



**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE CABINET**

**WEDNESDAY 13TH SEPTEMBER 2023, AT 6.00 P.M.**

**PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE**

**SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS 2 DOCUMENTATION**

The attached papers were specified as "to follow" on the Agenda previously distributed relating to the above mentioned meeting.

3. **Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 10th July 2023** (Pages 3 - 16)
  - (a) To receive and note the minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> July 2023. Please note that these minutes will be published in a supplementary papers pack.
  - (b) To consider any recommendations contained within the minutes.

S. Hanley  
Acting Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

13th September 2023

This page is intentionally left blank

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

**10TH JULY 2023, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors P. M. McDonald (Chairman), S. T. Nock (Vice-Chairman), A. Bailes, R. Bailes, A. M. Dale, E. M. S. Gray, R. J. Hunter, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke and J. D. Stanley and J. W. Robinson (substitute).

Observers:

Councillor S. Ammar, Councillor S. J. Baxter, Councillor S. R. Colella, Councillor S. M. Evans, Councillor C. A. Hotham, Councillor R. E. Lambert, Councillor M. Marshall, Councillor K. J. May, Councillor B. M. McEldowney, Councillor J.W. Robinson, Councillor D. G. Stewart, Councillor C. B. Taylor and Councillor S. A. Webb.

Mrs. C. Buckley – Centre for Governance and Scrutiny

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mr O. Paparega, Mr. K. Hirons and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs. J. Gresham.

15/23

#### **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors B. Kumar and S. Robinson. Councillor J. Robinson was in attendance as named substitute for Councillor S. Robinson.

16/23

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest nor of any party whip.

17/23

#### **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 6TH JUNE 2023**

The minutes of the meeting that took place on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 were submitted for Members' consideration.

Councillor A. Bailes raised that the date of the first meeting of the Governance Task Group, which was reported as 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023 within the minutes was incorrect. However, during further discussion the Chairman confirmed that this date was indeed correct as he had been consulted on all potential dates for all meetings of the Task Group.

Councillor R. Bailes stated that there was a change made to the membership of the Finance and Budget Working Group following the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Board on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 with Councillor R. Bailes replacing Councillor A. Bailes.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting that took place on 6<sup>th</sup> June 2023 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

18/23

## **GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS REVIEW - PRESENTATION FROM CENTRE FOR GOVERNANCE AND SCRUTINY**

The Representative from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) delivered a presentation on governance system options available to local authorities and in doing so highlighted that no governance system option was inherently better or worse than others. Instead, the right governance option for a given authority depended on the local area, local circumstances and culture that existed within the authority. Therefore, the advantages and disadvantages of each governance system depended on the local circumstances and there was no evidence that changing a governance system would lead to actual changes in terms of ensuring good governance.

The main features of governance system models that were available to local authorities in England were introduced as follows:

- Leader and cabinet – This was the model currently operated at Bromsgrove District Council. In this model the council appointed a leader who in turn would appoint his/her cabinet. The cabinet was responsible for making decisions within the policy framework (including ‘key decisions’). With this model, there was a requirement for scheme of delegation to officers, which defined decision-making powers delegated to officers. Under this model, there needed to be at least one overview and scrutiny committee to act as a check and balance to cabinet.
- Directly elected mayor – Almost identical to leader and cabinet, the only difference being that the directly elected mayor appointed his/her cabinet, which was then also the body responsible for decision-making.
- Committee system – In this model, councillors made decisions through politically balanced committees with no option for decisions to be taken by individual councillors. Scheme of delegation to officers would still need to be in place to define the decision-making powers given to officers. There was no requirement for an overview and scrutiny committee under this option but some authorities operating the committee system still chose to retain scrutiny arrangements through standalone scrutiny committee. Generally, committee systems could be seen as more collaborative because more members would be directly

involved in committees when decisions were made, however, under the model it would take longer to make decisions as greater degree of work planning and programming was involved.

- Hybrid model – This involved modifying one of the above governance models to suit the specific circumstances of a given authority. For example, the leader and cabinet model might be adapted so that scrutiny committees would be carrying out detailed debate on every single cabinet decision. Other adaptations might to the models might be made.
- Writing to the Secretary of State to request a different governance model of choice – This was an option provided for in legislation but had not been used to date.

