me, by giving blankets and provision to me”
(Open Door)

“Open Door have provided me with food and shelter regularly for some years now, all for no cost. Without being overly pushy.”
(Housing benefit office, Open Door, MIND)

“They have not helped at all”
(Home Point, police, Stonham floating support marked as accessed Open Door marked as helpful)

“Listened, fed and tried to help”
(Open Door)

“Sanitary - keeping clean. Salvation Army - blankets, food”
(CAB, Open door, Stonham floating support)

“Open Door- fed, clothed and listened”
(Homelessness and prevention team, Home Point, G.P, Open Door)

“Providing information (Home Point) Allowed to use phone - referral to WHABAC (Probation) Approved for Rent Deposit Scheme (Homeless Team) Sign posting to services (Shelter)”
(As stated)

“Found me accommodation”
(Social Worker/ Social services)

“Anne Holland (DASH) made initial referral for housing. Anne Holland referred to Stonham Floating support. Wendy Dyer, Stonham has continued liaison with housing department.”
(As stated)

“Has only been getting help through DASH”
(As stated)

“I would not be able without support to maintain tenancy and live in the community”
(Mental health team inc. crisis team, CARR GOMM tenancy support services)

“Every week with my Carr Comm support worker I place a bid through Home Point. My benefits are now in place since I left prison. Housing, Tax, DLA, Income support”
(Homeless and Prevention Team, Home Point, Mental Health teams inc crisis team, Housing Benefit Office, CARR GOMM tenancy support services)

“I can say without Carr Comm and the mental health team support. I would have lost tenancy and be in hospital.”
(G.P, Mental Health teams inc crisis team, CARR GOMM tenancy support services)

“Admission to Jenny Lind to Stonebow mental health problems, tackle memory problems and transfer to community hospital due to ulcer”
(N.A)

“Home Point - resource to find accommodation. MH teams - returned to Pomona, Stonebow unit - stabilizing mental health and advising, Stonham keeps a roof over head and helps with bills”

(As stated)

“CSO have helped with sign posting - CAB will look at acquiring free legal advice”

(As stated)

“They had time to listen”

(Mental Health teams inc crisis team, Social Worker/ Social services, MIND)

“No services accessed”

“Homeless prevention put in contact with, SHYPP provided accommodation, Benefits office arranged income support and Housing Benefit”

(As stated)

“Gave support, somewhere to live and they are fair”

(SHYPP)

“Somewhere to live, met new people and learnt new skills”

(SHYPP)

“Gave advice”

(FACT, Probationary services, Mental Health teams inc crisis team, SHYPP, Connexions)

“Police - provided information on Homeless prevention. Homeless prevention paid arrears for temp accommodation. SHYPP assisted to claim HB that was owed for temp accommodation once in 1st tenancy.”

(Police, SHYPP)

“SHYPP housed me and provided support”

(Home Point, SHYPP)

“Gave me a warm, safe place to live. Helping me to survive on my own”

(SHYPP)

“Only just started working with SHYPP. She is hoping to get something out of working with SHYPP”

(Home Point, SHYPP)

“I was given a bed-sit by SHYPP and offered support to get own business off ground, been on business, training and tax courses. Also involved in 3 peaks challenge, life coaching and been SHYPP rep.@ foyer fed event in London. Now working with Outreach to move back into my own tenancy. Also accessed Night stop before I moved in foyer.”

(SHYPP, Hostel support staff)

“Social worker contacted SHYPP and homeless prevention and she provided reference for foyer. SHYPP gave me somewhere to live after being homeless for about 5months. In the time at SHYPP my drug problem has been addressed”

(Social Worker/ Social services, SHYPP)

“Helped me get a roof over my head”

(SHYPP)

“Mostly good support through situations and assistance”

(SHYPP, Connexions)

“SHYPP outlined personal situation put things into perspective, gave me peace of mind”

(SHYPP)

“When I was homeless helped me find accommodation”
(G.P, Homeless and Prevention Team, SHYPP, Connexions)

“Connexions helped me find work and told me about SHYPP. SHYPP did Home Point application and I have stayed on Nightstop”
(As stated)

“Help more back home”
(Home Point, Homeless and Prevention Team, SHYPP, Connexions)

“They gave me a roof over my head, they gave me advice and helped me with my benefits”
(SHYPP)

“Homelessness Prevention team helped me get present accomm. Have not paid last 2 weeks rent. My only concern is the length of time it will take to repay”
(N.A)

“Took time to discuss my housing situation with me – Shelter”
(As stated)

“Derek Allen is awaiting a referral from Oxford. As yet I've received no help”
(N.A)

“Shelter helped me through the Homelessness issues. I have become more confident since working with Shelter”
(Homeless and Prevention Team, Shelter)

“They have helped me learn about the outside world”
(Social Worker/ Social services, SHYPP, Connexions)

“With my housing issues”
(Home Point, SHYPP)

“Helped provided accommodation, even evicted still supported me. Luke at connexions - good options and someone to talk to”
(SHYPP, Connexions)

“SHYPP have helped me with Nightstop and other areas on housing. Connexions are always there to be a listening ear”
(Home Point, SHYPP, Connexions)

“These services have helped me to gain self confidence and they have helped me to gain some out of school qualifications and they have also helped me to meet new people.”
(Homeless and Prevention Team, SHYPP)

As reference to Q24 – Q23 results:

What services or help would you have liked, that you did not or could not receive? Please do answer this section as it will help drive the type of Homeless services that will be available in the future:	
Base	236 100.00%
Accessibility to rented accommodation	32 13.60%
A new hostel is needed	25

	10.60%
Accessibility to hostels	23 9.70%
Benefits advice	22 9.30%
Better transport links	18 7.60%
Employment advice	18 7.60%
Life Skills	18 7.60%
Relationship or family advice/ counselling	16 6.80%
Debt management	13 5.50%
Mediation services	10 4.20%
Links to health service	10 4.20%
Debt counselling	9 3.80%
Domestic violence advice	8 3.40%
Accessibility to buying your own property	7 3.00%
Links to mental health teams	7 3.00%

Q24 Please provide reasons why you could not access the services you needed

Reason	Count
Services not offered/ lack of information on services and where to go for information	18
The service does not currently exist in Herefordshire	11
Regulations preventing access or age restrictions preventing access to services	5
Currently not able to access accommodation due to waiting list size and/ or banding	3
Mental/ Physical health support needed to access services	2
Not having a permanent address	1
Lack of accessible social housing in Herefordshire	1
Respondent has an anti social history	1
Domestic issues	1

“It was not offered to me”

“Not one in Hereford - Hope Scott House you can't get into.”

"Far to many people on waiting list, no action made unless priority"

"Generally down to not having a permanent address. But also a personal stubborn streak which prevents me from accessing these services (perhaps stupidly)"

"There isn't a hostel it's difficult to get private accommodation"

"I find it difficult to be housed because I do not have any dependents and I am fit and able. I do not have any health issues or disabilities. Not being housed because I am healthy and able it is a disgrace maybe I should do more harm than good."

"Getting place on the bus."

"Lack of transport, non availability of accommodation, lack of social housing"

"Do not exist in Hereford"

"Did access B&B through Police and Homeless team. But was asked to leave because outdoor temperature was above 0 degrees C. A so called rule that I was unaware of and in all honesty bewildered by."

"No hostel"

"They are not available" (Hostels and rented accommodation)

"Past History. Anti Social behaviour. Forensic History"

"Phone messages left for Homeless prevention team not responded to. Refused accommodation by Pomona Place. Bidding regularly for properties but always unsuccessful. Although priority status, still in B&B after 6 months. More consideration of personal circumstances and history should have been taken into account when offering a property. Told if I didn't accept a property I would be intentionally homeless."

"Domestic Issues - splitting up with ex partner"

"I could only access services with support my mental health is not very good at the moment"

"Lack of motivation - depressed at the moment I find it very difficult to function"

"Didn't believe in what I was saying"

"Stephen is happy with the help received so far"

"Knowing who to contact - how to access these services"

"Did not know they were all available"

"Not offered - Don't know how to access them"

"Not aware of full extent of available services"

"I didn't know about them - lack of information"

"No where provides the time and service"

"Because they did not exist"

“Just not informed of what’s out there and also we were in V. rural area so had no access to appropriate transport.”

“I wasn't aware of services available and didn't find any info at the time. A new hostel is needed as there is no where for people to go.”

“Homeless prevention said that they could not help me as I was too old. They gave me a form for Home Point. I went to the job centre and they referred me to SHYPP”

“She didn't need any of them”

“Because there is no hostel in this County. Didn't have access to that type of information before homelessness happened to me”

“No hostels. My age was a factor”

“I didn't know where to go, no one told me anything”

“My worker from SHYPP accessed the homelessness team but so far they have not contacted me”

“Because of my age and some are not there.”

“Wasn't informed”

“Lack of information”

“At 18 too old for mediation/ family service”

“Lack of information”

“Lack of information”

“I didn't know they were available.”

“Not sure how to access or that I could.”

“Did not know where to start”

“No reply from Hostels when called. Did not return calls when they said they would. Spoke to Council about rent deposit scheme, she has still to await appointment. So far has been waiting 4 months. Interviewee was not given options or information on accessibility to buy own property.”

“Unsure who to approach- ended up contacting supporting people for help”

“Awaiting referral”

“I would have liked the Homelessness team to be more patient with me on the phone. I felt they got angry with me because I was confused”

“Not really available in the county”

Q25 What services would you personally like to see available in the future?

Service	Count
Hostel/ Drop in centre/ Overnight shelter/ Access centres	20
More accessible/ better advice – Raised awareness of services and support	11

More properties- Social/ sheltered/ affordable	10
Help finding employment	2
Better transport links	2
More support services to provide help at home	2
Access to rehabilitation, advice and support	2
More opportunities for young people	2
Help with domestic violence issues	1

“A Direct Access Homeless Hostel. More drop in centres like open door. Stonham Floating service to continue”

“Hostels, more accommodation available, homeless services improved”

“An overnight shelter for those in genuine need”

“More hostels and drop in centres. More help finding employment”

“I think there should be more properties for single people who are out of work but only for those who make an effort to find employment and want independence and responsibility. I do not want to rely on the charities of friends for support.”

“Better transport”

“Hostel more social and affordable housing”

“Y.M.C.A”

“Genuine accommodation for those who for whatever reason, have fallen into 'genuine' homelessness. A place that has access to cooking, washing, personal hygiene facilities and a choice NOT to share but to remain individual on a personal basis.”

“Hostel, affordable housing, sheltered housing”

“As before: List of landlords who accept rent deposit or housing benefits. Or list of B&B/ guest houses. Access to some form of Temp Accommodation. Chance to review flags on Home Point system.”

“Another hostel”

“A hostel for Homeless people. A drop in centre for Homeless during the day. More independent advice. More one bedroom accommodation.”

“Access top housing for single males some sort of loan arrangement for deposits for flats/ housing”

“When I came out of prison I was put in J.S.A. This caused me many problems I had no support in the time. It took five weeks before I started to receive benefits. This caused problems with housing benefits and tax benefits”

“Home help services - cooking cleaning, shopping for me”

“Alfred’s needs - memory problems, and poor day care could argue he needed or needs more input / visits or support at home.”

“Help with rehabilitation”

“Don't know”

“Not sure”

“Increased awareness of services”

“To be more aware of what is available”

“Nothing to add”

“Male night stop”

“Night stop in Ross”

“More housing options (more choice in location) and more housing”

“Direct access hostel in County. Information on where to go and how to prevent yourself from ending up homeless”

“Hostel. Info on what's available before becoming Homeless”

“Better transport. Better advice and info perhaps in schools so you know where to go.”

“Direct Access hostels, More supported accommodation”

“Different homelessness processes at the Council (i.e better understanding of youth homelessness and attitude, different processes with couples) An easy access hostel, somewhere to hang out in evening”

“More access centres for young people”

“More opportunities directed at young people”

“Not sure as moving away”

“Information centres - better access for young people training and employment”

“More hostels, not enough homeless accommodation around. Alcohol support”

“More advertisement of help with domestic violence. To know where to go for help”

“More flats/ houses to rent”

“One stop shop for Homeless people with support to see you into accommodation”

“More available services for homeless people and more suitable temp accommodation”

“Someone from the Council as a face to face contact. Homeless team who answer the telephone. Shorter waiting list at Shelter”

“Not sure”

“More foyers, a hostel, more support workers”

“More services for people who are not entitled to housing. Hostel (Direct Access) supported accommodation”

“Free access to gym, swimming and other sports activities 14-24”

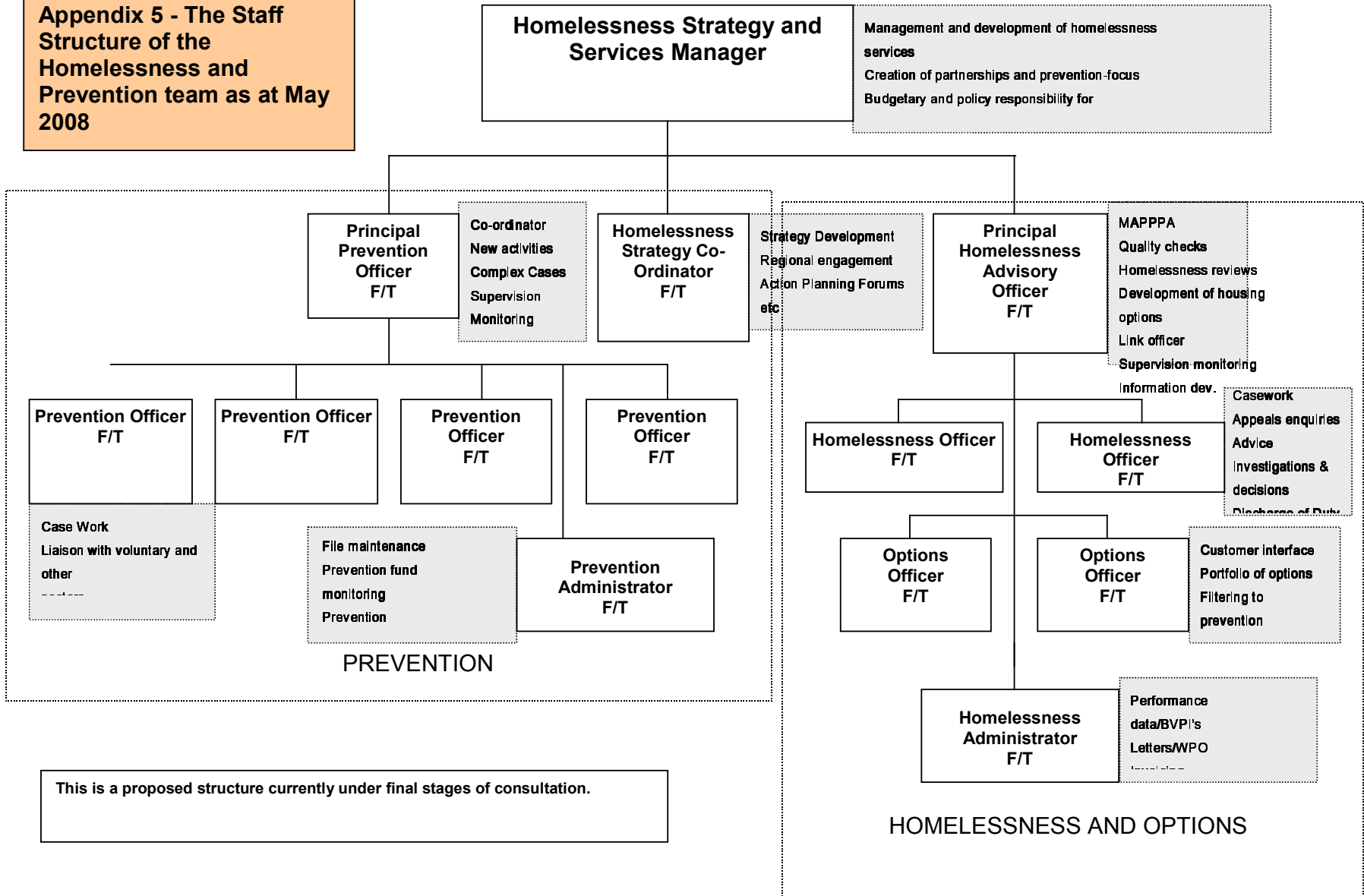
Appendix Four - Acknowledgements

The partnership working indicated in this strategy has been developed as a result of the support and co-operation of the Herefordshire Homeless Strategy Implementation Group (HSIG) and wider partners and stakeholders. Their contributions have been invaluable.

