



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy 2007

This document sets out the detail behind the Council's Private Sector Renewal Strategy that is summarised within the BDC's 'HOUSING STRATEGY 2006 – 2011- Unlocking the door to meeting housing needs in Bromsgrove District' under Priority 2 Improving the Quality and Availability of Private Sector Housing.

1. Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council's overall vision is *'Working together to build a district where people are proud to live and work, through community leadership and excellent services'*. From this the Strategic Housing Section provides a co-ordinated approach to improving the quality of life for everyone living in the District. A specific vision of *'Making best use of existing accommodation by improving quality of accommodation and addressing the imbalanced housing market through the provision of more affordable housing.'* which has been devised by the Strategic Housing Section which is aimed at addressing the objectives identified in the Community Plan. This vision identifies the need for the Local Authority to balance the housing market and work to meet the housing needs of the District through the Councils Corporate Objectives -

- Regeneration - which includes Housing and the Town Centre as priorities.
- Improvement – focusing upon Customer Service
- Sense of Community and Wellbeing
- Environment

Consultation with local residents, stakeholders and businesses was fundamental to the production of the Bromsgrove Community Plan 2003 – 2013, identifying issues and concerns of the community. A key issue is the need to provide Decent Homes to vulnerable households with housing need. The Council therefore recognises the need to assist some residents in maintaining their homes. The Community Plan therefore identifies the development of the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency as a key aim in improving social care, health and social wellbeing within the District.

The development and implementation of a balanced private sector housing market has become increasingly important as poor quality housing can have an impact on the health of occupants and on the quality of life in an area. The Council's Housing Strategy 2006 - 2011 recognises the importance of improving housing quality in all tenures, improving energy efficiency, eliminating fuel poverty, bringing empty properties up to a Decent Standard and back into use.

The responsibility for maintaining privately owned homes rests with the owners. Where owners can afford to carry out repairs and maintenance through their own resources they are encouraged to do so. However, the Council is able to assist lower income homeowners with repairs especially where this benefits health or allows people to remain in their own home.

Bromsgrove District Council aims to improve the standard of accommodation within the District to enable all residents remain in their existing property for a longer period in safety and maintaining independence. Providing and enabling properties to reach a Decent Standard reduces the pressures on Social Housing, Social Services, NHS/PCT pressures.

2. Bromsgrove District Council's Approach to Housing

The Private Sector Housing Strategy recognises that in order to improve the housing stock Bromsgrove District Council has to embody the following broad range of Central and Local Government Legislation, Policies and Strategies:

2.1 Central Government Approach to Housing

The Housing Act 2004 - This key piece of legislation is instrumental in improving the housing stock through the implementation of the Housing Health and Safety Rating System and Decent Homes Standard which provides advice and enforcement tools to remedy poor housing conditions.

The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance)(England and Wales) Order (2002) - encourages a more innovative approach and gives local authorities greater local control over how they work to meet local housing condition needs.

The Housing Green Paper – A Decent Home for All (2000) – This paper introduces a number of government priorities including: sustainable home ownership, promotion of the private rented sector and raising the standard of accommodation across all tenures.

Supporting People – is a government initiative that introduced centralised funding, multi agency strategic planning and commissioning of support services to vulnerable people with special needs. This is designed to promote peoples independence and ability to remain in their homes and community.

Worcestershire Supporting People Draft Strategy – identifies the importance of developing a Home Improvement Agency as a vehicle for the delivery of low level housing support to older and vulnerable clients.

The National Framework for Older People and Integrated Services for Older People - relies on support to assist older people to live safely and healthily in their own homes.

The Housing and Health Agenda – highlights the high cost to the health service of delayed discharge of patients from hospital often due to the condition of their home or the urgent need for adaptations.

Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 – lead to Bromsgrove District Council developing an Energy Efficiency and Affordable Warmth Policy to ensure that Government targets are met with the aim of eradicating fuel poverty in all UK homes by 2016 and increase Energy Efficiency within the District by 30% by 2010.

Sustainable Communities: Building For the Future Plan (Feb 2003) – This paper introduces the governments new approach to maintaining and encouraging thriving communities where people want to live and have access to decent and affordable homes.

West Midlands Regional Housing Strategy – This has been formulated by the Regional Housing Board who are responsible for the allocation of housing funding. The key aim is to address the condition of housing in the District through advice and enforcement action to ensure that dwellings meet Decent Homes standard.

