Date: 19 November 2008

To: Members of the Scrutiny Commission

Mr MR Lay (Chairman)   Mr CG Joyce
Mrs R Camamile (Vice-Chairman)   Mr C Ladkin
Mr PAS Hall (Vice-Chairman)   Dr JR Moore
Mr PR Batty   Mr K Morrell
Mr PS Bessant   Mr K Nichols
Mr DM Gould   Mrs BM Witherford
Mrs A Hall   1 vacancy
Mr DW Inman

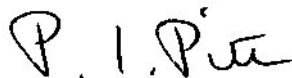Copy to all other Members of the Council

(other recipients for information)

Dear Councillor

There will be a meeting of the **SCRUTINY COMMISSION** in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, Hinckley on **THURSDAY, 27 NOVEMBER 2008** at **6.30pm** and your attendance is required.

The agenda for the meeting is set out overleaf.

Yours sincerely

P. I. Pitt

Pat Pitt
Corporate Governance Officer

SCRUTINY COMMISSION - 27 NOVEMBER 2008

A G E N D A

    1.   APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

RESOLVED 2.   MINUTES

        To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2008 attached marked 'SC45'.

    3.   ADDITIONAL URGENT BUSINESS BY REASON OF SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES

        To be advised of any additional items of business which the Chairman decides by reason of special circumstances shall be taken as matters of urgency at this meeting.

    4.   DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

        To receive verbally from members any disclosures which they are required to make in accordance with the Council's code of conduct or in pursuance of Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992. **This is in addition to the need for such disclosure to be also given when the relevant matter is reached on the agenda.**

    5.   QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

        To hear any questions and to receive any petitions in accordance with Council Procedure Rules 10 and 11.

RESOLVED 6.   PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY CAPITAL PROJECTS

        Report of the Deputy Chief Executive attached marked 'SC46' (pages 1 - 4).

        A maximum of 20 minutes has been allocated for this item.

RESOLVED 7.   FLEXIBLE WORKING

        Report of the Director of Finance attached marked 'SC47' (pages 5 - 71).

        A maximum of 20 minutes has been allocated for this item.

8. REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GENERAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Report of the Director of Community and Planning Services attached marked 'SC48' (pages 72 - 87). This report was deferred at the previous meeting.

A maximum of 15 minutes has been allocated for this item.

9. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY REVIEW

Report of the Director of Community and Planning Services attached marked 'SC49' (pages 88 - 138).

A maximum of 15 minutes has been allocated for this item.

RESOLVED 10. ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY – INTERIM REPORT

Report of the Head of Corporate and Scrutiny Services attached marked 'SC50' (pages 139 - 141).

A maximum of 15 minutes has been allocated for this item.

RESOLVED 11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

Work Programme 2008/09 attached marked 'SC51' (pages 142 – 159).

12. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS

Copy attached marked 'SC52' (pages 160 - 165).

13. MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES

For noting only:

(i) Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 29 September 2008. Attached marked 'SC53' (pages 166 - 168).

14. ANY OTHER ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH AS MATTERS OF URGENCY

To: All Members of the Scrutiny Commission with a copy to all other Members of the Council.

NOTE: AGENDA ITEMS AGAINST WHICH THE WORD "RESOLVED" APPEARS ARE MATTERS WHICH ARE DELEGATED TO THE COMMISSION FOR A DECISION. OTHER MATTERS ON THIS AGENDA WILL BE THE SUBJECT OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL.

HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

16 OCTOBER 2008 AT 6.30 PM

PRESENT: Mr MR Lay   -   Chairman
         Mrs R Camamile -   Joint Vice-Chairman
         Mr P Hall   -   Joint Vice-Chairman

         Mr JG Bannister, Mr PR Batty, Mr PS Bessant, Mrs A Hall, Mr
         DW Inman, Mr CG Joyce, Mr C Ladkin, Dr JR Moore, Mr K
         Morrell, Mr K Nichols and Mrs BM Witherford.

Officers in attendance: Mr S Atkinson, Mr Michael Brymer, Mr B Cullen, Miss
L Horton, Mr S Kohli, Mr D Moore, Mr R Palmer, Mr TM Prowse, Mrs S Stacey
and Miss R Owen.

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.4, Mr DS Cope, Mrs J Richards
and Mr R Ward also attended the meeting.

Also in attendance:
Mr M Baxter, Echelon; Mr S Lappage, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP and
Messrs C Roxbrough and P Wood, Bentley-Jennison.

217 APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Mr Gould with the
substitution of Mr Bannister authorised in accordance with Council Procedure
Rule 4.3.

218 MINUTES (SC30)

On the motion of Mr Hall, seconded by Mrs Camamile, it was

     RESOLVED – the minutes of the meeting held on 28 August 2008 be
     confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

Mr Ladkin arrived at 6.31pm.

219 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were declared at this stage.

220 <u>HOUSING REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE CAPITAL AND REVENUE BUDGETS (SC31)</u>

The representatives of Echelon, Bentley-Jennison and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP presented their reports and gave some background to their investigations and recommendations.

During questions and discussion on the report and introduction by Echelon, Members expressed concern about the following:

- The reason for accelerating works when it had previously been stated that works were behind schedule;
- The apparently high costs of the works not matching the generally low standard in the sample investigated;
- The prescribed 'lifecycle' of works being changed by undertaking work earlier than necessary.

The key failings which had led to the overspend and which had been investigated by Bentley-Jennison were highlighted as non-compliance with the contract, inability to justify costs, communication problems, internal management and ineffective procedures. During discussion of this report, Members raised the following concerns:

- There were anomalies between the reports of Echelon and Bentley-Jennison. In response it was explained that the Echelon report looked at larger-scale works, and the report of Bentley-Jennison looked at day-to-day repairs;
- There seemed to be uncertainty with regard to who had responsibility for monitoring the budget;
- The excessive amounts charged for jobs and the monitoring carried out on this;
- The appropriateness of open book accounting in the partnership with Inspace.

It was explained that carrying out too many checks on works undertaken would have diminished the advantages of partnership working and that such a partnership was based on trust and therefore a balance had to be reached. Trust was also highlighted as an important factor in open book accounting. Members questioned whether this system often worked in such partnership arrangements and if it could have worked in this case. It was explained that the benefits of open book accounting were that all parties knew the budget and could plan ahead, but that a full understanding of the methodology was needed to be able to monitor the system. It was also explained that in order for open book accounting to work there needed to be a flow of accurate and timely information from the contractor regarding works completed, and that this had not taken place during 2007/08.

Therefore it was reported that one of the problems that had led to the overspend had been the lack of timely information to be able to manage performance, for example the contract was paid monthly, but inspection reports were only available after much later throughout 2007/08. It was however reported that this had been addressed during 2008/09 and

information was being received more quickly and by the end of November the records would be up to date.

Mr Lappage from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP explained the reasons for the statements in his report which stated that two areas of the authority (systems of internal control and performance against budgets) had been classified as 'inadequate', but said that there were no other areas of concern and robust progress had been made to address the issues since they had been identified.

Members raised the following points and questions during debate on the overspend:

- The need to ensure we were getting value for money and a reliable service for tenants;
- The significant costs to the Council of addressing the issues since the problems were identified and the cost of monitoring the open book accounting system;
- Possible savings to the Council of a successful system of open book accounting;
- The need to continue to reinforce the importance for staff to understand financial regulations and to undertake training;
- The level of confidence in continuing the partnership;
- The need to examine the contract and future viability;
- The need to recover the confidence of the public by ensuring a high quality service within budgets;
- Concern with regard to the lack of an audit trail.

It was reported that there had been lengthy negotiations to secure the current position. Members expressed concern with regard to the payment to Inspace towards redundancy costs. In response it was explained that as the Council had changed their specification in certain areas eg. giving decorating vouchers for voids and reduced the budget for housing repairs in 2008/09, Inspace accordingly had had to reduce the number of staff. The settlement of £10,000 was against the contractor's claim of just under £45,000.

It was requested that a report be prepared for the Council Services Select Committee with regard to the costs of the investigations by the external consultants. It was also suggested that it may be useful to receive information on successful models of open book accounting and potential alternatives.

RESOLVED –

(i) The actions taken to address issues since March 2008 be endorsed;

(ii) Bentley-Jennison be asked to undertake further investigations with regard to open book accounting, the state of the partnership and its monitoring, to be reported back to the Commission at its meeting in January 2009;

(iii) A report be produced for the Council Services Select Committee with regard to the costs of the consultancy work and the additional internal work which had been necessary;

(iv) An appraisal of open book accounting systems be undertaken after receipt of Bentley-Jennison's report;

(v) Consideration be given to monitoring of the arrangements by an appropriate Council body;

(vi) Training for staff continue to be provided on financial and contract procedure rules as necessary.

Messrs Bessant and Cope left the meeting at 9.11pm and Mr Inman left at 9.12pm.

221 <u>OUT-OF-HOURS ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE REVIEW – FINAL REPORT (SC32)</u>

Members received a report which concluded the Out-of-hours healthcare review undertaken by the Scrutiny Commission. It was noted that input into the Community Hospital Consultation had been submitted within the deadline. It was noted that further information was awaited with regard to the service provided by the East Midlands Ambulance Service, particularly in relation to the Community Paramedic based in Earl Shilton.

RESOLVED –

(i) the Scrutiny Commission requests, as part of the Community Hospital Consultation:

(a) that a minor injuries unit be established at the community Hospital site in Hinckley, with provision until midnight and with GP provision attached;

(b) that the proposal for a healthcare hub be supported but that the out of hours provision be extended to 12 midnight;

(c) that the proposal for a nurse led service at the Community Hospital be supported but concern be expressed and a request submitted for a GP led services from 8am to 10pm or later;

(d) that transport be considered extremely carefully by the PCT before instigating the move to a one-stop hub, in particular that the bus service be extended to enter the hospital site rather than stopping on the main road.

(ii) the additional service provided by the East Midlands Ambulance Service be reviewed annually by the Scrutiny Commission.

Messrs Bessant and Inman returned to the meeting at 9.17pm.

222 EAST MIDLANDS REGIONAL PLAN – SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES – PUBLIC CONSULTATION (SC36)

Members were advised of the proposed changes to the Regional Plan. It was noted that consultation was due to end on 17 October. Members expressed concern with regard to the definition of 'pitches' on travellers' sites, as in some places there were up to six caravans on a pitch, and with regard to the review of green wedge policies. In response to concerns about affordable housing targets, it was reported that the figures were interim and work was ongoing as part of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment.

RESOLVED – the officer response highlighted in appendix A to the report be endorsed.

223 LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION (SC40)

The Scrutiny Commission received a copy of the 'Communities in Control' Improving local accountability consultation from the Department of Communities and Local Government and was provided with draft responses to the part of the consultation relating to the evolving role of Overview and Scrutiny committees.

RESOLVED – the draft response be agreed.

224 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (SC34) & HINCKLEY TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT (SC35) – PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENTS

It was agreed that as these reports would be considered by Council on 28 October, that would be the appropriate forum for a full debate.

RECOMMENDED – the report be discussed at Council on 28 October.

225 SCRUTINY ENVIRONMENT GROUP (SC38)

Members' support was sought for the establishment of a Members' group to monitor and oversee the environmental activities of the Council relating specifically to the Environmental Management System, climate change agenda and other environmental initiatives. It was agreed that the group need not be politically balanced and that the number of Members be flexible depending upon the number expressing an interest.

RESOLVED – the creation of a Scrutiny Environment Group be agreed.

226   REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY (SC39)

Members received a report which reviewed and updated the Environmental Policy. It was agreed that this would be an appropriate piece of work for the Scrutiny Environment Group.

RECOMMENDED – the Scrutiny Environment Group discuss the Environmental Policy.

227   EXTENSION OF MEETING

Having reached 9.30pm, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 9, it was moved by Mrs Camamile, seconded by Mr Nichols and

RESOLVED – the meeting be extended for a further 10 minutes to allow the business to be completed.

228   OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09 (SC41)

Members gave consideration to the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09. It was requested that Barwell and Earl Shilton regeneration be added to the work programme, however in response it was stated that a group had been set up by the Commission to look at this. A Member felt that the group was not effective, and it was therefore suggested that the focus of the group be addressed and the minutes of the meetings be included on the Scrutiny Commission agenda.

RESOLVED – the Work Programme be agreed.

229   FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE AND COUNCIL DECISIONS (SC42)

Members received the Forward Plan of Executive and Council decisions.

RESOLVED – the Forward Plan be noted.

230   MINUTES OF SELECT COMMITTEES

Minutes of the following meetings were received:

(i)   Finance & Audit Services Select Committee, 18 August 2008 (SC43);

(ii)   Council Services Select Committee, 21 August 2008 (SC44).

231   CITIZENS' PANEL – CONSULTATION RESULTS OF COUNCIL PRIORITIES AND BUDGET SPEND (SC33)

Members received a research report by the Consultant.

RESOLVED – the report be endorsed.

232   REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GENERAL ENFORCEMENT
       POLICY (SC37)

RESOLVED – this item be deferred to the next meeting of the Scrutiny
Commission.

(The meeting closed at 9.39 pm)

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 27 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT OF DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE
RE: PROGRESS REPORT ON KEY CAPITAL PROJECTS

1.0 **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1. To brief Members on the current position of key Capital projects, namely the Bus Station redevelopment, Atkins Site and the Leisure Centre.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

That Scrutiny Commission notes and endorses the progress being made on planning and delivery of the key Capital schemes highlighted in this report.

3.0 **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT – KEY PROJECTS UPDATE**

(i) **BUS STATION SITE**

3.1 The Tin Hat Partnership, who are appointed as the Council's Development Partner, are currently progressing work on the detailed design of the Bus Station Scheme. In September Tin Hat met with local residents and landowners and have given a commitment to ongoing engagement. A joint Project Board has been established between the Tin Hat Partnership and the Council, chaired by the Deputy Chief Executive, to oversee progress on the scheme. A project plan has been produced which highlights that a planning application will be submitted in May 2009.

3.2 A 'drop in' consultation event took place on Thursday 30 October between 3pm and 8pm at the council offices to facilitate the opportunity for local residents to raise specific issues to be considered as part of the design process. Architects from the Tin Hat Partnership and officers of HBBC were present to manage the event.

3.3 Discussions continue on the draft Development Agreement and the target for the sign-off for this is January 2009. The draft agreement will be reported to Executive in January for approval.

3.4 Two meetings have been facilitated between the Tin Hat Partnership and Britannia Centre Developers with the aim of ensuring both schemes come forward in a complementary way. A planning application for the Britannia Centre is due for submission in December 2008.

3.5 The current projected completion date for the Bus Station site is 2013.

(ii) **ATKINS PROJECT**

3.6 A project board has been established, chaired by Cllr Bray, to oversee the second phase of this key project, which involves the conversion of the Goddard building into a 40,000 sq ft Cultural Enterprise Centre and a new state of the art College building for North Warwickshire and Hinckley College

(NWHC). Phase 1, which involved the acquisition of the site and demolition of the non-listed factory buildings, was completed on target and with support by EMDA, in June 2008.

3.7 A successful £3.5m grant bid was approved by EMDA in August 2008. Architects have been procured through the Scape Framework to advance the detailed design of the Goddard building and the development of the new car parking on land adjacent to the Museum.

3.8 NWHC have procured their own design team, who are working up designs for the new College. A planning consultant has been procured to work jointly on behalf of HBBC and NWHC.

3.9 First draft plans will be available by the end of November for initial consideration by the project board. Whilst HBBC are likely to be in a position to have applications for Planning and Listed Building Consent in January, the College is indicating a March date for the new College application. Discussions are in hand to seek to facilitate NWHC to bring forward its programme to secure a joint application in January/ February 2009.

3.10 Work is being progressed to deliver key improvements to the main fabric of the Goddard Building this financial year, in line with EMDA's funding requirements. This could include re-roofing, the windows, rainwater goods and external brickwork, subject to relevant consents.

3.11 Pre-application consultation with residents is being planned on 12 and 13 December to gauge initial views on the design for the new College and Cultural Enterprise Centre.

3.12 Executive, at its meeting on 8 October, resolved to support the establishment of Creative Hinckley, an organization that is forming itself into a 'not for profit' company representing the interests of over 80 creative companies within the Borough. A business case has been submitted which is being considered by the Director of Finance and will be reported to Finance and Audit Commission and Executive in due course. This links to a proposal by Creative Hinckley to rent gallery and workshop space in the Atkins building.

3.13 Members will note from a separate report on this agenda regarding the 'Flexible Working Project', that opportunities are currently being explored to relocate as an anchor tenant to the Goddard Building for a limited time, to allow a long term solution to be developed.

(iii) **LEISURE CENTRE**

3.14 A project board has been established, chaired by Cllr Bray, to oversee the design and delivery of the new Leisure Centre and Sporting Hub.

3.15 Architects have been procured to develop design options for land adjacent to Hinckley United Football Club and the former potential crematorium sites off the A47. A Strategic Masterplan will also be developed. The timeframe is for the work to be completed for initial consideration by the Joint Member Leisure Centre Working Group in January 2009. A key part of the process will involve

consulting with key stakeholders, particularly the existing sports clubs. Wider consultation with the public will follow in the New Year.

3.16 Draft policies have been included in the Consultation Draft of the Core Strategy promoting the strategic link between the sporting hub and leisure centre with the Sustainable Urban Extensions at Barwell and Earl Shilton.

3.17 Further work has also been commissioned on sequentially testing the preferred sites for the new leisure centre to underpin future planning applications for the new facility.

3.18 Discussions have been taking place with prospective development partners for the new leisure centre. Investigations are currently underway to source expertise to assist the Council in procuring a development partner.

4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [IB]**

Bus Station

Currently there are no direct capital costs attributable to the project. The Council has however been successful in gaining £215,000 revenue funding from the LSEP to help facilitate the Bus Station and other key regeneration developments.

Atkins Development

The approved Council Contribution for the project is £2,500,000 (Atkins Site clearance and Goddard Conversion).

The approved budget for Goddard Conversion is £5,917,471 of which £3,758,471 is being met from external sources and £2,159,000 from Council Resources.

This budget will be rephased to allow for the joint planning application in January 2009 and the funding profile from the LSEP. The council contribution towards the project will remain at £2,500,000 unless otherwise agreed.

Any changes in funding will need to be approved by the LSEP and approved by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council at the appropriate level in line with Financial Procedure Rules.

Revenue implications arising from the original business case have already been allowed for within the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Revenue implications arising from the Creative Hinckley business case, anchor tenant options and other letting options will have to be affordable and will be allowed for when revising the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Leisure Centre

The current approved project budget is £10,000,000. Any revisions to this budget based on discussions with possible partners and other procurement options will have to be approved as per Financial Procedure Rules.

5.0 **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 **Bus Station Site** – The Council should seek to agree the draft Development Agreement as soon as it is comfortable that its interests are sufficiently protected by the agreement. The proposed date of January 2009 is, at present, realistic and the Council should seek to meet it.

5.2 **Atkins Project** – The necessary negotiations have taken place with the LSEP to allow the funding for the key works to be released this financial year, notwithstanding the LSEP's requirement in the funding contract that full planning approval is in the place before releasing any monies.

5.3 **Leisure Centre** – None at present.

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 All three project help deliver the Council's priority Strategic Aims.

7.0 **CONSULTATION**

7.1 The report identifies those stakeholder groups who have been engaged at this on the emerging plans for each of these key projects.

8.0 **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

8.2 It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

8.3 The risk implications of these three projects are included on the Council's Strategic Risk Register and on the Corporate Project Risk Registers.

9.0 **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 All three key projects will bring additional retail, leisure and employment opportunities to the Borough, which will be available for access by rural communities.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 These projects are all linked to the Council's five key priorities within the adopted Corporate Plan.

Background papers: None

Contact Officer: Bill Cullen

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 27 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF FINANCE RE: FLEXIBLE WORKING

1. **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

   To meet the request of the Scrutiny Commission for further information on the proposal to implement further flexible working initiatives in the Authority.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

   That Members support the implementation of more flexible ways of working to achieve a better work/life balance for individuals and service improvements and efficiencies for the Authority. Members are requested to

   (i) Endorse a co-ordinated and phased implementation of flexible working, managed and suitably resourced;

   (ii) Endorse the proposal to explore the opportunity to move to the Goddard Building as an Anchor Tenant for a limited period of time whilst allowing other long term solutions to be developed.

3. **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

3.1 The Modernising Government White Paper of March 1999 made specific recommendations for improving communication and service delivery through the use of technology and more innovative delivery channels (e.g. Internet, Call Centres, digital television)

3.2 In response to this agenda HBBC undertook a series of projects to implement E-Government (IEG) including Mobile Working and Electronic Document Management. These initiatives have enabled HBBC to meet the targets under IEG and with the introduction of Citrix have provided a solid platform upon which to deliver flexible working.

3.3 At the end of December 2007 the make up of staff working flexibly was:-

Permanent Home worker	5
Mobile Workers	4
Occasional Home workers	85
Hot Desks/Touchdown site	0

3.4 At Council on 26 February 2008 it was agreed to pursue an option of relocating all the staff who currently operate from Argents Mead to an alternative more energy efficient set of offices on a phased basis over the next three years. A significant element in the Members agreeing to this proposal was the opportunity to extend flexible working to more staff in all service areas provided that there would be no detrimental effect on providing excellent customer service.

3.5   The Strategic Leadership Board set up a Flexible Working Project Board in March 2008 supported by staff from key disciplines including HR, Asset Management, Health and Safety, ICT, with representation from Unison, to oversee the project within the Authority.   The group was tasked with developing a Flexible working policy, advice and guidance documents and a business case to justify undertaking the project based on the estimated cost, risks and anticipated business benefits.

4.   **PROGRESS TO DATE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING PROJECT GROUP**

The policy and guidance documents are now complete and cover all aspects of flexible working including defining if the flexibility relates to the location at which work is carried out or if it is time dependent flexibility where an employee's working pattern differs from the traditional; 9 to 5, five days a week.

Location Based Flexibility	Time Dependent Flexibility
*Mobile Working	*Flexi Time Scheme
*Mixed Location Working	*Job-Sharing
*Occasional Home Working	*Part Time Working
*Contractual Home Working	*Annualised Hours
*Shared &Team Desks	*Working Compressed Weeks/Fortnights
*Touch Down Sites	*Term Time Working
*Designated Desks	*Voluntary reduced Working (V Time)

4.1   The policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant council policies such as Lone Worker, ICT Usage, Data Protection and Security, Health and Safety, Mobile Phone Usage and Disciplinary and Grievance.

4.2   Consultation was carried out on the policy with Unison, Middle Managers, Staff and Members of the Scrutiny Flexible Working Group and changes were made to the draft policy to take into account feedback from that consultation. The Flexible Working Policy can be found in appendix A.

4.3   In order to better inform staff of the options available to them for flexible working the project team compiled a list of frequently asked questions which are available on the intranet. The topic was also covered at the staff meeting with the Chief Executive where there was an opportunity for questions and answers and a presentation on flexible working delivered at the Middle Manager's meeting in September.

4.4   Marylou Lousvet a consultant from Wisework delivered awareness training on issues regarding managing flexible workers to First Line Managers and team leaders. The training was well received and the intention will be to roll out similar training to all staff.

4.5   At the request of the Scrutiny Commission Flexible Working Group, representatives from Leeds City Council and Rugby Borough Council attended the working group meeting in September to present an evaluation of flexible working in their authorities providing a warts and all account of the

issues and successes. A Systems Administrator who is a permanent home worker at HBBC, a Visiting Officer in the Benefits Service who is a mobile worker and an Environmental Health Officer who is a temporary home worker also attended to feedback on the results of their flexible working pilots.

4.6   Following on from the presentations the group requested that a questionnaire should be sent to staff to determine the appetite for flexible working. It was decided in the first instance to gauge the take up from the Revenues and Benefits Service Area as they had been involved in the mobile working pilots, the home working pilot and already fully utilise the document management system.

4.7   Questionnaires were given to 52 members of staff, 46 have been returned to date. In response to the question "Do you believe your role is suitable for some form of flexible working" 34 responded positively and 11 responded negatively. The full results are in appendix B

4.8   The business case was drawn up to identify the main drivers for change supporting flexible working, options for implementation, expected benefits and risks. (The full business case is available in appendix C)

4.9   <u>Main Drivers for Change</u>

The main drivers for change have been identified as:-

➢ Reduce absenteeism
➢ Improve the Work/Life balance, morale and satisfaction leading to staff retention
➢ Reduce the need to travel thereby reducing both the individual's and the Organisations carbon footprint
➢ Enable the organisation to maximise office space as desk requirements drop
➢ Business Continuity is easier to achieve when there is a reduced dependency on "buildings"
➢ The statutory Rights of Employees who are parents, including adoptive parents, of children under six or disabled children under eighteen, and carers of adults, to apply to work flexibly providing they have the qualifying length of service.

4.10   <u>Benefits</u>

The main benefits of flexible working are:-

➢ Happier, less stressed staff
➢ Improvement in performance can be achieved
➢ Reduced requirement for accommodation
➢ Reduced absence rates, retention of staff
➢ Environmental impacts, less paper, efficient buildings, less travel

4.11 <u>Options</u>

The options that have been considered are:-

➢ Individual Directorates are allowed to develop pilots and their own response to flexible working requirements under an umbrella of a central policy but with no encouragement or support. The impact on ICT and HR unpredictable and difficult to manage.
➢ If nothing is done then Argents Mead will need to be upgraded or new accommodation with the same floor area acquired within two years?
➢ Agree a coordinated and phased implementation of flexible working, managed and suitably resourced.

4.12 To ensure the veracity of the business case the council engaged Paul Fleming a consultant from SOCITM the Society of I.T. Managers to review the flexible working strategy and business case. In his report he commented that "The overall ICT strategy for flexible and mobile working is well thought out and covers all of the key areas that impact on staff and the organisation. The full report is available at appendix D

4.13 At the end of October 2008 the make up of staff working flexibly is:

Permanent Home workers	5
Senior Officers home set up	3
Mobile Workers	8
Touchdown site	1
Occasional home workers	110

Consolidation of the Benefit Home Working Pilot by March 2009 will result in

Mixed location	10

5. **<u>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (DB)</u>**

Estimates of the Costs and Benefits of the flexible working scheme were included in the Business Case which was considered by members June 2008. A summary of the projected costs are as follows

5.1 <u>Capital</u>

ICT Equipment	£364,200
Installation and project Management Costs	£196,450
Other Costs including additional Drop in Centre and VOIP	£104,000
Costs to achieve Desk Saving	£664,650

5.2   Revenue

On going running costs   £233,130
Savings from reduced Accommodation Needs/
More efficient accommodation   (£172,030)
                                                _____
Net Additional Cost   £ 61,100
                                                _____

Saving in Capital Financing Charges from not
Refurbishing Argents Mead (Estimated Spend £6m) £570,000

Provision does not exist in the Capital programme approved by Council in February 2008 for this scheme.

5.3   It is recommended that the Council take an anchor tenancy on space in the Goddard Building innovation centre, as yet no firm estimates of rental payable have been made but such a move would significantly support the Business Plan for that enterprise as it would accelerate the letting of the space.

6.   **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [LH]**

None as a direct result of the report.

7.   **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Flexible Working contributes to all of the Corporate Aims to enable efficient and effective service delivery.