The members of Homeless Strategy Implementation Group are: -

Polly Hearsey	Shelter
Sam Pratley	Supported Housing for Young People (SHYPP)
Jamie Burns / Louise Norman	Home Point – choice based lettings agency
Paul Baker	Probationary Service
Chris Boote	RSL forum representative, Marches Housing
Catherine Collis	Women's Aid
Charles Naylor	West Mercia Police
Mark Hemming / Mair Edmunds	Mental Health Services, Drugs agencies and PCT
Ian Gardner	Herefordshire Council, Supporting People
Linda Maden	Herefordshire Council, Children Social Services
Jane Thomas	Herefordshire Council, Housing Needs and Development
Lorraine Fewtrell	Herefordshire Council, Homelessness Team
Derek Allen	Herefordshire Council, Homelessness Team
Claire Keetch	Citizens Advice Bureau
Paul Towner	Homeless Forum
Denise Bradley Lloyd	Herefordshire Council, Private Sector Housing
Karen Pritchard	RSL representative, Kemble Housing
Lydia Bailey	Adult Social Services
Christine Petherick	Housing Benefit
Ceri Vaughan Jones	Shropshire HSIG representative
Tara Roche	HSIG chair

Appendix 5 - The Staff Structure of the Homelessness and Prevention team as at May 2008



This is a proposed structure currently under final stages of consultation.

Appendix 6 – Sub regional SMART ACTION PLAN

West Housing Market Area – Shropshire and Herefordshire

1.6 Carry out sub-regional gypsy and travellers' needs survey. (West HMA).
Use this data from the survey to shape policy and investment, at least two examples of it being used in this way.

3.6 Share best practice and extend use of protocol for work with RSLs on prevention of homelessness. At least four examples of RSLs using the protocol to develop **prevention action plans**.

1.7 Develop cross authority data sharing on key homelessness data, investigate cross boundary presenter survey. **At least two examples of new data sharing being used to influence policy, procedure or practice.**

4.5 Commission joint (sub-regional) Housing Market Assessment. (West HMA). **One example of shared research and data being used to influence cross boundary working.**

2.8 Share best practice on resettlement of offenders and specific projects designed to improve resettlement (RESIT) , investigate the potential for wider application of similar schemes. Examples of improved quality of resettlement , and evidence of 2 examples of practice being changed or new service being developed.

5.3 Develop joint protocols and supporting materials for hospital and mental health service discharge. (West HMA, South HMA,C1 HMA). **Evidence of improved quality of discharge planning and service user experience.**

Ref	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
Outcome 1 - The prevention of homelessness through the effective targeting of housing options and services.							
HOS 3	ALL GROUPS	The re-specification of the rent deposit scheme, with the potential of a dedicated rent deposit scheme officer funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS3	To reduce homelessness amongst sofa surfers and rough sleepers - difficult to evaluate without a hidden homeless count.	2009	Supporting People	Lead: Strategic Housing	Links to SHP108 - (LP2) - Number of Private Sector vacant properties returned to occupation or demolished as a result of LA Actions. Former BV64
HOS 13	ALL GROUPS	To prepare a Directory of Homelessness and related services - to be used by Service Users and support teams	To empower Herefordshire Citizens	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Homeless Forum , Supporting People, various support agencies	Links to Audit Commission KLOE's Strategic Approach to Housing and Homelessness and Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus)
HOS 24	Excluded from Services	To encourage agencies including Home Point landlords to have statement of their exclusion policies, which includes the right of appeal and process for review of exclusion.	To reduce homelessness amongst those excluded from services. Along with the reduction in costs to PCT and Bed and Breakfast	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSiG, RSL Forum, Mental Health	Links to NI 156 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation SHP103 - Gov 3
197 HOS 45	ALL GROUPS	To review the procedures and customer service standards of the Homelessness team to ensure that all homeless and prevention applications are dealt with appropriately, consistently and efficiently. To ensure that the procedures are clearly defined, accessible and followed by staff in line with the Audit Commission Key Line of enquiries (requirements. REF: HOS45	To improve customer service	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Homeless Forum, Info in Herefordshire	Links to NI 156 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation SHP103 - Gov 3 P1E Homelessness Prevention Section 10
HOS 46	ALL GROUPS	To work in partnership with the voluntary sector including charitable and church organisations working with the homeless, to develop appropriate solutions for Herefordshire to enable emergency access to food and shelter for homeless individuals particularly during periods of cold weather. REF: HOS46 (when temperatures fall below zero degrees for three consecutive nights in line with CLG guidance.)	New services for the Homeless	ongoing	Existing	Lead: Homeless Forum Links: Strategic Housing, Churches Together and Hereford City Mission.	
HOS 47	ALL GROUPS	To research the Benefits advice within the County and if appropriate produce a signposting pack about the relevant benefits advice services in the County.	To improve advice services	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSiG, Homeless Forum, Info team	Links to NI 152 Working age people on out of work benefits and NI 181 Time Taken to process Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events.
HOS 11	ALL GROUPS	To produce a number of information leaflets as well as a directory of services in a range of formats appropriate to all service users' needs. These need to be circulated to all agencies supporting many client groups including BME groups. To ensure this information is available on the Council web pages.	To improve advice services	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSiG, Homeless Forum, Info team	Links to KLOE Strategic Approach to Housing (Access, Customer Care and User Focus) and KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus - Housing Advice, homelessness prevention and options services)
HOS 49	ALL GROUPS	Investigate the creation of a specialist Advocate worker position. To work with vulnerable adults offering assistance and advice through the Home Point system.	To improve advice services	2011	Supporting People	Lead: Home Point Links: Supporting People	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living Links to KLOE Allocations and Lettings (Access, Customer Care & User Focus)
HOS 50	ALL GROUPS	To produce a document outlining and reviewing the requirements of the Audit Commissions KLOE's (key line of enquiries). This is the audit commissions requirements for an "authority delivering an excellent service." This planning document should review how Herefordshire will achieve these requirements over the next five years and in line with the CLG Enhanced Options.	To improve advice services	2008	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSiG, Homeless Forum, Info team	Links to KLOE Strategic Approach to Housing (Access, Customer Care and User Focus) and KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus)

Ref	REF service	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
HOS 51	ALL GROUPS		To produce and implement a Housing Advice Strategy and customer charter taking into account the requirements of the Audit Commission KLOE's along with CLG and relevant guidance. To build in procedures for routinely monitoring and staff training on delivering this advice. This is linked to action HOS 50.	To improve advice services	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSIG, Homeless Forum, Info team	Links to KLOE Strategic Approach to Housing (Access, Customer Care and User Focus) and KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus)
HOS 53	ALL GROUPS		Develop a private sector landlord incentive scheme with the aim of encouraging private sector landlords to offer more homes to vulnerable or excluded clients, for a longer period of time along with taking people on benefits or the rent deposit scheme.	To reduce homelessness	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing	Links to - NI 154 Net Additional Homes Provided and NI 155 Number of Affordable Homes Delivered (Gross) (LAA)
HOS 55	ALL GROUPS		To investigate in discussion with childrens services the need for a 'life skills training service.' With life skills trainer rolling training sessions on subjects such as budgeting, child care, time management for household responsibilities, debt advice, anger management, nutrition and cooking, finding a new house, assertiveness, employment and education advice. The trainer can signpost to other services within the training session. This should aim to be a direct access service.	To reduce and prevent homelessness for the future	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Learning Skills Council, Job Centre, Life Coach	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation
HOS 9	ALL GROUPS		To develop a court desk service in Herefordshire aimed at preventing homelessness by ensuring households are appropriately advised and supported in cases where repossession proceedings are being taken against them.	To reduce and prevent homelessness for the future	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: CAB	P1E Homelessness Prevention Section 10
HOS 16	ALL GROUPS		To work with Citizens Advice Bureau on the development of a specialist debt advice service in support of homelessness prevention.	To reduce and prevent homelessness for the future	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: CAB	Links to KLOE Strategic Approach to Housing (Access, Customer Care and User Focus) and KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus)
Outcome 2 - To end the use of bed and breakfast as temporary accommodation and to continue to reduce the overall number of households in temporary accommodation.								
HOS 2	Homeless Families		With the results from the 'Homeless Case Panel Action Group', to carry out a feasibility study into the benefits of acquiring a small number of appropriate properties to provide intensively supported transitional housing for families with children who have been found intentionally homeless or who are hard to house. Potentially to research the family intervention model with the assistance of supporting people. REF: HOS2 (links to HOS1)	To reduce the numbers of Homeless families in Bed and Breakfast	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing and Supporting People Links: tbc at later stage	Links to NI 156 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation SHP/03 - Gov 3
HOS 6	ALL GROUPS		To develop and produce a Temporary Accommodation Strategy with action plan - This strategy and action plan is to review all current temporary accommodation usage, location and the quality and the facilities for washing and cooking facilities. It also aims to reduce to Zero the number of 16 / 17 year olds and families with children in Bed and breakfast by 2010 with an easily accessible emergency bed in TA and encompassing the specialist advice for reducing youth homelessness. This should ensure TA providers inform of GP and dentist to new residents.	To reduce the numbers of Homeless families and 16/17 year olds in Bed and Breakfast	2008	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Landlords, SHYPP	Links to LAA - Increase the availability of appropriate, decent and affordable housing NI156 - reducing street homelessness - along with Every Child matters and N146 - , N119 and N1143 - Offenders living in settled accommodation to build safer communities. LAA - Children and YP - NI150, NI117, Along with Stronger communities NI175 - access to services, along with increase the availability of appropriate decant housing / Every child matters / Government Teenage parents strategy /
HOS 43	Older People		The preparation and development of the hospital discharge protocol between mental health, County Hospital, Community Hospitals and Herefordshire Council.	To reduce the numbers bed blocking in hospitals	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: PCT, NHS, Mental Health, Social Services	Links to Mental Health Housing Plan

Ref	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
HOS 52	ALL GROUPS	To complete Temporary Accommodation Procedures for the placements of people in temporary accommodation, this should include a complaints procedure if the temporary accommodation is not adequate.	To provide appropriate customer service	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing	Links to NI 156 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation SHP103 - Gov 3 SHP1 16 (LPI 10 Percentage change in number of Families with Children in Temporary Accommodation Links to KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Temporary Accommodation for Statutory Homeless Households - Homeless Strategy, Services and Applications
Outcome 3 - To ensure sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who are, or who may become, homeless.							
HOS 4	Homeless Families	To seek in partnership with the Supporting People programme, the development of an RSL Tenancy Support service to work closely with the Homelessness and Housing Advice team assisting existing RSL tenants to maintain their tenancies. REF: HOS4	Reduction in evictions	2011	Supporting People	Lead: Supporting People	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living NI 156 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation SHP103 - Gov 3
HOS 10	Mental Health	A review of the Supporting People funded pilot service - this service is an 18 month pilot starting in 2008/2009 and is to offer a floating support service for those mental health service users who may be homeless. REF: HOS10	Reduction in bed blocking costs	2010	Supporting People	Leads: Mental Health and Supporting People	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
HOS 15	Substance misuse and Offenders	A creation of a wrap around service for drug and alcohol service users along with offenders. The housing related support element is to be funded through Supporting People.	Reduction in bed blocking costs	2009	Supporting People	Leads: Supporting People	Links to APA 2007 - Increase the proportion of young offenders in education and employment, along with NI115. And the outcome area 9.1.3 of Children and YP plan
HOS 20	Singles over 25	With the results from the 'hidden homeless' count, to develop a "Hidden Homeless and Rough Sleeper needs analysis" to include a needs mapping exercise - to ensure a strategic approach to tackling, managing and reducing homelessness amongst this client group. This should review the need for a Direct Access Hostel or offer alternative solutions including a MOPP (Move-on planned protocol). Links to HOS18	Reduce numbers of 'hidden homeless'	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links : Supporting People and HSIG	Direct Access Hostel - LAA priority for NI154/NI155 along with Economic reasons - to increase the economic potential and address worklessness - NI152 and NI156 along with decent homes for stronger communities/ Along with links to LAA NI19 - rate of re-offending and NI130 and NI146 and NI143 - settled homes for ex offenders. Many reports from homeless forum agencies about numbers of people sofa surfing within the County. There is no quantitative evidence for a new direct access hostel, but we suggest that a needs analysis is carried out to identify potential numbers and the potential support from Supporting People agencies to enable people to move-on from the Direct access hostel.
HOS 23	ALL GROUPS	Supporting People to re-specify the homeless housing related support services in the county, which are to be funded by Supporting People. REF: HOS23	Evaluate and plan existing services	2009	Existing	Lead: Supporting People	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
HOS 25	Young People	To produce and implement a Young People Homeless Strategy and Action Plan to include 16 – 25 years. Providing evidence of information, ideas and services along with the proposed need for new accommodation and support solutions for young people leaving home as well as those found intentionally homeless. REF: HOS25	To reduce the SHYPP waiting list	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Supporting People, SHYPP and relevant LA departments	NI 147 Care Leavers in suitable accommodation NI 46 Young Offenders access to suitable accommodation Links to KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care & User Focus)

Ref	REF service	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
HOS 30		Teenage Parents	To work in conjunction with SHYPP to prepare a Teenage Parents Homelessness needs analysis. To assess the current housing need and ensure solutions for accommodation and support	To provide appropriate and supported accommodation	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Supporting People, SHYPP and relevant LA departments	Every Child matters and LAA N146-, N119 and N1143 and governments Teenage Pregnancy Strategy.
HOS 31		Domestic Abuse	The planned re-provision of the Womens Aid refuge in Hereford City, with a potential of two additional units of accommodation	To increase the units of affordable units and to provide appropriate and supported accommodation	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Womens Aid, Herefordshire Council departments	Links to the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) - improve services to combat DV. As well as links to NI32 - reduce the repeat incidence of DV
HOS 32		Domestic Abuse	A proposal to investigate with RSL's the provision of 5 or 6 properties at any one time, from the county RSL stock. These properties will provide move-on or alternative accommodation from the Womens Aid refuge. This will also enable grown up children to live with their families. Intensive floating support will be provided by Womens Aid.	To provide appropriate and supported accommodation	2010	Existing	Lead: Womens Aid Links: RSL Forum, Strategic Housing, Supporting People	Links to the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) - improve services to combat DV.
HOS 38		Gypsy and Travellers	The 'Housing Needs of Gypsies and Travellers Working Group' to request discussion, consideration and review of the allocation procedures of allocating pitches or site placements. REF: HOS38	To increase number of available units and improve quality of accommodation	2013	Housing Corporation	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Environment and Planning	
HOS 42		Older People	To complete in 2008, Hereford City's first Extra Care scheme which will enable over 91 older people to live independently in their own homes with support matched to their individual needs.	To increase number of affordable units	2008	Dept of Health grant. LA capital. Elgar HA. Extra Care charitable trust. Supporting People. Adult Social Care. PCT.	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Supported People	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
HOS 54		Prevention Ex offenders	To keep under review the resources applied to providing homelessness and housing advice services in Herefordshire in responding to national developments and local demand to housing advice A housing needs analysis to be carried out to identify the numbers and housing options required for ex offenders.	To improve customer service and response times / reduce temporary accommodation usage and costs/ reduce homelessness applications and its effects within the County To evaluate the housing requirement of ex offenders	2009 2011	Existing Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSI, Finance Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Probation, CSDP	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation SHPI 17 (LPI 11) Former BV213 Preventing Homelessness SHPI 14 Average Length of Stay of Families with Children in B&B SHPI 15 Average Length of Stay of Families with Children in Hostels NI 46 Young Offenders access to Suitable Accommodation
HOS 21		Care Leavers	Strategic Housing with the assistance of Supporting People plan will aim to roll out the Move On Planned Protocol (MOPP) to their providers in Herefordshire. This will inform strategic considerations in relation to accommodation needs and provide an aid to strategic planning.	To reduce homelessness	2011	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Supporting People, Housing providers	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
Outcome 4 - Improve joint working amongst all agencies concerned with homelessness and prevention.								
HOS 1		Homeless Families	To seek the development of a housing related support service to deal with the challenge of Hard to House households whose tenancy history is preventing an offer of settled accommodation. Associated with this, to set up a new Homeless Case Panel Action Group to review individual Hard to House cases and to drive forward ideas and solutions with long term planning, potentially using the family intervention model	To reduce repeat homelessness	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Supporting People, RSL's, Shelter, Social Services, Police, CAB, NHS, Education	Links to NI 156 Number of Households in Temporary Accommodation SHPI03 - Gov 3 Links to KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care & User Focus - Housing Advice, homelessness prevention & options services)