The Worcestershire Draft Code of Practise for Home Adaptations for people with disabilities - has been adopted by Bromsgrove Council which identifies best practises when dealing with Disabled Facility Grant. It is also essential in identifying what is expected from both the Local Authority and partner agencies.

The Council's Housing Strategy Statement, recognises that whilst the overall condition of the housing stock is better than the national average, there is a need to address the problem of people on low incomes who cannot afford to maintain their properties in good repair.

2.2 Bromsgrove District Councils House Conditions and Needs

Nationally, the level of home ownership is high in comparison with the rest of Europe with the ratio of rented to privately owned housing constantly changing. Bromsgrove has a higher than national average private sector housing stock and below average social and private rented sector housing. The Right To Buy scheme has had a significant influence upon the private sector housing in Bromsgrove which continues to be very active with over 3,000 Council dwellings having been sold since 1980.

The responsibility for the maintenance of private sector dwellings rests with the owner-occupiers. Making sure owner occupiers are living in decent homes is a challenge for Bromsgrove District Councils who identifies it as its second Strategic Housing priority. Figures released by the ODPM reveal that 12% of homeowners aged 70 or over would not be able to pay for major repairs to their homes. Both Central and Local Government are therefore now addressing the requirement to make housing sustainable in order to address the housing needs of the district.

In order for Housing Services to effectively and efficiently deliver good value for money services, it is essential that the Authority accurately understands the housing

needs of the District. The Council therefore commissioned a House Condition and Housing Needs Survey (2004) to increase its understanding of the housing needs, conditions and markets within the Bromsgrove District. The surveys set meaningful objectives and provided structural and socio-economic information from a review of 4% of private and Council owned dwellings (now currently owned by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust) across the District to provide a rational basis for a future investment strategy to ensure that housing markets operate in a way that meets the needs of the community.

The survey aimed to determine the extent and severity of disrepair of dwellings within the District, with particular regard to the elderly and disabled, shared occupation, poor energy conservation and the existence of asbestos. The survey also identified the cost of remedying substandard conditions and Energy Efficiency issues. Special attention was given to all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) within the District, which underwent assessment as part of the survey. The findings of the survey have been used in developing a prioritised action programme to bring HMO's up to a Decent Standard.

The following section therefore sets out the housing needs of the private sector and the proposals and initiatives the Council have developed to address the issues identified. The associated Assistance Policy (Appendix I) sets out criteria for Council intervention in the private sector, taking into consideration the powers contained within the Regulatory Reform Order. This assistance is based upon the following evidence obtained from the House Condition and Housing Needs Survey (2004).

2.3 House Condition Survey Findings

The key findings of the report are as follows: -

1. A total of 749 dwellings (2.1%) of the housing stock surveyed were found to be unfit, this is concentrated within the older housing, and below the National average of 7.5%, it is therefore broken down into the following sectors: -
 - **Public Sector** - None of the public sector dwellings were found to be unfit.
 - **Private Rented Sector** - 8.8% of private rented sector dwellings were found to be unfit, however this is again lower than the National average of 19.3%.
2. A total of 1513 (4.2%) properties surveyed were found to be in substantial disrepair, this is further broken down into the following sectors: -
 - **Public Sector** – 134 (3.8%) of the properties surveyed were found to be in substantial disrepair.
 - **Private Sector** - 1379 (4.2%) of the private housing stock was found to be in substantial disrepair
3. Of the 749 dwellings identified as being 'unfit' a total of 122 (16.3%) are occupied by households over 65 year old and on low incomes.
4. 8079 (25%) of the private sector dwellings are occupied by people aged 65 and over. Approximately 4865 (58%) of these households are in need of immediate repair works carried out to their homes.

5. It was estimated that 6070 (17%) households contain at least one disabled person.
6. The average Energy Efficiency (SAP rating) for the dwellings in Bromsgrove District Council is 52 which is slightly above the national average (49). However, 79.4% of homes failing the decent homes standard are as a result of lack of sufficient thermal comfort.