8.   **CONSULTATION**

Unison
Revenues and Benefits Staff

9.   **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
The implementation of flexible working will not be adequately funded	This risk can also be mitigated by a sound project business case and plan which is managed and reviewed	BI
Flexible working is not seen by all managers and staff as an essential way of delivering services in an effective, accessible, future orientated and efficient manner but seen either as an HR policy only equated to being a "nice" employer or only being done to enable Argents Mead to be closed	Communication and training needs to include a clear business case and strategic objectives and cover all staff to counter this risk. All managers will be required to re-engineer processes and review procedures	BI
Accommodation requirements will be larger than foreseen and more accommodation space will be needed after Argents Mead is de-commissioned with associated costs	Implementing flexible working in a comprehensive manner based on a sound business case and a detailed and evaluated project plan. Monitoring development closely throughout 2009 and 2010. Contingency plans should be included for providing additional accommodation if required.	BI
Insufficient workstations are freed up when it comes to actually doing it - too few staff take up flexible working or the work patterns do not remove the need for 75 - 125 desks	Take up of flexible working will be monitored as pilots progress and any blocks identified and removed to encourage as many as possible staff to adopt flexible working.	BI
The existing culture is a major barrier and therefore a high risk. For flexible working to deliver full benefits the culture must be based on trust between staff, managers and the Council.	Time and attention must be given to developing a supportive culture win non-compliance managed. Clear policy and guidelines will give staff and managers clear direction on how the policy has to be implemented.	BI
There are a number of risks associated with the ICT infrastructure. Incorrect ICT solution is being used for the tasks and type of flexible working. Access to ICT systems which are essential to doing most tasks may not be reliable when working away from the office under present service provision, broadband and mobile access coverage	1. Well managed and evaluated pilots will test out a number of ICT options and issues which will be captured and the learning applied to later phases. 2. A practical implementation plan, clear policy and guidance will ensure the right equipment is available at the right time. 3. Robust cost models will ensure costs are controlled. 4. Allocation of ICT must be focussed on the needs of the job, not swayed by the individual choices of staff.	PL

10. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

Flexible working will support the introduction of Touch down sites around the Borough which will increase the accessibility of Officers for members of the public.

11. **ASSET MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS (ME)**

Asset Management implications are dependant on various levels of take up.

11.1 Flexible working is a common approach for local authorities in their attempt to reduce increasing revenue costs whilst improving services. This works hand in hand with other initiatives including partnership working and shared services and can lead to considerable cost savings if planned correctly.

11.2 Accommodation whist not the main driver for adopting a flexible working strategy is inextricably linked. Carefully planned flexible working will have the effect of reducing the required footprint of any operational premises in turn reducing the associated ongoing revenue costs. Benefits of placing the council within easy reach of its customers also delivers performance improvements along with an improved "work / life balance" for employed staff.

11.3 A flexible working strategy could also be linked with the development of a "community hub" around Argents Mead and may include partners in including other authorities, the Church and Masonic Hall. Such a project would provide a robust long term future for the delivery of council services.

11.4 As an alternative to extending Florence House the Goddard Building, within the Atkins Site, has been considered as a temporary base for the Councils operations. It is possible for the Council to become the Anchor Tenant on the second floor of the Goddard Building and lease additional space within the incubator space on the 1st floor. In doing so the Council will support the business case for the Goddard Project renting space at the rates identified in the Greenborough business case.

11.5 The increase in utilisation of the building from day one is also an advantage to the project as a building with high occupancy levels is considered easier to let than one which is predominantly empty.

11.6 The risk in this solution is that of timing and insuring the accommodation is available to the council early 2011. Delays will lead to the council having to look at another solution or considerable investment into Argents Mead.

11.7 As the flexible working strategy becomes embedded and accommodation requirements lessen a phased departure of the Goddard building should be planned. This will limit the increasing revenue demands that will be associated with a listed building. This departure should be in line with increasing demands from the incubator businesses and alternative modern solutions for Council Services.

12. **IT IMPLICATIONS (PL)**

The ICT Remote Access solution (home, drop in and mobile) has been successfully proven across the Authority. The key concern with the project has been the ability to deliver the number of flexible workers within the timescale rather than the technology being used. The opportunity to become anchor tenant at the Goddard Building will provide the Authority with greater flexibility to develop a longer term solution, putting the project on a stronger footing.

The key ICT financial investment required for the project is the introduction of Authority wide Voice over Internet Protocol telephony. With the original assumptions it was proposed this investment would be made when approximately eighty individuals were working flexibly. Given the introduction of the Goddard Building, this investment should be made earlier. This investment should now be made during quarter 2 of 2009 as this solution will be required in advance of any occupation of the Goddard Building in 2010.

13. **HR IMPLICATIONS**

The promotion and implementation of Flexible Working is a key theme under 'Organisational Development' within the Corporate Workforce & People Strategy (2007).

Background papers:

Appendix A Flexible working Policy
Appendix B Flexible working questionnaire and results
Appendix C Flexible working Business Case
Appendix D Flexible working strategy review

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HINCKLEY & BOSWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL

FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY (draft version 7)

This document describes the policy, criteria and identifies important issues when considering adopting formal Flexible Working within Service Areas of the Council. It is divided into the following sections:

1. **INTRODUCTION**

Hinckley and Borough Council's vision is to widen access to quality services through flexible modes of delivery and to provide employees with more flexible ways of working so long as these do not compromise good customer service. In order to achieve this, the Council is actively building a workforce culture receptive to innovation and flexibility.

This document looks to improve on current means of flexible working that will benefit both the organisation, service delivery and the employee. This procedure sets out specific arrangements for flexible working to bring these aspirations into being.

This document describes the policy, criteria and identifies important issues when considering adopting formal Flexible Working within Service Areas of the Council. It should be read in conjunction with other relevant Council policies such as:

- Data Protection and Security
- Special Leave
- ICT usage policy
- Health and Safety
- Disciplinary and Grievance
- Mobile Phone Usage
- Lone Worker
- Attendance Management and Absence Management

This list of related policies is not exhaustive but indicative only.

A separate Implementation and Management Guidance has been produced a copy of which can be found on the intranet.

2. **STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES**

2.1 Key issues, supervision arrangements and obligations of the authority when implementing flexible working are as follows:

1. Service delivery must never be compromised and the aim should be to promote improvements where possible.

2. Hours of work can be any time as long as they do not contravene the Working Time Directive, are aligned with service needs and have been agreed with the manager.

3. Flexible working is suitable for all employees/jobs unless operational reasons prevent it.

4. Employees may opt out of core hours.

5. Flexible working can be requested by the employee or the manager and is required to be mutually acceptable.

6. Solutions should be cost effective and in line with current legislation.

7. The Grievance Procedure should be used where an employee wishes to appeal in the case of an application being unsuccessful.

8. Part-time workers have protection in law not to be treated less favourably than conventional full-time employees.

The HR team has a key role in facilitating flexible working by providing information to managers and employees on flexible options and advising on their application and any implications.

2.2   The Council is committed to delivering excellent services in the most effective manner by employing well motivated and trained employees who have access to all the tools they need to deliver the services. The Council has recognised that new ways of working have emerged which enable employees to work remotely and in different time patterns. Flexible working enables the Council to improve service delivery and achieve real benefits for the Council, equally flexible working supports work/life balance for employees. Therefore the Council wishes to promote all forms of flexible working where it supports effective service delivery.

2.3   The Council will encourage and support voluntary flexible working where it meets business needs. All requests to work flexibly whether location or time based will be treated equally regardless of the personal circumstance of the employee making the application.

2.4   All employees will be treated equitably, whether they are home or office based or mobile workers.

2.5   All flexible workers, whether contractual or informal arrangements exist, will be expected to comply with all Council policies and procedures in particular with regard to data protection, confidentiality, security and health and safety.

2.6   ICT equipment supplied by the Council will be used in accordance with the Council's Security Policy and will remain the property of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council.

2.7   The aim of the Flexible Working Policy is to ensure that there are clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of all parties when undertaking work on behalf of the authority:

- in a remote location outside of the council premises
- in a contractual agreement where home based working forms part of the terms and conditions of employment for an employee
- in a home location on an occasional or ad hoc basis that does not constitute a contractual agreement forming part of the terms and conditions of employment for an employee
- at times outside the traditional 9 to 5 and in patterns that vary from the standard 5 days a week working arrangement

2.8   Some roles have been designated as suitable for mobile working and agreement for employees in these roles to work on this basis is assumed. Employees in these roles will be designated contractually as mobile workers.

2.9   In other cases, neither every position, nor everybody is suited to the requirements of Flexible Working and therefore, agreements will be made on a case by case basis taking into account the information provided in the relevant Application Form (see the Implementation and Management Guidance for Application Forms).

2.10 The Line Manager will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant Flexible Working issues are properly addressed and continually reviewed.

2.11. Employment Conditions

Flexible workers are subject to the same employment conditions and HR policies as all other employees.

Flexible workers should be managed as office based employees in all areas including:

➢ Performance management
➢ Career development & training opportunities
➢ Attendance at one to one and team meetings
➢ Terms and Conditions

3. DEFINITIONS

3.1 LOCATION BASED

In terms of flexibility about the location at which work is carried out, workers can be recognised as Office or Home, Mixed Location Based or Mobile. The following definitions describe the types of locations workers can be recognised as working from, however, it should be noted that an employee can fall into more than one flexible working category i.e. Location and Flexible hours such as Occasional Home Worker and compressed week etc. In such cases the line manager will need to follow guidance for each situation.

3.1.1 Contractual Home working

This is an employee who is contractually required to work from Home as their normal place of work. This is where work is carried out on a regular basis for the whole or a significant part of the week, at the employee's own home which is equipped with appropriate technology. Contractual home workers will **not** be provided with a designated workstation in a Council office.

When working in the office, a touch down or shared team workstation will be used. Home based working is a practical consideration where an individual's work is self regulated and is discrete to the extent that it can be undertaken outside the office.

No existing employees will be required to become home based workers.

3.1.2 Mixed Location working

This refers to employees who have agreed to work a regular pattern of working in the office and at another agreed site. This pattern would not vary week by week unless by prior agreement with the line manager and other affected employees. A designated desk will not be provided in the office but a shared desk would be available for the employee's use when working in the Council's office. The employee will be supplied with ICT equipment appropriate to their role in their home. It is the regularity and predictability of home working which distinguishes this category from

occasional home working. To make this option cost effective the employee should work an average of at least 2 days or 40% of their time based at or working from the home base.

3.1.3 **Mobile working**

This refers to an employee who is field based and is often working away from a dedicated base, for example Environmental Health Officers and Development Control Officers.

This is enabled through the use of information and communication technologies, so that the employee may alternate between his/her contractual base and other suitably equipped locations e.g. nominated council offices/ establishments, home, touch down sites. They will not have a designated workstation in the office but will use shared designated team desks.

3.1.4 **Occasional Home working**

This is when work is carried out at home occasionally and typically on an ad hoc basis to do a particular piece of work. The employee would retain a dedicated office workstation at their normal place of work or other desk sharing arrangement dependent on team arrangements. However, they would not be provided with the same level of ICT and other support in the home environment. It is the non-regularity and work driven nature of this arrangement which makes it occasional home working. The amount must not exceed on average 20% of the working year.

3.1.5 **Shared and Team desks**

Desks will be provided at a recognised Council location for employees to share at different   times. The location of shared desks will depend on the nature of the employee's duties, the need to work with other team members and the extent of flexible working taking place in the team and at the specific Council offices. Limited personal storage space will be provided. Shared desk facilities will be available on a priority basis to Contractual Home Workers and Mobile Workers but are available to all employees when visiting different locations.

3.1.6 **Touch down sites**

These will be available within the main offices and other locations e.g. Markfield. They will enable any employees, whatever their category, to work for a short period of time at a location which is not their designated base. Touch down sites consist of a limited number of standard workstation plus a phone with no storage facilities.

3.1.7 **Designated desks**

Employees who are office based for the majority of their time will be allocated a permanent workspace within the Council Offices.

3.2 TIME DEPENDANT FLEXIBILITY

For employees working patterns that differ from the traditional; 9 to 5, five days a week:

3.2.1 Flexi-time Scheme

The Flexi-time scheme averages your working hours over 1 month and covers 10.5 hours of the day (between 8.00 am and 6.30 pm). Core time - when all employees should be working - runs from 10.00 am to 12 noon and 2 pm to 3.30 pm. These bands can be adjusted to meet the needs of the particular service. An employee who accrues excess hours can take time off up to 2 days per month. (The full Flexi time scheme is available from the Human Resources Team).

3.2.2 Job-sharing

Job Sharing is an arrangement whereby two part-time employees share the responsibilities of one position. In a 'shared responsibility' arrangement the individuals both carry out all the duties of the job, simply picking up the work where the other one left off, while in a 'divided responsibility' arrangement the duties of the position are divided between the two individuals, with each being able to provide cover in the absence of your job share partner.

3.2.3 Part-time working

Part-time working is a system whereby the employee is contracted to work fewer than the standard number of contractual hours per year for the type of work in question.

3.2.4 Annualised hours

Annualised hours is a system of working under which employees are contracted to work a   total number of hours a year rather than a weekly figure. Working hours can therefore be varied on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis to meet the demands of changing workloads or seasonal patterns.

Within this system the employee's pay does not vary, but is fixed to the number of hours they are contracted to work during the full year. Payment is on 12 equal instalments.

The scheme has benefits to both employer and employee so long as both sides ensure that the spirit and intention of the scheme is honoured at all times.

This method of working allows:-

(i)   the service to make full use of its resources to be both commercially successful and responsive to market demands; and

(ii)   the employee to receive a guaranteed basic salary which remains stable throughout the year and on which benefits are assessed (e.g. pension).

3.2.5 Working Compressed Weeks/Fortnights

This is a system that permits employees to work their total number of contractual hours over fewer working days. Usually a five-day week is compressed into four days or four and a half days, or a 10-day fortnight into nine days.

3.2.6 Term-time working

This allows the employee who works under a permanent contract, but can take unpaid leave of absence during the school holidays.
Salary is paid in 12 equal monthly instalments. The contract usually specifies that no annual holiday should be taken during term time. Salary, pension, holiday and other benefits are pro rated to reflect the amount of leave taken during the school holidays.

3.2.7 Voluntary reduced working time (V-time)

V-time is a system whereby it is agreed that the employee will work reduced hours for a certain period of time, with a return to full-time hours at the end of this period.

Salary, pension, holiday and other benefits are pro rated during this time.

4 THE RIGHT TO REQUEST AND DUTY TO CONSIDER

4.1 Eligibility
Whilst not all jobs are suitable for regular flexible working, any request will be considered on its merits. Jobs that involve project work, an identifiable output or those providing services within the community may be suitable for working flexibly. Jobs that are unlikely to be suitable or practical for all types of flexible working are those that provide a direct service to the public at a fixed location, for example staffing a reception area and those that require specialist equipment e.g. customer contact centres. However they may be suitable for some forms of flexible hours such as compressed fortnights and part time work.

4.2 Flexible Working Procedures – Statutory Rights of Employees
Parents, including adoptive parents, of children aged under six or of disabled children aged under 18, and carers of adults, have a statutory right to apply to work flexibly providing they have the qualifying length of service. The employee must have worked for HBBC continuously for 26 weeks at the date the request is made. The Council has a statutory duty to consider their applications seriously.

The right enables employees to request to work flexibly. It does not provide an *automatic* right to work flexibly as there will sometimes be circumstances when the Borough Council is unable to accommodate the employee's desired work pattern.

The right is to apply/make a request for flexible working rather than that request necessarily being approved. In order to create a flexible working culture, the Council has extended this right to request flexible working to all employees.

For full guidance please refer the Implementation and Management Guidance for Flexible Working.

The following paragraphs refer to individual requests to work flexibly. Some teams and job categories may be identified as suitable for a particular type of working e.g. mobile. No existing staff will be required to adopt this style of working but any future recruitment will be on that basis.

4.3   **Who can apply?**
In order to make a request under the new right an individual will:

- be an employee
- not be an agency worker
- not have made another application to work flexibly under the right during the past twelve months

4.4   **The procedure**
An employee wishing to apply for flexible working must do so in writing to their immediate line manager (See Appendix 9 in the Implementation and Management Guidance for the full application form). Employees are only able to make one application a year under the right, and accepted applications will mean a permanent change to the employee's own terms and conditions of employment unless otherwise agreed between both parties.

4.5   **On what grounds would an application be refused?**
An application can only be refused where there is a clear business reason. These reasons can include some of the following (but are not exhaustive):

- Burden of additional costs
- Detrimental effect on ability to meet customer demand
- Inability to reorganise work amongst existing employees or that has a negative impact on them
- Detrimental impact on quality or performance
- Insufficient or appropriate work during the period the employee proposes to work
- Health and Safety

4.6   **Implications**

The employee has a responsibility to think carefully about their desired working pattern, whether that involves time and/or location based flexible working options, and present a well thought out case that benefits both themselves and the Council when making an application and the Council is required to follow a specific procedure to ensure requests are considered seriously.

If flexible working arrangements are agreed between the employee and the line manager it normally means a permanent change to the substantive terms and conditions of employment. There is no contractual right to revert back to former work patterns if circumstances change, although it may be possible to mutually agree to return to former work patterns. If flexible working arrangements reduce your normal working hours, this will affect the employee's pay and local government pension entitlements.

4.7   **Business Needs**

To be effective, flexible working has to primarily meet the business needs of the

service as well as those of the individual. If it does not meet the business needs the request to work flexibly may be refused. The right to flexible working is designed to meet the needs of employees and the operational needs of the Borough Council, and aims to facilitate discussion and encourage both the employee and the Borough Council to consider flexible working patterns and to find a solution that suits them both.

4.8   All flexible working will be subject to the prior agreement of the individual's manager, on the basis that clear outputs are identified in advance, which can be measured and monitored.

4.9   **Decision**
The final agreement to support flexible working will rest with the Director or Head of Service who is responsible for ensuring that all relevant issues are properly addressed, in consultation with the HR Manager, to ensure consistency of approach across the Council.

4.10   Regular flexible workers will be required to sign a flexible working agreement before being allowed to work from remote locations.

4.11   Any contractually agreed flexible working will be on a trial basis for a period of three months. During this period the home based working arrangements and the employee's performance and conduct will be monitored and reviewed and if found to be satisfactory their position as a home based worker will be approved in writing.

4.12   An employee who is being performance managed or who is not fully competent will not be allowed to work flexibly, or if currently working as a flexible worker, may be asked to return to working at a designated Council's office until performance has improved.

4.13   **General Office Equipment**

Employees must have their Line Manager's written agreement before any personal item of equipment is used i.e. PCs, shredders. The Council is not responsible for the maintenance, replacement or repair costs in the event of loss or damage to any personal equipment that is used. The relevant forms for applying for flexible working are available in the the Implementation and Management Guidance

5.   **DECIDING IF FLEXIBLE WORKING IS APPROPRIATE**

In cases where the job has not been designated as suitable for flexible working, the selection of flexible workers will be based on assessing the suitability of individuals and the work they are required to undertake and will be subject to line management agreement. The Line Manager and the individual should consider all relevant factors (within the implementation guidance) before deciding if flexible working will suit both parties. The final decision on whether to allow flexible working rests with Line Management in consultation with HR.

6.   **RIGHT TO APPEAL**

If a request for flexible working is declined, reasons for the decision will be stated to the employee in writing by their Line Manager. The Councils' Grievance Procedure

must be followed and the appeal will be treated as a grievance within that procedure.

7. EXPENSES

The approach to paying business travel expenses is dependent on the contractual work base as stated in the contract of employment. The normal policy applies for other business expenses.

7. 1 Travel Expenses

7.1.1 For staff based at home on a contractual basis:

If you are a permanent home or mixed location or mobile worker where your contract of employment has been changed to show your home as your usual base for work, HBBC will pay mileage from home except where the home base is outside the HBBC boundaries when a designated location will be agreed from which business mileage can be claimed e.g. the touchdown centres or the main offices or the council boundary.

For Mixed Based workers the right to claim expenses from home on the days designated for home based working will depend on whether the home is stated as the contractual base for those days in the contract of employment when the above paragraph applies. Normal commuting to work on the office based days will not be paid.

Exceptions:

Mileage cannot be claimed for attendance at normal progress meetings in the designated administrative office which occur not more regularly than once a week.

If an employee attends the office upon the requests of their manager for other reasons such as performance review meetings, training then this is not regarded as commuting and therefore mileage can be claimed.

When an employee is asked to work in the office base as part of a disciplinary process then mileage to the office will be deemed as commuting mileage and will not be accepted a legitimate travel expenses.

7.1.2 Office based staff

Office based staff will be able to claim business related travel expense from their designated office as previously. Mileage or other travel costs will not be payable on business journeys from home to the normal or designated administrative base. However, mileage or other travel and subsistence can be claimed from the individual's home address to a work site, subject to this not exceeding the travel costs which would have been incurred to these sites from the normal admin base (diversionary mileage).

8.   **COMMUNICATION**

It is essential that good communication is maintained at all times between the employee and their Line Manager. The Line Manager and employee should plan and agree how they will communicate effectively with each other.

It is expected that an employee and their Line Manager will agree work to be completed and deadlines to be achieved.

The Council expects the use of mobile technology to be a key feature in successful mobile arrangements. This ensures that employees can make contact with the office and other individuals. Use of mobile phones is in accordance with the Mobile Phone Usage Policy.

9.   **HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The Council has a duty to ensure the Health, Safety and Welfare of employees and persons not in his employ, who may be affected by a flexible working arrangement as far as reasonably practicable. Employees with remote based working arrangements have the same duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act as all other employees. They must take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of anyone else who might be affected by their actions and omissions. Any accidents, whether working from home or in a remote location, must be reported immediately to the line manager and recorded as per the Council's accident reporting procedure.

It is part of the flexible workers, especially mobile and home workers, responsibilities to keep their Line Manager informed about the number of hours they work. The Line Manager is responsible for ensuring an employee does not exceed the limits set by the Working Time Regulations. This includes any unpaid rest break of twenty minutes if working consecutively for six hours or more. This should be regularly monitored by the line manager as part of the risk assessment process.

10.   **DATA SECURITY**

Employees must ensure that information and equipment are kept securely. In particular, personal and/or confidential material must be kept secure at all times i.e. disposal of confidential documents, locking of the home office/computer etc. Line Managers must be satisfied that all reasonable precautions are taken to maintain confidentiality of material in accordance with the requirements of the Council's Data Protection policies which can be found on the Council's Intranet pages.

11.   **TRAINING AND CAREER OPPORTUNITIES**

Managers must ensure that flexible workers are not directly or indirectly excluded from any appropriate training and career opportunities as a result of their employment status.

In particular, managers must ensure that employees are suitably skilled in the use of technology. That they are competent in the use of the required systems, and that they can operate the equipment without direct assistance.

12. ICT PROVISION

The ICT equipment provided will be based on the needs of the job and the agreed working arrangements not the individual; except in cases covered by the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act and Health and Safety regulations.

Where staff are working at home on a contractual basis, whether as home based, mixed location or mobile workers, the Council will either install a broadband connection and pay the monthly charge directly or reimburse the cost of the an existing broadband connection at a rate equivalent to the monthly cost to the council of providing a broadband connection not at the rate of the actual cost to the staff member.

The tax office rules differ in respect of broadband. If the Council installs the broadband this is not regarded as a taxable benefit to the individual. However, if the broadband connection is already in place, and council reimburses the cost of broadband then the payment of the allowance is regarded as a benefit in kind and therefore subject to PAYE and NIC contributions.

13. DEPENDENT CARE

Flexible working is not a substitute for full-time dependant care, especially for young children, the elderly or the disabled. The Council's Absence Management Policy (covering emergency leave) should be referred to in cases of domestic emergency.

14. VARIATIONS

Managers need to be aware that some employees can find that the lack of regular contact with the office does not suit them (and this can effect motivation). This working arrangement must fit the job (the work must be capable of being delivered from multiple locations) but it must also fit the employee's personal working style and preferences (they must be self motivated and able to organise their time productively).

New Employees will be recruited to posts that have been advertised with a particular flexibility (mobile place or home based) and applicants must understand that offers of employment are made on the basis that they are able and want to work in this way.

If the employee requests a change but it remains a criteria of the job, then this should be handled accordingly. If the problem is that the employee cannot work in this way then this is a performance (or capability) issue and should be handled using the appropriate council policy.

However if the working style is now less suitable for the employee because a change in their personal circumstances means that they are less able to work in this way, then the manager should consider making a temporary (or permanent) variation to the existing arrangements. As a reasonable employer, the council will do what it reasonably can to support changes in personal life.

The working arrangement must be reviewed on a regular basis along with other performance measures.

15. START AND FINISHING OF WORKING DAY

The Council will not accept normal commuting time as part of the working day.

For home based or mobile staff who travel, the working day is assumed to start and finish as soon as they leave or arrive back at home unless the home is outside HBBC's area when the days is assumed to start as soon as they enter HBBC Council's area.

For office based staff, and home based staff who are not travelling, the working day starts and finishes when they start their first piece of work or finish their last piece of work.

16. TERMINATION OF FLEXIBLE WORKING

The Council may terminate this arrangement at any stage by giving the employee not less than two month's notice in writing.

Should the employee wish to cease formal flexible working for any reason, they may apply to the Council in writing, giving two months notice of their wish to be considered for an office-based position. The Council will consider the application and endeavour to accommodate the request, but does not guarantee that it will be.

17. TEAM WORKING

All flexible working arrangements should be designed to improve productivity, performance and customer service. Enabling employees to work from a variety of locations will help to increase flexibility in service delivery, as well as offering employees better opportunities for work life balance.

However, service improvements can only be achieved if flexible working is introduced on a team basis, with all members of the team working together to ensure that flexible working (time and / or location flexibility) is implemented fairly and consistently and does not cause disadvantages or resentment or become inflexible.

18. FLEXIBLE WORKING POLICY

If the Council should at any time issue a revised Flexible Working Policy, it will supersede this policy, and become the governing document for flexible working in the Council. The policies and procedures in any such policy document will apply to employees undertaking Flexible Working and form part of their contract of employment.

