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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 11TH MARCH 2024, AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS 1

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

3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 12th February 2024** (Pages 3 - 26)
5. **Local Heritage List Strategy - pre-scrutiny** (Pages 27 - 50)
6. **Bromsgrove Centres Action Plan Review 2024-25 - pre-scrutiny** (Pages 51 - 62)
8. **Cost of Living Funding Proposal - pre-scrutiny** (Pages 63 - 68)
12. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update** (Pages 69 - 70)

S. Hanley
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire

B61 8DA

5th March 2024

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

12TH FEBRUARY 2024, 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, D. J. Nicholl (substitute), B. Kumar, S. A. Robinson and J. D. Stanley

Observers:

Councillor M. Hart – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Communities, Worcestershire County Council;
Councillor S. J. Baxter – Deputy Leader, Bromsgrove District Council;
Councillor S. R. Colella – Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change, Bromsgrove District Council;
Councillor C. A. Hotham – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling, Bromsgrove District Council;
Councillor M. Marshall – Bromsgrove District Council;
Hannah Perrott – Assistant Director for Communities, Worcestershire County Council;
Carol Brown – Head of Libraries, Worcestershire County Council

Officers: Mr P. Carpenter, Mr. G. Revans, Mrs. R. Bamford (on Microsoft Teams), Mr. S. Carroll (on Microsoft Teams), Mr. J. Cochrane, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill, and Mr. M. Sliwinski.

69/23

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology of absence was received from Councillor R. J. Hunter, who was substituted at the meeting by Councillor D. J. Nicholl.

70/23

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

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

71/23

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 16TH JANUARY 2024

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 16th January 2024 were considered.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 16th January 2024 be agreed as a true and correct record.

72/23

LIBRARIES PROVISION - WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL PRESENTATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Board welcomed the Deputy Leader of Worcestershire County Council (WCC) alongside Officers from the County Council.

The WCC Deputy Leader introduced the presentation and stated that the County Council was committed to preserving all 21 libraries in the County. It was stated that the Libraries Unlocked scheme provided a way of allowing libraries to remain open despite significant financial pressures facing upper-tier authorities, particularly relating to adult social care (ASC) services and home to school transport of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The WCC Deputy Leader stated that the Libraries Unlocked scheme enabled library users who upgraded their membership to enter specific libraries outside of standard opening hours. The scheme had already live at Droitwich and Stourport Libraries for circa 18 months, with anecdotal evidence suggesting that there was high satisfaction with the scheme at those locations. Through the scheme, there was a reduction in total staff hours, however, library users were able to enter libraries and access range of services in the evenings, without a member of staff needing to be present.

It was highlighted by the WCC Deputy Leader that there was no proposal to reduce the range of activities offered at libraries; it was reiterated that Libraries Unlocked scheme would safeguard the future of libraries in the County in the face of financial pressures facing authorities.

Following the introduction by the Deputy Leader of WCC, County Officers provided a presentation on the Libraries Unlocked scheme, with the following matters highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The open library service delivery model was identified in the Library Strategy 2020-25 as Worcestershire's preferred transformation approach for sustaining the library network. This was approved by County Council's Cabinet in December 2019; however, the implementation had been delayed due to Covid-19.
- Formal public consultation on library transformation options was undertaken in 2018-19. 2000 responses were received in addition to feedback from public meetings held across all libraries in the county. Therefore, the Libraries Unlocked scheme was a model based on and informed by customer feedback expressed in the consultation, particularly with regard to addressing barriers to customers using libraries when unstaffed and best times of day for libraries to be unstaffed.
- Key benefits of Libraries Unlocked scheme were listed as: increasing opening hours and thereby extending service

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

availability to a wider community audience; growing libraries as community assets by increasing use of library space by community partners; future-proofing of Worcestershire Library network through a flexible delivery model; supporting recovery of library participation post pandemic.