2.4 House Condition Survey Recommendations

- The survey included an assessment of the Councils own housing stock which has since been addressed through Large Scale Voluntary Transfer. This housing stock is now owned and managed by a Residential Social Landlord (RSL); Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT). The Large Scale Voluntary Transfer enabled sufficient funding to be made available to bring all former Council owned social housing in the District up to a Decent Standard.
- The survey recognised the need for discretionary grant assistance to be introduced to and target the most vulnerable households in order to assist those in the greatest of need. Bromsgrove District Councils key aim is to address standards of properties, improve housing in the ownership of vulnerable people and to bring back into use vacant houses and vacant space above shops.
- The survey indicated that demographic evidence suggests that the demand for Home Repairs Assistance and Disabled Facilities Grants will increase due to the aging population within Bromsgrove. The authority has therefore worked in partnership with neighbouring authorities and Supporting People to develop and fund the North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency which assists the elderly, disabled, and vulnerable people in repairing and improving their homes.
- The final recommendation is that the Council should undertake a further House Condition and Energy Survey in five years time, and every five years thereafter (next House Condition Survey due 2009, a budget has already been allocated for this action).

3. Private Rented Sector Assistance

The Authority recognises the role it has to play in maximising the potential of the private rented sector in meeting demand for good quality rented accommodation. The private sector housing team therefore aims to inspect all private rented accommodation within 5 years, during this interaction, the Councils key objective are to encourage local landlords to improve the quality of rented accommodation through the following methods: -

- Property inspections - essential in providing advice to landlords on improving their properties in order to bring them up to a Decent Standard and in line with the Housing Health & Safety Rating System (as determined by the Housing Act 2004).
- Landlord handbook - instrumental in providing landlords with advice on the house conditions required in Bromsgrove District prior to inspections being carried out. (Draft at present)
- Advice leaflets - due to become available to both landlords and homeowners, these will detail how to undertake basic repair works to their property.
- Landlord Grants - available (subject to funding) in order to enable landlords are in compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 and the Housing Health & Safety Rating System 2004.
- Access to housing initiatives and schemes are available to landlords that are willing to work with the Local Authority in order to address housing need, homelessness and housing standards. Properties will be inspected and improved (if necessary) the Council will then recommend tenants for the property and provide support to both the tenant and landlord. Other benefits may also include fast tracking of housing benefit claims, providing the first months rent and/or providing the bond for the tenant, fast tracking to other landlord grants.
- For landlords that are in non compliance with the Housing Act 2004 and are unwilling to work with the Council to achieve compliance, the Local Authority has enforcement powers which are available to implement in the form of various notices, which will enforce landlords to undertake works at the property. Enforcement powers include Hazard Awareness Notices, Improvement Notices, Prohibition Orders, Emergency Prohibition Orders, Clearance Areas, Demolition Order etc. Further information regarding enforcement can be found within the Enforcement Policy.

3.1 Landlords Forum

Bromsgrove District Councils Private Sector Housing Team's main aim is to work in conjunction with landlords and have therefore developed the **BDC Private Landlords' Forum**. Initially established in October 1998, it has grown into a multi-agency forum which has enabled the Council to develop a closer working relationship with the private sector. All known private landlords are contacted by an annual landlord newsletter, which highlights forthcoming events at the forum. The

forum is an essential route for consulting landlords and agencies on the development of documents such as the landlord handbook, the identification of landlords training needs and provides support and information through a range of partner agencies such as the fire service, support services and the Housing Benefit Dept. The Forum assists private landlords to build up a catalogue of guidance and training to raise the standard and supply of accommodation. The Forum meets annually and speakers (e.g. Basement, CAB, Centrepoint, National Landlord Association, WEEAC) are invited to promote discussion upon issues such as Housing Benefits, Health and Safety, Gas and Electric Servicing, Energy Efficiency, Fire Installations etc.

3.2 Houses in Multiple Occupation

Since 1999 the council has implemented its HMO Strategy which comprehensively and systematically addresses the public health concerns that can be associated with Houses In Multiple Occupation (HMOs). Bromsgrove District Council is committed to improving the standard of HMOs within the district and therefore provides advice, enforcement and access to grants to landlords, in recognition of the contribution that HMO'S make towards relieving housing needs. The key areas for officers to consider within all HMOs are the following: -