Regarding the hybrid models, it was highlighted that councils might decide to modify an existing model to their specific needs. For instance, the full committee system might be modified into a hybrid model so that the overview and scrutiny arrangement would be retained, or the leader and cabinet might be modified to include features of a committee system.

The CfGS Representative explained that all the models could be placed on a spectrum in terms of councillor representation, from the mayoral system where decisions were concentrated in the hands of a single individual to the full committee system where politically balanced committees were responsible for making decisions.

The legal process of implementing changes to the governance arrangements of a local authority was discussed. The ability for local authorities to change their governance arrangements had been available since 2012 and there were two ways through which local authorities could make the change.

The most common way that councils could make the change to their governance system arrangements was through a resolution at a full Council meeting. A majority of councillors voting in favour of the resolution would be required in order for governance model to be changed and, once agreed, the actual change to the governance system model would only take effect from the next annual general meeting (at the start of a new municipal year). If the decision to change the governance system had been taken, the arrangements could not then be changed again for a five-year period.

The second way to change the local authority's governance system was through holding a referendum, either triggered by councillors themselves or if at least 5 per cent of the local government electors in the local authority area petition the local council to do so. If the referendum was to result in a change to the governance system, the arrangements could not be changed again for a period of ten years. In addition, any subsequent change after the ten-year period could only come as a result of another referendum.

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

It was stressed that any change to governance arrangements would necessitate redrafting of the Council's Constitution as well as modifications to a range of services and processes such as procurement. It was predicted, based on the experience of the work that Centre for Governance and Scrutiny undertook with other councils, that the process of finding and testing an appropriate governance model for the Council would take at least six months.

Following the presentation, Members asked a number of questions of the Representative from the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny and Officers present, and the following answers were provided:

- Implications of changing governance system at one council in a shared service arrangement environment – It was noted that if two councils under shared service arrangements had different governance systems, this would create additional difficulties for Officers as they would need to streamline their processes to service both authorities. It was noted that consequently, given current resources within the Council, it was highly likely that additional officers would need to be recruited if a new governance system was adopted.
- Possibility of reverting back to the previous governance system – This was possible, as highlighted in the pre-amble above. However, a period of five years would need to elapse before a change back could be made, if the original decision was made through a full council resolution, and a period of ten years would need to pass if the original change was decided through a referendum. In the second case, any decision to revert back to previous governance arrangements could only be made via a referendum.
- Making adjustments within an existing governance system option – It was noted that legislative requirements regarding governance system changes would not be relevant if the authority opted to retain a governance model but adapted some processes and constitutional arrangements within an existing system. Therefore, the authority would not need to wait for the five year (or ten year in case of referendum option) period to elapse before making a different set of adaptations. This applied as long as no change was made to the governance system option itself.
- It was commented that speaking to other local authorities which had undergone changes to their governance system would be helpful when the Governance Systems Review Task Group was undertaking the review into this. It was also highlighted that because of the nature of this matter it was imperative that all Members were involved throughout the review process.
- Case studies of different hybrid governance arrangements would be provided to Members.

**RESOLVED** that the presentation on Governance System options for the Council be noted.

19/23

## **SCRUTINY INVESTIGATION PROPOSAL - BLUE BADGE HOLDERS PARKING ON COUNCIL CAR PARKS (INTRODUCTORY PRESENTATION)**

A presentation was delivered by the Environmental Services Manager on the scrutiny investigation proposal relating to the Council's policy regarding parking for Blue Badge holders on council parks.

Information was provided on the current system for Blue Badge holders parking and the projections for possible loss of income if the Council offered free parking to Blue Badge holders. It was stated that currently Blue Badge holders paid for their car parking but received an additional hour of free parking on the Council's pay and display car parks. The process was that Blue Badge holders would purchase a ticket from the ticket machine in the usual way and display the ticket alongside their Blue Badge on the dashboard. The parking attendants would then allow an additional hour to the expiry time of the ticket. The same principle applied when parking was purchased via the 'my permit' app.

Members were informed that in all council car parks in the District there was a mix of disabled and normal parking bays and in all car parks the Council tried to accommodate at least six per cent of all bays as disabled bays. In total, there were 65 disabled spaces out of 975 parking spaces in Bromsgrove's off-street car parks, which equated to 6.7 per cent of all spaces.