Ref	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
HOS 7	Mental Health	Associated with this, to set up a new Homeless Case Panel Action Group to review individual Hard to House cases and to drive forward ideas and solutions with long term planning, potentially using the family intervention model.	To reduce the effects of Homelessness amongst Mental Health Service Users	2009	Existing	Leads: Strategic Housing and Mental Health	Links to KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Housing Advice, homelessness prevention & option services)
HOS 18	Substance misuse and 16-17 year olds	To develop information sharing procedures and a proforma care package for service users with Substance Misuse issues and 16-17 year olds that Home Point landlords can view - with the aim of assuring Housing Associations to offer a tenancy to this client group.	To reduce homelessness and discrimination amongst this group Substance Misuse clients	2010	Existing	Leads: Mental Health Links: Home Point, RSL Forum	Links to KLOE Allocations & Lettings (Access, customer care & user focus) NI 46 Young Offenders access to Suitable Accommodation
HOS 22	Ex-Offenders	To develop and implement a joint housing and probation services protocol for the assessment and referral of offenders to homeless services which is to provide a housing link scheme to work with offenders due for discharge to assist them in attaining appropriate housing and support.	Reduction of bed blocking in Bail Hostel and numbers on waiting list for Bridge House	2009	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing and Probationary Service Links: RSL's, Stonham	Links to KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus - Housing Advice, homelessness prevention & option services) Links to NI 143 Offenders under probation supervision living in settled and suitable accommodation at the end of their order or licence, NI144 Offenders under probation supervision in employment at the end of their order or licence
HOS 33	Domestic Abuse	To co-operate in the setting up and implementation of a MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference) panel in Herefordshire, to provide joined-up approach to assisting high risk victims of domestic abuse.	Reduction in number of reduced homeless cases	2009	Existing	Lead: Community Drug Safety Partnership Links: Police, Womens Aid, Health, Social Services, Mental Health	Links to the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) - improve services to combat DV. As well as links to NI32 - reduce the repeat incidence of DV and outcome 9.21 of Children's and YP plan
HOS 34	Domestic Abuse	The update of a Domestic Abuse strategy to be completed by the DA forum in 2008.	To ensure efficient planning of Domestic Abuse services	2009	Existing	Lead: Domestic Abuse Forum. Links: Community Drugs Safety Partnership,	Links to NI32 Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence and NI 34 Domestic Violence (Murder)
HOS 35	Domestic Abuse	To support the employment of a dedicated DA / MARAC co-ordinator. To be managed by the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership (included in their strategy 2008 - 2011)	To promote and encourage Domestic Abuse services within the County.	2011	Funding - Community Safety and Drugs Partnership	Lead: Community Safety and Drugs Partnership	Links to NI32 Repeat Incidents of Domestic Violence and NI 34 Domestic Violence (Murder)
HOS 37	Domestic Abuse	To promote joint working between the Homelessness & Prevention Service and Womens Aid. Womens Aid to support and advocate for service users wanting to access the Homelessness team	To promote Homelessness prevention services to Domestic Abuse victims	2012	Existing	Lead: Homelessness Team Manager Links: Womens Aid, IDVA, CAB	Links to the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) - improve services to combat DV.
HOS 40	Gypsy and Travellers	The progression of the 'Housing Needs of Gypsies and Travellers Working Group' to deliver the findings of the 'Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment 2007'. This could support the needs analysis and commissioning framework for the future. Links to HOS41	To improve the housing support and allocation for Gypsies and Travellers	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Shelter, RSL's, Health project, Gypsy and Traveller liaison officer.	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
HOS 58	Employment	To develop links with the Job Centre, Connexions and Learning and Skills Council encouraging attendance at HSIG.	To improve employment opportunities for homeless	2008	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSIG, Job Centre, Learning Skills Council	To link with NI117 - supporting young people into employment and education. Links with Children and YP plan outcome area 9.5.1
HOS 56	Advice	To research the possibility of a one-stop shop/ info hub or one conduit for housing related homelessness advice. This would involve the major agencies. i.e. housing benefit, Home Point, Homelessness and support agency representatives. This will need to be considered in the light of the accommodation and advice strategies.	To improve customer services	2013	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSIG, Info team, Accommodation Panel	Links to KLOE's Strategic Approach to Housing and Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus)

Ref	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
HOS 12	ALL GROUPS	To work jointly with 'Info in Herefordshire' centres to expand their role in the front line provision of homelessness and housing advice supporting the specialist role of the Homelessness team	To improve customer services	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Info team, IT	Links to KLOE's Strategic Approach to Housing and Homelessness & Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care and User Focus)
Outcome 5 - To reduce homelessness and it's related impacts amongst vulnerable client groups including young people and children.							
HOS 5	Homeless Families	To develop a joint Housing and Social Services protocol for early intervention where children are at risk of homelessness	To reduce the stress of children within homeless families and ensure future development of that child	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Children's Social Services and Partner agencies	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation PIE Homelessness Prevention Section 10
HOS 26	Young People	Review and re-commission Mediation Services for 16 - 17 year olds	To increase the numbers accessing the mediation service	2010	Existing	Lead: SHYPP Links: Strategic Housing, Supporting People, Mediation team	KLOE Homelessness and Housing Advice (Access, Customer Care & User Focus - Temporary Accommodation for Statutory Homeless Households)
HOS 27	Young People	To develop a system of referral procedures to be integrated into any accommodation referral procedure for 16 - 17 year olds and those under 25, particularly young parents to ensure that each young person's needs are identified and support is available as appropriate.	To ensure support is offered to young people	2011	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing, Links: New Dawn and SHYPP	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
HOS 28	Young People	To investigate the extension of the Nightstop scheme to encourage supported lodgings for 3 months until foyer place may become available or alternative accommodation can be sought.	To increase the availability of appropriate accommodation options /to reduce the usage of B& B for 16 17 year olds /	2011	Existing	Lead: SHYPP Links: Strategic Housing, Supporting People and Nightstop volunteer families	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation PIE return Number of 16-17 year olds in Temporary Accommodation PIE return Number of 18-24 year olds in Temporary Accommodation
HOS 29	Young People	To develop a joint Housing and Social Services protocol for homeless 16 and 17 year olds and those at risk of homelessness including Homeless Families.	To improve the accessibility to relevant services for young people	2011	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Social Services - Children's	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation PIE return Number of 16-17 year olds in Temporary Accommodation
HOS 36	Domestic Abuse	To review the proposal to further expand the Womens Aid outreach support service to offer support to children living in the community affected by domestic abuse.	To reduce the stress of children within homeless families and ensure children's future development	2013	Supporting People	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Womens Aid	Links to the 2007 Annual Performance Assessment (APA) - improve services to combat DV.
Outcome 6 - To maximise the effectiveness and targeting of homelessness services through the use of improved data collection and intelligence gathering.							
HOS 8	Mental Health	A detailed accommodation needs analysis will be carried out in 2008 / 2009 by Mental Health to support their Housing Plan. The Local Authority to ensure the results and requests are filtered into their Housing Strategies and planning of resources if applicable.	A housing needs analysis will be completed leading to increased units of accommodation	2008	Existing	Lead: Mental Health Links: Strategic Housing	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living SHPI 12 (LPI6) Total Number of Housing Needs Studies Undertaken
HOS 14	BME, Teenage pregnancy 14's, Migrant	To prepare an annual review of key information for HSIG to consider, particularly migrant workers, BME groups, teenage pregnancies and after care leavers along with reporting any issues with Local Housing Allowance in the County. This information will be reviewed by HSIG and any appropriate actions planned.	Planning of services	annually	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSIG	Annual HSSA Return and also links to PIE Returns that record this information on a quarterly basis

Ref	Need group or service	Key Actions and Objectives	Effect of Action / Evaluation of Action	Target date	Resources and funding	Lead and Links	Links to National and Local Indicators
HOS 17	Substance Misuse	To commission a housing strategy for people with substance misuse problems which will identify the housing needs of those with drug and alcohol problems.	Planning of services	2009	Mental Health Services	Lead: Mental Health	Links to NI 38 Drug Related Offending Rate & NI 40 Number of Drug Users recorded as being ineffective treatment Links to KLOE's Strategic Approach to Housing (Access, Customer care & User focus - Diversity)
HOS 18	Singles over 25	A 'hidden homeless' or presenters survey to be carried to review the true numbers of homeless single people presenting to agencies within Herefordshire. Links to action HOS20	Planning of services	2008	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: HSIG and associated agencies linking to HSIG	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Housing Advice, homelessness prevention & options services)
HOS 19	ALL GROUPS	A rough sleepers count as per the CLG guidelines in Autumn 2008	Statutory requirement	2008	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Various volunteers and agencies	Deleted from BVPI Requirements Links to KLOE Homelessness & Housing Advice (Housing Advice, homelessness prevention and options services)
HOS 41	Gypsy and Travellers	To investigate the possibility of registering known Gypsy and Travellers housed in bricks and mortar by the RSL housing allocation teams. Registering on the Home Point system a Gypsy or Traveller being housed in bricks and mortar. Links to HOS39 and HOS40	Data gathering and planning of services	2012	Existing	Lead: Home Point Links: G & T Health project, Shelter, RSL forum, RSL's, Strategic Housing	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living
HOS 44	Older People	To develop a register of adapted properties within the County.	Planning of services	2013	Existing	Lead: Home Point and Housing O.T Links: RSL forum, RSL's, Strategic Housing	SHPI 13 (LP17) Total Number of Households with physical disabilities re housed into appropriate newly adapted accommodation
HOS 39	ALL GROUPS	An IT system to record service users accessing the Local Authority Homelessness and Prevention service. This system is to record client information. It is a requirement that other agencies such as Home Point and RSL's, Shelter and SHYPP can access and add into this information.	Planning of services	2010	Existing	Lead: Herefordshire Connects Links: Strategic Housing, Home Point	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation P1E Homelessness Prevention Section 10 SHPI 17 (LP11) Former BV213 Preventing Homelessness
HOS 59	Homeless Families	To commission additional research into the increased number of relationship breakdowns in Herefordshire, with the aim of reducing the percentage of numbers in this homeless category as compared to the national statistics.	Reduction in homeless numbers within 'relationship breakdown' category	2011	Existing	Lead: Homelessness Team Links: Strategic Housing, Housing, mediation team	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation P1E Homelessness Prevention Section 10 SHPI 17 (LP11) Former BV213 Preventing Homelessness
HOS 9	Domestic Abuse	To review the decrease in numbers of women fleeing domestic abuse accessing the Homeless team	Reduction in Bed blocking costs at the refuge as well as increased places for women	2009	Existing	Lead: Homelessness Team Links: Womens Aid	Links to NI 156 Number of Households Living in Temporary Accommodation P1E Homelessness Prevention Section 10 SHPI 17 (LP11) Former BV213 Preventing Homelessness
HOS 21	Older People	To develop an older persons housing plan, in alignment with the aims and objectives of the Older Person Strategy for Herefordshire "Growing older In Herefordshire"	Planning of services	2010	Existing	Lead: Strategic Housing Links: Mental Health, PCT, relevant stakeholders, Supporting People	Links to NI 141 Number of Vulnerable people achieving independent living NI 142 Number of Vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living

Appendix 7 - Strategic Housing's National and local performance indicators

Strategic Housing Reference	Indicator Reference	LAA Y/N	Responsible Team	Definition	Target 08/09	Narrative	Q1 08/09	Q2 08/09	Q3 08/09	Q4 08/09	Outturn 08/09	National Comparative Position	Target 09/10	Target 10/11	
Strategic Housing National Indicators	SHPI 02	NI 155	Housing Needs & Development	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	200								300	350	
	SHPI 03	NI 156	Homeless Prevention Team	Number of households living in temporary accommodation	109								82	82	
	SHPI 03	Links to NI 156	Homeless Prevention Team	To reduce the number of households living in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010	109									82	82
Government Target	SHPI 14	LPI 8	Homeless Prevention Team	Average length of stay of FWC in B&B accommodation (in weeks)	1.5 Weeks								1 Week	1 week	
	SHPI 15	LPI 9	Homeless Prevention Team	Average length of stay of FWC in Hostel accommodation (in weeks)	1 Week								0 Weeks	0 Weeks	
	SHPI 16	LPI 10	Homeless Prevention Team	% change in number of FWC in Temporary Accommodation	-10%								-10%	-10%	
	SHPI 17	LPI 11	Homeless Prevention Team	Preventing Homelessness (Number of Cases per 1000 households)	4 Cases								4 Cases	4 Cases	
	SHPI 18	LPI 12	Homeless Prevention Team	Repeat Homelessness	1%								0.50%	0.50%	
	SHPI 19	LPI 13	Homeless Prevention Team	Number of FWC in Temporary Accommodation											
	SHPI 20	LPI 14	Homeless Prevention Team	All Households in B&B (P1E) FWC in B&B (P1E) 16-17 in B&B (P1E) 18-24 in B&B (P1E)	0								0	0	
	SHPI 21	LPI 15	Homeless Prevention Team	All Households in Hostels (P1E) FWC in Hostels (P1E) 16-17 in Hostels (P1E) 18-24 in Hostels (P1E)	0								0	0	
	SHPI 22	LPI 16	Homeless Prevention Team	All Households in RSL Stock (P1E) FWC in RSL Stock (P1E) 16-17 in RSL Stock (P1E) 18-24 in RSL Stock (P1E)											
	SHPI 23	LPI 17	Homeless Prevention Team	Homelessness Acceptances All Households (P1E) FWC (P1E) 16-17 (P1E) 18-24 (P1E)	160									160	160
	SHPI 24	LPI 18	Homeless Prevention Team	Repeat Acceptances All Households (P1E) FWC (P1E) 16-17 (P1E) 18-24 (P1E)	1%									0.50%	0.50%

STRATEGIC HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/09

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ENVIRONMENT AND STRATEGIC HOUSING AND SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To seek approval for the allocation of the Strategic Housing Capital Programme, which incorporates the Affordable Housing Development Programme and the Private Sector Housing Programme for 2008/09, and to inform Cabinet of external funding contributions, including National Affordable Housing Programme and Specified Capital Grant contributions.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure above agreed budgets for the service or function (shown as a line in the budget book) to which the decision relates but allowing for virements between budget heads and savings within budget heads of up to £500,000. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation(s)

THAT

- (a) the Strategic Housing capital programme be approved for 2008/09 as detailed in Table 2 of the report.

Reasons

2. The development of affordable housing is a Corporate priority and Local Area Agreement Priority for Herefordshire. The approval of the Capital Programme outlined in this report should enable the provision of a range of additional affordable housing throughout the County to meet local housing needs and promote independence.
3. The approval of the Capital budgets for Private Sector Renewal will assist vulnerable people to remain living independently in their own homes through the provision of a range of grants and minor adaptation services which provide for decent homes, improved security, safety and accessibility.
4. The approval of Capital funding to support the provision of Disabled Facilities Grants will enable the provision of improved access to the home and access within the home for people with disabilities.

Considerations

5. In October 2007, government announced Housing Investment Allocations to the regions within England totalling £10.2 billion for the three years 2008/09 to 2010/11. The funding forms the Regional Housing Pot in each region and supports the following activities:
- Development of affordable housing by Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and approved partners through the National Affordable Housing Programme (NAHP) administered by the Housing Corporation;
 - Funding to Local Authorities to support regeneration through renewal and other grants aimed at providing decent homes in the private sector and in promoting independence;
 - Local authority investment in meeting the Decent Homes standard for Council-owned stock;
 - Funding of Kickstart Programme aimed towards providing loans as a form of financial assistance to help homeowners access decent homes.
6. The West Midlands share of this allocation amounted to £679m over the three years funding period, split as follows:

2007/08	2008/09	2009/20	2010/11
£m	£m	£m	£m
174	206	228	245

7. Whilst the government's announcement on the 'Regional Housing Pot' for the West Midlands increased the size of the overall amount allocated to the region, it also set out extremely challenging targets for the number of affordable homes the Housing Corporation was expected to achieve through the NAHP (3,600 affordable homes per annum). As a result of the government's shift of funding and increased expectations around affordable housing, the West Midlands Regional Housing Executive limited the capital allocation to local authorities for decent homes, Kickstart and regeneration activity to £211m over the three years, to be split as follows:
- 2008/09 £72m
 - 2009/10 £74m
 - 2010/11 £65m

The remaining balance of £468m was allocated to fund affordable housing development through the NAHP, administered by the Housing Corporation.

Affordable Housing Programme

8. The proposed allocation of Strategic Housing Capital reserves for 2008/09 for affordable housing development has therefore been developed having considered and maximised external funding opportunities from the NAHP.
9. Cabinet will recall that the West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy identified 4 housing market areas within the West Midlands, with Herefordshire located within the

West Housing Market Area, alongside Shropshire. The Regional Housing Allocations Strategy has allocated 10% of the overall NAHP of £468m (£46.8m) to the West Housing Market Area over the period 2008/09 to 2010/11.

10. The funding will be allocated by the Housing Corporation, to preferred partners which include Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and house builders. The NAHP supports schemes that meet national and regional housing priorities as identified in the West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy 2005-2021.
11. The funds are allocated by way of a "bidding" process (referred to as the bid round) which took place for 2008/09 during November 2007. During this process, affordable housing scheme proposals for Herefordshire were submitted by Registered Social Landlords to the Housing Corporation to the value of £8,789,076, to deliver 181 units. Within those bids, applications for 30 units in the sum of £2,280,000 were not supported by Strategic Housing as they were not considered to represent value for money.
12. The outcome of the bid round resulted in capital funding being awarded by the Housing Corporation in the sum of £1,323,500 to provide 34 units in Hereford City.
13. The disparity between the bid total of £8,789,076 and the funding awarded of £1,323,500 is due to the Housing Corporation seeking efficiency savings across the West Midlands in terms of grant payable per unit. This efficiency drive required grant levels to be approximately £49,000 per unit for rented and £25,000 for shared ownership and the impact has been felt most predominantly amongst the rural authorities in the West Midlands.
14. However, the Housing Corporation has introduced Regular Market Engagement (RME), which allows "in year bidding" to take place. The Housing Corporation sought further bids through their first RME round which took place during April, and Strategic Housing is currently working with the housing partners to support schemes that meet the Housing Corporation's criteria. The outcome will be announced on 30th June, 2008 and will be verbally reported to Cabinet with this report.
15. As in previous years, the Council's Housing Capital reserves have been provisionally allocated and prioritised to support schemes that have failed to attract external funding through the NAHP bid round, but meet a local housing priority as identified in the Herefordshire Housing Strategy.
16. Cabinet will be aware that submissions were made through the Corporate Capital Programme bid process for Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) schemes (which included Do-It-Yourself-Shared-Ownership (DIYSO), Festival Property Purchase, Mortgage Rescue, Shared Ownership for Learning Disabilities (SOLD) Own Home) and Empty Property Activity. A bid was also made to support Disabled Facilities Grants, funding which is considered later in this report.
17. Due to the high level of bids received for funding from the Corporate capital programme, the schemes highlighted above were unsuccessful, but were recognised as a priority for funding. It was recommended by Cabinet that the schemes should be funded from the Strategic Housing's Housing Capital Reserves.
18. After carefully considering the capital reserve position and the current housing market "credit crunch", it is proposed to prioritise reserves towards affordable housing for 2008/9 as detailed below in Table 1, to address the potential changes and challenges in the housing market.