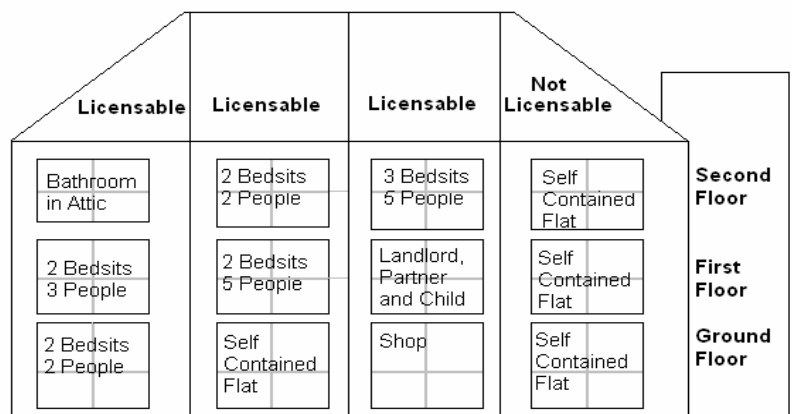
- Health & Safety of the occupants (as determined by the Housing Health & Safety Rating System)
- Fire Safety within the dwelling
- Management of the dwelling
- Room size standards
- Electrical and Gas safety
- Provisions of facilities

The Council has introduced a voluntary registration scheme for HMOs, with registration being dependent upon compliance with all relevant legislation. The register is maintained and the Council has developed a risk based inspection programme of all Houses in Multiple Occupation which commenced in January 2003.

The new Housing Act 2004 has recently altered the definition for a HMO and introduced a Mandatory Licensing Scheme, which has been successfully implemented in Bromsgrove District Council. The Mandatory Licensable Scheme is aimed at the following properties: -

- Five or more people, and
- Three or more storey's, and
- Two or more households

All criteria must be fulfilled to be considered a Mandatory Licensable HMO, an Application Form must be made



by the landlord or person in control of the property with a fee payable to Bromsgrove District Council. Once a valid application has been made with the following documentation a notice will then be sent to all interested parties with conditions of the license for information or appeal, a license will then be granted: -

- Passport photograph of Landlord and Managing agent
- Declaration of Notification to Interested Parties
- Prosecution Convictions and Cautions History from West Mercia Police or Similar
- Certificate of Property Title
- Photocopy of one official document e.g. birth certificate, passport, national insurance number (showing name and address of applicant)
- Fire Risk Assessment
- Plans of Property (including room sizes, usage, location of smoke/heat detectors, fire fighting equipment, fire escape routes, call points and sounders)
- Copy of Standard Tenancy Agreement
- Asbestos survey (if applicable)
- Certificate illustrating the gas installation and appliances that have been inspected by a competent person (CORGI Registered Inspector) in the last 12 months prior to this application.
- Certificate illustrating that the electrical installation has been inspected by a competent person.
- Certificate illustrating that the fire alarm system, emergency lighting system and fire fighting equipment has been inspected by a competent person.

3.3 Mobile Homes and Caravan Sites

A risk based inspection programme of Mobile Home and Caravan Sites has been implemented in the private sector housing team of Bromsgrove District Council, the main objectives of the inspections are to work with owners to achieve compliance with the model license conditions. It is the aim of the private sector housing team to inspect four mobile and caravan sites every year.

3.4 Empty Homes Strategy

The Empty Homes Strategy has been developed to steer the Council in becoming more proactive in encouraging owners to bring properties back into use. Although empty homes do not at present a significant problem within the District, the 2004 House Condition survey highlights the potential for bringing empty properties back into use. The authority has therefore developed a multi-agency approach to identifying, monitoring and addressing the empty properties within the District and works closely with Environmental Health, Planning, Council Tax, Democratic & Legal Services and the Care & Repair Agency in order to encourage the re-use of empty homes

An Empty Homes Information Pack is sent to owners of identified empty properties offering advice and assistance upon bringing their dwelling back into use. The authority provides grant funding to assist and encourage owners to refurbish and re-let dwellings in partnership with RSLs and to make dwellings suitable for letting to Council nominated tenants.

4 Addressing the Need

Under the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 and the recent introduction of the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance (England and Wales) Order 2002 the authority is able to provide the following assistance (subject to funding) to Bromsgrove districts residents to enable housing renewal: -

- Disabled Facilities Grants
 - Home Repair Assistance Grants
 - Renovation Grants
 - Empty Homes Grants
 - Energy Efficiency Grants
 - Renewable Grants
 - Landlord Grants
 - Home Move Grants
- Mandatory Grant**
- Discretionary Grants**

These discretionary grants assist private sector renewal and are essential in widening the advice and assistance for local households within the District. The Regulatory Reform Order has enabled the Authority to provide assistance direct and through a third party, the **North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency** a specialist financial intermediary. Assistance may be given to pay for any fees and charges associated with the assisted works.