It was reported that information about the number of Blue Badge holders using the pay and display car parks was limited because the pay and display machines did not record the difference between the blue badge holder and the general user when the parking ticket was being bought. Alternative methods were therefore used to estimate the current income derived from Blue Badge holders' use of council car parks.

A survey was undertaken for one hour period every day for 616 days, recording the customers parking in the disabled bays and displaying Blue Badge, noting the ticket value per purchase to provide an indication of how long they stayed. An income figure was provided for the vehicles parked in disabled bays during survey times and after extrapolating this data to be based on 8 hour days for 365 days a year an annual income figure of £19,939 per year was derived.

A second method of assessing the income was to look at the number of available display disabled bays expressed as a percentage of the total number of spaces (which was 6.7 per cent of the total bays available) Taking the total budgeted income from all the car parks in Bromsgrove (£1,136,402) and calculating 6.7 per cent of this figure provided a possible income in the region of £76,000 per year from Blue Badge holders. It was highlighted, however, that this was also only an estimate.

It was stated that based on these two estimates to offer free disabled parking could cost Bromsgrove District Council anything between

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

£20,000 and £76,000 per year. For budgeting purposes, a realistic figure was more likely to be between an average of those two figures meaning a potential loss of at least £48,000 per year to be planned within the budget. It was highlighted that this was just an estimate as Officers were unable to count every single car entering or exiting the car parks.

Following the presentation, Members were invited to ask questions and raise comments. Councillor R. Hunter addressed the Committee and in doing so thanked Officers for collating a more up-to-date set of data on Blue Badge holders parking. It was commented that given the total annual income derived from council car parks was around £1.1 million, the costs associated with offering free Blue Badge parking, if taking into account the average figure provided in the presentation above, only amounted to roughly 5 per cent of the total annual income from council car parks. Additionally, it was noted that presently Blue Badge holders were allowed to park on double yellow lines for free. Given this, it was commented that people would likely be choosing to park on double yellow lines instead of council car parks. It was also observed that all the neighbouring local authorities offered free parking to Blue Badge holders and Bromsgrove was an outlier in this regard. A question was raised regarding whether any estimates could be provided as to the average occupancy rates of disabled bays across Bromsgrove's council car parks, especially any indication of whether these bays were used to capacity.

The Leader of the Council was invited to respond to the observations and questions above and in doing so stated that the main reason people chose to park on double yellow lines was that it was the closest place to park to locations that people with reduced mobility or in a wheelchair needed to access – it was highlighted that it was a great challenge to transfer someone in a wheelchair, for example, the significant distance from the end of the car park in Bromsgrove to the Town Centre.

The Leader commented that there was a need for the review of this issue to take place but highlighted that the funds obtained from Blue Badge holders parking, and parking charges more generally, were used directly to re-invest and refurbish the Council's car parks, for example to install and repair lighting and carry out line painting and other work. It was noted that maintenance of Council car parks represented a significant cost. From the strategic point of view it was commented that the Council's strategic document, the 2040 Vision, should contain assessments of the locations of council car parks as a lot more could be done to enhance the parking offer.

It was also highlighted that income derived from Blue Badge holder parking was used to finance the shopmobility provision in the Bromsgrove Town Centre. As such Members were asked that any review of the Blue Badge holder parking was tied into the query regarding how shopmobility provision was financed.



# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

It was noted that the provision of 6 per cent of parking spaces as disabled bays was a best practice figure set by the Government. Officers further noted that the usage of disabled parking bays would be difficult to monitor as the only way it could potentially be undertaken was through an in-depth continuous survey of every car park in the District on a daily basis, which was not feasible.

It was noted that when the issue of Blue Badge parking was investigated previously 11-12 years ago, the local authority itself issued the Blue Badges. The Blue Badges were now issued by Worcestershire County Council, and only County-wide statistics on the number of Blue Badges issued were kept rather than breakdown of figures for each District within the County.

Following a question about survey duration and process, it was confirmed that the surveys which were carried to arrive at estimates presented before Members took place over 16 days, and these surveys were carried out at different times on each day. The surveys were undertaken by Enforcement Officers who took note of the number of cars parked in Blue Badge bays at the time they were present at each car park.