If there is a disagreement between the content of the Flexible Working Policy and the Implementation and Management Guidance or any other documents, the Flexible Working Policy is deemed to take precedent.
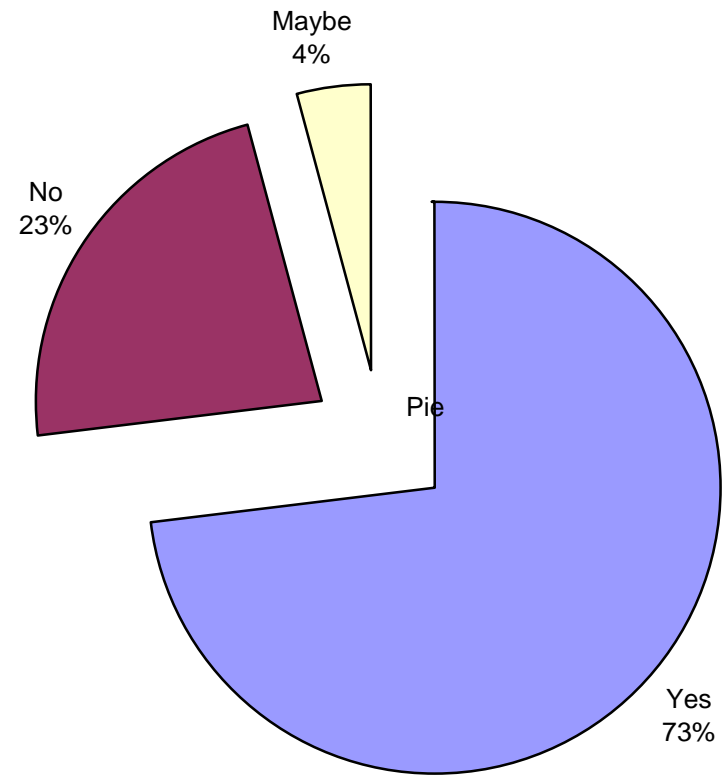
19. SUPPORT

Further advice and guidance on the effective implementation of this policy is available from Human Resources team. Any issues not covered in this document should be referred to the HR Manager.
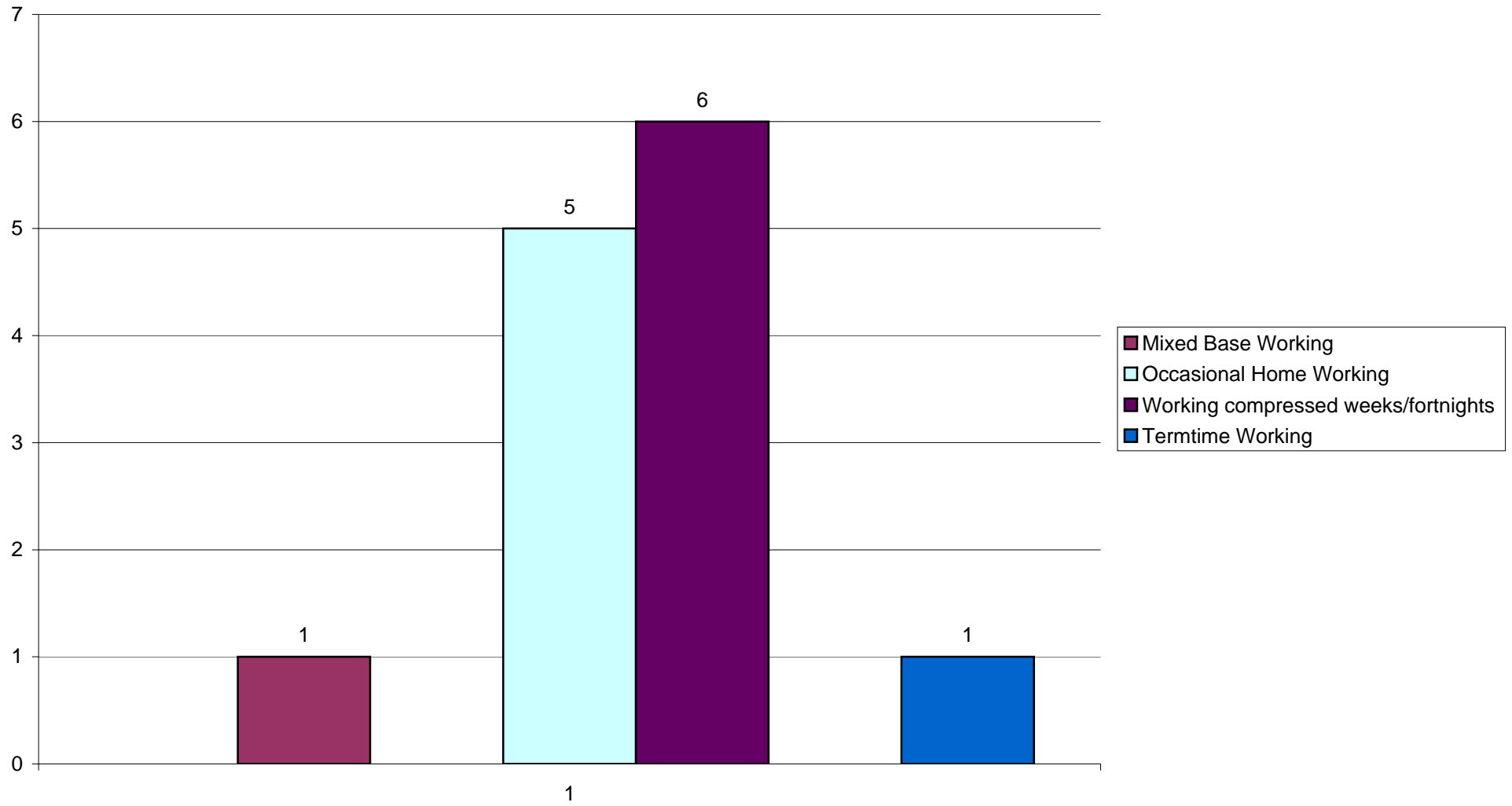
Do you consider Job Suitable for Flexible Working?	Yes	No	Maybe
	35	11	2
		How many	
Comments if said 'yes' or 'maybe'	Days recovery letters run, ideal as all computer work	1	
	Some aspects could be done at home - post & tabs, emails & phone calls	4	
	Data collection & reports can be done by email, interaction staff members via phone call	1	
	Could take it in turns to cover each other in the office	1	
	Currently 30hrs 5 days per week, change to 30hrs 4 days per week	1	
	Most work computer based, practical to work from home once set up (Anite intray)	2	
	Enable more work to be done in evenings & weekends. Working with a laptop as could work away from family when needed.	1	
	I can monitor work through the results emailed to me from Anite.	1	
	Mainly contact is by phone if needed	1	
	Could do some of the time. At times need to be out in the borough at events and benefit surgeries	1	
	Work 2 days from home, other team leader home 2 days then in the office one day per week to discuss issues	2	
	If internet provided at my home I can use as a base to pre-assess	1	
	Flexibility within self with home life etc	1	
	Would be similar to now, would need internet set-up for security	1	
	Being given appropriate equipment from home, doing same job but from home	1	
	Part of the week at home, part in the office to answer queries. Compulsory day for all to come in for team meeting.	2	
	Home working team leader deal with queries from home working team	1	
	No travelling, not as many disruptions, more work done.	1	
	Occasionally as need further training	1	
	Most of the time I am on the road, early starts are sometimes more productive if 8am instead of 9-9.15. More adaptable for team use.	1	
	Occasional home working would be appropriate when major projects require concentrated effort, not possible in the daily working office environment with all the distractions.	1	
	Majority of work computerised including report writing. Interviews must be in date and some mobile work involved.	1	
	Limited customer contact, most of my work is computer or paper based	1	
	I can use home as my base when visiting and use my laptop more to work from at home.	1	
Flexible Working Questionnaire	Provide a quieter environment. Remote access via Key fob (RSA token). Elements of the role require revisery and report writing, easily achieved outside the office.	1	

	As a PA this would be dependent on what the heads of service are doing. If they were not in the office or working from home it could be possible. Also the P.A's would probably need to work in a 'pool', looking after more than one head. I can see the benefit from working from home when long complicated tasked need to be completed, i.e. less interruptions.	1	
	Mixed base as 2 days week I need to run the private tenant payment schedule	1	
	Would need to ensure adequate cover if not working 5 days per week.	1	
	Alternative days at home and in office -3 days in office week one, 2 days in office week two	1	
	Providing all I.T in place shoule be much the same as working from the office	1	
Comments if said 'no'	Role is a very varied front facing service	1	
	Seeing customers (frontline service), unable to accommodate equipment at home	1	
	No space at home, pre-school child at home, unable to provide face to face service, 2 employees in household, would be significantly worse off as a result of having o pay utility bills. Travelling savings would not apply as usually walk to work.	1	
	Need to interview tenants who come to the office	1	
	Workload not computer generated, daily interaction needed with other departments, frontline service (customer based).	2	
	I find the routine of coming to work motivating, if I worked from home I would get distracted and therefore demotivated. I am a trainer so need to be in the office (in theory preparation could be done at home).	1	
	No desire to work from home	1	
	Providing counter service, collecting monies, staffing issues	1	
	Work dealing with the public	2	
	Visiting customers in their own homes	1	
	Impracticable from a work efficiency angle	1	

Do you consider you job suitable for some form of flexible working?

Maybe
4%

No
23%

Pie

Yes
73%

Flexible Working Questionnaire

What form of flexible working would you like to do?	Just ticks	Scores																				
Contractual Home Working		5	3	1	3	4		4	5	5	2			1	5	4	3	1	7	7	4
Mixed Base Working	1	7	7	7	5	7	7	7	7	7	7	4	7	4	7	7	6	7		7	7
Mobile Working		4	2	6	4	6		5	4	2	6	6		1	1	6	1	2		7	
Occasional Home Working	5	6	5	7	6	3		6	6	4	7		7	7	5	5	7	6	5	7	5
Working compressed weeks/fortnights	6	1	6	4	5	6		3	3	6	5	5		7	1	3	4	4	6	7	6
Annualised hours		2	4	2	2	1		2	2	3	3			1	1	2	5	3		7	
Termtime Working	1	3	1	3	1	1		1	1	1	1			4	2	1	2	5		7	

Flexible Working Questionnaire

What form of flexible working? Just ticks.

Legend:
- Mixed Base Working
- Occasional Home Working
- Working compressed weeks/fortnights
- Termtime Working

Data values: 1, 5, 6, 1

Flexible Working Questionnaire

Anticipated Problems	How many said that
Work generated in different ways, not all held on Anite. Would be difficult to work from home for a longer period.	1
Would not give desk space	1
Isolation from team, members would be detrimental to the service	1
Would cost me more to work from home as I live close by, travelling cost less than heating costs!	1
Small percentage of work suitable for home working, against cost of computer etc. No saving on desk space.	1
I.T. problems/breakdowns	6
Space at home, use more gas/electric, letter posting	1
Would prefer to keep same days each week to balance home/work.	1
My job would have to be covered when I would not be in the office.	1
Could envisage problem with continuity and not being on hand. Also I.T interaction between home/work would worry me.	1
Difficult to accommodate furniture/computer for some people. Additional charge on utility bills, may create problems with 'manning' the office.	1
Would not be able to share desk as I need my desk higher than most due to my height and to support my back. Home desk would also have to be the correct height. Communication with line manager, may not get problems sorted very quickly. Increased utility charge, would need another phone line, not enough space to put computer etc at home so that it would be out of normal living area,	1
May be difficult to train colleagues	1
Cover sickness absence and monitoring of this. Holiday cover, communication with colleagues and self management of time.	1
When notices printed, they have to come off a printer.	1
Contacting colleagues, printing bills.	4
If people are sick would affect the 'buddy' system	1
Being in the same day as others I need to see.	1
Cover is needed for the office, time management	4
Lack of motivation, lack of social side, feel out of work loop, loss of team spirit	7
May disturb other household member who works nights	1
Issues with work, system, printing	1
Only with mobile computer systems from past mobile working	1
Office cover may cause conflict within team with some officer taking 'lions share' of time away from office at expense of others	2
Safety whilst visiting, not being able to liase so much with line manger. Introduction of telephone reviews would increase mobile phone usage.	1
System access. Compliance with policies (failure/forgetting to contact the office). Getting team together for briefings. Culture change as much more emphasis on trust I.e. flexi recording	1

What benefit do you expect to gain from working flexibly?	
	How many said that
When my set hours are not enough to complete tasks at work I don't mind doing research or reading at home in the evening to meet deadline and make up flexi or where absolutely necessary over-time.	1
For those who can, happier at work if homecare arrangements better catered for.	1
Could give more flexibility within the office for others to use desk. For myself I would be reducing from 5 days in the office to 3 o 2, whilst still covering my work hours.	1
Better work/life balance	8
Not having to travel and being available at home when necessary	1
Difficult to use flexitime to have a day off with current operation. Socialising having	1
Greater output of work, staff my be happier with alternative hours of work	1
Less travelling time, being able to do more of the household jobs during the day, more flexibility with time.	1
Being able to adapt routine to suit circumstances	1
Greater ability to be able to have concentrated time on projects.	1
More work to be completed as would work extra hours in evening and weekends	1
Flexibility, longer/shorter hours, more flexibility within family unit. Reduced travel time	1
Better work conditions	1
Less distractions, so could work more productively.	11
More appreciative of colleagues when in the office.	1
More overtime and reduced costs of travelling to and from work	1

Flexible Working Questionnaire

Reduced sickness levels	1
Fuel costs, time saved, child care problems reduced, working in quiet area when nee	1
I would be able to work to more convenient work times and would save me time in car costs not having to drive to work.	1
Flexibility, less car costs. Easier if problems getting to work, any personal problems at time if feel ill, consider from home.	1
No travelling time or expense.	8
More content, less stressed = improved quality	1
Confidence working on own, being able to do things around work.	1
More flexibility timing wise in contact with customers e.g. serving stat notice for bankruptcy which require 2 visits - one an appointment, also catching arrears tenants.	1
Starting work earlier	1
I can work around customers needs more and give a better customer service.	1
The ability to control my working environment e.g. heat, light, music etc	1
Less damage to the environment	1

Do you think you need additional training?	Yes	No
	10	31
Comments		
I.T, accessing computer from home		
As this is a relatively new position I would prefer to be based within the offices for a further 6 months and then integrate home working gradually as my confidence grows.		
Would like training on Microsoft publisher, this would enable me to create and produce my own leaflets, advertising benefits etc.		
Basic I.T fault fixing I.e. if computer fails		
Don't want to do as part of my normal hours		

Do you think you need additional training to enable you to work flexibly?

Yes
24%

No
76%

Flexible Working Questionnaire
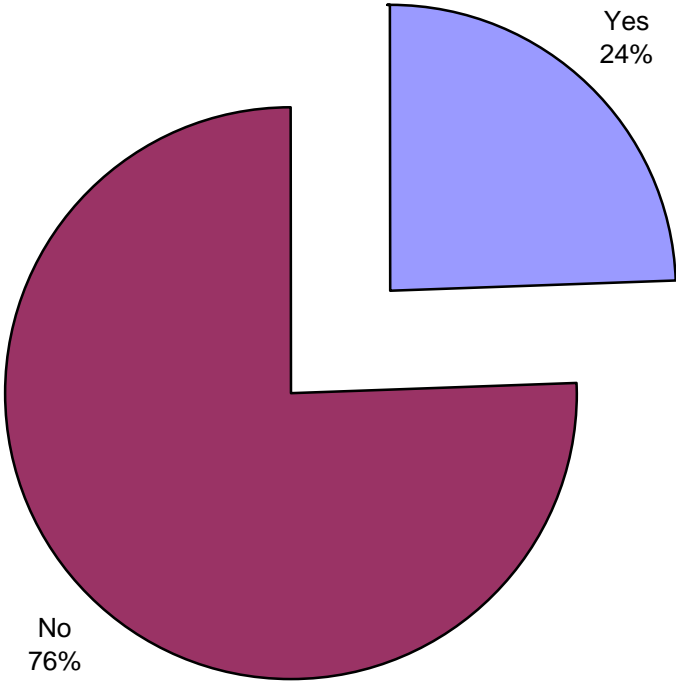
BUSINESS CASE

Project name **Flexible Working**

Release   v6
                Date: 4th June 2008

PRINCE2

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    Date of next revision: 4th June 2008

Version Number	Revision date	Previous revision date	Summary of Changes	Changes marked
Draft v7	25/06/08	0	Financials	0

Approvals
    This document requires the following approvals.
Signed approval forms are filed in the project files.

Name	Signature	Title	Date of Issue	Version

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Name	Title	Date of Issue	Version
Scrutiny Flexible Working Group		25/06/08	Draft v7

Purpose

To document the justification for the undertaking of the project, based on the estimated cost of development and implementation against the risks and anticipated business benefits and savings to be gained.

Contents   Business Case could cover, for example, the following topics. There may be other unique criteria for a specific project.

Reasons

Flexible working is the way of delivering work and thus services which has considerable benefits. Many studies have demonstrated that staff who have access to flexible work are less stressed, more satisfied in their work, take less days off and are more productive see reports from CIPD, CMI, Project Nomad and BT. Flexible working covers all types of non traditional working arrangements that include any form of flexibility around the time and the location when work is performed.

From 2000 to 2007 various reports have been conducted into the state of the main Council's Offices at Argents Mead. Although the structure of the building is sound the fabric is not and requires extensive work to make it safe.

Argents Meads is not fit for purpose in terms of the requirements of modern working practices and will require investment to bring it up to standard for office accommodation in 2010 onwards. The cost of upgrading and repairing the building is put at £6 million but could be as high as £8 million and would still involve some compromises and deliver a repaired building with a lifetime of just 10 years. In addition the running costs of Argents Mead are higher than for modern buildings.

Modern technology enables work to be carried out more effectively especially for those officers required by the nature of their work to carry out tasks away from the council's offices. This offers the chance to reduce the accommodation required at the same time as increasing productivity. At present there are 297 workstations and the aim is to save between 100- 150 workspaces (desks) (25 - 42%) regardless of which accommodation option is chosen.

Travel is becoming more stressful and taking more time which coupled with the government's green agenda supports the aim of fewer and shorter trips by council staff.

Flexible working supports a more inclusive workforce: flexible working time and flexible work locations create opportunities to employ a more diverse workforce (e.g. by helping to address the parental "right to request" flexible work under the Employment Act 2002, soon to be extended to staff with elder care responsibilities).

Council tax payers and service users expect to be able to access services in a more convenient way at any time and anywhere and to have decisions made more quickly than in the past. Creating 'drop in centres' for local residents to access services via technology gives an opportunity to add some remote working capability at nominal extra cost.

An initial assessment of the appetite amongst staff to take up flexible working carried out by Heads of Services has identified that nearly 100 desks can be freed up by a combination of home, mobile and shared desk working arrangement. This still leaves a shortfall in the number of desks that ideally would be removed from the accommodation requirement but indicates that the overall aim is achievable.

Many organisations in both public and private sector have successfully implemented flexible working. They have proved the approach can work and deliver results as shown in the Appendix notes on case studies available on www.projectnomad.org.uk.

With a well planned and managed project which is adequately resourced the objective of reducing accommodation requirement by 136 physical spaces should be achieved.

Options

1. **If nothing is done, then Argents Meads will have to be upgraded or new accommodation of the same floor area acquired.**

If the present state is allowed to continue and no focused flexible working project is undertaken the status quo will continue. A number of Service Areas, individual managers and teams have or are undertaking flexible working of various types on different terms. If this is allowed to continue there will be inconsistency across the Council leading to potential HR, Health and Safety and ICT issues. Changes in external targets and benchmarking will be based on Councils who have changed their ways of working and Hinckley and Bosworth will slip down the performance tables. Savings in accommodation costs will be unpredictable and minimal.

There may be other options for reducing the need for accommodation such as outsourcing activities presently carried out by Council directly employed staff. These however cannot be relied on at this point.

2. **The directorates are allowed to develop pilots and their own responses to flexible working under an umbrella of a central policy but with no encouragement or support.**

This will not deliver the full benefits of flexible working and may not deliver the space saving that will support the accommodation strategy. The impact on ICT and HR will be unpredictable and difficult to manage. Some managers will do it well; others may not, with the risk of inconsistency, no organisation wide strategy or shared learning. This could lead to disputes and eventually to possible employment tribunal cases based on unequal or unfair treatment. It will also breed resentment between staff groups. There will be no consistent review of the way work is delivered and productivity gains will be reduced.

3. **A coordinated and phased implementation of flexible working managed and suitably resourced**. **This is the recommended option**.

There will be additional costs but they are manageable in relation to the cost of upgrading Argents Meads and will have long lasting effects on the way work is carried out. The work flow and working methods will be reviewed and new ways of working developed which maximise the benefits of the flexible working and the technology which supports it. The flexible working options will be developed to meet the needs of the Council.

The Flexible Working Policy covers a variety of working arrangements that include variations in place work is carried out, time of working and number of hours worked to deliver the services and responsibilities of the Council such as:

- in a remote location outside of the council premises
- in a contractual agreement where home based working forms part of the terms and conditions of employment for an employee
- in a home location on an occasional or ad hoc basis that does not constitute a contractual agreement forming part of the terms and conditions of employment for an employee
- at times outside the normal working hours which could be compressed weeks or fortnights, part time hours, term time working, annualised hours
- reduced hours such as part time, or variable hours dependent on work demands

To be truly effective, especially in relation to desk sharing and touch down sites, a VOIP enabled telephone system should be available, VOIP,stands for Voice Over Internet Protocol . That would mean potentially that customer service staff and other telephone dependent staff could work from home in the longer term. This facility is available at present to a restricted number of users and the system will need to be extended to enable the fullest benefits of flexible working to be achieved.

Some project support will be required and there will be additional workload for several departments such as HR, ICT and Estates.

Staff who are not office based have not been included in this business case although there are flexible working options that could be introduced which would improve their quality of working life and introduce productivity gains. As they would not affect the total number of desk required it is suggested that a separate project is carried out subsequently to extend suitable flexible working options to those staff.

Existing office accommodation is for approximately 300 office based staff with a desk each: 90 Florence House and 210 Argents Mead. (This was counted in December as 297 actual staff). Staff based at the depot are not included at any point in the numbers and costs in this business case. The projected accommodation in any newly acquired alternative accommodation is ideally 120 workspaces which include meetings space etc. This leaves a balance of approximately 180 work spaces. It will be possible to design in more workspaces into the alternative accommodation but this would compromise the area available for meeting rooms and shared desk.

Moving some teams to other accommodation will save the following number of desks. This final decision to move any of these teams has not been taken:

Move Leisure Services and Estates teams to an alternative location   13
The Community Safety staff could move to a Community House/Police Station   5
Customer Services could be based in a new the town centre location   20

Green Spaces team could be based at Burbage Common Visitor Centre   6

This gives a projected total working at satellite offices of   44 staff
So projected total of workspaces (desks) that need to be removed in order to ensure the 120 planned spaces in the new alternative accommodation are adequate for the Council's needs: 300 - 120 = 180 – 44 = 136 as the number of workspaces that need to be removed.

If 150 work spaces are designed into the new alternative accommodation this would be 300-150 = 150-44= 106

In the costs tables we have used three scenarios, saving 100, 125 and 150 work spaces, which can be achieved in the following way:

Options	Low	Low	Medium	Medium	High	High
Flexible Option	**Number of staff**	**Number of desks**	**Number of staff**	**Number of desks**	**Number of staff**	**Number of desks**
Home based staff - frees an office desk per person	10	10	15	15	20	20
Mobile workers - frees one desk per two people	50	25	50	25	50	25
Staff based at home and in the office for half the week - frees 1 desk for 2 staff	110	55	150	75	170	85
Rationalisation use of desks across part time workers, unused desks, team sharing	10*	10	10*	10	20*	20
Total of staff affected and desks freed	**180**	**100**	**225**	**125**	**260**	**150**

* More staff may be affected if these desks are saved by rationalisation of team based desks with no staff adopting the specific flexible and remote working practices.

Categories of staff and ICT support – this needs to be tested out during the pilots and a full range of options is available as attached documents business case ICT

Work Type	ICT	Number
Office Based	Thin client, print ability Fixed phone	Balance of staff 100
Home Based	Thin client **NO** printing VOIP or mobile telephone	Maximum 5% 20 staff
Mobile option - anywhere	Laptop or tablet, connect via Office, GPRS, WiFi. Print at Hinckley locations	50 staff based on job types across
Mixed Location	At home: thin client or fob In office – thin client & printing VOIP or mobile phone	Need 110-190 staff

**Benefits
expected**

Benefits can be achieved across all aspects of the Councils' work notably: service delivery, costs-accommodation and staff; human resource and staff satisfaction; green agenda. The savings on costs and carbon emission and the improvement in productivity, will contribute to achieving Gershon and other central government targets.

Examples achieved by other Councils are included in Appendix A.

1.   **Improvement in performance can be achieved** – high levels of productivity improvements have been achieved in other Councils up to claims of 30%. A more conservative range that should be achievable would be 5-15% which would equate to an extra 15 - 45 staff based on 300 office based workers. As staff leave they might not be replaced so that the headcount gradually decreases or does not grow at the same rate as services are expanded or improved. This could amount to a saving of £375,000 - £1,125,000 based on a median salary of £20K plus employment cost uplift of 25% which gives a total average employment cost of £25K.

2.   **Reduced requirement for accommodation** and workstations within Council premises
   A reduction in overall accommodation required of 125 desks equates to savings of between   £108,125- £123,750.   Based on the cost of a workstations in Argents Mead as £990 and Florence House of £865.

   The recent move of the customer service team into Argents Mead has decreased the floor space through effective space planning from 65 to 47 square meters which is a 27% reduction. This would not be typical of most working teams as call centres have specific requirements. Present usage within Argents Mead is 9 sq metres. The target for alternative accommodation is the legal standard of 6.5 sqm per person but realistically 7.5 sq meters would be more likely which represents a decrease of approximately 20%. This has a beneficial long term impact on running costs.

3.   **Staff and Human Resource measures**:
- Reduced absence rates – HBBC rate has improved over the last year after much concentrated effort to 8.83 days at 1 March 08 falling from 12 days. The average of public sector is (approximately 9 days). Flexible working will contribute to keeping this low. If this fell a further 1 day the savings would be equivalent to £68.4K in productivity and agency costs based on £ day rate of £114 and 1 day per employee equating to 300 days. Other Councils have reported 3-7 days per person improvement but they probably had not carried out a targeted project.

   Flexible working has a beneficial impact on cases of stress which in the past in HBBC have been high but are manageable at present. Serious stress cases are expensive in terms of productivity, managerial and HR time, salary, agency costs and possible compensation.
- Retaining valued members of staff – the benefits include avoiding the disruption to service delivery by losing 3 months of work time as a new member of staff gets fully up to speed, cost of training a new member of staff and having a truly competent well integrated member of staff. This is estimated as probably affecting 2-3 staff each year equivalent to a saving of £25-37,500 per year based on a lack of productivity during recruitment and

learning period of 6 months. The DWP has run pilots of flexible working within six Benefits departments and the staff turnover has been reduced by 12%.

- As a result of lower turnover recruitment would be reduced with an average recruitment cost of £6,021 per post (advert, cost of HR and management time and temporary staff cover). If we assume 3 staff are prevented from leaving by the access to flexible working per year the savings could be as much as £18,063. The effectiveness of all recruitment would be improved as a wider candidate pool would be available.

- The amount of paid overtime is reduced as is the use and cost of agency staff as when staff work flexibly as they can flex their hours to work when the demand is highest. Agency use for 07/08 was £377,016K. If the need for agency staff could be reduced by 25% the amount that could be saved would be £94.25K per annum. In the Benefits team by using some home working and other options the cost of agency workers for 2007/8 are 50% less than in 2006/7.

4.   Environmental impacts

- It is very difficult to calculate the environmental benefits as many of them accrue from reducing commuting journeys about which the Council has no data. However, there should be savings on expenses paid to travelling staff as well as potential fuel savings and lower CO_2 emissions. Savings as high as 30% have been claimed by BT. Chesterfield BC achieved a total of 19% over 2 years. However using a more realistic figure of 10% over all office based staff these savings could equate to those shown in the table.

Mileage claims for 2007/8

Classification	Actual mileage	Actual cost	Possible savings Mileage 10%	Possible savings costs 10%
Casual users	54,510	£30,165.26	5,451	£3,016.52
Essential users *includes lump sums	283,310	£245,624.39	28,310	£12,965.98
	337,820	£275,789.65	33,761	£15,982.50

- Back scanning of documents and working on paperless systems, which is required for maximum effectiveness in flexible working, will result in a reduced need for expensive storage and subsequent copying of papers within the office and for archives.

- Paper use can be reduced with environmental impacts resulting from the need to produce timber.

- Modern offices are more environmentally effective buildings.

5.   Business continuity

Business continuity will be improved by having staff able to work from other sites. The ability for staff to work at other sites would be useful in emergency situations such as when travel becomes difficult because of severe weather or major road accident. The ability to work flexibility is also useful when an epidemic hits such as flu – avian or normal. The need to consider business continuity was also highlighted by the London authorities after the London bombings.

Risks

All these risks can be reduced by effective project management and leadership.

Ref	Date Added	Risk Description	Risk Categories (Risk tactical)	Gross Risk		Risk Level	Mitigating Actions currently in place	Action owner
				L	I			
1		**Accommodation requirements will be larger than foreseen and more accommodation space will be needed after Argents Mead is de-commissioned with associated costs**		M	H		Implementing flexible working in a comprehensive manner based on a sound business case and a detailed and evaluated project plan. Monitoring development closely throughout 2009 and 10. Contingency plans should be included for providing additional accommodation if required.	
2		**The implementation of flexible working will not be adequately funded**		L	H		This risk can also be mitigated by a sound project business case and plan which is managed and reviewed	
3		**It is essential that senior managers are seen to be not just supporting it, but driving it forward and acting as role models by working flexibly themselves**		L	H		The senior manager recognise the strategic imperative to implement flexible working more widely and will be kept informed of progress and encouraged to actively promote the projects.	
4		**Flexible working is not seen by all managers and staff as an essential way of delivering services in an effective, accessible, future orientated and efficient manner but seen either as an HR policy only equated to being a "nice" employer or only being done to enable Argents Mead to be closed.**		M	M		Communication and training needs to include a clear business case and strategic objectives and cover all staff to counter this risk. All managers will be required to re-engineer processes and review procedures	

5		**Insufficient workstations are freed up when it comes to actually doing it - too few staff take up flexible working or the work patterns do not remove the need for 75 - 125 desks**		H	H		Take up of flexible working will b e monitored as pilots progress and any blocks identified and removed to encourage as many as possible staff to adopt flexible working. Desks must be removed a staff adopt flexible working to ensure staff are unable to leep using them. Areas of the present office should be cleared an mothballed. Effective communication must be available to encourage both staff and managers to embrace flexible working. Staff communication workshops are part of the plan. a comprehensive guidance document is being developed to support the policy	
6		**No political support from Members. It is essential that Members support the introduction of flexible working and the change in working practices**		M	H		Involve the Members in the development of policies and procedures and decisions on the implementation of flexible working.	
7		**The existing culture is a major barrier and therefore a high risk. For flexible working to deliver full benefits the culture must be based on trust between staff, managers and the Council. The culture needs to value effective and efficient performance supported by a robust performance management process above attendance. Staff must accept responsibility for managing their own work output and performance standard. Having a culture based on performance counters manager's fear of how you know that flexible and mobile staff are actually working**		H	H		Time and attention must be given to developing a supportive culture with non-compliance managed. Clear policy and guidelines will give staff and managers clear direction on how the policy has to be implemented. Training workshops are included in this project for managers and staff involved in flexible working and awareness shorter session for all staff.	
8		**There are a number of risks associated with the ICT infrastructure:** **Incorrect ICT solution is being used for the tasks and type of flexible working** **Access to ICT systems which are essential to doing most tasks may not be reliable when working away from the office under present service provision, broadband and mobile access coverage**		M	H		1. Well managed and evaluated pilots will test out a number of ICT options and issues which will be captured and the learning applied to later phases. 2. A practical implementation plan, clear policy and guidance will ensure the right equipment is available at the right time. 3. Robust cost models will ensure costs are controlled. 4. Allocation of ICT must be focussed on the needs of the job not swayed by the individual choices of staff.	