The North Worcestershire Care and Repair Agency is in partnership with Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council. The home improvement agency has been developed in order to assist vulnerable homeowners or private sector tenants with the core task of enabling and encouraging the repair, improvement, maintenance and adaptation of their homes. The Care and Repair Agency, however provides many other services such as supporting independent living and assist in achieving cross cutting community aims e.g. improving the health and wellbeing of older and vulnerable people. The North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency is an appropriate vehicle to work with other agencies and the voluntary sector in accessing services and forms of assistance.

4.1 Disabled Facilities Grants

Disabled Facilities Grants are available to all residents within the District who are registered as Disabled and qualify for works based upon an Occupational Therapists (OT) referral. The OT referral identifies adaptations and alterations necessary to enable the occupier to remain living independently and their home and existing community. The maximum grant available is £25,000, however eligibility and means testing is essential to the process. Applicants under 19 years of age are not means tested and therefore are not required to contribute to the grant. The eligibility criteria for Disabled Facilities Grants are detailed within the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (see Appendix 1)

4.2 Home Repair Assistance Grants

Home Repair Assistance Grants aim to assist elderly and vulnerable people living within the district to remain safely in their homes and community. A maximum grant of £5,000 (subject to funding) is therefore available towards minor repairs, improvement or adaptation. This assistance is targeted at those least able to help themselves, e.g. those over 60 and on an income related benefit. Where the property is rented, the tenant must have the repair responsibility in order to qualify for a grant. In the majority of cases the repairs responsibility for rented accommodation falls to the landlord. This might include rewiring a property where the wiring is dangerous, gas safety work, roof repair or damp-proofing work. The eligibility criteria for Home Repair Assistance Grants are detailed within the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (see Appendix 1)

4.3 Renovation Grants

Grant assistance up to a maximum of £10,000 is available (subject to funding) to assist in funding essential major repair works due to the presence of a Category 1 Hazard (as determined by the Housing Act 2004). Grant assistance is targeted at clients on a low income and income related benefits. The eligibility criteria for Renovation Grants is detailed within the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (see Appendix 1)

4.4 Empty Home Grant

Bromsgrove District Council provides grants up to £5,000 per application (subject to funding) which is matched funded by owners of empty properties in order to bring these properties up to a Decent Standard. The property will be inspected in order to identify if any Category 1 Hazards exists (as determined by the Housing Act 2004), a schedule of works will then be drawn up to enable an Empty Homes Grant to be provided. The grant has a further aim of enabling these properties to be bought back into use for letting. Applications will be considered and assessed based upon the letting ability of the accommodation, location, size and suitability. The approval of grant assistance is subject to an agreement for the property to be let at an affordable rent to a Council nominated tenant. Full eligibility criteria is detailed within the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy (see Appendix 1)

4.5 Energy Efficiency Grants

Energy Efficiency grants are available to residents who comply with set criteria as identified in the Housing Assistance Policy (see Appendix 1) to increase energy efficiency within the District to achieve the central government target of increasing Energy Efficiency by 30% by 2010. Bromsgrove District Council promotes the uptake of Energy Efficiency Grants by working in partnership with the Worcestershire, Warwickshire and Coventry Energy Advice Centre (WEEAC), Primary Care Trusts and Local Authorities in providing an Affordable Warmth Referral Scheme. These grants are a government funded initiative and offer a potential £2,700 to those who qualify.

The Council also provides an Energy Efficiency Grant up to £5,000 to homeowners on a means tested benefit with less than £6,000 in savings. This is for cavity wall and loft insulation, water tank lagging etc. Please see Appendix 1 for the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy which details the eligibility criteria for Bromsgrove District Councils Energy Efficiency Grant.

4.5 Renewable Energy Grant

There is a maximum grant of £1,000 (subject to available funding) available for renewal energy sources being installed in residential accommodation within Bromsgrove District. The grant must be match funded by the applicant who must already be in receipt of the National Low Carbon Buildings Programme Grant in order to be eligible. Applying to the Low Carbon Buildings Programme enables applicants to access further grant funding for renewable energy sources. Further information regarding eligibility for a Renewable Grant is set out in Appendix 1 of the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.

