

# Portfolio Holder Annual Report

Portfolio: Planning, Regeneration, Economic Development  
and Local Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Pearce

Year: 2012/13

# 1. Executive Summary

1.1 **This Portfolio includes Development Management, Development Plans, Building Control, Economic Development, Town Centre Co-ordination and Strategic Transport. The following is a summary of progress over the last year.**

## Development Management

Progress has been maintained in Development Management. Enforcement colleagues from Redditch Borough Council and Bromsgrove District Council have been working more closely together to increase skills and efficiency and successful enforcement action has occurred in Redditch. The Local Land Charges shared service has commenced and is progressing towards its transformation goals through flexible working, IT improvements and changes to working patterns.

## Development Plans

Considered Core Strategy consultation responses through Planning Advisory Panel and numerous evidence base documents have been completed to support the emerging Local Plan. All evidence, responses to consultation opportunities and information items continually discussed at PAP. Commenced co-ordination of neighbourhood planning / training and workshops.

## Building Control

Following the approval of the individual shared service business case, the creation of North Worcestershire Building Control was formally completed on 1st November 2011. As with Economic Development Unit, this shared service also includes Wyre Forest District Council. Bromsgrove Council is the host Authority.

## Economic Development

Economic Development Unit has been restructured as part of the new North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (EDR) service. The new team will work from offices across North Worcestershire including the Economic Development Unit office at Redditch. The team continue to concentrate on the delivery of the Redditch Economic Development Strategy. The main focus for the year has been establishing the new shared service; integrating into the new business support structures (i.e. the Local Enterprise Partnerships); and establishing high level relationships with strategic businesses. The new team has also successfully launched the business start-up and booster grants schemes for Redditch. The team also continue to operate the street market and the Business Centres, whilst the Regeneration service is working to help bring forward key town centre sites.

## Town Centre

Project team and project plan established for the Church Road Redevelopment with HCA and Worcestershire PCT. Successful Town Centre Events Programme delivered. Projects progressed in the Town Centre Strategy. Town Centre Partnership advancing. Improvements to the War Memorial.

## Transport

Funding secured from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) for Choose How You Move 2: Redditch. Worcestershire County Council funding cuts to bus services managed well and impact minimised in Redditch.

## 2. Performance

### 2.1 Please detail areas of good performance over the past year

#### Development Management

Development Management statistics have been consistently high all year and there has been flexibility of staff into the Development Plans Team and to the Bromsgrove Planning Service. This has resulted in efficiencies. There has been a good level of pre-application advice for a range of applications with increasing Member involvement. Enforcement action has been positive and successful when required. More training for Members has been offered this year in conjunction with Bromsgrove Council.

The Local Land Charges Shared Service has been successfully implemented. Bromsgrove Council is the host.

#### Development Plans

The preparation of the Core Strategy continues with the necessary adaptation of working processes as the new planning system emerges. The information that underpins the emerging plan and the work of the team has resulted in significant and positive input into the Development Management process.

The team continues to deal with a large number of requests for information from the public and hostilities to the emerging plan. There is improved communication links with members of Action Groups (Webheath and Brockhill).

#### Building Control

The Building Control Shared Service, which includes Wyre Forest District Council as well as Bromsgrove Council, has been successfully implemented. Customer feedback questionnaires continue to show very high levels of satisfaction during the difficult transition period from individual authority to shared service working environments. Bromsgrove (host Authority for Building Control shared service) retained the BSI 9002:2008 accreditation after an annual audit and this is now extended to the area of north Worcestershire. The Building Control shared service expanded the number of local working partnerships following the creation of the shared service which brings financial advantages to the service. 100% of all applications have been determined within the target 5 week date. Over 90% of all applications were determined within 3 weeks.

## Economic Development

The Shared Service across North Worcestershire has been successfully implemented and the following are examples of achievements:-

- Organised a Biz Expo in May;
- Organised an MP's Business Question Time event in June;
- Strategic engagement with LEP's;
- Established the Business Leaders' Groups and held three meetings;
- Hosted quarterly FSB networking events at Greenlands Business Centre;
- Carried out a skills survey in partnership with the Worcestershire LEP;
- Launched the New Business Grant;
- Produced new marketing literature;
- Helped to organise a careers fair for young people in years 4, 8 and 10 attended by most schools in Redditch; and
- Organised work experience awards for students who excel in their Year 10 work experience placement.