		Laptop versus thin client - the present emphasis on a thin client solution may need to change for some flexible working options but based on the needs of the job **ICT support after normal working hours is not readily available and system cannot be available for 24 hours**					5. Any contractual changes are clearly specified, well negotiated and managed. 6. Consideration is given to extending the hours that systems are available so extending the working. 7. The capacity of Citrix is being extended during the day time which should meet future demand but could be a risk. This will be monitored during the progressive take up. 8. Decisions are taken in line with the agreed policy and procedures.	
9		**The downturn in the economy resulting in additional borrowing costs over the term of the project.**		M	H		To have a continuous review of borrowing and investment rates and sound treasury management

Costs This table represents the cost for mid range take up of flexible working

Cost type	Number of staff	Cost £ pp	Total Capital cost	One off costs	On going I.T.	Total revenue Cost	Total Cost
Home based workers -10 with single screens	15	1500	22500		975	14625	3712
Mobile working	50	2294	114700		1325	66250	18095
Mixed Location	140	1500	210000		975	136500	34650
Mixed Location - 10 with dual screens	10	1700	17000		975	9750	2675
Rationalisation of existing desks (part timers etc)	10	0	0			0	
Sub Total			364200			227125	5913
Training: Senior managers	15		3000				300
Managers of flexible workers	40		4000				400
Staff	320		3200				320
IT Training for flexible workers	225		22500				2250
Health and safety	225		3750				375
Communication			15000				1500
Project support			45000				4500
Additional ICT staff, development and contractor charges			50000				5000
Additional temporary HR staff			25000				2500
Additional estates team cost- overtime, interim			25000				2500
Development of 2 further touch down community centres – based on Markfield			30000				3000
Direct Flexible working costs			**590650**			**227125**	**8177**
Additional costs - bought forward in time and budgets							
VOIP upgrade			68000				6800
Document scanning - assumed to be completed by end 08			6000	6000		6000	1200
Total project cost to achieve desk saving			**664650**			**233125**	**8977**
Additional accommodation costs 44+ 11 = 55							
Re-locating 35 staff to suitable accom @ 5590 per work space.			195650				19565
high quality refurb £7800 -20 contact centre			156000				15600

Explanation of the costs

The costs could be spread over the implementation period which may be longer than one year and need to be put against the cost of repairing Argents Meads of £6-8 million or acquiring other accommodation of equivalent size. The estimated ICT costs are probably more than actual as some staff already have the ICT equipment they need or existing equipment may be reused but a reliable estimate of that number is not available. Detailed breakdown of the ICT cost are shown in a separate spreadsheet.

Home based workers
This is based on the ICT cost being £1250 for thin client, keyboard, monitor, phone and £250 for furniture and other office items as below. Some of the existing office furniture and ICT could possibly be reused which would reduce the cost (see investment appraisal). Some staff may wish to use their existing furniture.
In addition the ongoing costs for phone rental, BT line, broadband provision and off site support are included.
It is very unlikely that more than 5% of staff would wish to work at home.
5% of staff is 20 people working at home full time for the mid range cost example we have used 15 home workers.

Home Office Furniture Cost:

Quality Office chairs	£79.50
Small desk unit	£82.00
Smoke Alarm	£3.90
First Aid Lit	£8.13
Lockable storage	£72.00
Total	**£245.53**

Mobile Workers
Cost of set up for mobile workers using a model of equipment provision based on the trial within Building Control which includes a pen tablet or laptop, plus full access capability of mobile phone, GPRS access, WiFi. Not all these options may be required for all tasks.
Plus the ongoing costs for phone rental, BT line, broadband provision, GPRS whilst on site, key fob and off site support.
Some of the existing ICT could possibly be reused.

An initial review shows that between BC, DC, EH, benefits, revenues etc there are 50 potential mobile workers.

Mixed location workers (In and Out)

This option needs an office workstation (which the person would share with a 'buddy partner') and home technology. One desk is saved for each two people. Some staff are working like this but no formal pilots has been set up to work in this manner. Staff would either be set up at home as a permanent home worker or have mobile technology. The cost is based on the home working figure.

This seems to be a popular option but numbers are not clear. However as most of the desks savings have been identified are on this basis it would need to involve a high number of staff estimated as over 150 staff working this way would free 75 desks.

Some of the existing office furniture and ICT could possibly be reused but only one workstation is released per 2 staff.

Training for managers and staff

Senior Managers -15 = £3000 assumed £1000 day rate; one day preparation, one day workshop, one day of follow up meetings

Line managers: Assumed 40 in groups of 12-15 resulting in 3 workshops probably 1 days training plus preparation day rate £1000

Staff awareness: 8 Half day workshops for 320 HBBC staff, , in groups of around 50 plus preparation and design £3200.

IT training for mobile and home workers: This would probably be best delivered in small groups or individual coaching sessions. Using 225 staff and one hour of training each come would cost approximately £22,500.

Health and Safety training for home workers, mobile workers and their managers. Assumed a maximum of 225 staff and managers in 30 half day workshops resulting in 8 workshops at cost of £3,750 at £500 per half day workshop

It is assumed training would take place on Council property – the costs for hiring external training venues have not been include.

Staff costs

Competent project support will be required with an understanding of ICT, project management and HR issues associated with Flexible Working. The cost of providing this support has been estimated over the project's lifetime if 2 years is estimated as £45,000.

There may be a need for additional support in the ICT department and an impact on the ad hoc charges from the contract. This is estimated as £50,000.

There will need to be some additional support to HR to deal with changes in contracts as well as advice and support to both managers and staff and to handle any grievances etc. There will be peaks and troughs in this requirement so overtime or a temporary or part time contract staff member has been suggested at an estimated cost of £25,000.
Similarly there may be a need for additional support in the Estate team to cope with offices changes and home working set up which has similarly been estimated as £25,000.

Community Sites

The estimate of £15,000 for developing a community based touchdown working site is based on the flexible working element of the Markfield centre costs but is very dependent on the nature of the building being used.

Additional costs

A VOIP phone system would be required for maximum efficiency in flexible working so that an individual's number can follow them around. . This was projected in the I.T. Strategy for 4-5 years time but would be needed earlier.

Document scanning makes flexible working much more efficient and the cost is determined by individual departments who decide whether it is necessary to back scan documents. The 12K quoted relates to the purchase of an additional scanner and a temporary resource to carry out the scanning.

Accommodation cost

To reach the target of 136 saved desk requires off site accommodation for the originally identified 44 staff plus a further 11 giving a total of 55 spaces. The cost for a mid range workstation refurbishment is £5590 and for a high quality one required in the contact centre is £7800 per workstation.

THESE FIGURES ARE BASED ON THE BEST AVAILABLE AS AT 25th JUNE 2008.

Timescales

This is a top line suggested project plan and will require considerable work before an agreed practical plan can be prepared.

June-August 2008 Preparation Phase
- Test out this business case and clarify actual demand for home working and mixed location workers by consulting with staff
- Communicate policy and intentions to all staff
- Gain final sign off for budgets fit
- Hold training for staff and managers who are already implementing flexible working
- Hold communication workshops for all staff
- Approval of Flexible working policy and lone Worker Policy

September – December 2008 Consolidation
- Review existing pilot requirements and carry out DSE risk assessments, order any additional equipment for all projects that are already underway
- Explore web based communication processes for remote working staff e.g. Social web site, MSN etc
- Confirm Phase 1 projects and order equipment, furniture and broadband

January 2009 Phase 1
- Review the pilot projects
- Review policy, ICT requirements, staffing implications in the supporting departments of ICT, HR, estates from experience of Phase 1 projects
- Train remaining staff and managers in Phase 2

February - May 2009 Phase 1
- Implement phase 1 projects
- Organise broadband installation and furniture for Phase 2
- Train staff and managers who will take part in Phase 2
- Confirm Phase 2 projects

June 2009 Phase 2
- Review Phase 1 and make any modifications
- Implement phase 2 projects
- Complete phase 2 projects

July - October 2009
- Evaluate Phase 2
- Identify any further projects
- Finalise any outstanding implementation issues

December 2009
- Ready to move new accommodation

**Investment
appraisal**

COST

The costs of technology, training and accommodation refurbishments per individual are reasonably robust being based on industry norms.

The costs for of additional support for the central departments most affected – HR, ICT and Estates, are merely estimates until the volume of additional work generated is clearer.

Less robust is the number of staff who will want to adopt each of the flexible working options. We have tried to accommodate some variation across the flexible working options by producing cost models for low, medium and high take up.

Some staff are already working in a mobile way or at home and have the technology so the costs for set up for these staff would be reduced as they would not need the full ICT or furniture packages. All staff needs the H&S training but some may not need the full ICT training. Reductions in these costs are reflected in the best case model based on these assumptions.

The difference in overall maximum costs between the 3 options give a range of **£1,193,300 to £1,249,425** as shown in the table below. (An average of £1.22m)

However if the all the assumptions about potential cost savings are applied the total cost is reduced to £655,975 a 46% reduction.

The total cost of implementing flexible working is approximately 15 - 20% of the refurbishment cost of £6-8 million for Argents Meads.

Using an average cost for the flexible work of £ 1.22 million for providing the 206 staff based in Argents Meads with workspace the cost per person is £5,922. (This does not include the cost of extending or renting alternative accommodation but does include the ongoing ICT running costs for the flexible working options)

Using £6 million as the cost for refurbishing Argents Meads the cost of a work station would be £29,126; and for £8 million is £38,835.

The cost of refurbishing Argents Mead estimated at £6m to £8m would result in additional Capital Financing costs of £609,000 to £812,000 per annum for a period of 20 years.

A saving in water and energy costs of £30,000 per annum would be generated by moving to a more energy efficient building.

	100 Desks removed	125 Desks removed	125 Desks removed with cost saving assumptions	150 desk removed
Direct flexible working cost	660,200	817,775	448,225	901,400
VOIP & EDMS	80,000	80,000	68,000	80,000
Accommodation outside of alternative accommodation	491,400	351,650	139,750	211900
Total	**1,231,600**	**1,249,425**	**655,975**	**1,193,300**

BENEFITS

Against the above costs must be put the expected benefits from flexible working. The benefits have been based on actual figures monitored and obtained in other Councils. It is difficult to relate the savings achieved elsewhere directly to Hinckley's situation as there are so many variables. A robust monitoring process within HBBC must be established.

The facilities and building savings gained from running a more efficient modern building have not been included in this table.

Item	Lowest estimated savings	Upper estimated savings
Productivity improvements - one off	£375K	£1,125K
Reduced accommodation costs – annual	£108K	£124K
HR savings: Absence– annual	£68K	£68K
Retention -– annual	£25K	£37.5K
Recruitment– annual	£18K	£18K
Agency costs – annual	£94K	£188K
Environmental – annual	£15K	
Business Continuity – incident led	?	
Total	**£703,000**	**£1,560,500**

Only the savings allocated to accommodation, recruitment and agency cost are cash savings amounting to £220,000 to £330,000.

Evaluation

This project should go ahead as the downsides are manageable and the cost and productivity savings are large.

Strategy

The promotion of Flexible Working is a key theme under 'Organisational Development' within the Corporate Workforce and People Strategy (2007)

The flexible working project fits with the accommodation strategy, the e-government agenda, the environmental targets, customer service aims.

Flexible working will enable those services with commercial competitors to compete on a level footing.

Government policy is for e-government and improving work productivity based on best practice guidelines.

Systems
ICT systems and technology availability are now robust and at a cost that makes flexible working possible for Councils. These systems have been proved within a local authority context.

Pilots have been implemented in Hinckley to test out the optimum configurations for the local environment. There are already 7 permanent home workers, 8 mobile workers, 85 occasional home workers with fobs and broadband access and hot or shared desks in the contact centre/ reception and the Green Space team.

Scanning of documents must be widely used so that all records are accessible electronically from any site location

Skills
Many staff already have the ICT skills to operate the level of technology that will be required to work in a mobile way or can be trained. Many staff are already working remotely and occasionally from home and have demonstrated their ability to do so. The skills managers require are not new skills but require a different emphasise and application in a different context – these can be developed.

All staff must develop skill for managing their own time and work planning.

Shared values
Staff value customer service and can appreciate how flexible working can deliver better customer service. There may be some issues with different perceptions of what work is – a place or a service delivered? Valuing performance over time served underpins flexible working and must therefore be fully developed in all areas.

Staff
Many staff want to be able to manage their working life in a better way. They will welcome an opportunity to reduce long hours and unnecessary travelling and are eager to work from home, touch down sites and nomadically as is most effective. Staff turnover figures are low and absence rates have recently decreased and flexible working will contribute to keeping these figures low. Recruitment of hard to find skills will be helped as flexible working may encourage some people who are not at present economically active to return to work.

Style
This refers to management style and culture. There will be a need for all departments to manage by output and not attendance. There are variations across the Council in the readiness of managers and staff to embrace flexible working – some staff work remotely already for a considerable part of their jobs e.g. BCOs. Flexible working requires a high level of trust from managers and acceptance of personal responsibility for delivery of work by staff. Flexible working requires an understanding of what equality of treatment means in a flexible working context where individual arrangements may be prevalent.

Structure
Flexible working does not have any direct effect on the present organisational structure. It may have an effect at a lower level for teams. Staff may work alongside in touch down areas and have more contact with staff who are not their direct team members. This may open up the Council to a more corporate feeling and understanding.

APPENDIX A: BENEFITS GAINED BY OTHER COUNCILS

1. **Improvement in performance can be achieved** – conservatively a 10- 20% improvement which would equate to an extra 30-60 staff based on half the staff working flexibly

- London Borough of Sutton have actually measured reduced travelling time, more time spent directly on cases rather than on admin and travelling for Building Control Inspectors from implementing electronic forms for field workers.

- North Wiltshire District Council has seen a rise in productivity for home workers in some cases by more than 20%

- Forest of Dean Council reduced the time taken to produce minutes of Councils meetings to 1.6 days which was a productivity increase of 31% and elapsed delivery time improved by 52% by working at home on the day after the council meeting.

- In the Building Control department of Chester City Council has reported the time for processing applications that is 5 weeks ahead of that achieved in 2003 while at the same time they have 2 staff on long term sick leave.

- At North Hertfordshire DC a staff reduction in management support was achieved and through opening of the customer contact centre amounting to £200k per annum savings

- At Salford MBC Council Tax and Benefits processing has seen productivity improvements of 15% to 20% with no adverse effects on performance. Productivity was measured in terms of the number of client claims processed. Performance measures included error rates and time taken per client transaction. Benefits and Tax Overpayments saw a 48% increase in productivity levels.

2. **Reduced requirement for accommodation**

- Hertfordshire County Council have reduced there accommodation based on a ration of 3 staff to every 2 desks.
- Surrey County Council have saved in building, telecoms and IT of £25-50m over 25 years (£11m capital and 0.5m annually)

3. Staff and human resource measures:
Reduced absence rates – If reduced by 1% this would equate to more working days

- The absence rate in Forest of Dean Council before the flexible working pilots was 11.36 days per full time equivalent. After just a few pilots, which included benefits, ICT and democratic services, the figure reduced to 10.63 days per fte after first six months. At Salford MBC, among the initial pilot group of home-based staff, sickness absence levels were reduced by 75% with the time lost due to sickness falling from 27 days to seven within the first 12 months.

- Leeds City Council during a DTI Challenge Fund project reported a reduction of a third in sickness absence and 50% reduction in special leave.

- Retaining valued members of staff – the benefits are not losing 3 months of work time as a new member of staff gets fully up to speed and having a truly competent well integrated member of staff. This estimated as probably only 2-3 staff each year.

4. Environmental impacts
- Since the move to mobile working OSD in Chesterfield BC has experienced a significant reduction in fuel costs. This has resulted from a reduction in travel as the workforce now work from home, jobs are scheduled more efficiently, and unnecessary journeys have been minimised.

  Fuel usage reduced by 24,700 litres (16%) in 2004/05 compared with the previous year, saving some £17,600. In 2005/06 there was a further reduction of 4,780 litres, equating to a total annual saving of 29,500 litres or £24,000 at current fuel prices.

- Surrey County Council have been working flexibly for some time and claim productivity increases between 10 and 50% and reductions in staff travel of 30,000 vehicle miles (no indication of total miles is available).

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Flexible and Mobile Working Strategy – Review

Version   1.1
Status   FINAL
Author   Paul Fleming

Introduction

This report has been produced following a review of the Flexible Working Policy and its associated Business Case. The Council faces severe structural problems with its main administrative building (Argents Mead) and needs to expand the current flexible working facilities and policy to reduce demand in future.   One option under consideration is to redesign the other main administrative building (Florence House) and to relocate some teams to other smaller locations.

Objective

The objective of this report is to provide a constructive assessment of the Flexible Working Policy and specifically to comment on the rationale and costings for the proposed home and mobile working solutions.

Source Material

HBBC Combined Flexible Working Policy, Draft v2, 19 05 08
Flexible Working Implementation and Management Guidance, no version number
Flexible Working Business Case, Draft v6, 4th June 2008
BusCase_Model (spreadsheet) no version number

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank Belle Imison (Head of Revenues & -Benefits) and Paul Langham (ICT Manager) for the information provided to assist in this review,

Policy

The Policy itself provides a well structured and easily readable statement of the rationale and processes to support flexible working. The Statement of Principles gives staff a very good understanding of why flexible working is being encouraged and supported.

Item 3.1.7 Designated Desks: Staff who are office based for the majority of their time, over 80%, will be allocated their own desk within Council Offices. This statement should be removed from the policy as it runs counter to the earlier options of Shared Team Desks and Touch Down Sites. Other public sector organisations have opted for a typical ratio of 7 desks for 10 staff as this represents that actual occupancy.

Section 3.2 Time Dependent flexibility
This section is generic to all employees and is not specifically referenced elsewhere in the policy. It is suggested that it is removed to keep the policy concise.

Implementation and Management Guidance

This is a long documents (82) pages with multiple sections that are repeated in some cases. There are also a number of appendices and checklists. The policy itself is incorporated into the guidance document.

It is recommended that the guidance is split into a number of separate, shorter documents. Links should be inserted into the individual documents to direct staff to the policy and the supporting checklists (eg Risk Assessment). These can then be published on the Council's intranet.

An additional proforma should be included to give a consistent format to document the Output Management and Performance criteria agreed between a manager and the home worker.

A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) should be developed to accompany the policy and guidance to make the content more accessible for staff. For example –
Who will be considered for home working?
Do I need to change my home insurance?
Will home working impact on my council tax?
Can I use my existing broadband service?
Will I have to pay for telephone calls?
Will I be able to claim mileage into the office?

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The guidance makes recommendations to specific technologies (eg Citrix, GPRS). Whiles this can make it more relevant to the current situation it can also confuse non technical staff and cause the document to become out of date when the technology changes even if the logic of the guidance remains valid. *The guidance should be rephrased to use more generic and non technical language.*

In section 2b) Page 21 it is proposed: "If using the laptop in stand alone mode the user is responsible for securing the information and taking appropriate backups." Stand alone working should be discouraged and staff should be made aware of the risk of data loss. Encouraging staff to make their own backups is unreliable and leads to duplicate copies of data being stored on removable media which itself has a higher risk of loss or theft. *Directory synchronisation is a more effective method of ensuring that off line work is saved back to the corporate network where it can be backed up and managed. If Citrix is used then there is no requirement for synchronisation as the data is always held centrally. It is understood that fixed desktop users currently access their "My Documents" data via a network share. This allows them to move from one machine to another and for their documents to still be accessible. There would be a small cost (<£5,000) to modify and test the build of the laptop machines so that they would automatically synchronise between the local hard drive and the existing network share when they join the network and or when they log off. This would ensure that the "My Documents" folder is available offline and can be managed through group policy (see* http://www.tech-faq.com/implementing-folder-redirection-using-group-policy.shtml*). A small amount should also be added to ensure that laptop users are given some guidance on use of offline folders and the importance of regular synchronisation.*

Business Case

ICT Provision

The overall ICT strategy for flexible and mobile working is well thought out and covers all of the key areas that impact on staff and the organisation.
The use of Citrix gives a solid foundation for flexible working. The use of two factor authentication (RSA) and solid perimeter defences (FireBox) ensures that the Council's data is well protected.

Wireless connectivity should be encouraged in the main office locations and for home users. A well managed office wireless solution is secure and aids flexibility for staff.
For example, a mobile worker does not need to find a fixed location if they are visiting the office and need to connect for a short period. Wireless access from home allows the employee to chose where and when to work in their home. This does not prevent a fixed screen and keyboard being provided or contradict the Health and Safety risk assessment. The cost summary includes an estimate of £30,000 for a project to implement a wireless network throughout a single location. This estimate includes costs for Access Point hardware, a central management server, software as well as design and implementation services.

The desk layout with any new building (including Florence House) should be as open plan as the floor layout allows with "hot desks" shared between teams. For example if on one floor there are 50 staff organised into 4 teams then 35 desks should be provisioned (7 desks per 10 staff). Each team should be allocated no more than 7 fixed desks and the remaining 7 desks should be available as hot desks for all teams.

Home Worker Scenarios

The table below provides recommendations for various aspects of home working. The suggestions are split between permanent home workers and other staff who may work from home on a regular basis or just occasionally.

Option	Permanent Home Worker	Regular or Casual Home Worker
Device (HBBC Supplied)	Thin client or laptop	Laptop – allows one device per user
Broadband	HBBC provided service – ensures that any service issues can be managed; Business class service should be considered but only if performance problems mean that the standard (residential) service is not acceptable	Private broadband service; NB - HBBC to supply if employee insists or does not have personal broadband service. In which case comments are the same as for a Permenant Homeworker.
Router	HBBC provided router; It is understood that current experience has shown that the modest cost of the	Wireless router from ISP

HBBC Flexible and Mobile Working

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Option	Permanent Home Worker	Regular or Casual Home Worker
	router can be offset in the price of the ISP service and reduced support effort.	
Wireless	To be encouraged as this allows greater flexibility for employee to work anywhere around their home	Included
Printer	Optional – if appropriate to job role	Not provided
Voice	Use VOIP if possible as this retains the link to the Council voice network; alternatively try to get a broadband package that has landline minutes included	Consider VOIP if licences available;
Screen / Keyboard	19"; if using a laptop then the laptop screen can act as a second screen if required	Optional – must be provided if recommended by H&S
Mobile Phone	Not required	If appropriate for job role
Other household members	If HBBC provide the router then care should be taken about allowing access to other household members; they would need to be given the security details to access the router; this would not allow access to the HBBC network.	Able to use the broadband service but only from a separate device.*
Authentication	RSA token compulsory	RSA token compulsory
MS Office	Required but should not increase overall user numbers for Office; the Council should review its current licensing arrangements to see if a "per user" model is more appropriate.	Required but should not increase overall user numbers for Office

* Allowing access for other household members is a benefit to the employee that should not impact on their ability to work from home. When the employee uses an HBBC device they will only be able to connect to the internet via the HBBC network and will not be able to bypass the HBBC web content filtering, Virus checker and firewalls. There is a small risk that the reputation of the Council could be damaged if another household member was found to be making inappropriate use of the internet via a council provided line even though they were actually using the Council's network.

Occasional use by employee from their own equipment adds flexibility. Typically this would be for a manager requiring email access when at home or in an internet café or hotel. The use of Citrix ensures that the data remains on the Council's network and is no adversely affected by the state of the users own equipment. Recent guidance from DWP has stated that a "thin client" model is acceptable for this type of access. This type of access should not be considered for permanent home workers.

Costs

In general the cost information that has been used provides an appropriate estimate of the investment required. In some cases the values are somewhat conservative. There are opportunities to make some savings without compromising the solution.

Router – broadband service providers normally provide their own router (including wireless); the ISP provided router will be compatible with their service and supported by the ISP. It is not necessary to include an HBBC supplied router for all staff (see table above). Note – if VOIP is used then care should be taken to ensure that the ISP provided router is suitable. For permanent home workers then an HBBC supplied router should be considered as the modest cost can be offset by a reduced price from the ISP and lower support costs for HBBC ICT.

Laptop – the original Laptop pricing appeared high at £800 but it is understood that this includes licence costs for MS Office. This should not be a requirement as the overall number of users is not increasing. A target price of £600 or lower is consistent with current OGC Buying Solutions pricing. The Council may consider taking part in the next OGC eAuction to secure even lower prices.

Docking Station – the cost model includes a price of £300. A typical price should be £120.

Printer – printers should only be provided to permanent home workers if there is a specific business need.

ISP Connectivity – the Council proposes to upgrade its current 2Mb link to two 10Mb links. It is important that the move to 2 links provides a genuinely diverse link to the internet – ie connecting over separate physical circuits to different points of presence possibly via different telecoms carriers. Extra resource will be required to ensure that the firewalls and routers are configured so that they fail over if one of the links is lost. The Mobile Network providers can also offer private links to the Council's corporate network. This would allow mobile data traffic to come direct onto the network rather than via the public internet and the ISP. This improves performance, reliability and allows increased control of security.

Broadband – the pricing is based on HBBC providing business class broadband for all staff. Permanent Home workers should have an HBBC provided line to ensure service and to give the Council the opportunity to manage any service problems. Business class broadband is suitable for permanent home workers but a residential class may well be adequate for other users. For some staff (eg Benefits assessors) it may be mandatory to have HBBC supplied lines to comply with Central Government codes of connection. Also, non-permanent home working staff should be given an option to use an existing private broadband line if they have one. Many staff are more than happy to do this as they do not wish to have a second line into their home.

It is noted that fixed price 3G data packages for laptop users are proving very popular for the consumer market are starting to be offered to the corporate market. This should be included as part of the negotiation with Orange (or any other mobile network provider). With consumer prices of £10 per month the annual cost of £120 compares very favourably with a full

broadband package including line rental at £540. The 3G "dongle" solutions do not give the level of performance of business class broadband but may well be suitable for users who primarily want email and simple file access.

Voice Services – the cost model includes costs for VOIP / Mobile phones plus voice usage and data usage as well as a broadband line. Given that the Council's current mobile network provider is Orange then a packaged solution should be considered. Orange can combine all of these services to give a much simpler and more cost effective solution. For example this can include free landline minutes bundled with a broadband service; data usage can be shared across all staff eg 1Gb usage for 100 staff rather than 10Mb each so that excess charges only apply if the total package is exceed rather than individual members of staff. It is understood that HBBC ICT have already started discussions with Orange about providing a package of services.

Voice over IP (VOIP) – this is a very flexible option that potentially will ensure that home workers use voice services just like any other member of staff. This could include direct links to the Council switchboard, inclusion on "hunt groups" and the ability to transfer internal and external calls to home workers. However, there is a premium for implementing VOIP as it is still maturing as a service and the number of staff who will need to make extensive use of voice services from home is probably quite small. The proposal to expand the current Voice switch to support a full use of VOIP should be reviewed in more detail to test that the actual use by home and flexible workers will justify the investment.