Table 1

Proposed scheme details and grant requirements to be funded from housing capital reserves.

Scheme Details	Grant Required	Units	Priority in Housing Strategy
Festival Property Purchase	£120,000	4	1
Mortgage Rescue	£1,000,000	15	1,2
Temporary Social Housing – Empty Properties	£300,000	10	2
Low Cost Home Ownership (DIYSO)	£580,000	9	1
Overall Total	£2,000,000	38	

19. It should be noted that this may be subject to some fluctuation during 2008/09, but will not exceed that original budget. There is also an additional sum of £232,890 received from planning gain commuted sums to be used for the provision of affordable housing.
20. It is considered that the programme represents value for money as the overall grant per unit equates to £52,600 which is not dissimilar to the requirements of the Housing Corporation. Further details on monitoring arrangements are outlined in the Risk Management.
21. In addition to seeking grant funding, efforts over the last 12 months have been focused on the delivery of increased levels of affordable housing achieved through the planning system against the Unitary Development Plan (UDP) affordable homes target. This element of affordable housing is delivered without capital funding from housing capital reserves or housing corporation funding. This makes an important contribution to the overall provision of additional affordable housing within the County.
22. The Provision of Affordable Housing is now a national indicator (NI155) and is a priority for Herefordshire in the Local Area Agreement (LAA). A target of 200 affordable houses to be acquired and built during 2008/09 has been agreed with the Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM).
23. To bring the overall target of providing affordable housing in line with the requirements of the Regional Spatial Strategy preferred option over the next 3 years, a target of 300 affordable homes is proposed during 2009/10 and a further stretched target of 350 for 2010/11. This would ensure that over the 3 year period, 850 affordable housing units should be built or acquired across the County.

Private Sector Renewal

24. For the financial year 2008/09, Herefordshire Council has been allocated £734,000

from the Single Housing Pot to be utilised towards renewal activity. This compares to £919,000 in 2007/08 and represents a reduction of £176,000.

25. As stated previously, part of the background to this reduction lies in the reallocation of funding to the National Affordable Housing Programme. However, a further factor is that government is increasingly expecting a reorientation of traditionally grant-based funding for private sector renewal towards equity loan models for private householders.
26. For 2007/08, Housing Capital Reserves in the sum of £71k were added to the Single Housing Pot allocation of £919k to provide a total budget of £1m. For 2008/09 it is proposed that £184k of housing reserves be applied to the single capital pot allocation of £734k to provide a total budget of £918k. (The sum of £184k represents the total amount of grant funding repaid to Strategic Housing under land charges conditions between 2005/06 and 2007/08).
27. Herefordshire Council has registered its interest in joining the Kick Start Initiative, a loan based assistance scheme, and a provisional allocation of £178k for 2009/10 has been awarded to Herefordshire from the Regional Housing Pot to fund the expansion of the initiative into the County. The funding will be held and administered by Birmingham City Council as the accountable body for the partnership and is proposed to increase to £206k for 2010/11.

Disabled Facilities Grants

28. The provision of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) make an extremely important contribution to improving the quality of life and independence of people with a disability in Herefordshire. The grants therefore have a strong cross-cutting role in supporting the objectives of social care and health.
29. The budget for Disabled Facilities Grants is determined upon recommendations made to the CLG by Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM) and is based upon historic and planned expenditure detailed in the yearly Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix submission. Traditionally, the funding has been awarded as a Specified Capital Grant (SCG) allocation to cover 60% of the local authorities expenditure on mandatory DFG's.
30. For 2008/09 Herefordshire Council has been awarded SCG up to a maximum of £315k which provides for a budget of £525k taking into account the Council's contribution of 40% (£210k). Any funding above the limit of £525k would have to be 100% financed by the local authority.
31. As alluded to earlier in this report, a submission was made to the Corporate Capital Programme for funding to support DFG expenditure. The bid was not successful. It is therefore provisionally proposed to allocate £210k from Housing Capital Reserves in support of the SCG allocation of £315k (60%) towards mandatory DFG expenditure, representing the Council's 40% contribution towards the overall budget of £525k.
32. However, there has been considerable growth in demand for Disabled Facilities Grant throughout the County over the past 12 months, much of which has come from Registered Social Landlords tenants, who are eligible to apply for this mandatory grant.
33. It is therefore proposed to allocate an additional £200k from Housing Capital Reserves towards the 2008/09 budget for Disabled Facilities Grant. The funding will

not attract further subsidy in the form of SCG and will therefore be funding 100% of each awarded grant.

Financial Implications

34. Table 4 sets out the impact on Housing Capital Reserves of the funding proposals outlined in this report.

Table 2

Housing Capital Reserves current position as at 1st April 2008

	£'000
Balance available as at 1 st April 2008	8,295
Opening Commitments brought forward from 2007/08	
(i) Affordable Housing Grants	(3,819)
(ii) Housing Renewal Kick-start Initiative	(38)
(iii) Private Sector Housing CRM	(69)
Balance available to allocate to fund 2008/09 capital programme	4,369
Proposed 2008/09 funding allocations	
(i) Affordable Housing Grants	(2,000)
(ii) Private Sector Housing	(184)
(iii) Disabled Facilities Grant Match Funding	(210)
(iv) Disabled Facilities Grant 100% Funding	(200)
Less repayment of Right To Buy share to Herefordshire Housing	(879)
Plus expected 2008/09 Right To Buy share from Herefordshire Housing	170
Expected uncommitted balance remaining following funding the 2008-09 housing capital programme	1,066

35. The balance of remaining reserves illustrates that the Council's ability in future to utilise Housing Capital Reserves to fund the local housing investment priorities described in this report is limited.

Risk Management

36. It is important that efforts are made to maximise the external funding mechanisms identified in this report. For affordable housing programmes funded through the NAHP, the Housing Needs and Development Team are working closely with our

preferred RSL partners to progress schemes quickly, seeking support from local communities through consultation events, discussions with Parish Councils and liaising with planning colleagues, early on in the development/negotiation process.

37. Established procedures are in place for monitoring of capital expenditure against identified schemes and are regularly updated in partnership with the RSL's, internal audit and Capital Accountancy to ensure the correct allocation of grant payments at the appropriate stages of the development process. As part of the process, detailed information is requested confirming the various stages of scheme completion prior to interim and final payments of grant.
38. There is concern that the recent announcement by major housebuilders in response to the housing market issues presents a real risk to local, sub-regional and regional housing targets. Persimmon, Barratts and Taylor Wimpey have all announced nationally, the mothballing of incomplete sites and the halting of any new developments from starting. A reasonably significant proportion of our anticipated completions are dependant upon these schemes involving either these or other private house builders and this will inevitably be repeated across the West Midlands.
39. The Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return will reflect a request for growth in the funding of Disabled Facilities Grant for Herefordshire to meet emergent demand. Furthermore, it is anticipated that there will be a greater emphasis on the use of equity-loan based funding of major renewal works to properties in future years once the Kick Start Programme is rolled out more widely.

Alternative Options

40. The level of grant available through the NAHP both regionally and nationally is insufficient to meet the known demand for affordable housing. Furthermore, the anticipated level of affordable housing to be delivered through the UDP, particularly in light of the current housing climate, is insufficient to meet affordable housing needs within the County. It is therefore important that the provision of additional housing to meet local priorities is funded through the use of available housing capital reserves.
41. Cabinet could determine to cut the amount of funding applied to grants for major works and smaller schemes aimed at promoting independence and energy efficiency. Whilst this would increase the level of remaining reserves for 2008/09 it would impact negatively on vulnerable households and threaten the sustainability of the Home Improvement Agency. However, consideration will need to be given to reducing the amount of Housing Capital Reserves applied to supplement Regional Housing Pot funding in 2009/10.

Consultees

None

Appendices

None

Background Papers

Budget Book 2008/09

Cabinet Report 21st February 2008 and 10th April 2008

Overall Capital Programme (Full Council) 7th March 2008

PROCUREMENT STRATEGY 2008

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: RESOURCES

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To seek approval for the updated Procurement Strategy.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the updated Procurement Strategy be noted.

Reasons

1. Procurement is the process of acquiring goods, works and services from third parties. The process spans the whole of the purchasing cycle following identification of need from tendering through to the end of a service contract or the end of the useful life of an asset. It includes options appraisal and the critical make or buy decision. An appropriate strategy helps deliver this activity in an effective manner.

Considerations

The Strategy

2. Successful implementation of the updated Procurement Strategy will help the Council achieve further cashable and non-cashable efficiency gains in support of the Council's priority for greater organisational efficiency and improved value for money.
3. The Strategy plays a key role supporting the Annual Efficiency Statement process and supports the delivery and capture of benefits throughout the Herefordshire Connects programme.
4. The Procurement Strategy agreed in 2007 has been updated and is designed to define the approach that must be followed by officers and be a point of reference in giving initial guidance on all procurement related activity.
5. The revised Strategy document encompasses and reinforces all the corporate policies that need to be taken in to consideration before, during and after the procurement process.

6. The Procurement Strategy document is not a procedure manual. Other documents such as the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and accompanying mini-guide to procurement provide this level of detail.
7. The Strategic Procurement & Efficiency Manager is responsible for implementing and monitoring the effectiveness of the Strategy and keeping it up to date. Compliance with the Strategy is also be monitored.
8. The Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 set a target of 3% annual cashable savings from April 2008 and successful implementation of this updated Strategy will significantly contribute to this target. At the same time it will reinforce the Council's commitment to achieving value for money and this will feed into the Use of Resources section of Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

Financial Implications

11. Implementation of an effective Procurement Strategy can make a considerable contribution to the Council's overall financial position.

Risk Management

12. A clear, up-to-date Procurement Strategy is an effective means of managing the risks associated with procuring goods and services.

Alternative Options

13. There are no alternative options

Consultees

14. None

Appendices

- Appendix A - Procurement Strategy 2008
- Appendix B - Mini Guide to Procurement

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Procurement Strategy 2007

Procurement Strategy 2008



HEREFORDSHIRE
COUNCIL

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 For the purpose of this strategy the procurement process is defined as:

“The whole process of acquisition from third parties and in-house providers, covering goods services and works. The process spans the entire life cycle from initial concept and definition of business need to the effective management of markets, through to the end of the useful life of an asset or end of services contract. It involves options appraisals and the critical “make or buy” decision which may result in the provision of services in-house in appropriate circumstances”.

1.1.2 From the definition it is clear that procurement embraces the whole of the supply chain from identifying a need to making a payment i.e. the procure to pay cycle is one process.

1.1.3 Procurement is more than just the process of buying things. It covers the whole process from the initial identification of a need for a good service, through selecting a supplier or partner, receiving the goods or service, managing a contract, achieving the benefits expected, to finally disposing of an asset or ending a contract.

1.1.4 Procurement is a critical process for ensuring that the Council meets the needs of the community whilst achieving maximum value for money. The public may not distinguish between in-house services and those provided by contractors but poor procurement can lead to a loss of public confidence in our ability to deliver excellent and cost effective public services.

1.1.5 The Government issued a new national procurement strategy in October 2003 and this was incorporated into the Gershon Efficiency Agenda. The national strategy has a number of key milestones associated with it. The Council’s procurement strategy will keep in step with the expectations of this national strategy and will perform periodic health checks against the progress made in meeting the expectations of the national strategy.

1.1.6 Nine procurement “Centres of Excellence” have been set up around the country to help to develop expertise, capacity and networking within England. Herefordshire Council is aligned with the West Midlands based Centre of Excellence (WMCOE) which comprises the 38 local authorities in the region. The Council works closely with WMCOE and has engaged in a joint assessment process.

1.1.7 The Council must focus upon procurement as a major means of reducing the budgetary pressures it will face in the future. The National e-Procurement Project has outlined the potential cost savings that could be made as a consequence of local authorities modernising their procurement processes. The project recognised that councils need to examine the effectiveness of their procurement, manage their supply chain more effectively, use technology and collaborate more in order to unlock the benefits of effective procurement. The project recognises that it will take time for authorities to make savings as they re-organise service delivery and overcome previous shortcomings.

1.2 Commissioning

1.2.1 Procurement is an element of the commissioning process and any procurement activity must assess where it sits in a wider context. Commissioning is about understanding and anticipating future needs and opportunities, setting ambitions, making best use of resources, working in partnership, building capacity in the market, and monitoring experience and changing circumstances to enable continuous service development. It is a process in which the expertise, skills and knowledge of volunteers and paid employees can be knitted together.

1.2.2 Commissioning falls into four stages: analyse, plan, do and review.

a) Analyse

When analysing, mapping and forecasting both need and supply, the process must take into account national requirements and link with local circumstances. At this point any risks should be identified. This stage is crucial to defining the current position, what improvements needs to be made and how the process will deliver improved outcomes.

b) Plan

This stage requires agreement about priorities and outcomes, being imaginative about how services can be delivered, allocating resources, looking at service design to increase understanding of service costs and value for money.

Planning requires strategic as well as collective decision making involving a range of stakeholders.

c) Do

This stage covers the process of procurement, contracting with a supplier, service delivery and managing and communicating changes. Purchasers and providers need to be clearly separated.

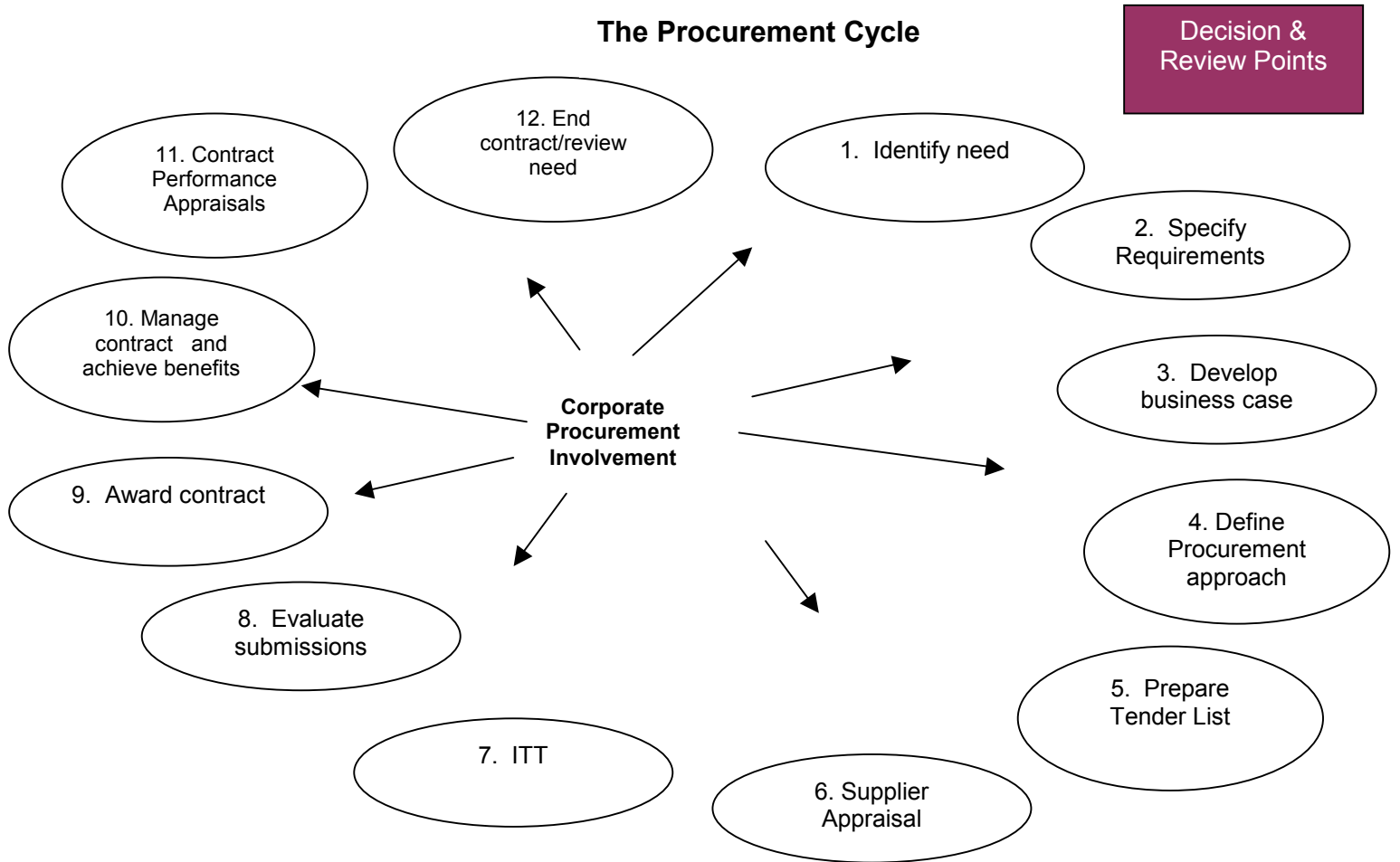
d) Review

Successful delivery must include a review to monitor and evaluate changing need. This stage should use feedback from service users to challenge and scrutinise the process and outcomes.