## Town Centre

As a result of the staff flexibility described above, under Development Management, a Planning Officer is now informally engaged full time in a town centre co-ordinator role. This role attempts to bring a co-ordinated approach to issues in this key area of the borough. The town centre co-ordination ranges from high level policy development to dealing with specific sites or events. The following gives a flavour:-

- LSTF Funding Secured for the Town Centre and the Borough;
- Wide representation of stakeholders on the Town Centre Partnership;
- 3 Sub groups established for the TCP with website / action and business plan underway;

- Events delivered: St. Georges Day, Christmas Light Switch on and Carol Concert;
- Successful working relationships with the Police, Kingfisher Centre, St. Stephens Church with regular meeting and joint working where possible;
- Train Station Landscaping, improved lighting and addition of murals to the project in conjunction with Community Safety.

### Transport

- £3.5 Million secured from the Local Sustainable Transport Fund for Choose How You Move 2: Redditch. The project will seek to develop a sustainable transport culture in Redditch by moving people from private transport onto more sustainable modes. The project will run for 3 years (2011 - 2014);
- Worcestershire County Council funding cuts to bus services managed well directly by the Portfolio Holder and impact minimised in Redditch.

## 2.2 Please detail key performance indicators that are of concern

<b>Key Performance Indicators - Areas of Concern</b>			
<b>PI Ref</b>	<b>PI Description</b>	<b>Explanation and / or corrective action</b>	<b>Impact on budget</b>
	Grants to Manufacturers.	This grant scheme was due to be run in conjunction with the Manufacturers Advisory Service but their role nationally has been under-review and the scheme has not been developed.	Underspend c £4,000.  Some of this budget has been used to fund new business grants which have been oversubscribed.

### 3. Revenue Budget

#### 3.1 Explain problem areas - what has been done, what is planned to be done - impact on priorities, key deliverables

Revenue Budget - Areas of Concern			
Budget Code	Description	Explanation and / or corrective action	Impact on performance and priorities
0760	The service is not expected to fully cover costs for Building Control fee earning work however income levels are higher than 2011/2012.	This is essentially due to the recession and will hopefully be addressed under the North Worcestershire Building Control Shared Service. Economic forecast for the construction industry in 2012 remains poor.	No impact upon performance. The creation of a shared service will produce savings as outlined within the approved Shared Service business cases.
0760	Redditch Borough has more unauthorised development than adjoining authorities.	Review of unauthorised work and procedures under the North Worcestershire Building Control Shared Service.	Marketing the service such as writing to applicants of planning applications to raise awareness to avoid unauthorised work and improve income.
0090 4733 P015	Business Start Up Grant.	The existing budget (which was partially matched by WCC) was spent in ca. 3 months.	

## 4. Capital Budget

### 4.1 Explain problem areas - what has been done, what is planned to be done - impact on priorities, key deliverables

<b>Revenue Budget - Areas of Concern</b>			
<b>Budget Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Explanation and / or corrective action</b>	<b>Impact on performance and priorities</b>
		No requirements have been identified currently, however changes in working practices resulting from transformation may lead to capital bids later in the year 2012/13 related to IT.	

## 5. The Year Ahead

### 5.1 Please detail the Portfolio Holder's main areas of focus in 2012/13:-

#### Development Management

- Development Management transformation and possible advances towards shared service;
- More involvement in pre-application discussions, especially on large / strategic sites.

#### Development Plans

- Amend the Core Strategy to take into account changes at the national level, so that a Local Plan can be progressed;
- Continue to gather information, research and evidence to support the Local Plan;
- Revise development targets for the Borough and express them in the Local Plan;
- Focus on Community Infrastructure Levy work at a Worcestershire level and an Infrastructure Delivery plan aligned with the Local Plan.

#### Building Control

- Implementation of the first Building Control shared service business plan. This includes the commencement of diversification of the service together with preparation for mobile working and improvements in customer focused methods of working.

#### Economic Development

- Continuing to develop strategic business engagement;
- Establish and implement a North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration Strategy;
- Town Centre Site concept feasibility(s);



- Establish business case for key investment sites.

#### Town Centre

- Continue the progress of implementing the Town Centre Strategy key projects particularly Church Road and Edward Street Sites;
- Continue work with the Town Centre Partnership through their action plan and ensure events are continued in the Town Centre.

#### Transport

- Continued involvement and support for the Choose How You Move 2: Redditch scheme and involvement in citizen led bus issues.