4.6 Landlord Grant

Landlord Grants are available up to a maximum grant of £2,000 (subject to funding) per application which must be matched funded by the applicant. It is available for fire installation works as determined by the Housing Standards Officer, in conjunction with the provision of a Fire Risk Assessment. For eligibility please see Appendix 1, the Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy.

4.7 Home Move Grant

Where an owner occupier or tenant qualifies for a Disabled Facilities Grant assistance but their existing home is unsuitable for adaptation, a Home Move Grant may be available. Assistance is available to fund up to £2,500 of removal costs where a move to a more suitable or adaptable property is the favoured solution. Some homes are unsuitable for adaptation and owners maybe unable to afford the maintenance and running costs of their home, even after improvement. In such cases it may be more cost effective to assist a person to move to more suitable accommodation. (Appendix 1 - Private Sector Housing Assistance Policy sets out the eligibility criteria for the Bromsgrove District Council Home Move Grant.

5. Initiatives

5.1 Current Initiatives

The Council works in partnership on the following initiatives:

1. With Redditch BC and Wyre Forest DC in the provision of the North **Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency**
2. With WEEAC (Worcestershire Warwickshire and Coventry Energy Advice Centre) to provide advice, guidance and access to **Energy Efficiency** grants to the residents of Bromsgrove District.
3. With WEEAC, the PCT and Redditch Borough Council to develop an **Affordable Warmth Referral Scheme**.
4. Through Bromsgrove & District CAB, the Council funds the provision of a **Housing Advice Service** that provides advice and information in respect of all housing sectors and tenures.
5. In partnership with Age Concern who are able to assist with the installation of **Community Alarm Service** connections for older and vulnerable people through the Age Concern Handyman Service. The service also offers valuable assistance to older people assisting with minor works and adaptations.
6. We hold an annual **Private Landlords Forums** providing advice, assistance and training on a broad range of subjects covering home safety, management of tenancies, rent and housing benefit issues and housing renewal. We will use the Forum as a vehicle to engage landlords in the policy making process and plan to develop a landlords guidance handbook.
7. We work in close partnership with local letting agents, BDHT, CAB and Housing Benefit for our new **Step Up Private Tenancy Scheme**, which is essentially a Rent Deposit Scheme that aims to provide a bond to landlords in order to secure new tenancies.
8. In addition to those mentioned above, we will continue to work closely with the Worcestershire local authorities, Social Services, Occupational Health Team, the Supporting People Team, financial organisations and charities when delivering **Private Sector Housing Services**.

5.2 Future Initiatives

1. The Council is working with neighbouring Local Authorities, North Worcestershire Care & Repair Agency and builders in the adoption of a Contract Framework Procurement Policy for the delivery of grant works.
2. Development the Local Area Agreement priorities for affordable housing delivery and renewable energy schemes through Strategic Housing representation on all consultation and working groups for the Local Strategic Partnership.

3. Joint working with the Primary Care Trust and Social Services to develop a rapid Hospital Discharge Scheme to help people who are in hospital and cannot be discharged until adaptations are carried out at their dwelling.
4. Investigation into provision of Private Finance and Equity Release Loan Schemes to homeowners wishing to undertake improvements to their property. New Housing Assistance proposals place the emphasis on borrowing for home improvement wherever possible. However the guidance points out that for some households, particularly vulnerable people and those on low incomes, borrowing is not an option and in such circumstances the award of grants will still be appropriate.
5. Where residents who are in fuel poverty do not qualify for a Warm Front grant the Green Loan Scheme is an initiative, which Bromsgrove District Council is currently investigating to help tackle fuel poverty. The Energy Efficiency Advice Centre (WEEAC) recommends that all local authorities who do not currently offer such a facility should support this proposal as Green Loans would give customers access to low cost loans (regardless of income) with repayment over a 2-year period. Loans would be up to a maximum of £1,000 for insulation or appliances or £1,500 for a boiler.

CONSULTATION

A broad range of consultees have been approached in developing this strategy and policy including members of the Community Panel, representatives of Worcestershire local authorities, Primary Care Trust, SAFFA, Age Concern, CAB, Fuel Poverty Steering group and Supporting People Team

Further consultation is planned when the private sector renewal strategy and policy will receive further consideration as part of the Council's overall Housing Strategy review. Consultation will take place to reflect any future changes that are proposed to reflect the housing needs and conditions identified when the 2004 surveys are updated and in response to any future government policy or changes in the resources that are available to the Council.