1.3 Purpose of the Strategy

1.3.1 This document aims to provide a framework for the full range of procurement activity carried out across the Council and ensure that procurement planning reflects the Council's corporate standards and objectives.

- 1.3.2 This will provide an opportunity to co-ordinate current processes and to identify and act on improvements to ensure that best value is being obtained consistently when goods and services are purchased. It sets out areas for strategic consideration and development.
- 1.3.3 It should be noted that this document is not a procurement manual. Best practice procedures and documents are to help develop a toolkit via the intranet available to all staff.
- 1.3.4 Training needs analysis will take place and the most appropriate method chosen to meet these needs.



1.4 Objectives

- 1.4.1 The objectives of this strategy are as follows:
 - a. To evaluate and improve current procurement practices to achieve better value for money and ensure customer/client needs are met.
 - b. To ensure good practice examples and processes are identified and applied consistently across the organisation.

- c. To integrate procurement activities into other strategies adopted by the Council and to ensure that corporate objectives are addressed holistically.
- d. To ensure that current and future procurement activities are planned, monitored and reviewed effectively.
- e. To identify opportunities for working with others, both public and private sector, to widen the scope for maximising purchasing power and VfM and identifying innovation and efficiencies.

1.5 Benefits

1.5.1 In taking this strategy forward, the Council can expect to realise the following benefits: -

- a. Improved value for money;
- b. More efficient procurement;
- c. Consistent, compliant and best practice procurement processes;
- d. Better risk management;
- e. Better project planning;
- f. Closer integration of the Council's overall objectives and business plans; and
- g. Consistent application of the Council's key policies.

2. ROUTINE PROCUREMENT

2.1 General Principles

- 2.1.1 Procurement of low value items by individual budget holders accounts for a significant proportion of the Council's expenditure when aggregated across the whole range of Council services. Whilst flexibility needs to be maintained to ensure that budget holders can respond to their own requirements, there needs to be sufficient co-ordination to allow good practices to be shared, benefits to be accrued for economies of scale and targets and improvements to be identified and achieved.
- 2.1.2 Procurement must be result focussed i.e. meeting the Council's objectives, ensuring customer needs are satisfied and achieving value for money.
- 2.1.3 The procurement strategy notes that the Council welcomes the use of local enterprises and business for the supply of goods and services. Clearly this must be through the use of the

existing procurement framework but the Council will investigate taking steps to provide electronic access to forthcoming tenders.

2.2 Purchasing Guidance and Regulations

2.2.1 The Council's purchasing guidelines are currently contained within Standing Orders and Financial Regulations. These include the contract standing orders for the Council and they govern the way contracts are let.

2.2.2 Adherence to these regulations is mandatory for all Council employees.

2.2.3 Both the Data Protection Act (DPA) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) have implications for procurement. Under the DPA we are required to keep personal information private. Under FOI we are required to make non-personal information available to the public. Guidance on these Acts is available on the intranet and from Legal Services.

2.2.4 The primary objective of the Council's Standing Orders and Financial Regulations is to ensure that all contracts for works, services and supplies are entered into by the Council in a manner which: -

- a. secures the best possible value for money; and
- b. is demonstrably free from impropriety

2.3.5 For more information regarding Standing Orders and the regulation of contracts see Appendix 5 of the Council's Constitution. The Intranet Info library address is as follows:

Corporate essentials / corporate / constitution / appendices / 5

2.3.6 For more information on Financial Procedure Rules see the Intranet Info library at:

Corporate essentials / corporate / constitution / appendices / 4

2.3 Consortia and Joint Negotiation

2.3.1 Any procurement activity becomes more powerful when shared with other local authorities, agencies and private sector partners to identify areas of common interest. There are a number of local authorities that have joined together to share expertise, realise administrative efficiencies and economies of scale for mutual benefit.

2.3.2 The Council owns a quarter share of West Mercia Supplies purchasing consortium (WMS) and as a result receives a significant dividend each year which makes a valuable contribution to the overall budget. It is vital that the Council employees use WMS appropriately and do not purchase outside of this arrangement for the agreed products and services.

2.3.3 A purchase from a non WMS supplier is on an exception only basis and cannot proceed unless agreed by the Head of Financial Services of the Strategic Procurement and Efficiency Manager.

- 2.3.4 The Strategic Procurement and Efficiency Manager will investigate opportunities for utilising purchasing consortiums such as OGC Buying Solutions where beneficial to the Council.
- 2.3.5 Herefordshire is a member of the Joint Procurement Group consisting of Worcestershire County Council, Telford and Wrekin Council and Shropshire County Council. Opportunities for joint working and best practice sharing are discussed on a regular basis.

2.4 E-Procurement

- 2.4.1 E-procurement is more than simply automating the purchase order and invoice payment process. It is about using the technology available to improve the effectiveness of the whole supply chain.
- 2.4.2 The Council is in the process of identifying as part of the Herefordshire Connects programme:
- a. How the procurement process can be further automated and streamlined through the application of Business Process Re-engineering (BPR)
 - b. Maximising the use of BACS (electronic transfer of monies into bank accounts) for payments to suppliers and contractors
 - c. Electronic tendering and e-sourcing allowing placing of supplies contracts on line with the opportunity for tenders to be returned electronically
 - d. How particular suppliers could meet the requirements for e-procurement given the variety of systems individual organisations operate, for example the sharing of electronic data on supplier databases.
- 2.4.3 The development of “e” initiatives is aimed at bringing down the cost and time of purchasing processes and transactions for the Council and its suppliers. It will also help control how the Council spends its money and drive compliance around corporate contracts.
- 2.4.4 The following diagram outlines the e-procurement options available in the sourcing-managing-ordering-paying cycle of procurement. The Council will as part of Herefordshire Connects explore the opportunity of exploiting e-procurement technology to reduce the cost and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of all aspects of the procurement process for the Council.

CONTROLLING

BUYING

ACTIVITY

SCENARIO

TASKS

SOLUTION TYPE

	Sourcing	Managing	Ordering	Paying
ACTIVITY	Sourcing	Managing	Ordering	Paying
SCENARIO	A local authority (LA) puts in place corporate contracts with suppliers.	The local authority reviews and negotiates contracts when necessary	A LA employee wants to purchase goods (or services). They contact the supplier, place an order and later take delivery.	The supplier invoices the LA and the LA Finance department arranges payment.
TASKS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Define requirements ➤ Identify potential contractors ➤ Compile tender list ➤ Perform due diligence on suppliers ➤ Ensure best contract price and Service Level Agreement is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Review existing supplier contracts ➤ Monitor and assess performance of existing suppliers ➤ Renegotiation contracts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Authority ➤ Budget cover ➤ "licensed to order" ➤ Select goods or service ➤ Place an order with the supplier ➤ Receive the goods or services and complete delivery note 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The supplier invoice is received by the local authority ➤ Invoice approval process ➤ LA arranges payment of the invoice via LA accounting system
SOLUTION TYPE	<p>Reverse auction</p> <p>e-tender</p> <p>Bid evaluation tools</p>	<p>Contract Management</p> <p>Management information</p>	<p>e-market place</p> <p>Back-office order system</p> <p>Supplier websites</p> <p>Content management</p>	<p>e-invoicing</p> <p>Procurement card</p> <p>BACS</p>

The overall strategy will be incremental, ensuring that risk is minimised whilst opportunities for business gain are developed and realised over time. However, some level of risk is inevitable if we are to take maximum advantage of cutting edge technology.

2.5 Purchasing Cards

- 2.5.1 Opportunities for introducing procurement cards are available for areas with an operational requirement for flexibility of ordering that a p-card can provide. P-cards should complement the procure to pay ordering system and would only be adopted where the purchasing need cannot readily be serviced by the electronic ordering system. P-cards would help reduce the transaction process costs and also offer a flexible but controlled way of spending the Council's money.

3. HIGH VALUE/STRATEGIC PROCUREMENT

3.1 General Principles

- 3.1.1 Fewer transactions are likely to meet the criteria under this category of procurement. This is because each contract tends to be of a high expenditure level and carry far higher risks if the project is not completed successfully e.g. a construction contract or tendering for the provision of a service. Strong support and guidance, therefore, needs to be in place.

3.2 Legal Framework

- 3.2.1 High value projects are likely to be covered by the European Union (EU) procurement regulations and any lack of compliance with the legal requirements could open the Council to costly legal appeal. All decisions must be transparent, objective and auditable. The EU processes specify different routes according to the type of procurement and the Council must provide clear support on the legal framework.
- 3.2.2 In response to Part 1 of the Local Government Act 1999 the Council can now take account of certain "non-commercial" matters when determining contracts. Under Compulsory Competitive Tendering councils could not take such matters into consideration during the tendering process. Under the replacement Best Value requirement this prohibition has been removed enabling authorities to take into account such items as the terms and conditions of the workforce.

3.3 Tender Evaluation

3.3.1 The Council has to develop corporate guidance on the selection criteria to be applied when awarding contracts. Typically these will include;

- a. Price, including whole life cost
- b. Quality
- c. Plans for service improvements
- d. Empathy with the Council's objectives and core values
- e. Skills and capabilities
- f. Investment required
- g. Impact on employees innovation
- h. Shared risk/reward
- i. Staffing issues including TUPE arrangements
- j. Environmental issues
- k. Equality and diversity
- l. Health and safety issues
- m. Previous contractual performance
- n. Quality of tender documentation
- o. Clear compliance with specification

3.4 Partnership Working

3.4.1 Partnering is more about the approach undertaken than a specific method of procurement. The Council is committed to working with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to develop co-operative procurement arrangements and develop supplier effectiveness. Exploring further opportunities to work in partnership and achieve benefit from sharing resources, skills and expertise, will evidence this commitment.

3.4.2 Partnering is a term widely used within both public and private sectors but has no commonly agreed definition. The aim of partnering is for clients and service providers to work together to achieve best value for all parties by adopting a flexible and motivated approach unrestrained by artificial barriers and in a non-confrontational manner. Ideally, the partnership will be underpinned with a formal contract, processes and procedures document in which the ethos of the partnership is captured.

3.4.3 The partnering model enables customers and service providers to work together sharing risk, cost savings, innovations and best practice. The relationship is built on mutual respect and the trust that develops between customer and supplier at strategic and operational levels and enables the sharing of skills, knowledge and research. Where quality is enhanced, life cycle costs are driven down and customer satisfaction remains high.

- 3.4.4 Partnering principles will be applied to individual projects. There is a growing number of successful project partnering initiatives which the Council may embrace to develop best practice. However, to maintain momentum and build on the learning and culture change that has taken place, it is increasingly important for the Council to extend these partnering principles to more strategic alliances covering
- a. Programmes or phases of work
 - b. Work which is more difficult to define precisely in advance such as building maintenance
 - c. Initiatives whose priorities will develop over time requiring flexible structures
 - d. Projects where a solution has yet to be defined such as regeneration or redevelopment projects
 - e. Initiatives where construction is only a part of the solution and the partnership may extend into the operation of a facility or series of facilities, for example the Private Finance Initiatives.

3.5 Project Management

- 3.5.1 Procurement undertaken in this category needs to be managed to formal project management principles, with responsibilities clearly outlined and plans in place setting targets, milestones, timescales and resources required for successful completion. This applies not only to tendering processes but also to the performance of the contract once in place to ensure the desired results are achieved and the Council's objectives met. Any project should consider the training given to key employees undertaking this work to ensure that the appropriate project management skills are in place.
- 3.5.2 Before the start of any procurement project a business case must be completed to define the desired benefits and the approach to achieving them. Successful completion of the business case will lead to a project manager being appointed to the project for its duration.

3.6 Performance Improvement

- 3.6.1 Achieving continuous performance improvement is an essential objective for each and every one of the Council's services. Effective procurement needs to be recognised, where appropriate, as a tool that can be used to achieve this.
- 3.6.2 Use of appropriate management information and contract management techniques is essential if continuous improvement is to be achieved.

3.7 Strategic Procurement Forward Plan

- 3.7.1 Any procurement strategy needs to have a role in the forward planning of strategic procurement reviews. This provides a framework for the realisation of benefits from implementation and aligns contract renewal dates for goods and services internally. This will also help identify collaboration opportunities with other public sector organisations.

- 3.7.2 Each directorate should have a Strategic Forward Procurement Plan will be created for each Directorate to ensure that the authority maximises the opportunities for procurement savings in future years.
- 3.7.3 The forward plan is driven by a number of triggers that may stimulate the inception of a procurement project. These are depicted in the diagram below: -



- 3.7.4 The forward plan considers a number of drivers for example:-
 - a. Renewal dates for large strategic contracts
 - b. Market opportunities and maturity
 - c. Opportunities for investigating new financial models for the procurement of services
 - d. Poor performance of services/best value reviews
 - e. Analysis of internal spend
 - f. Analysis of non-pay expenditure
- 3.7.5 All strategic procurement exercises will be project managed under the PRINCE2 project methodology which will be led by the project manager. Each will undertake an options analysis comparing all or some or a hybrid of the following procurement options:-
 - a. Tradional procurement
 - b. Partnering
 - c. PFI/Public Private Partnership

- d. Outsourcing
- e. In house service provision

3.7.6 The options analysis will cover the following; -

- a. Cost
- b. Service Quality
- c. Risk
- d. Deliverability
- e. Timescales
- f. Funding
- g. Practicality
- h. Legal/Statutory Requirement

3.7.7 Once the details have been collated for the forward plan it will be split into three sections: -

- a. Strategic Procurement Reviews/Duty of Best Value
- b. Commodity Procurement
- c. Contract Reviews

4. RISK ASSESSMENT

4.1 Risk Management & Insurance

- 4.1 The procurement of services or the identification of a partner to deliver such services will always include a measure of risk to the authority. The Corporate Risk Manager will assist in reviewing those risks before final decisions are made and should accordingly be involved in the process from the embryonic stage of any such project. Reviewing the risks and how they can be controlled often opens up opportunities and should be seen as a positive part of the procurement process.
- 4.2 The Council's Risk Management Policy and Guidance document is available on the intranet and should be used as a basis for considering the risks during the procurement process.
- 4.3 Insurance implications are often left to last in the matters to be considered, however there can be a danger in this as inadequate insurance arrangements can put a project on hold whilst insurers consider the current levels of cover against those required. Again as soon as a procurement process is considered the insurance section should be contacted for advice.

5. EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

5.1 Consultation

- 5.1.1 In accordance with the Council's policies and procedures relating to managing change in employment, employees affected must be kept informed of procurement developments and their comments sought and fully considered.
- 5.1.2 Trade unions will also be consulted as appropriate.
- 5.1.3 A consultation timetable will be drawn up early in the process

5.2 Transfer of Employees

- 5.2.1 Where outsourcing is an option, this will be undertaken in accordance with current employment legislation (for example TUPE) and best practice. Separate guidance is available on the personnel info library page on the intranet.

5.3 Training and Development

- 5.3.1 A substantial amount of procurement carried out within the Council is not managed by purchasing professionals and, therefore, the skills required need to be properly identified and met. This will include the project and contract management skills referred to earlier as well as competency in appraising suppliers, carrying out tendering processes, negotiations and risk management.
- 5.3.2 Where new processes are adopted e.g. use of payment cards or on-line procurement or changes to guidance/standing orders, training requirements need to be identified as part of the changes proposed.
- 5.3.3 Training needs will be identified, and a training plan created to cover these training needs through the Procurement Exchange Group led by the Strategic Procurement and Efficiency Manager.
- 5.3.4 The Procurement Exchange Group replaces the Contract Officer Monitoring Group, and gives greater opportunity for two way procurement information exchange and acts as an internal network for all procurement related activity and initiatives.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABLE PROCUREMENT

6.1 Environmental Conditions

- 6.1.1 The whole Council and all contracts are bound by the Council's environmental policy commitment to 'use its influence to actively encourage responsible environmental practice by

suppliers and contractors'. The Council's Constitution states that, "the Council's strategic policies must be taken into account, for example in relation to protecting the environment." (Appendix 5: Contracts Procedure Rules, 1.2.iii)

- 6.1.2 In procurement optimising value for money calls for the choice of the bid that offers the best combination of whole life costs and benefits to meet the Council's requirements. This is not necessarily the lowest initial price option and an assessment of the ongoing revenue, resource and disposal costs, as well as the capital investment and financing costs. The Council's requirements relating to social, environmental, sustainability and other strategic objectives should be defined at the earliest stages of the procurement cycle.
- 6.1.3 Whatever method of procurement is used, the Council must ensure that providers of services work to environmental standards equivalent to those set within the Council and are made aware of relevant requirements. This may be achieved both by contractual means and through advice, support and guidance.