Two Factor Authentication – the existing service provides an important part of the security framework and should be encouraged for all staff. Typical pricing is around £30 per user per year. .The costs for authentication, support and MS Office should be shown separately to give more clarity in the business case.

MS Office Licences – as mentioned in relation to Laptop use above, the total number of users will not increase as a result of flexible working. If laptops are provided this should not encourage the deployment of more than one device per person. The Council should engage with its Microsoft Select Agreement partner to review the current licence arrangements and make use of the "Home Use Programme" where possible – see extract of Microsoft Licence Terms and Conditions:

Home Use Programme

You can increase employee productivity and maximise the value of your Microsoft Office System investments by enabling your employees to work at home. The Home Use Programme allows employees to get licensed copies of selected Microsoft Office System desktop applications to install and use on a home computer, if they use them on their PC at work. (Eligible Microsoft Office System applications include Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel, Microsoft FrontPage, Microsoft InfoPath, Microsoft Office, Microsoft OneNote, Microsoft PowerPoint, Microsoft Project Standard Edition, Microsoft Publisher, Microsoft Visio and Microsoft Word.)

noted that this level of flexibility is normally only offered when licences are purchased with software assurance (SA). It is understood that HBBC do not currently use SA.

Microsoft and the OGC have negotiated a pricing arrangement for their Enterprise Agreement (EA). This provides a single price for a range of Microsoft desktop products including:
MS Office
Exchange
Windows OS
Active Directory
SCC
Sharepoint
Note: the appropriate server components have to be licensed separately.
The agreement has a number of additional benefits for support, training and eLearning. It also includes full software assurance so new versions of products can be deployed at no extra cost and with minimal administrative effort compared to raising individual orders. For HBBC this would include the option to upgrade to MS Office 2007, Exchange 2007 and Vista. The current OGC price is £130 (per user per year for a minimum 3 year commitment). Cost £49,000 per year for HBBC.

Setup – the model includes a setup charge of £50 plus a further cost of £280. If devices are provided using a standard build then there should not be a need for home visits or other additional setup charges

Out of Hours Support – the pricing for out of hours support is consistent with other outsourced contracts. A distinction should be made between system support and the service desk. Normally the Council should reasonably expect the service provider to support the core systems at all times. For example, if the email server fails at 5pm the service provider should continue working through the evening to ensure that the service is back and available the following morning. Similarly, if the server fails at 10pm then they should have automated alerting mechanisms and local or remote access to at least attempt to resolve the problem before start of business the following day, End user expectations form the help desk should be quite different. There is a genuine extra cost for the service provider to ensure that there is adequate staff cover with local system knowledge available for extended service hours in the morning, evening and at weekends. Sometimes end users perceive a demand for this type of service but in reality the volume of calls generated out of hours does not justify the cost to the Council. It is helpful if staff can at least log a call out of hours (eg via email or voicemail) knowing that the service provider will act on it promptly when the normal support hours commence.

Project Costs – the overall project resources of around £200K are clearly documented and the logic behind the calculations is sound.

Cost Summary

A costing schedule has been produced assuming a 50/50 split of HBBC provided and personal broadband for "Mixed Location" and "Mobile Working" staff. The cost estimates for the various components have been adjusted in the light of the recommendations above. This reduces capital cost and the recurring costs for each category of flexible worker.

Provision has been made for a £30K project to add a wireless network in the main administrative building.

The revised costings should be seen as an optimistic estimate. A pragmatic approach would be to budget for somewhere between the two approaches.

Item	Original		Revised	
	One off	Recurring	One Off	Recurring
Direct Costs	£780	£298	£458	£64
Additional (VOIP and Accommodation)	£431		£461	£5
Total	£1211	£298	£919	£69

End of Document

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 27 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & PLANNING SERVICES RE: REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH GENERAL ENFORCEMENT POLICY

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1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To review and update the Environmental Health General Enforcement Policy.

2.   **RECOMMENDATION**

The Scrutiny Commission recommends to the Executive to approve the Environmental Health General Enforcement Policy 2008

3.   **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

Much of the work within Environmental Health is the enforcement of legislation. Certain areas such as Food Hygiene, Health and Safety and Licensing are required to have their own enforcement policies as part of the requirements from Central Government.

This leaves the remainder of the legislation enforced requiring an enforcement policy to guide officers and the public on how the Council will enforce the legislation it is responsible for. The courts and Local Government Ombudsman uses it to assess how the Council has come to decisions on enforcement. The policy is reviewed every two years or when changes occur in legislation, guidance or changes in council structures or designations.

Government policy has been seeking to reduce the regulatory burden on businesses by looking to review the enforcement regimes and approaches to enforcement by the many enforcement agencies. Central to the drive is to target where regulation is required and to lessen unnecessary demands on businesses to lighten the load. The five principles of better regulation have been identified as Consistency, Transparency, Accountability, Proportionality, and Targeting.

The Better Regulation Executive was established within the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform to drive the policy. To assist in this for the enforcement of Environmental Health and Licensing legislation the Local Better Regulation Office LBRO was established to provide formal guidance to local authorities. Originally set up as a company it will become non-departmental public body with statutory powers in October 2008, following the recent royal consent of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 on 21st July 2008. The LBRO has issued guidance on the Regulatory Compliance Code which has assisted in the review of this Enforcement Policy.

Procedures will be reviewed against the requirements of the Code and the outcomes from enforcement activity reported annually through the Members Briefing Note reporting on the Environmental Health performance in the last Quarter of the year.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS [HF]**

Costs of implementing the policy will be met from existing budgets

5. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS [LH]**

The Council must have an enforcement policy in place, when they intend to pursue enforcement action. When action is taken regard must be had to the policy and any procedures therein are complied with. The Council must also use the Prosecutors Code when action is taken to prosecute breaches of the legislation, considering the evidential grounds and public interest.

6. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

Enforcement of legislation relating to pollution, food safety, health and safety, licensing and animal welfare contributes to achieving. The drive for lifting the burden on business will assist in reducing costs to businesses.
1. Cleaner and Greener Neighbourhoods
2. Thriving economy
3. Safer and healthier borough
4. Strong and distinctive communities.

7. **CONSULTATION**

Borough Bulletin, Hinckley Business Association, Earl Shilton Business Forum, Voluntary Action Hinckley & Bosworth. SLB

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

It is the Council's policy to proactively identify and manage significant risks which may prevent delivery of business objectives.

It is not possible to eliminate or manage all risks all of the time and risks will remain which have not been identified. However, it is the officer's opinion based on the information available, that the significant risks associated with this decision / project have been identified, assessed and that controls are in place to manage them effectively.

The following significant risks associated with this report / decisions were identified from this assessment:

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Formal action taken without regard to the compliance code could be subject to legal challenge.	Ensure all legal action is taken in accordance with the enforcement policy	R Parkinson

9. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

Enforcement of legislation falls across all areas of the borough and so there are no specific issues for rural areas.

10. **<u>CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS</u>**

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications –effective enforcement assists in reducing antisocial behaviour and the fear of crime within communities.
- Environmental implications-   Effective enforcement of legislation relating to pollution assists in minimises the impact on the environment.
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background papers: Regulators' Compliance Code: Statutory Code of Practice for Regulators 2007
Applying the Regulators Compliance Code and Enforcement Concordat LBRO Briefing

Contact Officer: Robert Parkinson, Head of Community Services (Environment) ext 5641

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council

Environmental Health Services

General Enforcement Policy

September 2008

September 2008

1.   Scope of this Document

This is an umbrella document that sets out Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Enforcement Policy in respect of Environmental Health matters. It refers to all areas of Environmental Health legislation where the Council has a duty or a power to bring enforcement action, except where a specific Enforcement Policy document exists. These currently include; Food Safety, Health and Safety, Smoke Free Licensing and Local Air Pollution Control.

2.   Introduction

This document sets out what business and individuals being regulated can expect from Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's enforcement officers. It commits the Council to good enforcement policies and procedures. It lays down the generalised policy of the Council based on the principles of good enforcement contained in the Enforcement Concordat, produced by Central Government & the Statutory Code of Practice for Regulators (Compliance Code) produced by the Department for Business Enterprise & Regulatory Reform and supplemented by additional statements of enforcement policy of service units within the Council.

The Council takes into account advice contained in the Code for Crown Prosecutors, and endeavours to ensure that it supplements the advice outlined in specific enforcement guidance from other sources, including the Compliance Code.

The primary function of central and local government enforcement work is to protect the public, the environment and groups such as consumers and workers. At the same time, carrying out enforcement functions in an equitable, practical and consistent manner helps to promote a thriving national and local economy. Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council is committed to these aims and to maintaining a fair and safe trading environment.

The effectiveness of legislation in protecting consumers or sectors in society depends crucially on the compliance by those regulated. We recognise that most businesses and individuals want to comply with the law. We will, therefore, take care to help businesses and others meet their legal obligations without unnecessary expense, while only intervening where there is a clear case for protection. All citizens will reap the benefits of this policy through better information, choice and safety.

There are many instances where the enforcement responsibilities of the authority are shared by, or complimentary to, those of other agencies. Where these shared responsibilities exist, we will endeavour to set up, or join, liaison groups or working parties to ensure cost effective and efficient service delivery. Where situations occur in which shared enforcement with other agencies is appropriate, then a full exchange of information between those agencies will be implemented.

September 2008

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council has adopted the central and local government Concordat on Good Enforcement. Included in the term 'enforcement' are advisory visits and assisting with compliance as well as licensing and formal enforcement action. By adopting the Concordat we commit ourselves to policies and procedures, which contribute to best value, and will provide information to show that we are observing them.

In most cases our Officers will act in an informal way when dealing with those who have duties under the law. Where appropriate Officers will offer information, advice, support, and keep relevant parties informed of the current situation, either face to face, in writing or over the telephone. However, Officers may also use formal action to secure compliance with legal requirements or for the remedying of defects or statutory nuisance.

The Council regards prevention as better than cure. We offer information and advice to those we regulate and seek to secure co-operation avoiding bureaucracy or excessive cost.

This Policy sets out the general principles which the Council intends to follow in relation to enforcement and prosecution. It is to be used in conjunction with any more detailed specific Government guidance or from other Agencies, approved Codes of Practice, Professional bodies and any relevant case law.

3.   Purpose and Methods of Enforcement

The purpose of enforcement is to ensure that preventative or remedial action is taken to protect the environment, employees, contractors, the self employed and members of the public and to secure compliance with the regulatory system. The need for enforcement may stem from a lack of knowledge or a deliberate or negligent act. Although the Council expects full voluntary compliance with relevant legislative requirements, codes of practice and guidance notes, we will not hesitate to use our enforcement powers where necessary.

Where an offence has been committed, in addition to any other enforcement action such as issuing appropriate notices, the Council will consider instituting a prosecution, administering a caution or issuing a warning.

September 2008

4.   Principles of Enforcement

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council believes in firm but fair enforcement of the law. This should be informed by the principles of *proportionality* in applying the law and securing compliance; *consistency* of approach; *targeting* of enforcement action; *transparency* about how the regulator operates and what those regulated may expect; and *accountability* for the regulator's action.

4.1   Proportionality

Proportionality means relating enforcement action taken to the effect on those affected or the environment. Those whom the law protects and those on whom it places duties (duty holders) expect that action taken by Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council to achieve compliance or bring businesses or individuals to account for non-compliance, should be proportionate to level of disturbance, or to the seriousness of any breach, which includes any actual or potential harm arising from the breach of the law. However legislation relating to statutory nuisances requires the service of an Abatement Notice where a Statutory Nuisance is found.

4.2.   Targeting

Targeting means making sure that regulatory effort is directed primarily towards those whose activities pose the most risk to health, causing the most disturbance or against deliberate offences. Action will be primarily focused on breaches of the law or those directly responsible for the risk and who are best placed to control it.

In the case of regulated industries, management actions are important. Repeated incidents or breaches of regulatory requirements which are related may be an indication of an unwillingness to change behaviour, or an inability to achieve sufficient control. Such activity may generate additional inspections or contact by the environmental health staff.

4.3.   Consistency

Consistency of approach does not mean uniformity. It means taking a similar approach in similar circumstances to achieve similar ends. Where appropriate professional guidance exists then this will be used.

Duty holders managing similar risks can expect a consistent approach from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council in the advice tendered; the use of informal and formal notice; decisions on whether to prosecute; and in the response to incidents and complaints.

September 2008

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has arrangements in place to promote consistency in the exercise of discretion, including effective arrangements for liaison with other enforcing authorities E.g. Memorandum of understanding with the Environment Agency.

4.4. Transparency

Transparency means helping businesses and individuals to understand what is expected of them and what they should expect from Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. It also means making clear to businesses and individuals not only what they have to do but, where this is relevant, what they do not. That means distinguishing between statutory requirements and advice or guidance about what is desirable but not compulsory.

This statement sets out the general policy framework within which Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council should operate. Businesses and individuals also need to know what to expect when an Officer calls and what rights of complaint are open to them. A leaflet is available detailing these procedures.

When inspectors offer businesses and individual's information, or advice, face to face or in writing, including any warning, Officers will tell them what to do to comply with the law, and explain why. Officers will, if asked, write to confirm any advice, and to distinguish legal requirements from best practice advice.

4.5. Accountability

Regulators are accountable to the public for their actions. This means that Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has policies and standards (such as the four enforcement principles above) against which they can be judged, and an effective and easily accessible mechanism for dealing with comments and handling complaints.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has procedures for dealing with comments and handling complaints which are available by telephoning Environmental Health Services on 01455 255644. In particular they:-

- describe a complaints procedure in the case of decisions by officials, or if procedures have not been followed; and

- all notices served by the Department have notes attached which explain about the right of appeal where available to a magistrates court in the case of statutory notices.

5.   Compliance Code

In addition to the principles of the Concordat the Councils` approach to enforcement will have regard to the Compliance Code which is based on recommendations of the Hampton Report. The Council will therefore take account of:

5.1 Economic Progress

The Council will consider the impact regulatory interventions may have on economic progress. We will only adopt a particular approach if the benefits justify the costs.

The Council will make reasonable attempts to ensure that the burdens of our interventions fall fairly and proportionately on small businesses by giving consideration to their size.

This Council will allow for reasonable variations to standards to meet local priorities.

5.2 Risk Assessment

The Council will ensure that the allocation of our regulatory efforts and resources are targeted where they would be most effective.

Risk assessment will inform all aspects of our approach to regulatory activity & be based on all available relevant and good quality data.

5.3 Advice and Guidance

The Council will ensure all regulatory requirements as well as changes to those requirements are promptly communicated to relevant businesses.

The Council will provide general information, advice and guidance to make it easier for businesses to understand and meet their regulatory obligations.

The Council will provide targeted and practical advice that meets the needs of businesses.

When offering compliance advice the Council will distinguish between statutory requirements and advice and guidance aimed at improvements above the minimum standards.

The Council will provide appropriate means to ensure that businesses can reasonably seek advice from us without triggering enforcement action.

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5.4 <u>Inspection and Other Visits</u>

Inspections should only take place in line with risk assessment or where we are acting on other intelligence.

The Council will focus our greatest inspection effort where risk assessment shows that both:

- A compliance breach would pose a serious risk to a regulatory outcome and
- There is a high likelihood of non-compliance

The Council will give positive feedback to encourage and reinforce good practice.

The Council will share information about good practice amongst other businesses and other regulators.

The Council will make arrangements with other regulators for collaboration to minimise the burdens on business through data sharing & wherever possible joint or co-ordinated inspections.

5.5 <u>Information Requirements</u>

When asking for data from businesses the Council will have consideration of the costs and the benefits to the business

5.6 <u>Compliance and Enforcement actions</u>

The Council will reward businesses that have consistently achieved good levels of compliance through positive incentives such as a lighter touch.When considering taking enforcement action the Council will discuss the circumstances with those suspected of the breach and take these into consideration when deciding the best approach. This does not apply where immediate action is required.

The Council will give clear reasons for any formal enforcement action to the person or entity against whom the action is being taken at the time the action is taken. These reasons should be confirmed in writing.

The Council will ensure that we interpret and apply legal requirements and our enforcement policy consistently and fairly.

5.7 <u>Accountability</u>

The Council will create effective consultation and feedback with businesses.

September 2008

The Council will provide courteous and efficient services to businesses.

6.   Authority

Authority to instigate legal action and prosecution proceedings is contained in the schedule to the of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Constitution of the Council Part 3 which will be amended from time to time. A copy of the Constitution is available on the council website or by contacting 01455 238141. Officers have their level of authority detailed in their authorisation document.

7.   Prosecution

Prosecution proceedings may be considered for strict offences or for the failure to comply with a notice issued by the Council. Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will use discretion in deciding whether to bring a prosecution where permitted to do so.

The decision whether to prosecute will take account of the evidential test and the relevant public interest factors set down by the Director of Public Prosecutions in the Code for Crown Prosecutors. No prosecution may go ahead unless Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council finds there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction, and decides that prosecution would be in the public interest.

While the primary purpose of Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council is to ensure that businesses and individuals do not act in breach of any relevant legislation, prosecution is an essential part of enforcement. Where in the course of an investigation Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council collected sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction and has decided, in accordance with this policy and taking account of the Code for Crown Prosecutors, that it is in the public interest to prosecute, then that prosecution will go ahead, subject to such prosecution being authorised by the Head of Health and Environment following consultation with the Head of Corporate Services. The portfolio holder for the service area shall also be informed of decisions. Where the circumstances warrant it and the evidence to support a case is available, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will prosecute without warning or recourse to alternative sanctions.

8.   Public Interest Factors

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council will consider the following factors in deciding whether or not to prosecute:-

- the seriousness of the offence;
- the foreseeability of the offence or the circumstances leading to it;

September 2008

- the intent of the offender, individually and/or corporately;
- the history of offending;
- the attitude of the offender;
- the deterrent effect of a prosecution, on the offender and others;
- the personal circumstances of the offender;
- the likelihood of the offender being able to establish a 'Best Practicable Means' defence where available.

These factors are not exhaustive and those, which apply, will depend on the particular circumstances of each case. Deciding on the public interest is not simply a matter of adding up the number of factors on each side. We will decide how important each factor is in the circumstances of each case and make an overall assessment.

Where there is sufficient evidence, the Council will normally prosecute in any of the following circumstances:-

- breaches of abatement notices that have resulted in serious effect on neighbours;
- serious impact on the environment and /or resulting in significant cost to the Council
- persistent breaches of statutory requirements in relation to the same or similar undertaking;
- failure to supply information without reasonable excuse or knowingly or recklessly supplying false or misleading information. It is essential that lawful requests for information by the Council or its Officers are complied with and that accurate information is supplied to enable informed regulation to be exercised;
- obstruction of Officers in carrying out their powers. The Council regards the obstruction of its Officers while lawfully carrying out their duties as a serious matter.

9.   Sufficiency of Evidence

A prosecution will not be commenced or continued by the Council unless it is satisfied that there is sufficient, admissible and reliable evidence that the offence has been committed and that there is a realistic prospect of conviction. If the case does not pass this evidential test, it will not proceed, no matter how important or serious it may be. Where there is sufficient evidence, a prosecution will not be commenced or continued by the Council unless it is in the public interest to do so. Public interest factors that can affect the decision to prosecute usually depend on the seriousness of the offence or the circumstances of the offender.

10.   Companies and Individuals

Criminal proceedings will be taken against those persons responsible for the offence. Where a Company is involved, it will be usual practice to

prosecute the Company where the offence resulted from the Company's activities. However, the Council will also consider any part played in the offence by the employees of the Company, including Directors, Managers and the Company Secretary. Action may also be taken against such employees (as well as the Company) where it can be shown that the offence was committed with their consent, was due to their neglect or they 'turned a blind eye' to the offence or the circumstances leading to it.

11. Choice of Court

In cases of sufficient gravity, for example serious environmental damage over a wide area, where circumstances allow, consideration will be given to requesting the magistrates to refer the case to the Crown Court. The same factors as listed above will be used, but including consideration of the sentencing powers of the Magistrates' Court.

12. Penalties

The existing law gives the courts considerable scope to punish offenders and to deter others. Unlimited fines and, in some cases, imprisonment may be imposed by the higher courts. The Council will continue to raise the awareness of the courts to the gravity of many environmental offences and will encourage them to make full use of their powers. Examples of penalties presently available to the courts for certain environmental offences are:-

Magistrates' Courts; up to 6 months imprisonment and/or £20,000 fine;
Crown Court: up to 5 years imprisonment and/or an unlimited fine.

The Council will always seek to recover the full costs of investigation and Court proceedings.

13. Alternatives to Prosecution

For the purposes of this Procedure, enforcement for non compliance includes the following:

- Formal Cautions
- Written warnings (sometimes known as Informal Notices)
- Works in Default, including seizure of equipment
- Revocation (of Licenses or Authorisations)

13.1. Formal Cautions

In cases where a prosecution is not the most appropriate course of action, the alternatives of a caution or warning will be considered, the choice depending on the factors referred to above.

September 2008

A caution is the written acceptance by an offender that they have committed an offence and may only be used where a prosecution could properly have been brought. It will be brought to the Court's attention if the offender is convicted of a subsequent offence. Failure to accept a caution should normally result in a prosecution being taken.

13.2. Written warnings (sometimes known as informal Notices)

A warning is a written notification that, in the Council's opinion, an offence has been committed. It will be recorded and may be referred to in subsequent proceedings.

As with a prosecution, additional enforcement mechanisms may also be used in conjunction with a caution or warning.

13.3. Works in default

Where powers exist for the carrying out of works in default to remedy the nuisance or defect, the Council may carry out the works and recover all costs in lieu of prosecution proceedings. This will normally be where the recipient is not at fault or unaware of the problem e.g. drainage defect / intruder alarm. In the absence of a specific charge, 25% on costs will be charged.

The Council will seek to seize noise-producing equipment where serious nuisance is occurring to residents and awaiting prosecution proceedings would not provide effective relief. Such seizures will be under a warrant from a magistrate. The Council will normally seek a forfeiture order from the Court for equipment seized.

13.4 .Revocation (of Licenses or Permits/Authorisations)

Where legislation allows for the revocation of licences or permits the Council may consider this course of action. Again the principles contained in para. 9 will guide such decisions.

Non-payment of fees and charges due to the Council will result in revocation of licences after suitable opportunity for the holder to pay outstanding fees. Should the licensed activity continue then prosecution proceedings will be considered.

14. Working with Other Regulators

Where the Council and another enforcement body both have the power to prosecute, the Council will liaise with that other body, to ensure effective co-ordination, to avoid inconsistencies and to ensure that any proceedings instituted are for the most appropriate offence.

September 2008

Where the Council is notified or becomes aware of matters which are statutory enforcement responsibility for other agencies e.g. Police, Environment Agency that Council employee shall notify the appropriate agency by the quickest means acceptable to that agency. The referral of such information shall be recorded against the property database.

15. Consultation with Stakeholders

Prior to revisions of this policy notification will be placed on the Council's website and notification will be placed in the Council's newspaper alerting stakeholders. Copies of the revised policy will be available from the Council offices on request.

16. Equalities

In developing this policy, the Council has recognised its responsibility under the Race Relations Act 1976 as amended by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, to consider the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote equal opportunity and good race relations between persons of different racial groups. This Policy therefore supports and is supported by the Councils Race Equality Scheme.

The Council also recognises that this policy should promote equality in a wider sense and disadvantaged groups in general, with regards to ethnic or national origin, sex, religious belief, political views or the sexual orientation of the Individual. The Council will ensure all decisions are taken without adverse influence to these issues. The Council will not be affected by improper or undue influence from any source.

To assist in this

- The Policy and associated documents will be available on the Internet, and in other formats upon request.
- Multi-language sections may be included in all leaflets upon request.
- Support will be offered to individuals who are socially excluded to assist in their understanding of legislation and legal requirements
- Action will be taken to ensure that all enforcement action, particularly against those individuals from disadvantaged groups, is dealt with fairly.

This policy shall be reviewed every two years or sooner if there are changes in structure, titles and responsibilities.

T M Prowse
Director of Community and Planning Services

September 2008

September 2008

Environmental Health Services General Enforcement Policy

If you would like a copy of this document in another format such as large print, Braille or audio tape, please contact the Communications Team on 01455 238141 E mail customer.services@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

Formatted: French (France)

ਦੂਸਰੀਆਂ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਵਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਨੁਵਾਦ ਅਤੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਪੇ ਜਾਂ ਆਡਿਓ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕਾਪੀਆਂ ਅੱਗੇ ਲਿਖੇ ਸਰਨਾਵੇਂ ਤੇ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਹਨ: Communications Team, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council, Argents Mead, Hinckley, Leicestershire, LE10 1BZ. ਟੈਲੀਫੋਨ: 01455 238141. ਈਮੇਲ: customer.services@hinckley-bosworth.gov.uk

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September 2008

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 27 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND PLANNING SERVICES
RE: HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2008 - 2013

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1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1.   To present the Homelessness Strategy 2008 – 2013 to Scrutiny for comment.

2.   **RECOMMENDATION**

2.1   That Scrutiny Commission endorse the Homelessness Strategy and recommend it to the Executive for approval, subject to final amendments to be agreed by the Director of Community and Planning services and the Executive Member for Housing.

3.   **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

3.1.   There is a statutory requirement for the council to have a Homelessness Strategy which details their approach to dealing with homelessness and actions required to further develop services and address issues in their particular area.

3.2.   The Homelessness Strategy attached in appendix 1 details:

- ❑ Our Key priorities, linking in with the national and regional homelessness context, and looking a key partner strategies which impact on our homelessness work.
- ❑ An overview of homelessness in Hinckley and Bosworth.
- ❑ Our achievements in dealing with homelessness and developing the service since our last Homelessness Strategy was written in 2003.
- ❑ The way forward – the areas which require further development and attention to ensure that the service continues to improve and meet the needs of homeless people within the borough.

3.3   To inform the Homelessness Strategy consultation was undertaken with customers who have used the service, both in terms of those who have received advice and assistance and those who have been accommodated in temporary accommodation.   The strategy will be sent out to a number of partner agencies, detailed in appendix 2, for comment.

5.   **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS (DB)**

        There are none arising directly from this report

6.   **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS (LH)**

        The Statutory requirement to formulate a Homelessness Strategy is contained in the Homelessness Act 2002.

7. CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Contributes to the aims of:
- ❑ Safer and healthier borough.
- ❑ Decent, well managed and affordable homes.
- ❑ The Corporate Value of providing support to those who need it most.

8. CONSULTATION

Consultation took place with customers of the service.   A number of agencies were involved in the information gathering stage of the Homelessness Strategy. The Strategy will be sent to partner agencies detailed in appendix 2 for comment.

9. RISK IMPLICATIONS

Management of Significant (Net) Red Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating Actions	Owner
No Homeless Strategy in place identifying priorities and future actions for improvement of services, impacting on customers.	Ensure adoption of Homelessness Strategy	Head of Community Services (Housing)

10. RURAL PLAN IMPLICATIONS

Ensuring the Homelessness service is accessible to those customers in rural areas is referred to within the Homelessness Strategy.

11. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

By submitting this report, the report author has taken the following into account:

- Community Safety implications
- Environmental implications]
- ICT implications
- Asset Management implications
- Human Resources implications
- Voluntary Sector

Background Papers:

Contact Officer: Sharon Stacey Extension 5636

Appendix 2

PCT (Health Visitor for the Homeless)
Orchard Resource Centre
Lawrence House – hostel for young people
Wykin Project – hostel for young people
Youth Offending Service
Probation Service
Connexions
Supporting People
W.A.L.L.
Rathbone Project
Salvation Army
Team Manager Social Care and Health
Citizen's Advice Bureau
Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator
Housing Benefits Take up Officer
Community Safety Team
Mediator Services
Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator
Accommodation Officer 16+ Team
Local landlords
Next Generation
Nottingham Community Floating Support Team
Registered Social Landlords.
Neighbouring District Concils.

Homelessness Strategy
2008 - 2013

Contents

Foreword:

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council take their strategic responsibility to housing and homelessness people seriously. This strategy details our achievements, and gives an overview of 'where we are now' with our Housing Options Service. In addition to this the strategy sets out the vision of the Council and our partners for tackling homelessness over the next five years.

The Governments aim of preventing homelessness, securing accommodation for homeless people and providing support to those at risk of becoming homeless as well as homeless people, gives strength to our own approach that seeks to tackle the causes of homelessness and not simply respond to problems after they have arisen.