During the discussion, it was highlighted that the surveys also provided detail on the duration of stay for cars during the survey period. However, to provide a breakdown of annual income to the Council in terms of tickets issued for 1 hour, 2 hours, 3 hours and other duration would necessitate a full review to be agreed by Members, to enable Officers to investigate the topic in-depth.

Regarding the parking meter machines, it was noted that the machines were now more sophisticated than in the past, however, there was no facility currently to programme the machines, so they provided an indication of whether it was a Blue Badger holder who was buying the ticket. This could be added as an option to the machines in the future.

It was reiterated by some Members that often people made decisions about parking based on cost and currently, some Members reported, the Council differed from almost all local authorities investigated in that it did not offer free parking up front to Blue Badge holders. It was acknowledged that there were historic reasons for the Council's decision, however, in the context of most other authorities offering free Blue Badge parking there should be questions as to why the Council still charged Blue Badge holders for parking.

It was also noted that the rationale behind the system of allowing an extra hour to Blue Badge holder parking that was adopted by the Council 11 or 12 years ago was that Blue Badge holders would be treated in the same way as other users but the extra hour was an accessibility and mobility point.

Councillor R. Hunter put forward a recommendation to the effect that a business case be produced by Cabinet to allow for a provision in the 2024-25 Budget for the Council to move to offering a free Blue Badge holder parking. It was clarified that this would mean the Council would continue to fund shopmobility provision but no longer through Blue Badge parking fees. In proposing this recommendation, Councillor R. Hunter commented that there was currently a reputational risk to the Council as it did not treat Blue Badge holders as favourably as other local authorities did. The recommendation was seconded by Councillor J. Robinson.

Councillor H. Rone-Clarke proposed an amendment to the recommendation made by Councillor R. Hunter to the effect that the scrutiny proposal for free Blue Badge holder parking be referred for consideration by the Finance and Budget Working Group (a sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) in the first instance, and any potential business case proposal considered at that forum before proposals were submitted to Cabinet. This amendment was seconded by E. Gray.

Councillor R. Hunter responded that the issue of Blue Badge holder parking had already been considered by the Finance and Budget Working Group (sub-committee of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) in previous years on a number of occasions already with no significant actions taken. As such, decision on this issue should now be made.

The amendment as proposed by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke was put to the vote and it was carried.

**RESOLVED** that the proposal for free Blue Badge holders parking be referred to the Finance and Budget Working Group for consideration.

20/23

## **CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE ACTION PLAN - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Deputy Chief Executive Officer provided an overview of the report on Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan and in doing so explained that the report before the Committee was due to be considered by Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2023 and then be considered by the full Council, and the report and the appendices specifically contained the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Review Challenge feedback and six key recommendations, and the Council's written response to those recommendations.

It was highlighted that the Corporate Peer Challenge Review was not an inspection but provided an opportunity and forward-looking overview to consider and reflect on areas of improvement and for both the shared service authorities, Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, the background to calling for the peer challenge was as a direct result of the respective Councils being issued with a separate Section 24 notices. The Corporate Peer Challenge was requested by Bromsgrove District

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

Council at its full Council meeting in December 2022, primarily in response to the Section 24 notice.

The review covered five high-level themes which were:

1. Local priorities and outcomes - Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities?
2. Organisational and place leadership - Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
3. Governance and culture - Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of challenge and scrutiny?
4. Financial planning and management - Does the council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a plan to address its financial challenges?
5. Capacity for improvement – Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?

The Bromsgrove District Council's Peer Challenge Review had a specific focus on corporate governance. It was also highlighted that a separate piece of work was undertaken by the Bromsgrove Audit Standards and Governance Committee (through the Audit Task Group) which concerned learning points from the Section 24 Notice and which was an area the Corporate Peer Challenge Review did not investigate. The Peer Review did consider the issues of clarity, transparency and speed of decision making within the Council's governance arrangements and this did include the examination of the role and impact of overview and scrutiny.

It was noted that appendix 2.6 to the report set out the process for the peer review, and it was reiterated that residents, elected members, local partners from public and private sectors, and members of staff all had the opportunity to take part in the Peer Review. There were resident, elected member, and staff focus groups to facilitate participation from these groups. In total, the Peer Review team gathered information and views from around 55 meetings and spoke to over 130 people over the course of the review in Bromsgrove and Redditch.