6.2 Sustainable Procurement

- 6.2.1 Sustainable Procurement is a process whereby organisations meet their needs for goods, services, works and utilities in a way that achieves value for money on a whole life basis in terms of generating benefits not only to the organisation, but also to society and the economy, while minimising damage to the environment." *Procuring the Future* (Sustainable Procurement Task Force, June 2006).
- 6.2.2 There is a compelling business case for making procurement spend more "sustainable".
- 6.2.3 There are financial benefits for the council. Savings can be realised through the design and construction of buildings with lower through-life operating costs, better management of demand (including re-use, recycling and standardisation) and the acquisition of products that are more efficient in their use of energy, water and material resources.
- 6.2.4 The environmental imperative is clear, particularly the need to reduce CO2 emissions and the amount of waste going to landfill.
- 6.2.5 Socio-economic benefits range from the creation of employment and training opportunities for the long-term unemployed and people with disabilities.
- 6.2.6 Through better coordination of demand across local government and the wider public sector, and engagement of key suppliers at a strategic level, public purchasing power can be improved. This also stimulates product and process innovations that deliver improved environmental performance and further savings.
- 6.2.7 Intelligent public procurement can also capture innovation from small businesses and third sector organizations (TSOs) while realising wider benefits for local communities. This includes their engagement in the supply chains for major projects.
- 6.2.8 The Council should work towards purchasing sustainable and renewable goods and services wherever feasible and effective.

7. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY

- 7.1 All Herefordshire residents have a right to expect that public money is spent on services which suit their needs, and that it is spent in a way which promotes equality of opportunity and delivers high quality goods and services.
- 7.2 Legislation now requires the authority to eliminate unlawful discrimination. Where an external supplier carries out our functions for us, we remain responsible for meeting this duty. Therefore it is vital to take issues of equality into consideration when:
- a. Providing services;
 - b. Purchasing services;
 - c. Employing staff; and
 - d. Working in partnership with other organisations.
- 7.3 It is key that we demand the same commitment from those who deliver services on our behalf.
- 7.4 When procuring or commissioning services, the Council will:
- a. Treat contractors and partners with dignity and respect.
 - b. Encourage applications from partners and contractors which represent the Herefordshire population.
 - c. Ensure that, in setting the standards for the services it procures, barriers for potential services users will be eliminated. These barriers may include affordability, language, physical accessibility, culture and attitude.
 - d. Ensure that individuals and organisations providing services on its behalf are aware of the Council's Comprehensive Equality Policy and understand their responsibility for implementing it.
 - e. Ensure that the services it provides and those provided on its behalf are monitored to ensure fairness, equity and accessibility for all.
 - f. Ensure that the organisations it commissions comply with all equalities legislation and do not unlawfully discriminate as an employer or service provider.
 - g. Use whatever opportunities the law allows to ensure that those providing the Council with works, goods or services or providing services on the Council's behalf, accept a commitment to equality and monitor their own performance in the area.
 - h. Provide diversity training sessions for partners' employees.
 - i. Encourage contractors to agree to further voluntary steps to promote equality after the contract has been awarded.

- 7.5 When providing services on behalf of the Council, partners will:
- a. Treat Council officers and members of the public with dignity and respect.
 - b. Ensure that everyone providing, receiving or benefiting from the service are treated fairly and without discrimination (on whatever grounds), either directly or indirectly, and will put systems in place to monitor these criteria.
 - c. Ensure that barriers to accessing services are removed, including physical, communication and attitudinal barriers.
 - d. Make every effort to consult, involve and encourage the participation of the diverse communities of Herefordshire to ensure equitable service delivery.
 - e. Comply with all relevant diversity legislation and reflect the Council's values of "service with integrity, empathy and equity".
 - f. Provide such information as the Council may reasonably request for the purpose of assessing the partner's compliance with the above conditions.
 - g. Ensure that staff providing the service have diversity training and understand their responsibilities in regards to the councils commitment to diversity and relevant equality legislation.

8. BENEFIT CARD

- 8.1 In 2007 the Herefordshire Connects Board identified the need for a simple mechanism for managing the benefits realisation programme. As set out in the original Medium-Term Financial Management Strategy, cash savings realised through the Herefordshire Connects programme are to be treated as a corporate resource for investment in corporate priorities.
- 8.2 In the interests of simplicity the Council has one mechanism for identifying, approving and monitoring delivery of benefits for all change programmes (not just Herefordshire Connects). This approach also helps us manage the corporate efficiency agenda. Key to the process is agreeing the level of investment in the project (if any is required), the benefits that will be delivered, the implications for the base budgets and accountability for delivery.
- 8.3 The standardised "Benefit Card" attached at Appendix 1 has been in place since 2007 and is used to collect the key information needed to manage the benefits that will flow from transformation projects such as Herefordshire Connects. Following sign-off, the Benefit Card is used to track changes in the base budgets and monitor delivery against agreed financial and service targets. A guide to what a completed Benefit Card might look like is given at Appendix 2.

BENEFIT CARD							
SUMMARY	Benefit		Provide a brief description of the proposed benefit here				
	Change programme		Name of the change programme the benefit relates to				
	Link to change programme		Describe how the benefit supports the change programme objectives				
	Link to corporate priorities		Describe how the benefit supports corporate priorities				
	Efficiency gains		Describe the nature of the efficiency gains				
	CMB Sponsor		Name the individual and give post title				
	SMT Sponsor		Name the individual and give post title				
	Officer responsible for delivery		Name the individual and give post title				
	Financial Services Officer		Name the individual and give post title				
	Business Change Manager		Name the individual and give post title				
	Reference number		Referencing system to be devised				
	CURRENT PROCESS	Description		Current / Planned Performance		Current Revenue Budget (£000)	
Describe the current arrangements		Describe current and planned performance as per relevant corporate or service delivery plan in current and future years.		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
				Revenue Budget Code:			
				Current Capital Budget (£000)			
				2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
				Capital Budget Code:			
Description		Performance Improvement		Revenue Investment Needed (£000)			
Describe the new arrangements		Evidence improved levels of performance against indicators to show the stretch in performance that can be achieved		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
				Revenue Budget Code:			
				Capital Investment Needed (£000)			
				2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
				Capital Budget Code:			
Cashable Savings (£000)			Non Cashable Savings (£000)				
2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10		
Budget Code:			Budget Code:				

DEPENDENCIES	Description		
	Describe here what other things might need to be in place for the benefit to be realised		
STAFFING RESOURCES	Description		
	List here who will support the officer responsible for the delivery of this benefit		
TIMETABLE	Task	Planned Date	Actual Date
	Sign-off of proposed benefit		
	Start of project		
	Target completion date		
SIGN OFF	Who	Signature	Date
	CMB Sponsor		
	SMT Sponsor		
	Officer responsible for delivery		
	Financial Services Officer		
	Business Change Manager		
POST IMPLEMENTATION	Were the expected benefits delivered?		
	This section needs developing but will need to ensure that we review benefits realised to assess whether expectations were realised and to capture further improvements.		

BENEFIT CARD						
SUMMARY	Benefit	Reducing the amount of paper remittances sent to creditors and the number of payment enquiries from suppliers				
	Change programme	Herefordshire Connects				
	Link to change programme	Integrated Support Services				
	Link to corporate priorities	Organisational priorities on efficiency				
	Efficiency gains	Cost reduction and improved service efficiency				
	CMB Sponsor	Sonia Rees				
	SMT Sponsor	Mike Toney				
	Officer responsible for delivery	Alun Smith				
	Financial Services Officer	Greg Evans				
	Business Improvement Manager	TBA				
	Reference number	TBA				
CURRENT PROCESS	Description	Current / Planned Performance		Current Revenue Budget (£000)		
	All remittances are printed, enveloped and posted to creditors and an average of 100 calls are taken on the payments enquiry number each week Consumables including postages amount to £50k a year and approximately £5k staff time spent on dealing with payment queries	No current performance indicators		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
				55	55	55
				Revenue Budget Code: yyxxxx		
				Current Capital Budget (£000)		
			2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
			None	None	None	
	Capital Budget Code: n/a					
	Description	Performance Improvement		Revenue Investment Needed (£000)		
	Introduce an electronic means of sending remittances advices to suppliers by email or fax	Year 1 – 25% electronic remittances and 25% reduction in payment queries Year 2 – 50% electronic remittances and 50% reduction in payment queries Year 3 – 75% electronic remittances and 75% reduction in payment queries		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10
5				None	None	
Revenue Budget Code: yyxxxx						
Capital Investment Needed (£000)						
		2007/08	2008/09	2009/10		
		None	None	None		
Capital Budget Code: n/a						
Cashable Savings (£000)			Non Cashable Savings (£000)			
2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	
12	25	37	1	3	4	
Budget Code: yyxxxx			Budget Code: yyxxx			

DEPENDENCIES	Description		
	New ICT enabled procurement system needs to be in place.		
STAFFING RESOURCES	Description		
	Creditor payments team. ICT technical support.		
TIMETABLE	Task	Planned Date	Actual Date
	Sign-off of proposed benefit	June 2007	
	Start of project	September 2007	
	Target completion date	December 2007	
SIGN OFF	Who	Signature	Date
	CMB Sponsor		
	SMT Sponsor		
	Officer responsible for delivery		
	Financial Services Officer		
	Business Improvement Manager		
POST IMPLEMENTATION	Were the expected benefits delivered?		

Mini Guide to Procurement

1. How to use this Mini Guide

- 1.1 Use this mini guide whenever you are involved in procurement. It provides you with a quick check of the procurement processes you should follow when buying on behalf of Herefordshire Council. It does not replace the Contract Procedure Rules but provides a brief overview to help you to get started.

2. Important Issues

- 2.1 Before you start, check that the important issues have been considered – confirming the availability of budget provision; following guidelines on procurement ethics; aiming to achieve value for money; making best use of framework agreements and ensuring that the correct procurement procedures are carried out.

3. Questions to Consider

- 3.1 Look at the questions a procurer needs to ask – they will help you to make fundamental decisions about how to proceed. If you find that answers to any of these questions suggest areas of weakness, seek advice (see below).

4. Process Models

- 4.1 See the process models for the steps to take with contracts below a value of £10,000, contracts with a value between £10,000 and £50,000, and contracts with a value above £50,000. If you have a contract with a value greater than the current EU limits (£140,000) you must contact the Corporate Procurement Team. (Note: contract value is the total value of a contract, not annual value, excluding VAT).

5. Help and Advice

- 5.1 For sources of help and advice within the Council you can email the Strategic Procurement and Efficiency Review Manager (dhogan@herefordshire.gov.uk) or contact him on 01432 260043.

6. Questions a Procurer needs to ask...

- 6.1 Are the goods, services or works really required?
- 6.2 Do they contribute to the objectives of the Directorate and the Council?
- 6.3 Is a procurement necessary to acquire them? Could they be borrowed, shared or provided in-house?
- 6.4 Are they a priority? Could the money be better spent elsewhere?

Mini Guide to Procurement

- 6.5 Is this the right time to make the procurement? Might resources be available later, might the market change, are there potential major risks that might become clearer?
- 6.6 What quality level is needed (rather than desired)?
- 6.7 What will be the total cost, including maintenance, consumables, installation, in-house management, etc?
- 6.8 Can the environmental impacts be reduced? - raw materials (using substitutes), running costs and emissions (being energy efficient), disposal (re-usable or recycled option).
- 6.9 Can the cost and resource implications of the procurement exercise be justified? Can the cost be reduced? Can it be included in a similar procurement elsewhere in the council?
- 6.10 Is the budget available?
- 6.11 Is the necessary technical expertise available in house? How can it be obtained?
- 6.12 Are the resources available for the procurement?
- 6.13 What are the latest developments in the market and might they benefit the Council?
- 6.14 Who will be affected by the procurement and how can they best be involved in the decision making process?
- 6.15 What are the risks affecting the procurement and how will these be managed?
- 6.16 Are you competent to carry out the procurement in order to meet all legal requirements and to achieve the best value for money for the Council?

7. Ten Top Tips for a Successful Procurement Process...

7.1 Spend Plenty of Time Planning

- 7.1.1 Consider at the outset the full extent of who needs to be involved, what needs to be done, by whom, and by when. Seek advice from others.
- 7.1.2 Establish a complete procedure timetable from consultation period through to contract award, ensuring that adequate time is allowed.

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7.2 Establish Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.2.1 Establish roles and responsibilities of all involved.
- 7.2.2 Get everyone to contribute to the planning process.

7.3 Ensure Transparency of Proceedings

- 7.3.1 Be seen to be fair and conduct the process without favouritism.
- 7.3.2 Engage widely with stakeholders and existing contractors in advance of formal proceedings.
- 7.3.3 Get all internal players to contribute to the critical success factors and key evaluation criteria and record these!
- 7.3.4 Allow sufficient time for suppliers to submit tenders.

7.4 Observe Legalities

- 7.4.1 Ensure compliance with EC Procurement Directives, domestic legislation, Contract Procedure Rules etc. Seek legal advice and involvement in the process at the outset. You are initiating events that will result in a contract. It has to be legal!

7.5 Accommodate Innovation and Secure Best Value

- 7.5.1 Don't be too restrictive with suppliers. Don't be too prescriptive in how you want the work to be delivered. Describe the 'outcomes' you require.
- 7.5.2 Try to find ways specialist suppliers and contractors can contribute their expertise; allow tenderers to innovate and offer you their best solutions.
- 7.5.3 Make sure you secure Best Value, not just the lowest tender price.

7.6 Prepare Sound and Complete Tender Documents

- 7.6.1 Specify clearly what you want and describe in detail how tenderers are to price their submissions – and whether VAT is included.
- 7.6.2 Give thought to various pricing mechanisms (i.e. lump sum or schedules of rates) and how good these will be at accommodating change.
- 7.6.3 The more information you provide, the greater your chances of success.

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7.7 Consider Monitoring Payment Arrangements at the Outset

- 7.7.1 Be clear as to how payments are to be calculated. Make payments on time.
- 7.7.2 Establish monitoring procedures, which are required to satisfy the Council.
- 7.7.3 Consider default procedures, performance incentives and profit sharing.
- 7.7.4 Incorporate these processes into the tender documents.

7.8 Ensure Procedures Provide for Probity and Accountability

- 7.8.1 Ensure the whole process is documented and recorded, and that all key documents are signed, dated and retained.
- 7.8.2 Communicate all decisions to the whole team.

7.9 Think Before You Act

- 7.9.1 Review your plans before commencing and don't rush things.
- 7.9.2 Think, "What can go wrong?" and put possible contingencies in place.

7.10 Learn From the Process

- 7.10.1 Learn, experiment, and don't fear mistakes. Ask "How could it be improved next time?"
- 7.10.2 Develop your skills.