Over the last twelve months we have begun to see the benefits of a combined and dedicated effort to tackle homelessness in this Borough. The Homelessness surveys carried out give an indication that we are providing a good Housing Options service, we have drastically reduced the numbers being placed in B&B accommodation and our own family hostel accommodation was empty for a period over the last months for the first time.

We are committed to further reducing homelessness by continuing with our successful pro-active approach, and effective management of homeless cases. We not only intend meeting our statutory homeless duties, but to deliver on the vision within this strategy to positively impact on the lives of those who are, or would be affected by homelessness.

Councillor David Cope
Executive Member for Housing

Introduction to the Borough of Hinckley & Bosworth

Geography

The Borough of Hinckley & Bosworth extends over a largely rural area of some 298 square kilometres in the County of Leicestershire, from the west of the City of Leicester to the border with the county of Warwickshire, which is also the border between the East and West Midland regions.

The main urban area – Hinckley and the adjoining parishes of Barwell, Earl Shilton and Burbage – is at the southern tip of the Borough and has around 61% of the total population. A further 19% live in the north-eastern parishes close to the City of Leicester (Groby, Markfield, Ratby and Desford). The remaining 20% live in the 17 rural parishes, only one of which has a population of more than 3000. In the north-eastern area of the district there is a former mining area falling within the Coalfields Priority Area.

Strategic transport links abound as the M1 to the east and north, and the M69 to the southeast, intersect, and have junctions in, the district. The A5 and the M42/A42 enclose the south-western and north-western sides respectively. There is a railway station at Hinckley with services to Leicester, London and Birmingham. This results in a significant amount of commuting from the district, mainly to Leicester and local towns in the West Midlands.

Demography

The population of the Borough is around 101,500. It grew by 3.6% between 1991 and 2001 and is projected to grow by a further 7.5% from 2001 to 2021, faster than at regional or national level.

The age distribution follows the national pattern fairly closely although the Borough has a higher proportion of people aged 30 – 59 than the country as a whole, offset by fewer people aged 20 – 29.

Households mirror the national and regional average in terms of the average size of 204 people but the Borough has fewer one person and lone parent households and more married and cohabitating couple households that there are nationally and regionally.

The black and minority ethnic population is just 2.6%, well below national and regional proportions in every ethnic grouping. The biggest non-white population is Asian/Asian British, forming 1.1% of the Borough's population, of which 0.8% were of Indian origin – the largest minority ethnic population in the Borough.

Local Economy

The economy of the Borough is mixed. The services sector accounts for 63.7% of the economy, well below national and regional levels. Within this sector the category of "Distribution, hotels and restaurants" is the biggest. Only around 15% of the Borough's jobs are in the "Public administration, education and health" compared to 24% regionally and nationally. Manufacturing accounts for 28.8% of the economy, more than double the national figure (13.4%) and well above the regional level of 19.6%.

Geographically the economy shows a split into four overlapping areas: the urban areas in the south accounts for much of the manufacturing but also distribution; the east has limited employment and there is significant commuting into Leicester; the west is rural and based mainly upon agriculture and a limited amount of manufacturing; the north is the former coal mining area which has declined economically since the early 1980's.

Unemployment in the Borough is well below national and regional averages. Average weekly earnings of people living in the Borough lie between the region and national average while people working here they are below both, showing high levels of outward commuting to work.

Vehicle ownership levels in the Borough are also interesting. One-car households match the national average but the proportion with 2 or more cars is 10% higher than the national figure. This could be symptomatic of the higher numbers of couple-households and the commuter behaviour of residents.

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's Aims and Visions

Vision

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council's long-term vision is to improve the quality of life for the people who live and work in the borough.

Our vision is to make Hinckley & Bosworth ' **A Borough to be proud of'.**

Aims

Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council aims to be proud of our: -
- ❑ Cleaner & greener neighbourhoods
- ❑ Thriving economy
- ❑ Safer and healthier borough
- ❑ Strong and distinctive communities
- ❑ Decent, well-managed and affordable housing.

The Housing Service's particular area of contribution to the corporate aims is to secure decent, well managed and affordable housing and to do this the following outcomes have been identified:
- ❑ Ensure there is sufficient choice in type, tenure and location of affordable homes within the Borough through our enabling and provider role
- ❑ Improve the condition of existing homes in the Borough
- ❑ Ensure that all Council stock continues to meet Decent Homes Standard
- ❑ Ensure a year on year increase in the percentage of vulnerable households in the private sector living in decent homes, from 85% 2008/09 to 89% in 20012/13
- ❑ Continue the delivery of new build affordable homes that meet the needs of the residents in accordance with the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document
- ❑ Continue to increase the number of homeless cases prevented by 10% year on year in the period to 2013

1.   Homelessness Strategy - Our Purpose

Hinckley and Bosworth's Homelessness Strategy aims to build on the successes of the previous strategy of 2003 –2008 and strengthen the options available in the Borough for all our residents in order to prevent homelessness and support vulnerable households to access housing. Our emphasis will be on preventing homelessness, increasing the commitment already shown in the Borough, providing timely and inventive solutions to individual issues and providing support to the most vulnerable in their tenancies to ensure sustainable options.

This is Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's second Homelessness Strategy and its purpose is to build upon the achievements of the first strategy. The first Homelessness Strategy was a starting point to providing a comprehensive and effective homelessness service. Its aim was to formalise partnerships, to shape and develop the services for people facing homelessness, including those not statutory homeless and those in need of housing advice within the Borough.

It is a statutory duty for all local authorities to have a current Homelessness Strategy and make this available to any interested parties free of charge.

Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's focus has seen a shift from providing a traditional Homelessness Service to increasing the housing options available to our customers.   The emphasis is on providing a preventative service, through timely advice and intervention. It is envisaged the service will target resources to provide people with options at an early stage to enable them to make an informed choice on their housing problems and improve the quality of their lives. It will also contribute to the government's most recent homelessness strategy *Settled Homes: Changing Lives.* The five key areas identified in the government strategy will be dealt with in more detail throughout this strategy.

This second strategy forms a summary of our priorities and objectives, celebrating the successes and achievements of the previous five years and concentrates on identifying the actions that are needed to build on these successes and take the service into excellence.

2.   Developing the strategy

In developing this strategy a review was carried out into homelessness in the Borough, in order to direct and inform our future direction and action plan. The review aimed to collate as much evidence as possible of homelessness and urgent housing need, as experienced by all households.

The review process involved:

- Analysing data collected by the council and other organisations to understand how many people are asking for assistance, who they are and why they need help
- Service user surveys
- Talking to other agencies in the Borough to take into account the needs of their service users
- Reviewing national, regional and local plans to understand how homelessness and housing need has been, or will be, impacted on in the future

3.   Our Key Priorities

This strategy and action plan must take into account national and regional priorities, to ensure that we are contributing to these priorities and meeting the targets set.

1.1   National

The Government's overall policy aim on homelessness is to reduce homelessness, reduce the use of temporary accommodation and eradicate the use of bed and breakfast. It envisages this being achieved by:

- ❑ Offering a wider range of preventative measures;
- ❑ Increasing access to settled homes;
- ❑ Halving the numbers living in temporary accommodation by 2010.
- ❑ Ending the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for 16/17 year olds by 2010.

Within the Communities and Local Government (CLG) published strategy for tackling homelessness "Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives" actions required are broken down into:

- ❑ Preventing homelessness;
- ❑ Providing support for vulnerable people;
- ❑ Tackling the wider causes and symptoms of homelessness
- ❑ Helping more people move away from rough sleeping;
- ❑ Providing more settled homes.

More recently the CLG have been promoting the enhanced housing options approach in "Expanding Choice, Addressing Need" where people make more of their own choices from a wider range of options, with support provided where people need it.

3.2 Regional

Regional Homelessness Strategy

The Homelessness Strategy will contribute to meeting the targets of the East Midlands Regional Homelessness Strategy published in 2007. A Regional Homelessness Forum for the East Midlands was launched in March 2005 to bring together experience and expertise and offer a joined up approach to tackling the issues throughout the region. The East Midlands Regional Assembly published a draft strategy in April 2008 with the emphasis being on:
- ❑ Developing sub-regional action plans and initiatives;
- ❑ Engaging service users in the development of policies;
- ❑ Encouraging joint working to maximise any opportunities to include agencies outside of the housing sector;

❑ Focus attention on groups and issues such as repossession of owner occupied properties by lenders.

Supporting People Strategy

The Leicestershire Supporting People Strategy 2005 – 2010 was approved in December 2004. This identified housing related support need across the County and prioritised them into 3 groups:

Priority Level A
- Generic provision for younger people – to include the following Primary Client Groups: Young People Leaving Care, Young People at Risk, including Young People at Risk of Offending or Re-Offending, Teenage Parents, younger People with Drug Problems, younger Single Homeless People with Support Needs and younger People with Mental Health Problems.
- Offenders and Mentally Disordered Offenders.
- Older People with Support Needs/Frail Elderly/Older People with Mental Health Problems/Dementia – in respect of Extra Care, floating support, assistive technology and Home Improvement Agencies.
- People with Learning Disabilities.

Priority Level B
- Homeless Families.
- Remaining People with Mental Health Problems.

Priority Level C
- People with HIV/AIDS.
- Women at Risk of Domestic Violence.

It is recognised that the Supporting People Strategy requires updating and work is currently underway to update the priority groups to ensure that services are commissioned and supported where there is an identified need and gap in provision. HBBC will be involved in this review and will ensure that the Homelessness Strategy is updated to accommodate any actions stemming from this review.

Local Area Agreement (LAA)

Under LAA 1 specific targets have been set for reducing homelessness amongst 16 and 17 year olds. LAA funding has been available to research into this issue and implement recommendations including:

- To develop a county funded Supported Lodgings Officer to explore the option of providing this service for 16/17 years in the area;
- Develop more pro-active Prevention Approaches including widening the use mediation and training officers county wide;
- Working with partnership agencies to use good practice and roll out versions of the Single Access Point.

Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) (adopted April 2008)

The 2005 – 2008 Housing Strategy stated the need to increase provision of affordable housing across the Borough. This Affordable Housing SPD details how we intend working towards this increase. A target of 20% affordable homes will be requested on all new development sites that generally have 15 or more homes on them.

Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Gypsies and Travellers Accommodation Needs Assessment (2006 – 16)

This assessment was carried out to produce detailed information about local Gypsies and Travellers and to generate reliable estimates of future accommodation and housing – related support needs. Evidence gathered in the study suggests housing related needs would best be met on a floating basis, which could complement site-based support. This could be achieved through joint commissioning *(of the partners involved in the survey)* of cross boundary provision.

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Reducing Re-Offending Board Strategy and Action Plan 2008/09

The aim of this strategy is to reduce re-offending by improving management and access to resources. Emphasis is placed on the need for housing and housing support providers to understand and respond to the needs of diverse groups and ensure that work is founded on the principles of equality. Getting offenders into settled and suitable housing can be the foundation of every other part of rehabilitation, resettlement, and managing risk. For many offenders it can give roots to a previously unstructured life, and is a springboard for other important steps, it can also reduce re-offending by as much as 20%.

Leicestershire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership

The role of the partnership is to implement and facilitate a local action plan to ensure National targets identified in their Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. A large number of agencies are working together to prevent unplanned pregnancies and support young parents. The role of the Housing Options team is to support the work of this partnership and to provide appropriate and timely advise to pregnant and vulnerable teenagers.

3.3 Local

Hinckley and Bosworth's Community Plan lays out a vision for the local area that has been agreed with a wide range of stakeholders through the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to build towards a better Borough. It emphasises the need for local groups and agencies to working together, provide support and pool resources:

"To achieve tangible improvements in the quality of life for people in the Borough today, and also build the foundations for continued improvement in the future."

The Community Plan identifies **Housing for Everyone's Needs** as a key priority and one of the five key aims in the Corporate Plan 2008 – 2013 is to be proud of our: **decent, well managed and affordable housing.** Increasing the availability of housing to meet expected needs has a major impact on the quality of people's lives and this Homelessness Strategy will contribute directly to both the Community and Corporate Plan.

Overarching this Homelessness Strategy is the Housing Strategy. The Housing Strategy lays out the key housing issues within the Borough and how the Council along with its relevant stakeholders will tackle those issues. The Housing Strategy is due to be renewed shortly and the information contained in this Homelessness Strategy will influence this process.

Hinckley and Bosworth's Borough Council Homelessness Strategy sits below the Housing Strategy, providing a more detailed vision specific to the service and action plan for dealing with potentially homeless applicants with an emphasis on prevention. Actions from the Homelessness Strategy will link into the frontline service by assisting with target setting for Options Officers through Performance Appraisals and team briefings.

4.   Overview of Homelessness in Hinckley and Bosworth

4.1   **Context**

The number of homelessness declarations made to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has decreased from 172 decisions made in 2003/04 to 141 in 2007/2008 in the past five years since the first homelessness strategy was launched. (Please refer to Appendix 2 - E1 for a full breakdown)

At the same time the number of people approaching the service has increased, as shown below.   Some of this increase will be due to the increased accessibility of the service and the fact that customers are encouraged to approach for advice and assistance even when a full homeless duty is not owed to them

	04/05	05/60	06/07	07/08
Customers approaching for advice and assistance and full homeless claims	415	618	580	788

Whilst a variety of factors can influence levels of homelessness it is clear that the focus of the service has shifted to prevention measures and providing sustainable Housing Options for our customers has helped to reduce levels of homelessness.   Other factors such as rising house prices and limited availability of affordable housing will have contributed to customers accessing the service. A reduction in the number of declarations taken reflects the efforts made to prevent homelessness during this period.

In preparation for a possible recession or "Credit Crunch", we need to be mindful of an increase in applicants who may approach due to mortgage repossessions and find resourceful ways to resolve their issues avoiding a decision of intentionally homeless wherever possible. The Government has stated that local authorities should be using funding from Supporting People to increase the supply of and access to settled housing and reduce the use of temporary accommodation with special emphasis on teenage parents, young people at risk, young people leaving care and families with children. The Government has set two targets around temporary accommodation: families should not be placed in bed and breakfast for more than 6 weeks and the numbers of households in temporary accommodation should be halved by 2010 against a baseline figure on 31st December 2004.   Achievement of both of these targets is on track.

In terms of numbers in temporary accommodation, the 2004 baseline figure for Hinckley and Bosworth was 30 applicants in temporary accommodation and 7 households classed as Homeless at Home, totalling 37.   The numbers in temporary accommodation peaked in 2004/2005 when there was an average of 37 applicants in a variety of temporary accommodation, with 22 applicants Homeless at Home. This compared to 18 applicants in temporary

accommodation and 7 Homeless at Home at Quarter 4 2007/2008. This has further been reduced in the first Quarter of 2008/09.

Numbers of applicants in temporary accommodation

E6	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Bed & Breakfast	6	10	14	10	2
Family Hostel	25	20	19	21	11
Women's Refuge	0	3	2	4	3
Council Stock	0	4	1	1	1
Total	35	37	36	36	18
Homeless at Home	18	22	11	10	7

(Please refer to Appendix 6 - E6 for a full breakdown)

Since 2005/06, the age range of applicants has been recorded. It is significant that an average of 43% of applicants were in the 16 – 24 age range category. Almost equal to this is the 25 – 44 age range highlighting a need to work closely with local agencies to prevent young people and families from becoming homeless.

A particular focus has been placed on 16 and 17 year old homelessness through the Local Area Agreement. In 2003/04 there were 11 people aged 16/17 accepted as homeless compared to 4 in 2007/08. This shows some of the success stemming from the joint working and sharing of resources and good practice stemming from the Local Agreement work.

Applicants age, where a full duty was accepted

E1b	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
16 – 24	55	39	41
25 – 44	54	42	27
45 – 59	15	14	6
60 – 64	4	3	2
65 – 74	4	5	0
75 and over	3	5	0
Total	135	108	76

(Please refer to Appendix 3 - E1b for a full breakdown of the figures)

The principle reason for priority or vulnerability within the Borough are applicants with children, followed by pregnant women. This trend is consistent throughout the previous five years ensuring accommodation for families continues to be a priority when assessing housing need.

E2 Reasons for priority for all accepted applicants

E2	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08
Emergencies (flood; fire etc)	0	1	1	0	1
Applicants with children	76	60	63	36	39
Pregnant women	11	8	8	14	12
Applicants 16-17	11	4	3	1	4
Applicants 18-21 & formally been in care	1	5	2	1	4
Old age	6	4	8	11	0
Physically disabled	8	9	17	10	9
Mental illness	14	17	15	11	7
Other special reasons (e.g. Drugs; former asylum seeker)	1	6	3	0	0
Vulnerable	0	7	15	24	1
Totals	137	121	135	108	76

(Please refer to Appendix 2 - E2 for a full breakdown of the figures)

The main causes of homelessness in Hinckley and Bosworth from 2004/05 to 2007/08 were:

- Parents, relatives or friends no longer willing or able to provide accommodation;
- Relationship breakdowns, significantly applicants fleeing Domestic Violence;
- End of Assured Shorthold Tenancies.

These reflect the national trends of causation of homelessness and Hinckley and Bosworth has shown a reduction in presentations against all three of these main issues. This is in line with the Governments prevention agenda.

The number of repeat homeless cases as defined in P1E Government guidance has been very low in this Borough. The most common cause for repeat presentations within a two year time frame is the termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy funded through the Council's Rent Deposit Scheme. This is not a significant issue within the Hinckley and Bosworth area

Hinckley and Bosworth's Homelessness Strategy has identified that implementing solutions to homelessness at a local level will involve taking account of the complexity of reasons for homelessness. This includes a shortage of supply of affordable accommodation within the private sector and a reluctance from local landlords to accept referrals from potentially homeless clients without a guarantor. To address prevention of homelessness at a local level therefore involves working to ensure the supply meets the demand as well as ensuring appropriate support and safe accommodation is available for the more vulnerable client groups. It is essential that the strong partnerships are re-enforced and formalised as part of the new strategy to be able to achieve the desired outcomes.

A Corporate working group is currently being set up to jointly tackle the effects of poverty on individuals and families within the Borough. The Housing Options team will be working with the voluntary sector and other organisations of this group, to minimise the impacts of poverty, and give appropriate advice regarding housing options.

5. Achievements

A number of successes and resources have been achieved since the publication of the first Homelessness Strategy. These include specific actions that can be linked with the reduction of homelessness against the main causes:

Tackling eviction by parents, other relatives and friends.
- ❑ Mediation Service for 16/17 year olds originally funded by Local Area Agreement funds and now mainstreamed from Prevention Fund;
- ❑ Home visits to facilitate good behaviour contracts;
- ❑ Visits to schools as part of the Leicestershire Enterprise/Horizons programme to raise the profile of housing issues to young people;
- ❑ Provision of a resettlement worker through Next Generation part funded from the Local Authority;

Relationship Breakdown, most significantly domestic violence
- ❑ Provision of a refuge operated by Women's Aid;
- ❑ In partnership with Riverside Housing Association and Community Safety Team, provision, management and support of move-on accommodation for women experiencing domestic abuse who have issues or circumstances that may exclude them from traditional Women's Refuges;
- ❑ Dedicated Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator as a joint post with Community Safety. Position made permanent in 2007.
- ❑ In house training on Do-It-Yourself Injunctions.

End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- ❑ Introduction and marketing of the TETRA service (Tenants Facing Eviction Through Rent Arrears) to provide early intervention for any tenants with arrears;
- ❑ Improved networking with local lettings agents;
- ❑ Successful action taken against Landlords attempting to illegally evict their tenants;
- ❑ Continuation of the Rent Deposit Scheme;
- ❑ Continued support and attendance at the Landlords Forum.

Two further areas of successes which merit specific attention are in the use of temporary accommodation and prevention of homelessness.

Prevention - information was provided earlier on the fact that whilst the number of homeless approaches for advice and assistance had increased, the number of decisions taken on homeless cases had decreased. This is due to the success that the Housing Options team has had in developing preventative measures, which means that a customer does not have to make a formal homeless declaration. Performance in prevention was in the top quartile in 07/08 and the success can be seen in the figures – in 07/08 341 cases of

homelessness were prevented – 43% of those approaching the service.

Year	Case prevented	BVPI213
06/07	143	4
07/08	341	9
08/09 (to date)	164	4

The development of preventative options has been assisted through the provision of a prevention fund, which is a spend to save budget, since through preventing homelessness costs of temporary accommodation and possibly the cost of an allocation of a council tenancy are saved.

Temporary accommodation.
❑ Performance to date during 07/08 sees Hinckley and Bosworth Borough council meeting the 2010 target of halving the use of temporary accommodation by 2010.
❑ No families have been in bed and breakfast accommodation for more than 6 weeks – meeting another government target.
❑ For a period during August/September 2008 there were no families in the homeless hostel - this has never been achieved previously.
❑ Length of time in hostel accommodation is no more than 6 months. This is due to a combination of the new build of RSL stock in the area, the success of the new Allocations Policy and spending time with applicants to discuss in detail the other options available to them.

There have been a number of other achievements aimed at improving the services and support for homeless people. These include:

❑ Provision of an additional Options Officer Post to enable the provision of a more comprehensive service;
❑ Provision of a Take Up Officer post through Housing Benefits to maximise benefit take up;
❑ Links developed with Prison Service and Probation. Established links with hostels that don't exclude ex-offenders; Protocol in place for dealing with prisoners;
❑ Compilation of procedure manual and welcome pack for family hostel;
❑ Regular monthly monitoring of homelessness service;
❑ Implementation of joint protocol with Social Services, Connexions, Next Generation and HBBC;
❑ Implementation of County wide protocol with Leaving Care Team;
❑ Established 16/17 year old forum for the Borough;
❑ Forged strong links with partner agencies such as Social Care and Health, CAB, local hostels by attending staff and residents meetings to provide Homelessness Awareness training;

- ❑ Considerable new build of properties to provide affordable housing with RSL's;
- ❑ Referral system in place for floating support through SHARP and NCHA to support vulnerable tenants.
- ❑ Appointed a county wide Supported Lodging Officer funded through LAA to explore option of supported lodgings for 16/17 year olds;
- ❑ In house training received from teenage pregnancy co-ordinator to raise awareness of services available locally; signed up to the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership action plan
- ❑ Jointly working with other organisations to tackle the negative impacts of poverty, and draw up an 'Anti-Poverty Strategy;
- ❑ Improved networking links with specialist hostels outside of area to improve accommodation options for applicants with no priority;
- ❑ Provision of £500 towards a bond for any applicants found to be intentionally homeless to secure more permanent accommodation as an alternative to bed and breakfast;

6. The Way Forward

Whilst there have many successes within the Housing Options Service we are always seeking to improve on performance. As part of the review process seven priorities have been identified.

- ❑ Joint working between service areas within the Borough Council, with local agencies and cross county groups
- ❑ Access and support to the Housing Options Service
- ❑ Action to address main causes of homelessness:
  - o Family and friend evictions
  - o Loss of private rented accommodation
  - o Domestic violence.
- ❑ Improving the council's homelessness service
- ❑ Making the best use of temporary accommodation
- ❑ Improve service-user involvement
- ❑ Improve access to and supply of affordable permanent accommodation.
- ❑

<u>Joint working</u>

The development of this strategy has reinforced our commitment to work together to tackle homelessness and meet the needs of people who are more vulnerable to homelessness. We aim to build on, and develop, our current joint working arrangements to take responsibility for the delivery of this strategy. There are already strong links between organisations and there is a willingness to work together and share resources.

Evidence for this priority includes:

- ❑ There are a range of organisations who contribute to meeting housing need
- ❑ There is variable knowledge of roles and responsibilities.
- ❑ Organisations are under pressure from lack of resources, pooling of resources can bring better outcomes for customers.
- ❑ There are several groups in existence working on various projects listed below;

We will:

Develop and review protocols with Registered Social Landlords, voluntary agencies such as Next Generation, Children and Young Person's 16+ Team, and Adult Social Services (in particular to develop a protocol for intentionally homeless families);

Continue to work with the Primary Care Trust in order to accommodate a Homelessness Health Visitor within the family hostel;

Work with the Localities Partnership Co ordinator to provide a worker to support children accommodated with their parents in temporary accommodation

Through the Local Area Agreement, support the employment of an Officer to establish a Countywide Supported Lodgings Scheme;

Liaise with 16+ team to provide a "test pad" for care leavers identifying a suitable property

Work with Leics. Teenage Pregnancy Partnership/Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Re offender board to deliver on their strategies.

Contribute to Supporting People strategic reviews to improve knowledge of accommodation and support issues.

Work with other areas of the Council to ensure adequate provision of sites for Gypsy and Travellers and work with Supporting People to identify support needs of this group.

Implement a Single Access Point based on model developed by the Bridge in Loughborough

With Community Safety, continue to attend the Domestic Abuse forum and support the Domestic Abuse Co-ordinator in her role;

Continue with quarterly countywide Homelessness Officers Forums to share good practice and identify countywide issues, share training and understanding of each others' organisations.

Formalise agreement with Local Solicitors and Citizen's Advice Bureau for a court desk with early referrals and debt management solutions.

Access and support

Access to services is particularly important in a time of crisis and it can make the difference between someone seeking early help to avoid homelessness. Timely intervention is the key.

Support and realistic options can achieve a number of things; it can enable someone to 'get through' the crisis and start again, it can prevent a crisis occurring or it may enable someone to live independently for a prolonged period of time.

Evidence for this priority includes:

❑ There is very limited floating support available to residents of Hinckley and Bosworth there being 22 places Countywide;

❑ There are problems accessing services elsewhere because of exclusions or 'local connection' policies;

- The Borough of Hinckley and Bosworth is geographically diverse making it difficult for residents further away or on low incomes to access services;

- There is limited awareness of existing services by partners and service-users.

We will:

Develop a Homeless Service Directory for the area to be made available to local agencies and expand this to be the basis for a web site ensuring all forms, advice leaflets, protocols, policies and procedures are made available.

Work with our rural partners and Neighbourhood Action Teams to develop new services and tackle exclusion and local connection policies.

Work with the Supporting People team to develop cross boundary access to services.

Develop local surgeries in rural areas.

Action to address main causes of homelessness

Family and friend evictions:
Although we have shown an excellent performance in reducing the number of presentations and increasing the number of preventions within the Borough, homelessness from friends and family remains the main cause of homelessness. As this is the main contributor to homelessness and housing need within the Borough, we need to understand more about what can be done to prevent homelessness in this situation and work together to achieve a better outcome for service-users. This cause of homelessness is often linked to teenage pregnancy and overcrowding issues within the family home.

Evidence for this priority includes:

- Parents, relatives and friends asking someone to leave is the main cause of statutory homelessness (32% of all accepted households April 2005 – March 2008)
- Number of young parents in family hostel accommodation
- Young people have particular needs when they find themselves without a home. It is not always appropriate for them to return to their family/friends' home yet they may not have the life skills required to run a home of their own
- A protocol for addressing the housing needs of young people has previously been developed (by a multi-agency 16/17 year old forum) but not monitored.
- Levels of teenage pregnancy remain high in certain wards of the Borough.

We will:

Continue to offer a mediation service to overcome family problems and enable people to remain in the home until a planned move can be arranged;

Ensure the council and partner agencies liaise on a regular basis to discuss households at risk to ensure early intervention through development of protocols

Build on the success shown in our figures from home visits;

Develop information and education in schools;

Build on the links made with the Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator to contribute to the Teenage Pregnancy Action Plan

Explore shared training on mediation skills throughout the County.

Domestic violence:
The second main cause of homelessness is domestic violence. It is difficult to predict levels of future need as many households can experience abuse in the home but many may not report it. The geography of the borough and accessibility of services have been a challenge, however, through the work and support of the Domestic-Abuse Co-ordinator this has been significantly overcome.

Evidence for this priority includes:

- • 18% of households accepted as homeless by the council (April 2003 – March 2008) were homeless as a result of a violent relationship breakdown

- Many of the claims by applicants experiencing Domestic Abuse are withdrawn before a decision can be made as the person returns home. In 2007/08 there was a total of 19 approaches of those 8 were accepted and 11 returned home.
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has a Women's Refuge that can accommodate 7 households with varying family sizes.
- In the Hinckley and Bosworth Crime Disorder and Drugs Audit in 2004, there were 781 incidents of Domestic Violence recorded in 2003/04.
- We need to work with Community Safety to reduce the number of repeat domestic violent incidents by 10% by 2011;
- There is a Hinckley and Bosworth Domestic Abuse Forum.