The Corporate Peer Review team's formal feedback was enclosed at Appendix A. The Council's response to that feedback was included at Appendix B, with response to the 6 key recommendations provided in that Appendix B. Supporting action plans that addressed the 6 recommendations were included in Appendices C to G, including the programme for the review of the Council Plan at Appendix C, Governance Action Plan at Appendix D, and the Workforce Strategy and Agile Working Action Plans at Appendices E and F respectively. Appendix G included the Section 24 notice and interim annual audit report.

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

The Interim Director of Finance highlighted in relation to the Section 24 notice and the recommendation 5 of the Peer Review Challenge and the External Auditors Section 24 Statement Statutory Recommendations that the progress in addressing those recommendations was reviewed through the Finance Recovery Plan which was reviewed at each meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and at each Cabinet meeting.

It was noted that the key question raised by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee concerned the possibility of the Council receiving another Section 24 Notice. It was answered that as long as the Council was fulfilling and progressing on the recommendations of the Interim Annual Audit Report for 2020-21 this was highly unlikely. It was stressed that there were delays in the auditing of Statements of Accounts across the local authority many councils still without their 2020-21 Accounts signed off by their external auditors.

It was reported in relation to the 2020-21 Accounts that the data take-on balances remained to be approved by the Council's External Auditor. It was stated that the external audit of 2020-21 financial statements was predicted to be finalised by November 2023, the audit of 2021-22 financial statements in June 2024, and the 2022-23 financial statements in November 2024. However, it was highlighted that these timescales were challenging and could be subject to further change.

The Leader of the Council addressed the Board and placed on record her sincere thanks to the Officers and team at Bromsgrove District Council for the work undertaken in support of the Corporate Peer Review Challenge. It was reiterated that many of the recommendations contained in the Corporate Peer Review report had already been actioned and the Council had already progressed significantly in terms of addressing the points raised.

Following the main presentation, Members had the opportunity to make comments and question the Officers in attendance. The following comments and suggestions were made by Members, and responses provided by Officers:

- A theme in the Corporate Peer Review Challenge report concerning a lack of capacity within senior management – Members asked why this issue was not recognised before the Peer Review Challenge was undertaken. It was responded that the capacity issues existed in certain areas throughout the Council and there was a challenge whereby the Council was over-ambitious in terms of the number of priorities that it had. If the number of priorities could be reduced, there would be more capacity for officers and management team to deliver on the priorities decided by Members. A review of the Council Plan was currently being undertaken which looked at making sure there were fewer priorities that had more potential of being fully

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

delivered. It was also highlighted that there were financial constraints which needed to be acknowledged in the Plan.

- Scrutiny of the Council's Performance reports – It was noted that performance monitoring reports were being considered by the Cabinet on an ongoing basis and were also being regularly scrutinised by the Finance and Budget Working Group.
- Vacancies – It was noted that the Council had 1 per cent fewer vacancies than the national average for local authorities. However, it was acknowledged that there were significant challenges in recruiting to Planning, Finance and Housing departments at the Council. This was a national problem for local government sector and this issue further brought to light the need for the Council to have a more focused set of priorities in certain areas.
- A reference in the Corporate Peer Review Report to the considerable slippage in the Council's capital programme – It was reported that it was rare for capital programmes at local authority to fulfil more than 65 to 70 per cent of expected delivery. The issue the Council faced at the moment was a lack of workforce and / or contractors available to complete the major schemes. It had been reported through to the Government, including through various lobby groups such as the Local Government Association (LGA) because this issue had been becoming more and more acute.
- Corporate Priorities – It was highlighted that within the Council Plan review it was first imperative to work out the high level strategic priorities and understand how they were going to be delivered and resourced before working on the more detailed level. It was also highlighted that there was a focus on reporting to Members through the performance reports and developing more key performance indicators to ensure they were tailored to monitoring how the Council was delivering its priorities.
- Digitalisation and the Covid-19 Pandemic – It was noted that the pandemic slowed the delivery of most objectives and the capital programme in various ways. It was also noted that the Government was pushing for the digitisation across the sector and the Plans covered some detail regarding how digitisation would be implemented, ensuring that residents who struggled to use digital tools continued to be provided for.
- Selection process for the Community Panel – It was explained that the Community Panel was composed of residents who were volunteers and agreed to be contacted by the Council at any time for taking part in surveys and similar engagement activity on the matters relating to the Council. Officers undertook to provide details of the application page for joining the Community Panel on the Council's website.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