8. Formal Quotation and Tendering Process

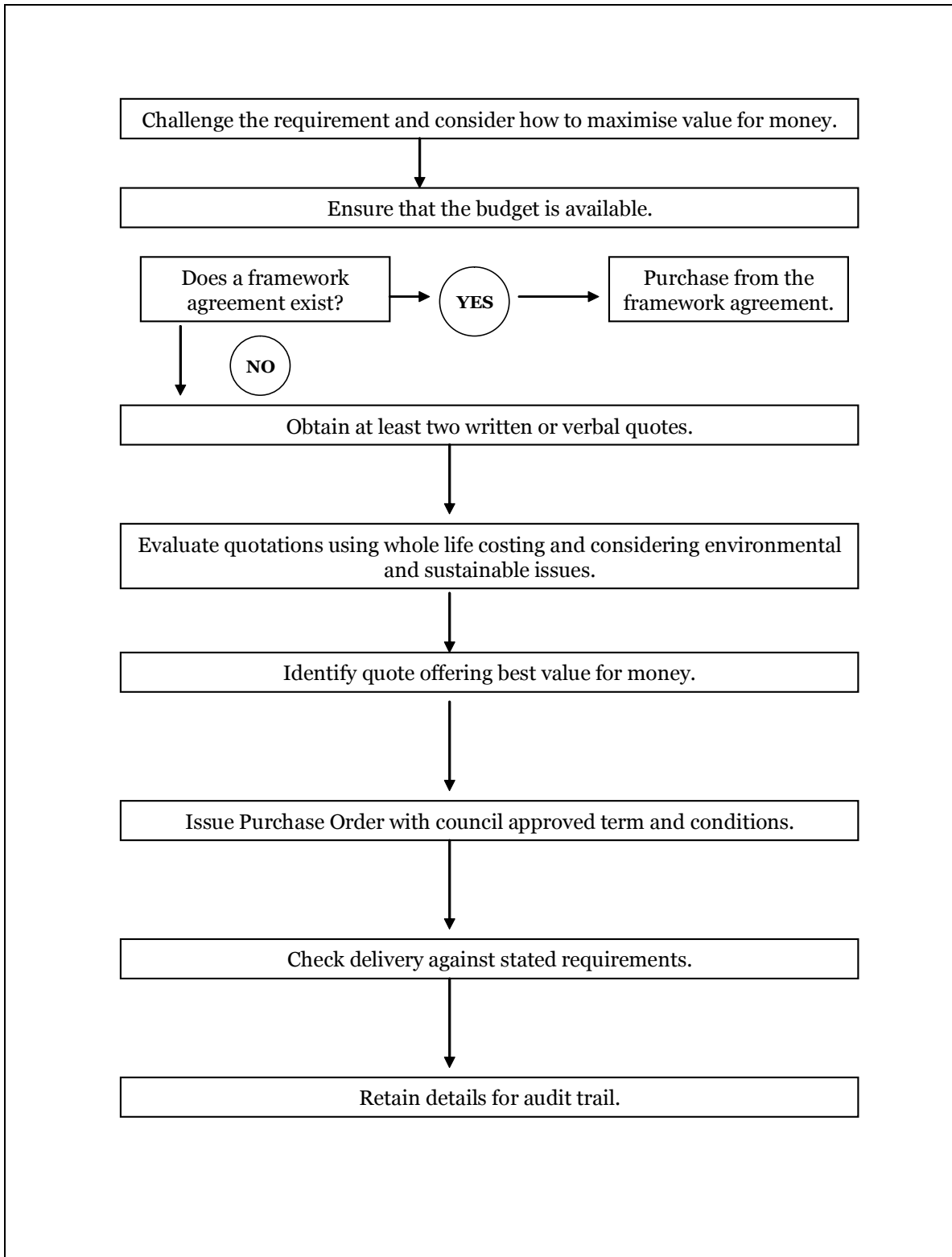
- 8.1 West Mercia Supplies (WMS) or their supply partners must be used for all purchases of office supplies and consumables, furniture, photocopiers, janitorial supplies and personal protective equipment.
- 8.2 Proposals to use an alternative supplier for such goods must be approved prior to an order being placed using a form prepared by the Strategic Procurement and Efficiency Review Manager.
- 8.3 Requests to use an alternative supplier to WMS will be approved or otherwise by the Head of Financial Services.
- 8.4 Failure to comply with the Council's policy on the use of WMS will lead to a corresponding budget reduction.

Mini Guide to Procurement

- 8.5 Officers must also use Council approved strategic service delivery partners such as Amey Wye Valley Limited and Owen Williams where appropriate to do so.
- 8.6 Procurement of ICT equipment must be achieved using the Council's online procurement system
- 8.7 The following procedures must be followed for all other types of procurement:
- a) Purchases in total valued less than £1,000 – no requirement for formal quotations or tenders but officers must be able to demonstrate value for money has been obtained and that all other relevant aspects of the Council's Contract Procedure Rules have been followed.
 - b) Purchases in total valued between £1,001 and £10,000 – two formal quotations must be obtained (see attached flowchart).
 - c) Purchases in total valued between £10,001 and £50,000 – three formal quotations must be obtained (see attached flowchart).
 - d) Purchases in total valued between £50,001 and up to relevant EU limit – formal tendering arrangements must be followed (see attached flowchart).
 - e) Purchases in total valued in excess of relevant EU limit – European procurement rules must be followed (see attached flowchart).

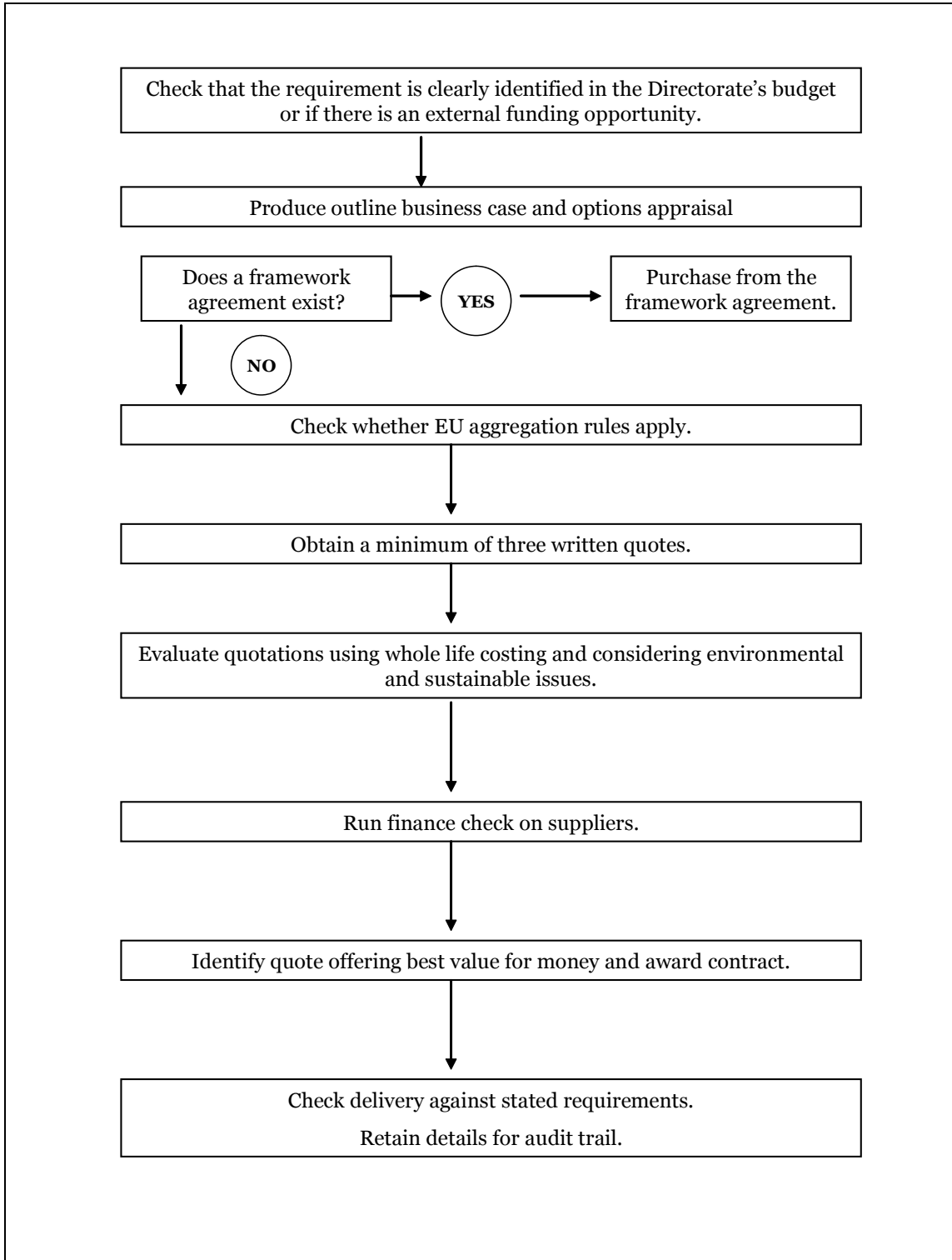
Mini Guide to Procurement

Contracts with a value below £1,000



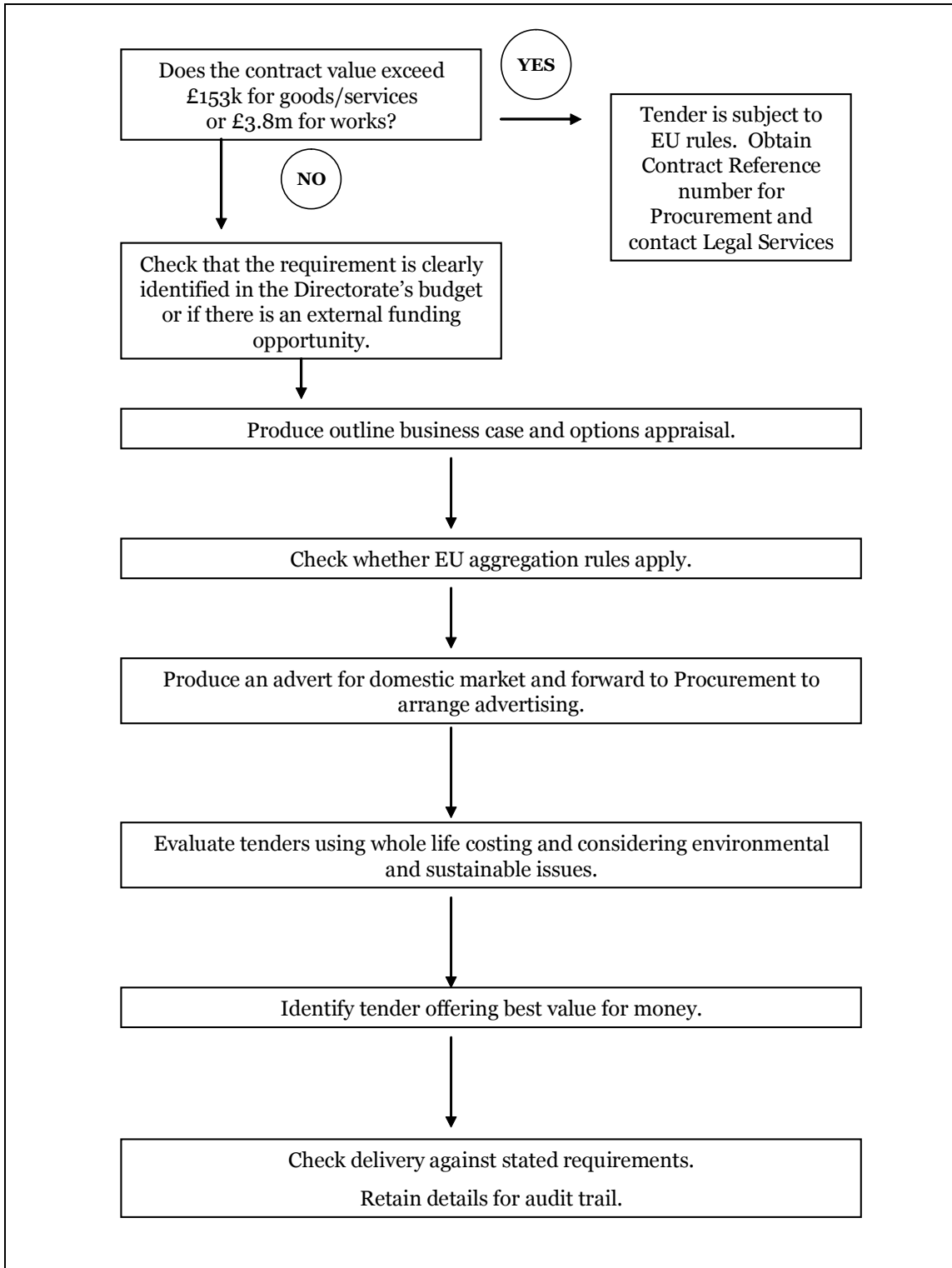
Mini Guide to Procurement

Contracts with a value between £1,001 and £50,000



Mini Guide to Procurement

Contracts with a value between £50,001 and up to relevant EU input (£140,000)



EDGAR STREET GRID DEVELOPMENT – SELECTION OF PREFERRED URBAN VILLAGE STRATEGIC PARTNER

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CABINET

10 JULY 2008

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the selection of the preferred strategic partner for the Edgar Street Grid Urban Village and authorise detailed negotiations with that supplier prior to consideration of a full Development Agreement.

Key Decision

This is a key decision as it is likely to be significant in terms of their effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

THAT:

- a) **Cabinet agrees the recommendation of the ESG Board as to the preferred Urban Village Strategic Partner and;**
- b) **authorises officers to agree a Heads of Terms agreement with the preferred partner and commence negotiations on a development agreement which will be subject to a further report to cabinet.**

Reasons

The Urban Village will be the next phase of the Edgar Street Grid (ESG) redevelopment to come forward after the initial Retail Quarter redevelopment. A strategic partner is required to assist ESG Herefordshire Ltd secure the necessary land and property acquisitions throughout the designated Urban Village area.

The preferred partner selection process requires Herefordshire Council to approve the selection of the preferred strategic partner for the Urban Village. The ESG Herefordshire Ltd Board and Advantage West Midlands (AWM) have been involved in the selection process supported by external specialist consultants.

This report sets out the process that has been followed in the procurement of a strategic partner for the Urban Village. The process demonstrates that it has been robust and independent; and that the preferred strategic partner has been selected on technical and financial merits that justify preferred status. Once selected, negotiations must be undertaken with the preferred partner to establish the detail of the future scheme to be

incorporated in a Development Agreement. This will be the subject of a future report to Cabinet.

Considerations

1. ESG Herefordshire Ltd is a joint venture company set up, following Cabinet approval on 15th July 2004, by Herefordshire Council and Advantage West Midlands (AWM) to coordinate the redevelopment of the 100-acre (40.7 hectares) Edgar Street Grid site in Hereford. The Company is managed by a Board of fourteen Directors and a company secretary, overseeing the work of a small executive team. The Council is represented on the Board by the Leader and Chief Executive.
2. The Unitary Development Plan (UDP) and the subsequent Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the ESG development, informed by the ESG Masterplan provide a robust planning policy and design framework for the overall redevelopment of the site.
3. The Urban Village covers an area of approx 30 acres primarily within the northern element of the ESG site, please see appendix 1 for a map of the Urban Village site within the ESG boundary. The Urban Village is not one site but rather an allocation of a number of correlating sites that together will be developed for residential purposes. The site currently includes the Merton Meadow car park, the Essex Arms training ground, and numerous private commercial properties including the large Jewsons builder's merchants.
4. ESG Herefordshire Ltd, with advice from AWM, Herefordshire Council and commercial and residential property consultants DBK Back, determined that the appropriate method of procurement for a strategic partner should be on the basis of formal submissions and additional competitive dialogue from prospective strategic partners.
5. The primary principle behind the decision to appoint a strategic partner was to attract the external funding necessary to deliver residential development plots to the market, a project that would ordinarily be outside the scope and finances of the public sector. This brings to the process the added benefits of the strategic partner's expertise and experience of delivering other residential schemes; their ability to provide an element of branding and marketing for the scheme, their ability to attract top quality architects, urban designers, and other expert consultants; and their proven ability to negotiate with house builders in order to attract the best value to the site.

Role of the Strategic Partner

6. The preferred strategic partner will be a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) and as strategic partner for ESG Herefordshire Ltd their role will be to secure site and land assembly for the development plots within the Urban Village, and to deliver appropriate supporting site infrastructure i.e. utilities. A contractual Joint Venture agreement will be entered into with ESG, Herefordshire Council, and AWM to bring forward and deliver residential development plots, including affordable housing, to the market place.
7. To achieve this goal the strategic partner will negotiate and purchase the necessary land and property assets to assemble development plots, they will make an outline planning application, together with the necessary supporting studies, for the overall Urban Village site, and appoint and fund a dedicated Project Manager for the delivery of the Urban Village. This will involve a considerable long term capital investment to

enable the site and land assembly to take place.

8. It is the intention that the Council land and property assets within the Urban Village will need to be ring-fenced for inclusion within the Joint Venture agreement to be negotiated with the strategic partner. Additionally alternative car parking provision will be required to replace the spaces lost within the Merton Meadow car park. These projects will be the subject of a further Cabinet Report setting out the detailed implications from a financial and service delivery perspective.

Community Benefits

9. The proposed residential mix will bring significant amounts of new residential units to the centre of Hereford city, in a very sustainable location, and construction will be on a brownfield site reducing the pressure for new residential development on Greenfield land. The Council's current policy of 35% affordable units within developments will be applied, the strategic partner will take ownership and management of these properties once constructed. It is calculated that approximately 20 new jobs will be created by the development of the Urban Village. Additionally there will be numerous construction jobs created during the physical construction phase.
10. An important aim of the Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (UDP) is to protect and enhance the sub-regional employment and service role of Hereford City centre. The redevelopment of the site will support this aim by providing a strategic housing site, including an affordable element, and attracting significant private sector investment into the City. There will be a significant up front investment within the city, both from a financial point of view and from the strategic partner on an organisational perspective, this will continue into the long term and will involve full engagement with the local community.