We will:

Explore option of Sanctuary Scheme to allow service users to remain safely in their own homes with their support networks

Continue to support Women's Aid Refuge;

Continue to provide and support Move-on accommodation for women experiencing Domestic Abuse who may not be able to access mainstream refuge due to the age and/or gender of their children or mental health issues.

Continue to support and participate in the Domestic Abuse forum.

Loss of rental accommodation:
Loss of private rented accommodation is the third main cause of homelessness in Hinckley and Bosworth, and presents a challenge. Although there is a reasonable amount of affordable private rented accommodation in the area, it is difficult to find Landlords who will accept tenants on benefits or without a guarantor.

Evidence for this priority includes:

❑ Between April 2003 and March 2008, 17.85% of households accepted as homeless by the council were homeless due to the loss of privately rented accommodation.

❑ 4.65% of homes in Hinckley and Bosworth are privately rented (2001 Census)

❑ The council's excellent Housing Benefit service means that landlords will receive their rents promptly and this should be a reason for engagement with our customers;

❑ A private landlords' forum has been developing since 2006

❑ Hinckley and Bosworth Council has a successful rent deposit/guarantee scheme for households approved as homeless and seeking to live in the private rented sector but unable to pay the deposit.

We will:

Work together to provide information to people living in the private sector

Develop a better understanding of the private landlord market through the landlords' forum;

Continue to develop the Prevention fund to prevent vulnerable applicants and families from becoming homeless by providing a bond at an early stage;

Develop a list of available rented property within the Borough;

Provide advice and assistance for Landlords and tenants alike;

Continue to market and support the TETRA service to provide early intervention of difficulties either through rent payments or behaviour.

Economic climate/credit crunch.

Early indications are that there will be an increase in demand for housing options services, as more people face debt problems resulting in loss of accommodation. A Corporate working party has been established to consider these issues and develop an Anti Poverty Strategy. The Housing Options team will be an integral part of this group. In addition:

We will:

Liaise with local debt advice agencies and solicitors to formalise a two way referral service through current Court Desk provision.

Proactively market debt prevention services to ensure early intervention, raise profile of Housing Options Service/debt advice services through media resources (e.g. Borough Bulletin) highlighting where advice can be sought at an early stage.

Improving the council's homelessness service

With a statutory responsibility for meeting the housing needs of households who are 'accepted' as homeless under government legislation, the council's homelessness service is of the utmost importance. The 2002 Homelessness Act and subsequent government strategies reinforced the need for councils to take a more strategic role in addressing *all* homelessness and for services to be more preventative.

Evidence for this priority includes:

- ❑ The council's service is very small and has been historically under-resourced. The focus has been very much on the front line service and seeing our customers, rather than developing the service   This has impacted on our ability to:
- ❑ Focus on the requirement to move from managing statutory homelessness only, to a broader, more preventative, approach;
- ❑ Accessibility (by organisations and service-users) and the ability to lead and participate in joint working;
- ❑ Homelessness monitoring and analysis;
- ❑ Making the service pro-active as opposed to reactive
- ❑ Despite limited resources the council has fostered some good relationships, e.g., through the LAA with other Local Authorities, with Social Care and Health, Connexions and Next Generation.

In June 2005, an additional Options Officer post was approved and recruited to and this has had a positive impact on the service resulting in excellent prevention results and a dramatic reduction in the use of temporary accommodation.

We will:

Continue to provide a 24/7 out of hours service where the customer will speak to an Options Officer from our Borough and receive the same level of advice and care they would receive within normal office hours;

Continue to market the service to ensure customers are made aware where they can go for assistance at an early stage;

Implement a Homeless Service Directory for the area to be made available to local agencies and expand this to be the basis for a web site ensuring all forms, advice leaflets, protocols, policies and procedures are made available.

Monitor the use of the Housing Options Service to identify and respond to trends.

Ensure maximum use of resources and customer empowerment through recovery of prevention fund money and bonds.

Ensure equal access to the prevention fund through identifying and removing any barriers to access and raising awareness with partner agencies.

Making the best use of temporary accommodation

Temporary accommodation has many roles to play in addressing homelessness and housing need. It can be more than a roof; for more vulnerable households it provides a safe and secure environment in which their needs can be properly assessed and planned for. It can be the first step to sustained and independent living. Our long-term aim is to ensure that we are able to access suitable and value for money temporary accommodation in Hinckley and Bosworth to meet need.

Evidence for this priority includes:

- The council owns and manages a family hostel with 35 units of temporary accommodation in Hinckley;
- Support is not attached to the accommodation and is made available only through other local agencies such as Next Generation, Homelessness Health Visitor and Community Centre with support groups;
- Options Officer and voluntary agencies in Hinckley and Bosworth refer service-users to a range of temporary accommodation, in and outside of the borough;

- ❑ It has been identified that emergency temporary accommodation provision has to acknowledge the range of needs that are presented, from young people to people with drug problems;
- ❑ There is a decline in the need for temporary accommodation. Factors that contribute to the low use of the council's accommodation include:
  - o Improved marketing of options and work with applicants to improve their knowledge of the availability of the accommodation and the varying options;
  - o The poor perception of hostel accommodation;
  - o The success of the council in re-housing people into permanent accommodation very quickly.

We will:

Complete a review of temporary accommodation including current provision and future requirements and considering:

- ❑ Review and assessment of support needs of households in temporary accommodation as part of the work to identify and recognise vulnerability;

- ❑ Considering other options for temporary accommodation away from hostel accommodation which will assist applicants into more sustainable long term accommodation;

- ❑ Consider rural options.

- ❑ Develop a 15 unit Property Leasing Scheme working with Private Sector Housing:

<u>Improving service-user involvement</u>

For services to improve and develop to truly meet local need, the process of development has to involve people who may need to use these services. Evidence for this priority includes:

- ❑ There is no provision for specific feedback from service users of the Housing Options Service;
- ❑ We need to know more than customer satisfaction; we want to learn from the experiences of service-users so we are better prepared to help others.

As part of the development of this strategy two surveys were carried out with our service users. One survey was sent to all applicants who approached us for advice and assistance since April 2008. The other survey was sent to all those who were placed in temporary accommodation from April 2007 onwards.

The Homelessness survey for advice and assistance indicated that the majority of applicants were satisfied, or very satisfied with the helpfulness and attitude of staff as well as the quality of advice, including explanations of legislation and procedures. The majority also found the information given was clear and easy to understand. General feedback suggests that applicants were happy with the advice and assistance, although not always happy with the decisions made.   One area of dis-satisfaction is the need for more information about benefits and how to access them. (for full survey results please see Appendix 7)

The Temporary Accommodation survey results showed that the majority of people were satisfied with the accommodation provided, stating that it was safe and clean with adequate, parking, bathroom and kitchen facilities. The majority of respondents also thought there was adequate support given while they were in temporary accommodation and they were kept up to date with their application process. (for full survey results please see Appendix 8)

The findings of these surveys have helped give us an overview of user opinion, but we know that it is a very limited sample group.   To address this

We will:

 Ask all users to complete a temporary accommodation survey when they leave.

 At the end of each month send out surveys to all those who have approached us for advice and assistance.

 Carry out more specific focus group work with various groups, for example with those who are traditionally more hard to reach.

Improving access to, and supply of, affordable permanent accommodation

Demand for affordable housing has increased substantially across the country as a side effect of increasing house prices. In 2005 the average house price in Hinckley and Bosworth was £166,889. The regional average was £153,493. The average earnings in 2006 for Hinckley and Bosworth were £33206 per annum against the Regional average of £31,062 (Leicestershire Economic Partnership, Hinckley and Bosworth Profile Baseline Study 2006). This illustrates that a person would have to borrow five times their salary to get on the property ladder. With recent developments within the world of banking, this is not possible

It is important not only to increase supply but also to ensure that households in the most need are able to access what is available.

Evidence for this priority includes:

- There has been an increase in the number of people on the housing register;
- Stakeholders have identified a need for suitable accommodation for people with a specific need including young people, people with a disability or acute mental health problem
- Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council has developed a housing strategy (2005- 08); this will be subject to review in 2008
- The recently developed community housing theme group, a sub-group of the local strategic partnership, will be responsible for the strategy
- The council works in partnership to develop additional affordable homes with housing associations
- The government has introduced a target for all social housing to be accessed through choice-based lettings (CBL) schemes by 2010
- The current economic situation is likely to see an increase demand for affordable housing.

We will:
Work with the Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer to ensure affordable housing opportunities are maximised through their work with Registered Social Landlords/developers

Ensure affordable housing on new developments is maximised through the Affordable Housing SPD.

Work with the Homebuy agency to promote affordable housing options.

7. Delivering the Strategy

7.1 A number of actions were identified following the review of homelessness and the Council will work together with its' stakeholders to ensure its effective implementation. The areas Hinckley and Bosworth will concentrate on strategically during the next few years mirror those that the government has identified as national priorities – preventing homelessness, ensuring sufficient accommodation is available, eliminating the use of bed and breakfast accommodation, providing a wide range of housing options and support to those who need it.

An action plan is attached to this Strategy. It outlines the broad actions needed, details of the tasks involved and officers responsible for delivering those tasks. All tasks have targets attached to them to allow for effective monitoring of the Action Plan.

The Action Plan will be monitored and reviewed at bi-monthly team briefs to ensure this is a working document and all officers are involved with the delivery and take responsibility for meeting the targets. The Action Plan will be reviewed and updated annually in response to consultation, changing needs and priorities. Relevant performance indicators will also be monitored and a full report of the service delivery will produced on a monthly basis in addition to completing the P1E statistics for CLG.

As the Government has allocated funding for preventing and tackling homelessness and, more locally, the Council has committed to a spend to save fund, it follows that there is a clear expectation that services will become effective and that a clear performance structure is essential to ensure the needs of the customer are met. The Council also expects homelessness services to link in with and contribute to achieving the Corporate Vision.

Action Plan – Homelessness Strategy 2008 - 2013

Housing Options Service			
Action	**Outcome / positive impact on performance**	**Resource Requirement/Responsible Officer**	**Completion Date**
Joint Working with other service areas/partners.	In conjunction with Locality Partnership Co-ordinator, explore option of Support Worker dedicated to transition floating support for hostel accommodation	Funding from Children Centre Programme	January 09
	Contribute to Supporting People strategic reviews to improve knowledge of accommodation and support issues, and to work on cross boundary issues.	Senior Housing Options Officer	April 09
	Work with partnership agencies to update 16/17 year old protocol and ensure sign up from organisations	Social Care and Health/Senior Housing Options Officer/Connexions/Next Generation	December 08
	Work with 16+ team to update a county wide protocol for care leavers	Leaving Care Team	December 08
	Work with Leics. Teenage Pregnancy Partnership/Leicester/Leicestershire and Rutland Re offender board to deliver on their strategies.	Housing Options Team	Ongoing

	Develop protocols with Registered Social Landlords concentrating on early intervention and preventing homelessness	Housing Options Officer	Dec ember 09
	Work with other areas of the Council to ensure adequate provision of sites for Gypsy and Travellers and work with Supporting People to identify support needs of this group.	HBBC Lead Officer for Gypsy and Travellers/Supporting People/Housing Options Officer	Ongoing
	Liaise with 16+ team to provide a "test pad" for care leavers identifying a suitable property	Victor Cook, Leaving Care Team/Senior Housing Options Officer. Use of council property.	April 09
	Re-instate young persons forum and provide a case management service with relevant agencies	Resettlement Worker, Next Generation/ Health Visitor/Senior Housing Options Officer	January 09
	Work with Education Authority and local schools to provide information on housing issues at an early stage	Senior Housing Options Officer	January 10
	Explore ways to continue to provide funding for Resettlement Worker at Next Generation	Within budget for 08/09	January 09
	Implement a Single Access Point based on model developed by the Bridge in Loughborough	LAA Funding/The Bridge/Next Generation/Housing Options	March 10

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Access and Support	Develop a directory of services to include all application forms, referral forms, contact details, policies, procedures and protocols	Housing Options Team	April 09
	Develop a web based version of the directory with links to partner agencies websites	Systems Administrator/Housing Options Team	April 09
	Identify rural issues through contact with agencies/customers and adapt services accordingly.	Senior Housing Options Officer	December 09
	Develop rural surgeries.	Housing Options Team	December 08
	Awareness training (showcasing of services) for elected members, other Local Authority staff and relevant agencies	Housing Options Officers	Ongoing
Addressing main causes of homelessness	Further promote mediation to encourage young people to stay in the home	Already within budget	Ongoing
	Identify funding for training for Housing Options Officers on mediation as part of a county wide project	Funding to be identified through development of Business Case.	December 08
	Explore option of Sanctuary Scheme to allow service users to remain safely in their own homes with their support networks	Senior Neighbourhood Officer/Domestic Violence Co-ordinator	March 10
	Consult with Landlords to understand the private rented market and to identify improvements to the Bond Scheme to encourage acceptance of Homeless	Senior housing Options Officer/Take-up Officer through Landlords Forum	Ongoing

	applicants.		
	Work with Corporate working party on debt/poverty issues.	Senior Housing Options Officer	Ongoing
	Liaise with local debt advice agencies and solicitors to formalise a two way referral service through current Court desk provision	CAB/LDJ Solicitors/Senior Housing Options Officer	April 09
	Develop and implement an advice package for people suffering debt problems	Senior Housing Options Officer/Revenue and Benefits	January 09
	Proactively market debt prevention services to ensure early intervention, raise profile of Housing Options Service through media resources (e.g. Borough Bulletin) highlighting where advice can be sought at an early stage	Senior Housing Options Officer	April 09
Improve the council's homelessness service.	Monitor the use of the Housing Options Service to identify and respond to trends.	Senior Housing Options Officer	Ongoing
	Ensure equal access to the prevention fund through identifying and removing any barriers to access and raising awareness with partner agencies.	Senior Housing Options Officer	July 09
	Ensure maximum use of resources and customer empowerment through recovery of prevention fund money and bonds.	Admin Assistant	July 08
Make the best use of temporary	Complete a review of temporary	Senior Housing Options	March 09

accommodation	accommodation including current provision and future requirements.	Officer	
	Further explore option of a Property Leasing Scheme and how to best utilise the resource	Private Sector Leasing/Senior Housing Options Officer	March 09
	Continue to provide funding through Local Area Agreement to implement a supported lodgings scheme for 16/17 year olds	LAA/Supported Lodgings Officer	March 09
Improving service user involvement and access	Consult with service users and community groups to gain feedback on service by introducing a satisfaction survey for temporary accommodation users and for advice and assistance customers. This will also assist to profile customers and identify any under represented groups.	Senior Housing Options Officer	January 09
	Carry out more specific focus group work with various groups, for example with those who are traditionally more hard to reach.	Senior Housing Options Officer	December 09
	Continue to subscribe to Language Line Service	Already in budget	Ongoing
	Ensure temporary accommodation and interview facilities are DDA compliant	Planned Maintenance Officer/Senior Housing Options Officer	March 10
Improving access to and supply of affordable housing	Work with the Housing Strategy and Enabling Officer to ensure affordable housing opportunities are maximised through their work	Senior Housing Options Officer	Ongoing

	with Registered Social Landlords/developers		

APPENDICES

1. APPENDIX 1 – E1 Households dealt with under housing provisions of 1996 Housing Act

2. APPENDIX 2 – E1b Applicants age where full duty accepted

3. APPENDIX 3 – E2 Reasons for priority need

4. APPENDIX 4 – E3 Reasons causing homelessness

5. APPENDIX 5 – E6 Applicant households accommodated by authority

6. APPENDIX 6 – Homelessness Survey – Advice and Assistance

7. APPENDIX 7 – Homelessness Survey – Temporary Accommodation

Section E1:Households dealt with under the homelessness provisions of the 1996 Housing Act

Number of People

	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
■1	137	121	135	108	76
□2	14	25	35	29	24
□3	12	3	10	20	16
▨4	8	12	28	17	24
□5	1	1	0	0	1
▦ totals	172	162	208	174	141
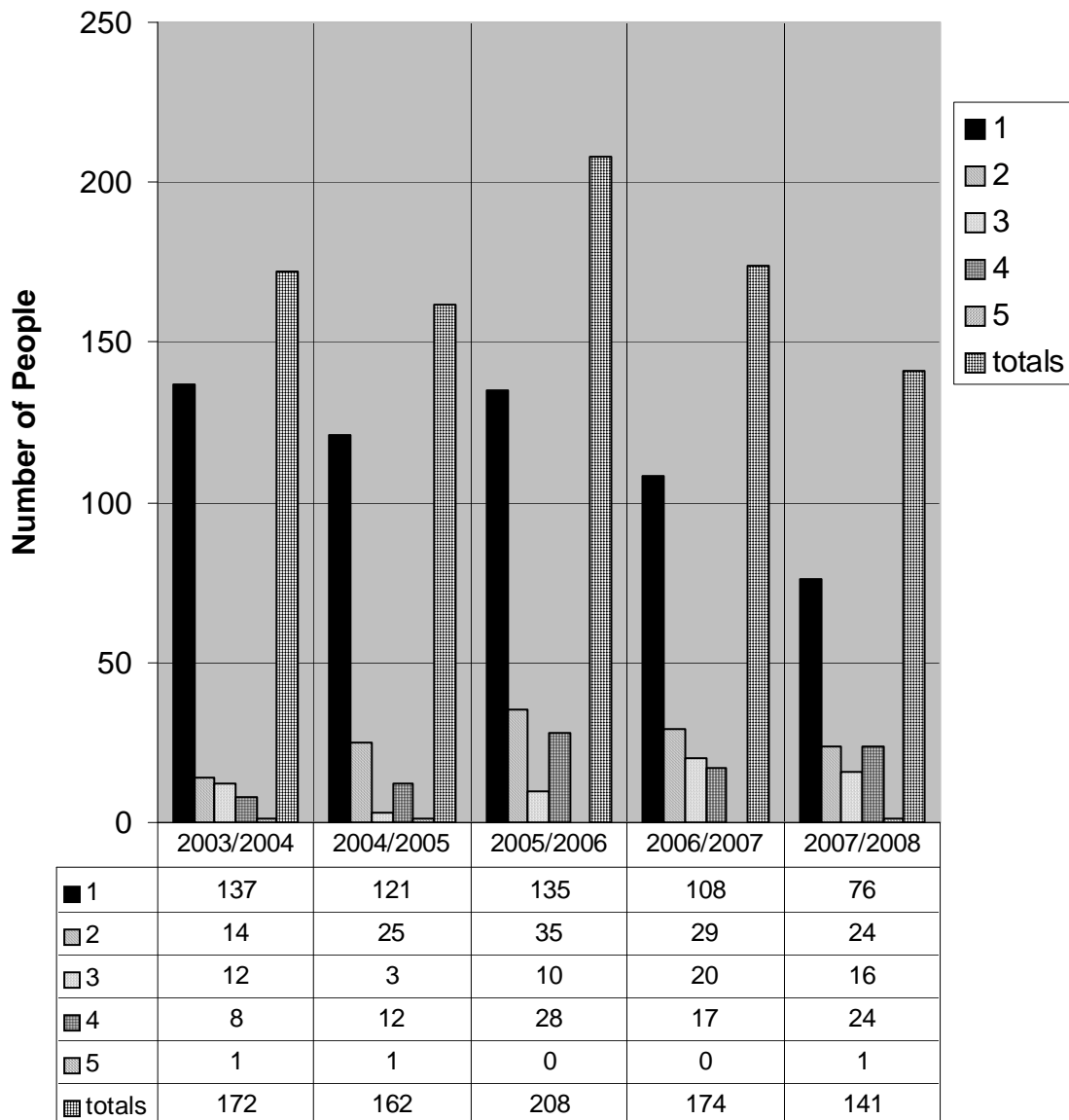
1 Eligible homeless and in priority need
2 Eligible homeless and in priority need but intentionally so
3 Eligible homeless but not in priority need
4 Eligible but not homeless
5 Ineligible

Section E1b of those where a FULL duty was accepted what was the applicants age. This statistic only began monitoring in 2005/06. No figures available before this time.

	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
■ 16-24	55	39	41
▦ 25-44	54	42	27
□ 45-59	15	14	6
▦ 60-64	4	3	2
▨ 65-74	4	5	0
▦ 75 and over	3	5	0
▦ total	135	108	76

Appendix 3

Section E2 Reasons for priority for all ACCEPTED APPLICANTS

No. of people

	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
■1	0	1	1	0	1
▨2	76	60	63	36	39
☐3	11	8	8	14	12
▦4	11	4	3	1	4
☐5	1	5	2	1	4
▦6	6	4	8	11	0
▦7	8	9	17	10	9
☐8	14	17	15	11	7
■9	1	6	3	0	0
▦10	0	7	15	24	1
▦11	137	121	135	108	76
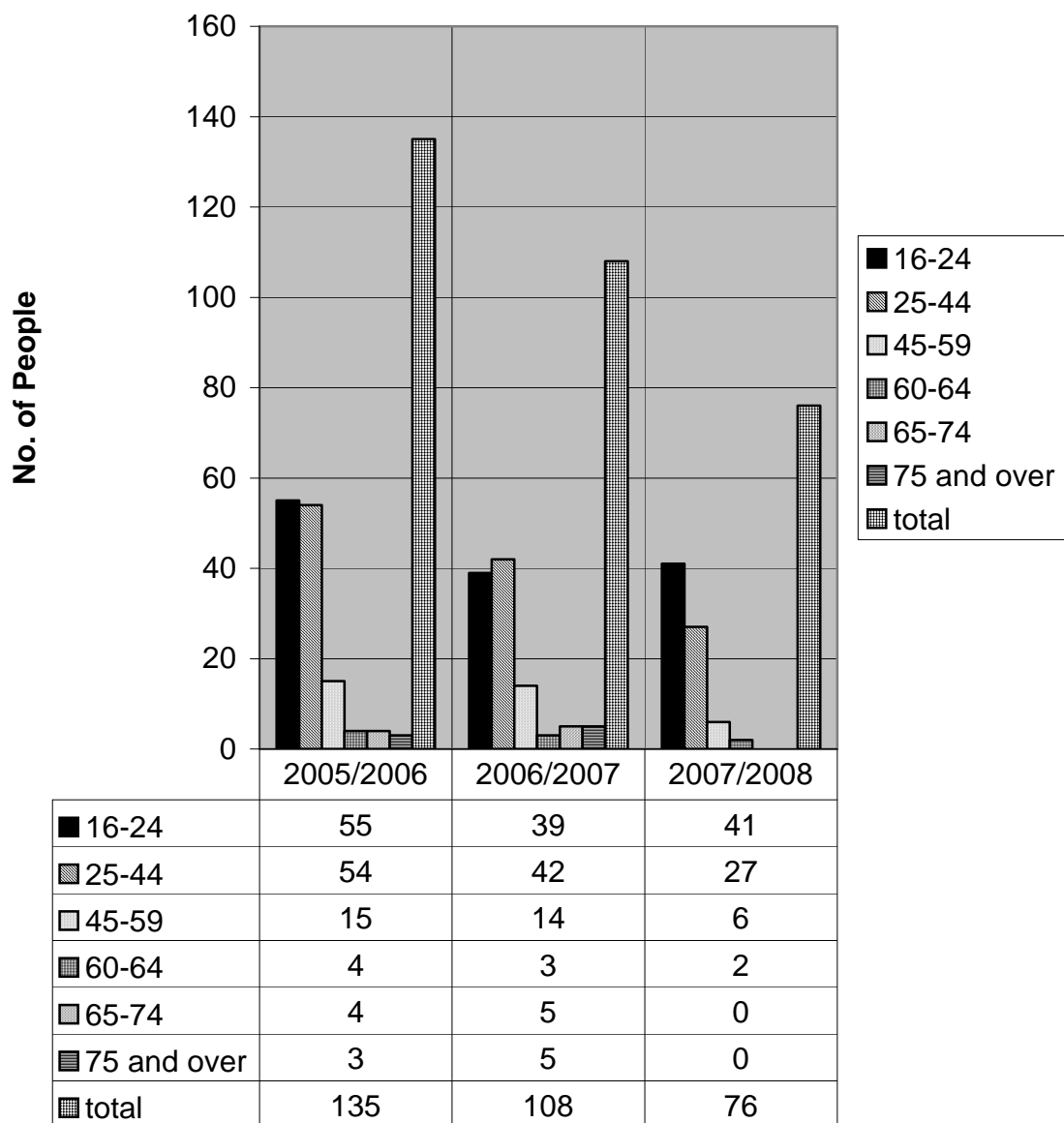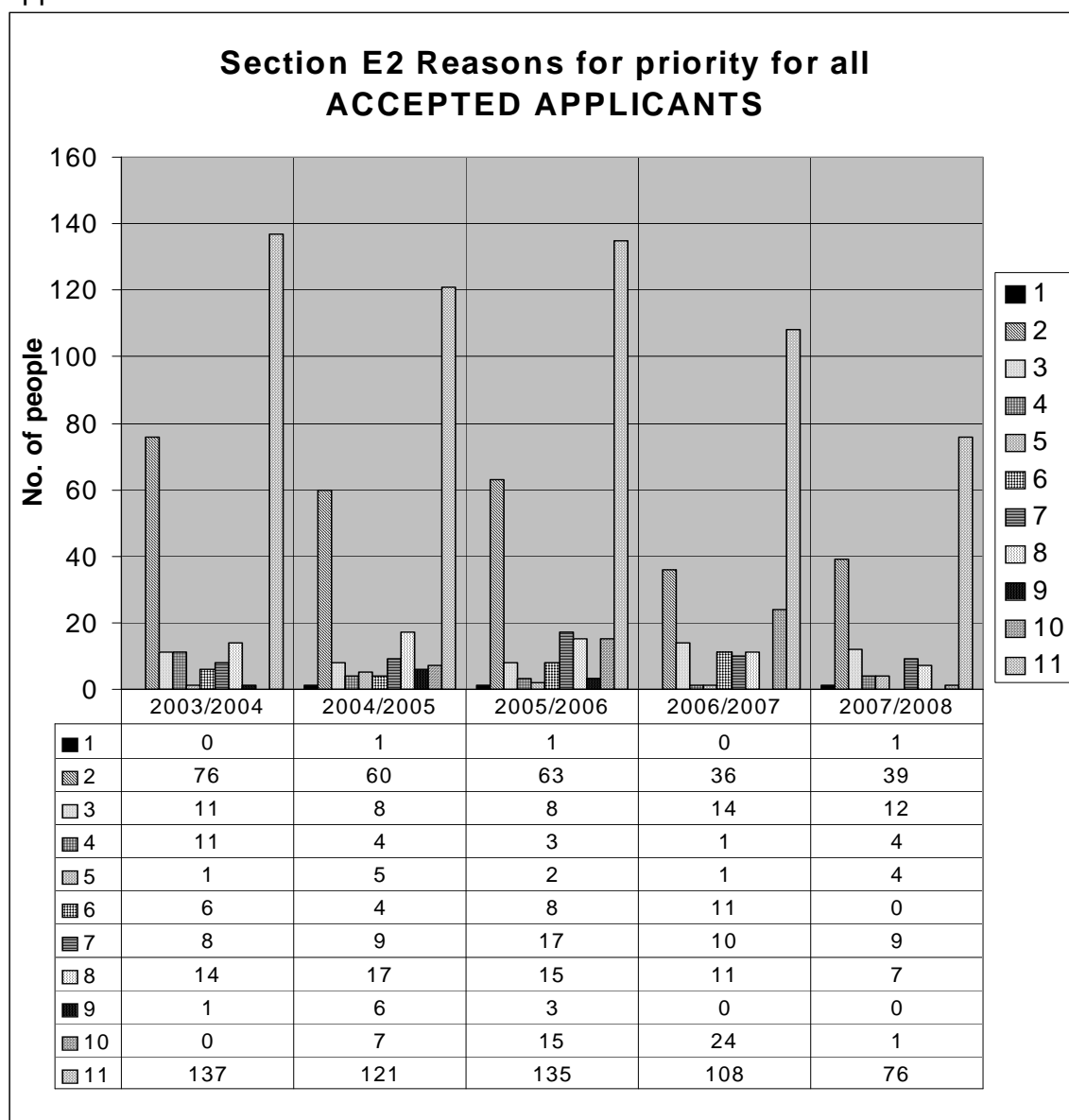
1   Emergency, fire, flood, etc
     Applicants with children (there is a further breakdown for number of children in
2   family)
3   Pregnant women
4   Applicants age 16/17
5   Applicant age 18 - 21 and formerly been "in care"
6   Old age
7   Physical Disability
8   Mental illness
     Other Special reason - drugs, alcohol, former asylum seeker,
9   other
10   Applicant vulnerable due to having been in care, armed forces, custody, fled home due to violence
11   Totals