- It was reiterated that staff support would remain available under the Library Unlocked model and would be timetabled throughout the week. The model provided a way whereby most library services remained accessible without library staff needing to be present.
- To mitigate the impact of reduced staff hours from Libraries Unlocked, the under 16s were surveyed (in phase 1 locations for implementation of Libraries Unlocked) to identify preferred times for visiting local library. The staff had been timetabled to reflect the preferences expressed by survey respondents. 12-months after the go-live date, it was reported that there had been a 22 per cent increase in 16-19 year old active library members and a 5.6 per cent increase in 11-15 year old active library member (for locations where Library Unlocked is live).
- Safety of Libraries Unlocked – Concerns of customers about safety of unstaffed libraries had been taken into account with all libraries operating Libraries Unlocked scheme offering: mandatory face-to-face induction for users upgrading to libraries unlocked membership; the scheme being unavailable to customers with history of unacceptable behaviour; full CCTV coverage of libraries including monitoring by County Hall Security during unstaffed hours (Monday-Friday 5-8pm and all day Saturday); dedicated emergency 24/7 phone line on sites; security and fire systems linked to suppliers for a timely response.
- The early adopters of the scheme, Droitwich and Stourport libraries, had seen an 85 per cent increase in opening hours and a 26 and 37 per cent respective reduction in core staffing hours in the two libraries. Staff remain available throughout the week. It was highlighted that the scheme had seen a positive customer response with a 56 per cent increase in library visits 12 months after the go-live date.
- It was noted that at the Droitwich and Stourport libraries, which were part of phase 1 of Libraries Unlocked, the use of library as a local venue for community activity had been encouraged. As part of this, a free meeting room hire offer had been in place to encourage greater use of library by local groups and organisations.

In terms of next steps, Worcestershire County Council (WCC) Officers noted that 12 further libraries were in scope for phase 2 implementation of Libraries Unlocked scheme: 5 of these were located in Bromsgrove District – in Bromsgrove, Rubery, Hagley, Wythall, and Alvechurch. The first libraries to proceed with implementation of Libraries Unlocked would be Bromsgrove and Rubery libraries, with the provisional go live date of March 2024. Further work would need to take place at Hagley, Wythall

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

and Alvechurch libraries with regard to separate arrangements at those libraries before implementation dates could be provided.

It was highlighted that the implementation of Libraries Unlocked at each of these locations was subject to a detailed stakeholder engagement, cost-benefit analysis, and formal staff consultation. It was further highlighted that additional feasibility work would be required to determine whether Libraries Unlocked could be implemented in libraries which were run under Private Finance Initiative (PFI) arrangements, these applied to Alvechurch, Wythall, and Hagley libraries.

In terms of staff hours and opening hours, it was confirmed that for Bromsgrove (town) library, staff hours would be reduced by 25 per cent and overall opening hours would increase by 50 per cent when Libraries Unlocked is introduced. For Rubery library, staff hours would reduce by 30 per cent but opening times increase by 106 per cent following Libraries Unlocked implementation. All libraries under Libraries Unlocked had an opening time of 72 hours per week.

Following the presentation by County Council Officers, Members asked questions and made a number of comments. The following responses were noted:

- Safety of unstaffed libraries – Officers reiterated that there had been no recorded incidents of theft at either the Droitwich or Stourport libraries since the implementation of Libraries Unlocked in 2021. There was one incidence of disruptive behaviour at Droitwich Library in January 2023. While it was noted that CCTV footage showed the disruptive behaviour did not seem to concern other users, police community support officers (PCSOs) were alerted and appropriate action was taken, including talking to the parents of the offenders. No damage or injuries to persons had occurred from this incident. There had been no further incidents.
- Updating library stock based on needs of residents – It was noted that despite budgetary constraints facing the County Council, there was a book fund as part of a broader libraries funding. This allowed book stock to be replenished in libraries and get books updated with latest additions. The BorrowBox app allowed users to offer suggestions on the books they would like to see stocked. The use of the app, it was reported, had seen a great increase in the post pandemic period. In addition, an annual customer voice survey would be run again this year, which would ask asked users what books they would like to see in stock, among other questions. Lastly, library users could offer suggestions directly to librarians.
- Impact of Library Unlocked on experienced librarians – It was noted that in all libraries in the County, all staff was experienced in customer service and the library managers were qualified librarians and that would remain the case in libraries under the

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

Library Unlocked scheme. In terms of staffing, the main impact for users would be that staff would be on hand for a reduced number of hours per week.