Procurement Process

11. At its meeting on 12th July, 2007 Cabinet approved the marketing of the Council's assets within the ESG Urban Village site, and were advised that ESG Herefordshire Ltd would commence the procurement process to select a preferred strategic partner for the Urban Village.
12. All procurement in the public sector over a specified limit (currently £3.5 million) is subject to the EU Treaty principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency. The EU Public Procurement directives require contracting authorities such as Herefordshire Council to provide details of procurement in a prescribed format, which are then published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU).
14. All companies replying to an OJEU advertisement must have an equal opportunity to express interest in being considered for tendering and those companies selected to tender receive the same information on which to make their bid.
15. A four-stage process has been followed to select the preferred strategic partner for the Urban Village development. Legal advice on the process to be followed was secured from both the council's legal services and ESG Herefordshire Ltd's legal advisors Pinsent Masons. This has been compiled to comply with OJEU standards. The table below sets out the procurement process followed:

Launch.	Marketing Launch – 25 th July 2007 Submission of Pre Qualification Questionnaire (PQQ). 27 th August 2007
Stage 1.	Long list. Selection from 10 PQQ submissions down to 5 developers. 17 th September 2007
Stage 2.	Short list. Selection from long list of 5 down to 3 developers. 26 th November 2007
Stage 3.	Selection of 2 parties from short list. 21 st April 2008.
Stage 4.	Preferred developer selection from 2 parties. July 2008

16. The site was launched to the market in July 2007. Potential strategic partners were invited to submit PQQ's to register interest in the development opportunity, ten of which were received by ESG Herefordshire Ltd within the deadline set.
17. Five potential strategic partners were selected from the initial PQQ stage to go through to the Long List. This selection was made by a panel comprising officers from ESG Herefordshire Ltd, AWM and the Council on the basis of previously agreed selection criteria, which included the developer's track record of similar schemes; their skills and technical ability to complete the project; and their general methodology and approach to the project.
18. The five long listed strategic partners were provided with a "Topic Area" based around an area within the site identified for the Urban Village. The purpose of the exercise was for the parties to prepare an indicative development proposal which would outline their strategic thought process and overall ability to create an exciting and attractive place to live and visit.
19. In April 2008 the strategic partners attended interviews undertaken by officers from Herefordshire Council, AWM and ESG Herefordshire Ltd. Two strategic partners were then invited to go forward to the Short List stage, Bromford Housing Group, and Sanctuary Housing Association. A third strategic partner (Taylor Wimpey Major Projects) was held in reserve in case of default by either of the remaining two.
20. The short listed parties were invited to firm up their suggested approach to the whole Urban Village, taking into account issues such as phasing, housing mix, design and respond to draft legal heads of terms. This was to clarify methodology and approach rather than seek a scheme design.
21. To co-ordinate and assist the decision-making process a "Technical Panel" was commissioned by ESG Herefordshire Ltd, to oversee scrutiny of the legal selection process and provide an expert analysis of the merits of each bid on different technical aspects.
22. The panel consisted of a core of public sector officers who had involvement from the Long List stage, and expert consultancy advice provided by DBK Back, commercial and residential property consultants. Panel membership is set out below:

Urban Village Preferred Strategic Partner Technical Panel

Permanent Members	
Jonathan Bretherton	ESG Chief Executive and Chair of ESG Urban Village Sub Group.
Gerrard Williams	Development Director – ESG Herefordshire Ltd
Malcolm MacAskill	Head of Asset Management & Property Services - Herefordshire Council
Richard Gabb	Head of Strategic Housing
Nigel Hudson	Development Team Leader - Advantage West Midlands
Expert Consultancy	
Kevin Foreman	DBK Back Associates

23. Prior to the commencement of the procurement process, the Board of ESG Herefordshire Ltd agreed the criteria against which each of the bids must be judged. As required by the OJEU process, the basis of assessment was notified to both short listed strategic partners. The assessment used a scoring matrix to evaluate various criteria within the bids; a copy of the scoring matrix used to assess the Short List bids is at Appendix 2.

24. There are four criteria within the assessment matrix:

- Overall approach of the proposal and vision;
- Planning, design and development content;
- Project deliverability;
- Financial proposal.

Detailed descriptions of the criteria and the weighting attached to each are included within the scoring matrix and can be viewed at Appendix 2.

25. The benefit of the matrix assessment process is that it has enabled the technical panel to determine the ranking of the bids through a robust and tested methodology and provides an auditable means of recommending a preferred developer to the Board of ESG Herefordshire Ltd and to Cabinet.

26. The permanent members of the technical panel assessed each strategic partner's submission against the matrix. Assisting in this assessment, and adding to the individual expertise and experience of individual members, was the independent consultancy element of the panel.

ESG Herefordshire Ltd Board Recommendation

27. The Board of ESG Herefordshire Ltd will consider the outcome of the evaluation process at its meeting on 7th July 2008 and will make a recommendation at this meeting as to the preferred strategic partner for the Urban Village. Cabinet will be informed of the preferred partner via the ESG Chief Executive giving a verbal notification at the Cabinet meeting.

Next steps

28. Following confirmation of the preferred strategic partner Heads of Terms will be negotiated and signed between the Council and the preferred strategic partner. They will set out the basis on which the detailed negotiations regarding a Development Agreement will be undertaken.
29. Detailed negotiations regarding the treatment of the Council's assets will be held within this period to inform the development agreement. The agreement will also set out the financial considerations, contractual obligations of all parties, scheme details, and include a refreshed Masterplan.
30. A further report will be brought to Cabinet to advise of the outcome of these negotiations and seek agreement to enter into a formal development agreement.

Financial Considerations

31. Herefordshire Council owns approximately 8 acres within the Urban Village site, including the significant landownership of the Merton Meadow car park. Herefordshire Council has recently acquired additional land within the site, on behalf of ESG Herefordshire Ltd, utilising AWM funding. Herefordshire Council land ownerships within the Urban Village are shown in Appendix 3.
32. As mentioned above the strategic partner will be responsible for the acquisition of the land and property necessary to bring forward development plots to the open market. This will involve significant up front financial investment from the strategic partner and the inclusion of the Herefordshire Council assets within the Urban Village to assist in the formation of residential plots or the essential infrastructure required to service them.
33. The detailed financial implications, including asset transfer, will be negotiated through the Development Agreement process, and will be included within a further report to Cabinet before any agreement is finalised.
34. The negotiation of the Heads of Terms, Development Agreement, and CPO Indemnity Agreement may require the Council/ESG to incur costs of up to £100,000 in respect of professional fees. This sum will be at risk until the Heads of Terms are finalised. On finalisation of the agreement these costs will be reimbursed by the strategic partner.
35. A detailed financial model for the regeneration of the Urban Village of the ESG project will be prepared as the Development Agreement is negotiated. Cabinet will receive a further report on the Development Agreement prior to its final determination and this report will include the detailed financial model for the project and an assessment on the implications for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. The financial strategy Council endorsed on 7th March 2008 aims to ensure that the Council's cash resources are allocated in line with corporate priorities such as the ESG project. It therefore highlights the fact that the ESG Project may have implications on both revenue and capital budgets as the project unfolds and more detail becomes available. Cabinet's financial strategy recognises this potential pressure by leaving capacity within both the revenue and capital budgets in the event that it is needed for this and other key corporate priorities.

Risk Management

The technical panel comprised of representatives from the three organisations with vested interests in the ESG development - Herefordshire Council, Advantage West Midlands, and

ESG Herefordshire Ltd. The expertise of these representatives was backed up by specialist knowledge in specific areas by consultants appointed by ESG Herefordshire Ltd.

Independent advice has been sought throughout regarding the procurement process to be followed.

Alternative Options

To appoint an alternative strategic partner; or not appoint either of the two short listed partners.

Either would have implications for the role and integrity of the ESG Herefordshire Ltd Board and would go against a procurement process which has already been assessed as technically robust and that follows an approved OJEU methodology.

Additionally, a decision not to progress the proposal would result both in damage to the reputation of the authority and loss of significant resources to support the regeneration of the city.

Consultees

As this process is aimed at selecting a strategic partner for ESG Herefordshire Ltd and at this stage is not concerned with the actual physical regeneration of the Urban Village no public or stakeholder consultation has taken place in either the selection process or as a part of the development of strategic partners bids.

Appendices

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | Map of proposed ESG Urban Village. |
| Appendix 2 | ESG Scoring Matrix for final Urban Village Strategic Partner Bids. |
| Appendix 3 | Herefordshire Council land and property ownerships within the Urban Village. |

Background Papers

None.

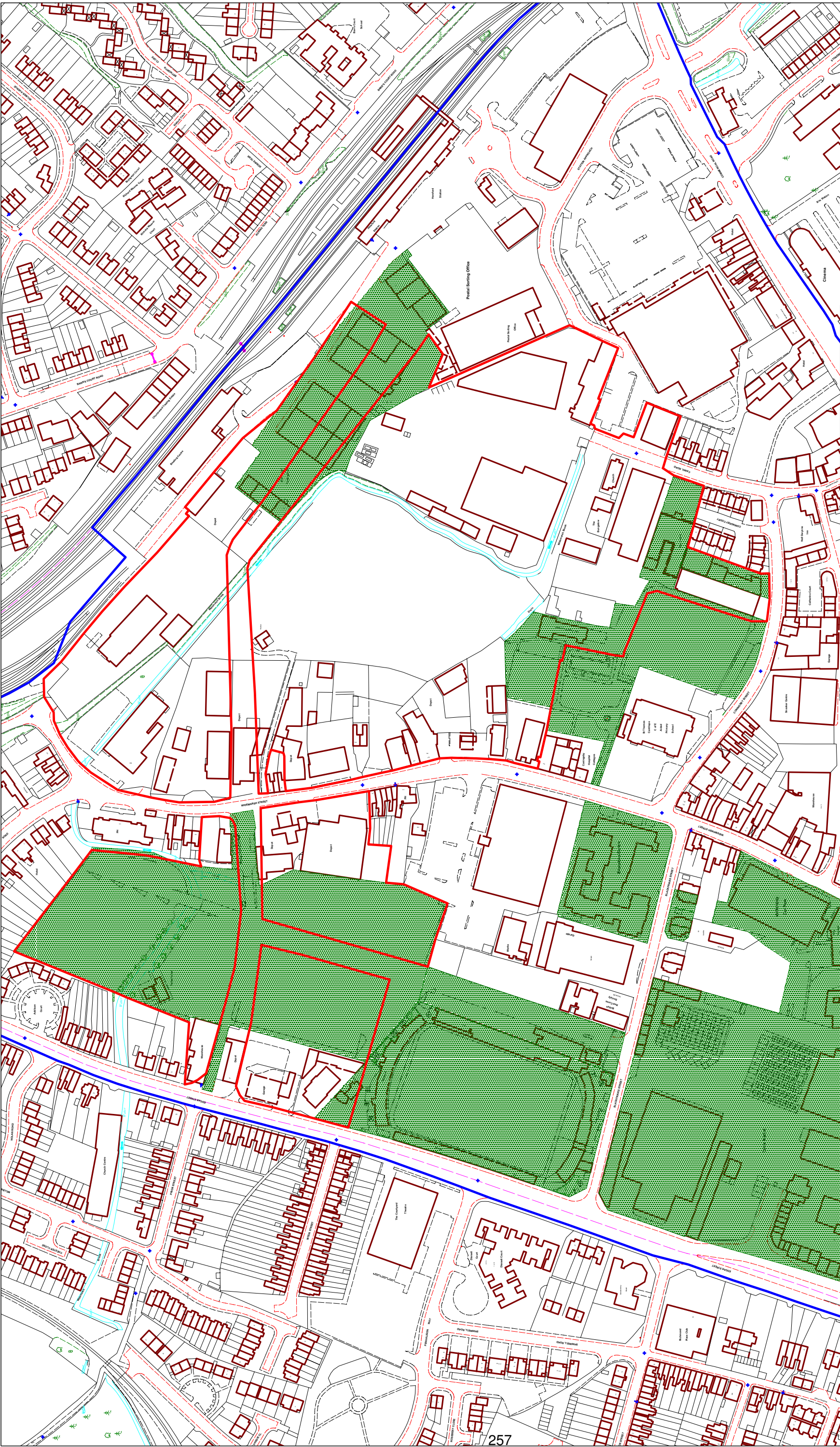
APPENDIX TWO

BLACKFRIARS URBAN VILLAGE

SCORING MATRIX FOR THE SELECTION OF THE FINAL PREFERRED PARTNER

CRITERIA	DETAILS	FINAL PREFERRED PARTNER SELECTION WEIGHTING
Overall Approach of the Proposal and Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the proposals fit with the overall vision for Hereford and ESG • Overall strategy and programme of the partner • Ambition of the partner • Achieve objectives, targets and priorities • Integration, community liaison, social and community benefits and local facilities • Adjoining development 	15%
Planning, design and Development Content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriateness of the development, form and context • Key criteria / points for the development brief / design guide • Housing type, mix and style, density and massing, quality • Sense of place, experience, public realm • Sustainability and future-proofing • Access • Parking, pedestrian, cycling and park and ride provision • Canal/water facility, location, lay-out, design criteria, delivery and resourcing 	20%
Project Deliverability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response and approach • Project team, expertise and resourcing • Land assembly strategy • Project phasing, project programme • Governance • Risk strategy 	25%

CRITERIA	DETAILS	FINAL PREFERRED PARTNER SELECTION WEIGHTING
Financial Proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnering arrangements / framework, • Contribution to land assembly plus servicing and costs • Resource and funding • Funding security requirements, • Land to be retained for development • Levels of return required • Allocation of sales receipts and repayment priority • Profit sharing, overage/future receipts, profit investment and additional value • Financial contribution to long term stewardship and stewardship • Performance monitoring and KPI 	40%



Urban Village Legend

-  Council/AWM Land
-  Residential Parcels
-  ESG Regeneration Area

Herefordshire Council
 Property Services
 Franklin House
 4 Commercial Road
 Hereford
 HR1 2BB
 Tel.: (01432) 260000
 Fax.: (01432) 261892

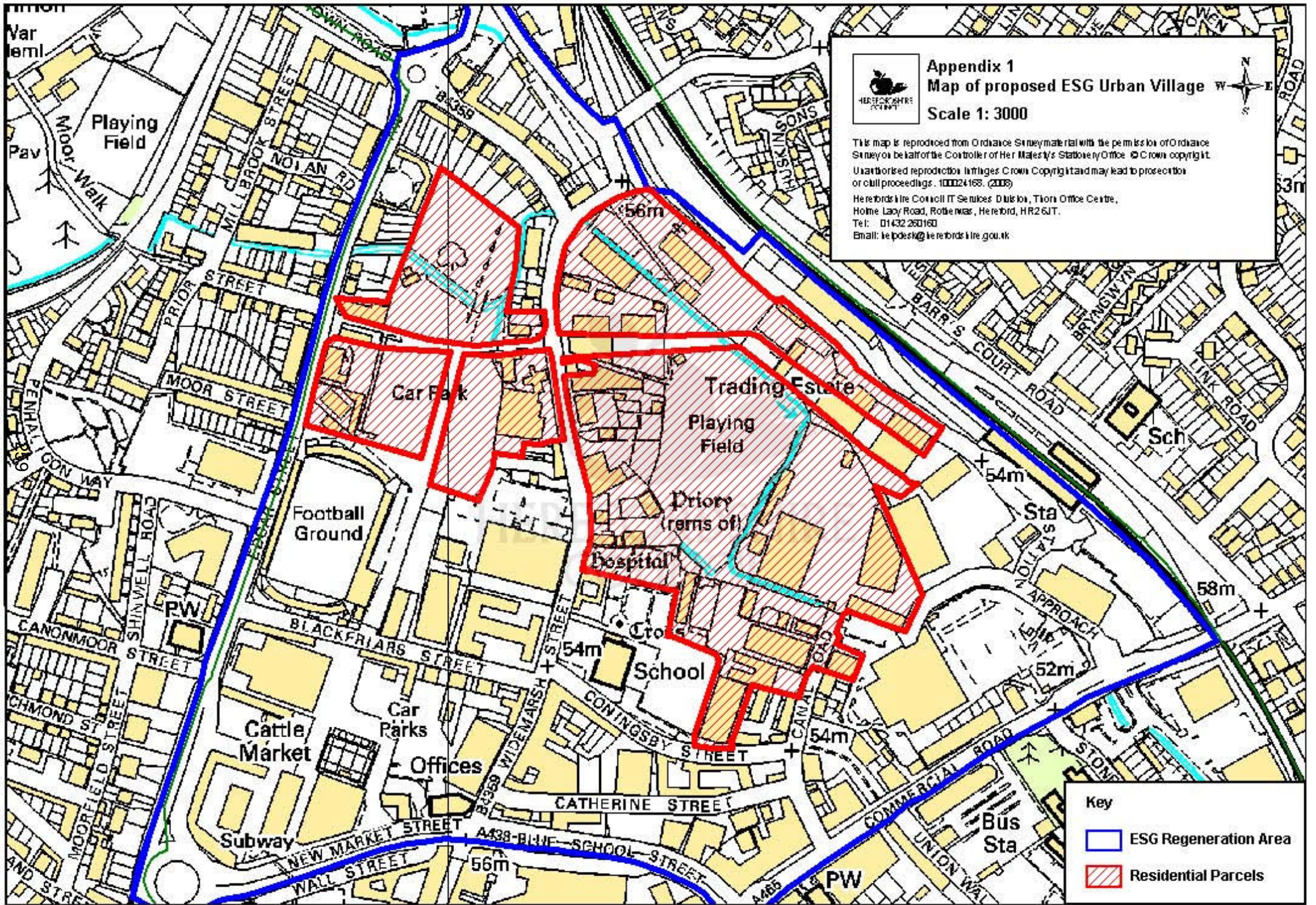
APPENDIX 3 - Herefordshire Council land and property ownership within the Urban Village

SCALE 1:2500 @ A3



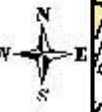
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Appendix 1
Map of proposed ESG Urban Village

Scale 1: 3000



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Key

- ESG Regeneration Area
- Residential Parcels