The Chairman reported that the last meeting of Finance and Budget Working Group took place on 7th July 2023. At the meeting, Members discussed the Council's procurement processes in light of the Government's New Procurement Bill, which was currently progressing through Parliament, and what the Council needed to do to ensure it complied with the Bill.

The Chairman reported that the main issue in terms of the Council's compliance was in relation to the production of reports for all key decisions that the Council was taking. The authority's current key decision threshold was £50,000 and for any procurement above this value a full report needed to be made to Cabinet so that the decision could be made by Cabinet. The Chairman reported that at the current £50,000 threshold level, there was a serious issue whereby a report was not produced for some procurements above the threshold value, which meant that the Council was in breach of its own constitution in those instances. The Chairman commented that this was a serious issue.

It was noted that this issue occurred in many authorities with low key decision thresholds as there were a large number of procurements that crossed the threshold and not enough resources, for example, in terms of officer time, to ensure that reports were prepared for all procurements above the key decision threshold. It was therefore proposed in the Approval to Spend report going to Cabinet that the key decision threshold be raised to £200,000 as this would ensure the level was compatible with that of most local authorities across the country and would enable the Council to have the necessary resource to ensure that reports were produced for all key decisions.

The Chairman reported that the Finance and Budget Working Group also looked at the Burcot Lane Housing Development. The Working Group came to the conclusion that the sale to a housing company owned by this District Council was the best way forward in relation to the 37 private rented units in the development that would be rented at market value. The specific arrangements associated with the housing company meant that the right to buy would not apply to these units which enabled the Council to retain ownership of these properties through the company in the longer term and thereby fill the gap in the Bromsgrove private rental market.

It was reported that the future plan was to develop additional sites including and add units from these sites to the housing company's stock once these developments had been completed. It was reported that some of the added units could then be rented at affordable rent because, as noted by the Chairman, the plan in the long-term was to address the imbalance between market and social housing, which was currently at an 8 to 1 level in Bromsgrove.

Members discussed the plans for the housing company and it was commented the the key thing to note from discussions of the Finance and Budget Working Group meeting was that, because of the wider

economic environment, it was anticipated that in the initial phase the return would not be as great as hoped on the 37 units. The view was that the benefits of a housing company would be seen in the long run when the housing company had managed to develop a bigger portfolio of houses.

It was reiterated that the primary aim of the Council's housing strategy was to provide housing to Bromsgrove residents rather than making a profit in the short term. The houses were built to enable people to stay in the local area and Members opined that Bromsgrove District residents should be prioritised in terms of getting a home in the District, for example to ensure that local key workers could find and purchase a home in the local area. It was reported that the average cost of a property in the District was around 14 times the average annual income and that this meant a very high number of 30-39 year olds were moving out of the District as they could not afford to buy or rent properties in the District. The motivation behind the Council-owned housing company in the longer term had to be ensuring that local residents were able to afford to stay in the District.

**RESOLVED** that the Finance and Budget Working Group Update be noted.

22/23

## **TASK GROUP UPDATES**

Members considered scheduling the dates for meetings of the Governance Systems Review Task Group and it was agreed that appointments for weekly evening meetings (over August) would be sent out to Task Group Members and if any of these meetings were no longer necessary the appointments could be cancelled at a later date. Members of the Task Group and Officers would liaise over the next few days to agree precise dates for the meetings.

**RESOLVED** that the Task Group Updates be noted.

23/23

## **WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE**

It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had not yet been delegated the authority to appoint a Member to serve on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC). Therefore, nominations for this outside body appointment were to be considered once the Full Council had delegated this authority to the Board, which was expected for the meeting of the Board on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023.

**RESOLVED** that the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update be noted.

24/23

## **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
10th July 2023

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

25/23

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME**

The Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

**RESOLVED** that the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 8.01 p.m.

Chairman