Section E3:Reasons causing homeless for all ACCEPTED APPLICANTS

	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
■1	41	27	31	25	16
▨2	14	11	11	12	5
☐3	13	13	12	16	3
▦4	18	26	25	26	12
▧5	5	6	3	4	4
▦6	6	4	4	1	3
▨7	2	1	1	1	0
☐8	21	20	34	15	13
▨9	0	0	0	1	0
▨10	3	5	5	3	7
▨11	0	8	9	4	13
■12	137	121	135	108	76
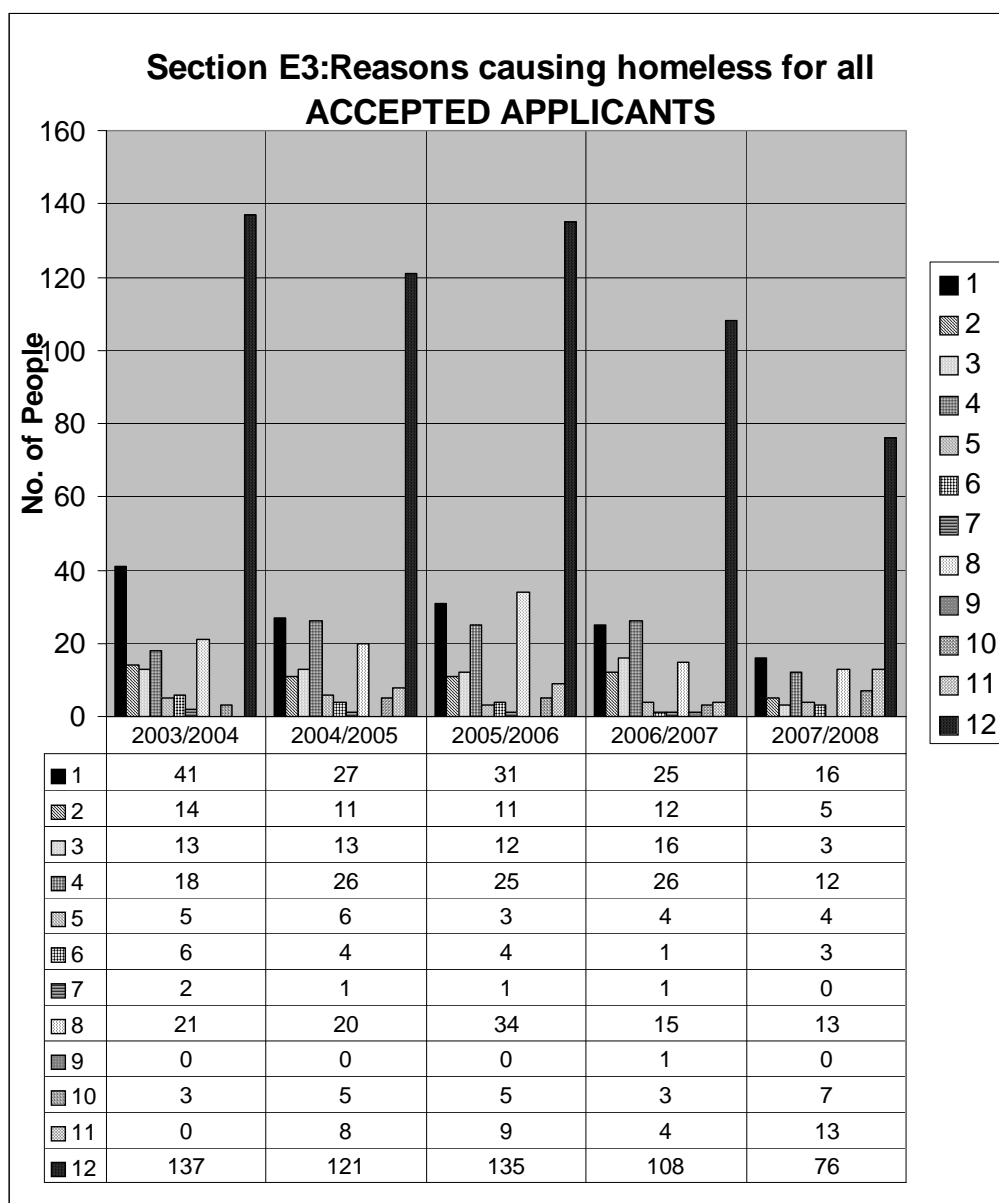
1 Parents no longer willing to accommodate
2 Other relatives no longer willing to accommodate
3 Non-violent relationship breakdown
4 Violence
5 Harassment
6 Mortgage Arrears
7 Rent arrears (Council, Housing Association, Private Sector dwellings)
8 Loss of rented/tied accomm due to termination of assured Shorthold tenancy or reasons other than
9 Required to leave accommodation provided by Home Office
10 Left institution or Local Authority care (Prison, Hospital, Left other institution or LA care
11 Other reasons for loss of last settled home (Left HM Forces, emergency, sleeping rough, hostel, fro
12 Totals

**E6: Applicant households accommodated by authority.
This is a SNAPSHOT taken on the last day of each quarter
and gives an indication of trend. This includes ALL
APPLICANTS regardless of whether a duty has been
accepted or is pending enquires**
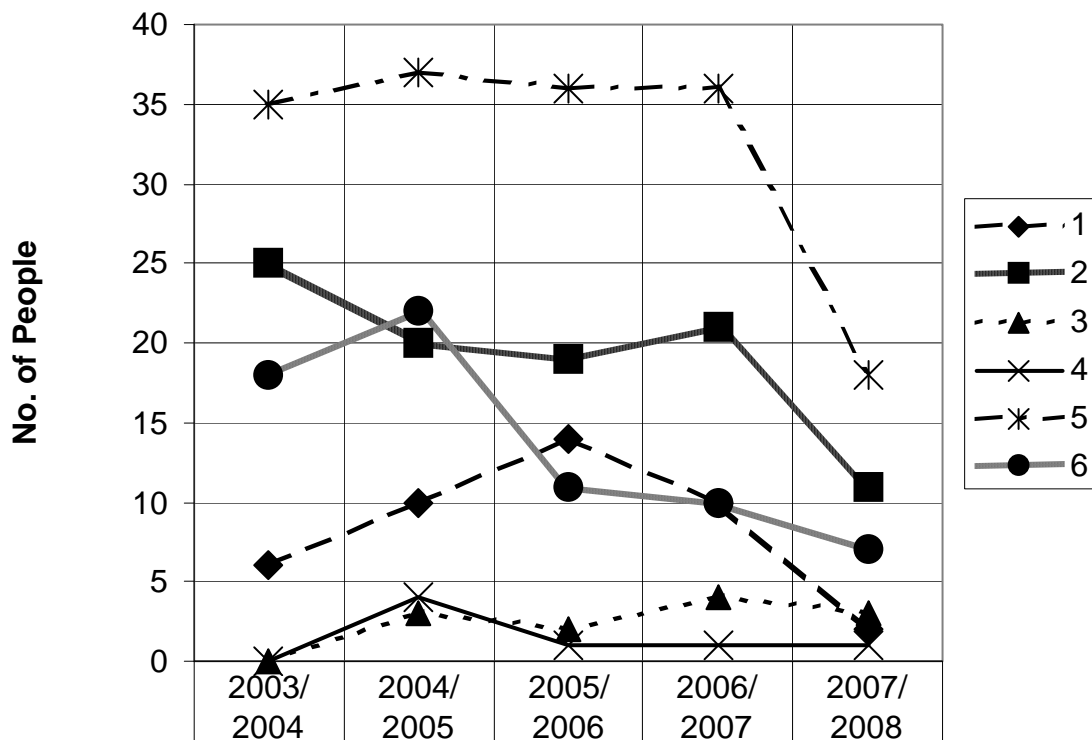
	2003/2004	2004/2005	2005/2006	2006/2007	2007/2008
1	6	10	14	10	2
2	25	20	19	21	11
3	0	3	2	4	3
4	0	4	1	1	1
5	35	37	36	36	18
6	18	22	11	10	7

1   Bed & Breakfast
2   Family Hostel
3   Women's Refuge
4   Council Stock
5   Total
6   Homeless at Home

HOMELESSNESS SURVEY RESULTS

1. How did you find out about the Housing Options Service?

Website	0
Reception	1
Letting Agent	0
Support Worker	2
Friend	7
Solicitor	0
Landlord	0
Relative	2
Other Council Section	2
CAB	0
Local Councillor	2
Social Worker	0
Estate Agent	0
Other Stated	5
	a) Probation Service
	b) Shelter @ H.M.P Lindholme prior to release from prison
	c) CCCS Website
	d) Connexions
	e) Our Selves

2. Did you see an options officer?

Same Day	5
Within 3 days	4
Within 1 week	5
Within 1 month	0
Can't remember	6

3. Do you think the Council could have done more to prevent your homelessness?

Yes	8
No	12

Comments from clients who answered yes.

* I want to move into a hostel in Coventry

* You could have helped me find somewhere to live, all that was offered was £500 bond scheme or 4 weeks in the homeless

* We weren't made homeless due to your help which prevented us being made homeless

* They didn't have to take away the last flat because they said that I was not living there, but I was, but there was no furniture and I was on crutches after accident and I stayed with a friend awaiting decision on community care grant and you boarded me up and took my flat off me

* A bit more thoughtful not offered hostel

* A place to live in my own town

* I am still homeless staying with friends

4. How satisfied in general were you with the service offered?

	Helpfulness & attitude of staff

V. Satisfied	12
F. Satisfied	2
Neither sat or dissat	2
F. Dissatisfied	0
V. Dissatisfied	3
Don't know - N/A	1
	Quality of Advice & Assistance given
V. Satisfied	11
F. Satisfied	3
Neither sat or dissat	2
F. Dissatisfied	0
V. Dissatisfied	4
Don't know - N/A	0
	Explanation of Homelessness Legislation & Procedures (Law)
V. Satisfied	10
F. Satisfied	1
Neither sat or dissat	3
F. Dissatisfied	1
V. Dissatisfied	3
Don't know - N/A	2
	Explanation of types of temp. accommodation available
V. Satisfied	9
F. Satisfied	3
Neither sat or dissat	3
F. Dissatisfied	2
V. Dissatisfied	2
Don't know - N/A	1
	Explanation of the Housing register (Waiting list)
V. Satisfied	8
F. Satisfied	3
Neither sat or dissat	3
F. Dissatisfied	0
V. Dissatisfied	5
Don't know - N/A	1

5. Was the info given to you clear & easy to understand?

Yes	15
No	4

Appendix 7

**HOMELESSNESS SURVEY
TEMPORARY ACCOMMODATION RESULTS**

1 Were you placed in temp. Acc?

Yes	14
No	1

2. Which type of temp. acc were you placed in?

B & B	6
W/Illiffe/J/Nichols	8
Other hostel	1

3. Were/Are you able to continue your employment or education?

Yes	5
No	6

4. Were/Are your children able to remain at the same school?

Yes	5
No	4

5. Were/Are you able to continue to receive family support?

Yes	11
No	3

6.Could/Can you afford the accommodation?

Yes	12
No	2

7. Was/Is the accommodation safe and clean?

Yes	11
No	3

8. Were/Are the kitchen/Bathroom facilities adequate?

Yes	13
No	2

9. Was/Is the car parking adequate?

Yes	10
No	3

10. Was adequate property storage & removal arranged for you if requested?

Yes	7
No	6

11. Have you received adequate support from housing options officers whilst in temp acc?

Yes	9
No	5

12. Do you feel you were/have been kept up to date with the process of your application?

Yes	10
No	5

13. Were you offered tenancy support at anytime during the process?

Yes	7
No	6

14. Did you take up this offer of support?

Yes	7
No	5

SCRUTINY COMMISSION – 27 NOVEMBER 2008

REPORT OF HEAD OF CORPORATE AND SCRUTINY SERVICES
RE: ANTI POVERTY STRATEGY – INTERIM REPORT

_____

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To provide an update to members of the work commissioned on behalf of the Commission to inform and scope an anti poverty strategy for Hinckley and Bosworth.

2.   **RECOMMENDATION**

That Scrutiny Commission

(1)   Notes and endorse the work undertaken to date and the future planned actions in paragraphs 3 and 4.

(2)   Comments on the report, the proposals and provide input into the development of the strategy.

3.   **BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT**

3.1   The need for a review into income deprivation within the borough of Hinckley and Bosworth was identified in 2006/7 by the Scrutiny Commission. A decision was therefore made to include it in the Commission's work programme.

3.2   **The Driver**

The Commission's objective for the review was to improve the quality of life of people living in poverty in the area. This remains a primary concern heightened by the current economic downturn.

3.3   **The Approach**

Two reports have been commissioned and completed to date.

3.4   Matters of Fact Research Consultancy reported in April 2007, they aimed to define income deprivation and understand the geography of income deprivation within the Borough.

3.5   The report concluded that the most common definition of poverty in economically advanced societies is a household income that is 60% or less of the average household income.

3.6   It also identified that Hinckley and Bosworth was 275th most deprived in England out of 354, however there were certain pockets of the Borough which were particularly deprived areas. These have now been identified as Priority Neighbourhoods.

3.7 The second report aimed to develop local strategies and policies to address the situations arising from local income deprivation. The report highlights best practice approaches and describes particular case studies which have demonstrated success. This work was carried out by CI Research and reported in February 2008.

3.8 The report concluded by identifying recommendations to take the matter forward. Scrutiny Commission endorsed this approach. The recommendations focussed on working with partners, providing a real and meaningful voice for residents and enhancing the work already undertaken in the Borough.

3.9 The proposed action, endorsed by the Scrutiny Commission earlier this year was to establish a working group to take forward the conclusions of the studies and develop local strategies an policies to address income deprivation in the Borough.

3.10 Following an initial Stakeholder Workshop bringing together members, officers, CI Research, the voluntary sector, CAB, Job Centre plus and the faith communities it was agreed that Scrutiny would commission a further review to scope an anti poverty strategy, brining areas of best practice to the table which could then be informed by initiatives and actions currently being addressed in the Borough by all agencies and identifying where these could be more joined up to offer even more support.

3.11 It was agreed that Scrutiny Commission would be responsible for the establishment of a working group and get a strategy to a stage whereby it could be forwarded for approval by the Executive and the initiatives taken forward with the support of key Partners and Agencies throughout the Borough.

3.12 **The Next Steps - Timetable**

27 October 2008 – Stakeholders Workshop
1 November 2008 – CI Research commissioned
12 November 2008 – Anti Poverty Strategy Workshop – HBBC Staff
19 November 2008 – Initial report from CI Research
27 November 2008 – Report to Scrutiny Commission
11 December 2008 – 2nd Stakeholder Workshop
12 February 2008 – Scrutiny Commission Report draft Anti Poverty Strategy

4.1 **Initial Findings**

The Stakeholders who attended the workshop were keen to see a strategy developed and increase partnership working. There were a number of initiatives which were identified which can be expanded to offer further support to those in need.

4.2 The staff workshop and brainstorm identified current initiatives and best practice which can be captured and rolled out to offer a more holistic approach to tackling poverty.

4.3 CI research has offered a comprehensive review of current strategies, looking at who should be involved in the process, how strategies are developed, particularly in terms of consultation and allocation of responsibilities and more particularly the focus and format of anti poverty strategies.

5. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

6. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

7. **CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS**

This report and review contributes directly to the Corporate Aim of a thriving economy and to the corporate value of providing support to those who need it most.

8. **CONSULTATION**

Stakeholders across voluntary sector, faith communities and key agencies.

8. **RISK IMPLICATIONS**

Management of significant (Net Red) Risks		
Risk Description	Mitigating actions	Owner
Failing to challenge and offer recommendations leading to the community not recognising the importance of the Scrutiny Commissions opportunity to develop policy	Finalise report Offer Recommendations Publicise the report and successes	L Horton

9. **RURAL IMPLICATIONS**

The review is of poverty and income deprivation for the whole community of Hinckley and Bosworth. The strategy will address rural and urban parts of the authority.

10. **CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS**

None

Background papers: Scrutiny Commission papers and reports associated with Income Deprivation April 2007 and February 2008.

Contact Officer: Louisa Horton x 5859

A Borough to be proud of

Hinckley & Bosworth
Borough Council

Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme 2008/2009

ISSUE 2008/05: November 2008

Welcome to Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council's Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme, which sets out the work to be carried out by the Council's Scrutiny Commission during 2008/2009.

A structured, focussed and supported scrutiny process, which dovetails into the Council's wider democratic, performance and financial management processes, provides for an evidence based approach to challenging and developing the Council's long term vision and priorities and ensuring that the needs of the Borough's Citizens' are met.

This is the fourth year that we have managed the work of scrutiny through a work programme. Following a review of progress in November 2005, it was proposed that future work programmes be configured into the following categories to better represent all the roles and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Function:

• **Scrutiny Topics –** This includes items of particular interest to overview and scrutiny that can be classified as 'scrutiny topics' to investigate in particular detail.

• **Performance Management Information –** Information provided by the council identifying current performance levels against performance indicators, progress with implementation of business delivery plans, best value reviews and service improvement projects. This is in accordance with the Council's Performance Management Framework.

• **Participation in Policy Development Issues –** These are issues being revised or introduced by the Council or other external organisations. The Overview and Scrutiny Function should be engaged in the development of such matters so that the decision-making body (Executive, Council or external organisation) are informed of all possible views before taking a decision / agreeing a new policy. This will need to be updated in the Council's Constitution.

• **Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations –** The scrutiny committee will review progress with the implementation of previously agreed recommendations.

• **Committee Management Issues –** These include the minutes of previous meetings, progress reports on actions, overview and scrutiny work programmes and development issues for the overview and scrutiny function.

The Work Programme ensures that Scrutiny's work is:
 outcome focussed;
 prioritised accordingly;
 resourced properly; and
 project planned properly.

The Work Programme has been designed to ensure it is a living document and it will be reviewed at each meeting of the Scrutiny Commission, and the Select Committees will also review their sections at each of their meetings, to ensure it remains focussed and relevant.

Councillor Matthew Lay
Chairman of Scrutiny Commission

SCRUTINY COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

1. **Citizens' Panel Consultation Results**
   - Use the results of the survey improving Your Area as a Place to Live and Work to inform priorities and policy.
   - Report on issues identified in the 2007 results of Council Priorities & Budget Spend

2. **Performance Improvement**
   - How the Council proactively manages performance to ensure that issues are addressed in a timely fashion and that there is continuous improvement; and
   - Monitor the quarterly Performance Reports to Executive and the decisions they take.
   - Risk Management

3. **Implementation of Rural Areas Review**
   - Annual progress report on implementation of outcomes.

4. **Review of the Local Strategic Partnership**
   - Monitor the effectiveness of the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Strategic Partnership and how it delivers effective outcomes for the community by provision of performance information

5. **Community Services Strategy for Leicestershire & Rutland**
   - Update on local Health Economy
   - Development of local facilities
   - GP Out of Hours Access

6. **Community Safety Partnership**
   - Quarterly report on progress of Partnership

7. **Equalities Standard**
   - Scrutinise progress on Equalities

SCRUTINY COMMISSION

TIMETABLE

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 27 November 2008						
Function	**Activity/Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**	**External Involvement**
Scrutiny Topics	Progress on key capital projects	Request of Commission	Progress monitoring	Thriving Economy	Deputy Chief Executive	
Performance Management Information						
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
	Environmental Health Enforcement Policy	Scrutinise policy before decision being made	Input into development of policy	Safer and healthier borough	Director of Community and Planning Services	
	Homelessness Strategy Review	Scrutinise strategy before decision being made	Input into development of strategy	Decent, well-managed and affordable homes	Director of Community and Planning Services	

Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations	Section 106 money – update	Update progress since previous report (July 08)	Monitoring of section 106 contributions	Strong and distinctive communities	Executive Member for Planning / Director of Community and Planning Services	
	Flexible Working	Update progress	Identify way forward	Strong and distinctive communities	Director of Finance	
	Anti Poverty Strategy	Update progress on creation of strategy		All Corporate Aims	Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review workload for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 8 January 2009						
Function	**Activity/Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**	**External Involvement**
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information						
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations	Community Safety Partnership – 6-monthly update	Monitoring progress of the partnership since the Scrutiny Commission's review	Improved partnership working	Strong and distinctive communities	Community Safety Manager	Community Safety Partnership
	Section 106 money – update	Update progress since previous report (July 08)	Monitoring of section 106 contributions	Strong and distinctive communities	Executive Member for Planning / Director of Community and Planning Services	
Committee Management issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 12 February 2009						
Function	**Activity/Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**	**External Involvement**
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information	Performance Improvement – End of year status	Monitor the Annual Performance Report to Executive	Ensuring that the Executive delivers improvement to Council Services and addresses underperformance appropriately	All Corporate Aims	Relevant Executive Members and Heads of Service	
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services / Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations						
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 2 April 2008						
Function	**Activity/Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**	**External Involvement**
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information						
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services / Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations						
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

Scrutiny Commission - Thursday 7 May 2009						
Function	**Activity/Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**	**External Involvement**
Scrutiny Topics						
Performance Management Information						
Participation in Policy Development Issues	Review of Forward Plan to identify items	Scrutiny of Executive decisions	Identification of reports for review ahead of decision making	All Corporate Aims	Executive member for Corporate Services Head of Corporate & Scrutiny Services	
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations						
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme	Review work load for the year	Agreed forward work programme	All Corporate Aims		

COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

1. **Programme for each key frontline service**
   - Monitor improvements and delivery against our stated objectives under the Corporate Performance Plan as applied to key front line services in the community.
     - Groundcare, Refuse, Recycling, Street Cleansing and Neighbourhood Wardens
     - Environmental Health (including Pest Control)
     - Housing Benefits & revenues
     - Housing
     - Parks & Open Spaces and Leisure Centre
     - Development Control & Local Development Framework

2. **Performance Management information – Performance indicators**
   - Scrutinise performance
   - Data Quality
   - Attendance Management

3. **Environmental Sustainability**
   - Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

4. **Cultural Events**
   - Scrutinise successes of events and promote further activity/events in rural areas

5. **Staff Survey**
   - Monitor Progress on actions to address issues of concern

COUNCIL SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Timetable

Council Services Select Committee – Thursday 18 December 2008					
Function	**Subject**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**
Scrutiny Topics	Programme for each key frontline service: Housing	Monitor improvements and delivery against the councils aims stated under the Corporate Plan	Better quality services and more community focused services	Decent, well managed and affordable housing	Head of Service (Housing)
Performance Management Information	Sickness Absence	Monitor improvements as a result of the Attendance Management Framework	Improved attendance of employees	All Corporate Aims	Head of Corporate and Scrutiny Services
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient work flow for the CSSC processes	Achieve Work Programme content & schedule agreed by Members	All Corporate Aims	Relevant Executive Members and supporting Officers

Council Services Select Committee – Thursday 29 January 2009					
Function	**Subject**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**
Scrutiny Topics	Programme for each key frontline service: Parks & Open Spaces and Leisure Centre	Monitor improvements and delivery against the councils aims stated under the Corporate Plan	Better quality services and more community focused services	Cleaner & Greener neighbourhoods and Safer & healthier borough	Deputy Chief Executive
Performance Management Information	Performance Improvement – End of year status	Monitor the Annual Performance Report to Executive	Ensuring that the Executive delivers improvement to Council Services and addresses underperformance appropriately.	All Corporate Aims	Relevant Executive Members and Heads of Service
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient work flow for the CSSC processes	Achieve Work Programme content & schedule agreed by Members	All Corporate Aims	Relevant Executive Members and supporting Officers

Council Services Select Committee – Thursday 19 March 2009					
Function	**Subject**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**
Scrutiny Topics	Programme for each key frontline service: Development Control, Building Control & Local Development Framework	Monitor improvements and delivery against the councils aims stated under the Corporate Plan	Better quality services and more community focused services	Thriving economy and Strong & Distinctive Communities	Director of Community & Planning Services
	Annual Review of Children & Young People's Strategy	Request of Scrutiny Commission	Monitor progress against the strategy	Safer & Healthier Borough	Deputy Chief Executive
Performance Management Information					
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient work flow for the CSSC processes	Achieve Work Programme content & schedule agreed by Members	All Corporate Aims	Relevant Executive Members and supporting Officers

FINANCE AND AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009

1. **Internal Audit Work Programme**
   - Consider each Internal Audit Block and recommendations and ensure that recommendations are implemented and followed up

2. **Financial and Budget Monitoring**
   - Prudential Indicator Report (March 2009)
   - Treasury management Report (March 2009)
   - Final Accounts 2007/08 (June 2008)
   - Budget Strategy 2009/10 (August 2008)
   - Budget Proposals (February 2009)
   - Final Council Tax Report (February 2009)

3. **Corporate Management**
   - Risk Management (May 2008 and November 2008)
   - Annual Audit and Inspection Letter (March 2009)
   - ISA260 Annual Audit Letter (September 2008)

FINANCE AND AUDIT SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Timetable

Finance and Audit Services Select Committee – Monday 22 December 2008					
Function	**Activity/ Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**
Scrutiny Topics	Data Quality Assessment – update	Request of Select Committee to monitor improvement on areas of 'adequate performance'	Monitor performance improvement	All Corporate Aims	
Performance Management Information	Audit Block 3	Ensure findings are considered	Recommendations are implemented	All Corporate Aims	Internal Audit
	Capital Programme 2008/09 to 2011/12	Backbench input to Capital Programme	Ensure the Executive provides good value improving services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
	Progress report on Revenue Budget and Council Tax Proposals	Ensure Value for Money and allow backbench input into the Budget and Council Tax setting process	Ensure the Executive delivers good value improving services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient workflow for the FASC process	Achieve Work Programme Content and schedule agreed by members		Relevant Executive Members and supporting officers

Finance and Audit Services Select Committee – Monday 2 February 2009					
Function	**Activity/ Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**
Scrutiny Topics					
Performance Management Information	Audit Block 4	Ensure findings are considered	Recommendations are implemented	All Corporate Aims	Internal Audit
	Revenue Budget and Council Tax Proposals to include Capital Programme, HRA budget and Review of Fees and Charges	Ensure Value for Money and allow backbench input into the Budget and Council Tax setting process	Ensure the Executive delivers good value improving services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
	Support Services Charging methodology	To ensure most appropriate methodology is used particularly where Services Charge outside bodies	Proper Support Services Charges are made to end Services	All Corporate Aims	Accountancy Manager
	Budget Monitoring 3 quarter 2008/09	Ensure Value for Money	Ensure the Executive Delivers good value improving services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues					

Finance and Audit Services Select Committee – Monday 16 March 2009					
Function	**Activity/ Objective**	**Reason**	**Desired Outcome**	**Vision, Values and Aims**	**Responsible (member/officer)**
Scrutiny Topics					
Performance Management Information	Audit Block 5	Ensure findings are considered	Recommendations are implemented	All Corporate Aims	Internal Audit
	Prudential Indicators and Treasury management Report	Ensure value for Money	Ensure the Executive delivers good value improving Services	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance/ Accountancy Manager
	Annual Audit and Inspection Letter	Review work of External Auditors	Matters reported by External Auditors are considered by Elected members	All Corporate Aims	Director of Finance
Tracking of implementation with previous recommendations					
Committee Management Issues	Work Programme Review and set programme for 2009/10	Review the Work programme for the year to enable efficient workflow for the FASC process	Achieve Work Programme Content and schedule agreed by members		Relevant Executive Members and supporting officers