- Further information about the impact of the scheme on library staff – It was explained that Libraries Unlocked was designed to deliver savings and as staffing was the main expenditure the reduced staff hours had been identified as a way to deliver savings. It was noted that vacancies had been held open to minimise any compulsory redundancies that might occur. In addition, the County Council had recently run a corporate-wide voluntary redundancy scheme with some library staff taking the voluntary redundancy offer.
- It was noted that additional energy costs of libraries from increased opening hours would be factored in when calculating the net efficiencies made as a result of the Libraries Unlocked scheme.
- A Member commented that special praise should be given to the current librarian employed at Alvechurch Library who was doing an exceptional job in very difficult circumstances. It was added that the librarian was greatly valued by the community in Alvechurch. Concerns were expressed that library staff worked in conditions where building staff and other contractors might be continually on site as part of the plans for new arrangements which was very distressing to the staff concerned. County Council Officers responded that staff awareness sessions had been implemented as part of the Libraries Unlocked implementation. In addition, because there had been a number of vacancies, there had been no staff redundancies up to this point and it was hoped this would continue to be the case in the remainder of phase one and phase two of Library Unlocked implementation. It was highlighted that there had been a positive response to Libraries Unlocked scheme from staff in other libraries. Staff were also formally consulted on any final proposals to implement Library Unlocked; Alvechurch, Wythall, and Hagley libraries were not yet at the stage where final plans had been formulated.
- Survey feedback on Libraries Unlocked – The County Council's Head of Libraries reported that a survey had been undertaken during the early part of the phase one Libraries Unlocked implementation in October 2022. As part of that all of the Library Unlocked customers in the County at that time had been surveyed. It was noted that one learning point from that survey was that non-Libraries Unlocked customers in the libraries having the scheme should also be surveyed in order to understand the reasons why those library users were not subscribing to / using the Libraries Unlocked. This would be taken into account in phase two of the Libraries Unlocked scheme. The Head of Libraries undertook to provide the survey results (figures) to District Councillors.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

- Libraries put forward for phase two of Libraries Unlocked that operated under PFI arrangements – It was noted that as part of identifying the 12 libraries for phase two of Library Unlocked, a return on investment (ROI) exercise was (or would be) undertaken individually for each of the libraries proposed. It was explained that each library that was planned to have Libraries Unlocked implemented had a capital investment assigned and Officers had to assess whether there would be an appropriate level of ROI based on factors such as potential staffing costs and implementation costs of the technology. It was explained that in locations such as Alvechurch, there might be a negative ROI to Libraries Unlocked, because of the PFI arrangements, in which case the scheme would not go ahead at that location.
- It was explained that scale up phrase used in the presentation denoted keeping libraries open even if further efficiencies were needed should they be required. This was not the case at that moment.
- Free meeting room hire (for partners) during Libraries Unlocked hours – It was queried by a Member why this offer was provided if efficiencies needed to be made. An example was provided of Rubery where the building was felt by a Member to be in a bad condition requiring regeneration. County Council Officers explained that there was a wide range of partners that County worked with across libraries including voluntary organisations who run activities for children and youth. The free meeting space within libraries unlocked hours was offered to encourage people and organisations to utilise library space in the evenings and weekends. It was stated that this initiative can be reviewed over time in terms of its effectiveness. In Library Unlocked hours (weekdays 5-8pm and Saturday), library members could also book the space for free.
- Building surveyors – It was explained that this was to assess any needs and costs arising from the implementation of Libraries Unlocked at the selected libraries such as from implementing the new technology and design and safety features required to run Libraries Unlocked scheme.
- Library use and access – It was explained that anyone who was a library member in the County could join to become a 'Libraries Unlocked' member. It was explained that all members of the public (regardless of place of residence) could join to become a Worcestershire library member and through this could then sign up to join 'Libraries Unlocked'.
- It was reiterated that no library activities were proposed to be scrapped as part the Libraries Unlocked scheme. Individual libraries within the County retained discretion over timetabling

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

library activities such as 'bounce and rhyme' sessions, the timetabling of which might be affected by the implementation of libraries unlocked.

- Information for Staff about Libraries Unlocked – The hours of operation of Libraries Unlocked had been communicated to library staff at affected libraries (via staff consultation) and this message would be reinforced through further communication. It was raised by a Member that a number of librarians were not aware of the decision to proceed with Libraries Unlocked until a key decision had been published on the County Council website. Providing a response, Officers noted that staff had been provided with up to date information on this but efforts would be made to provide comprehensive communication to library staff going forward. It was noted that the decision to implement Libraries Unlocked scheme had already been taken. Staff consultations going forward would be more specific circumstances in the individual libraries concerned that had to have the arrangements implemented.
- Information session on Libraries Unlocked arrangements for customers at Bromsgrove Library would be held on 20th February, and similar sessions would be held prior to 'go live' dates of Libraries Unlocked at other libraries. Officers undertook to ensure that Libraries Unlocked engagement sessions were effectively publicised.
- Key lessons learned from implementation of Libraries Unlocked in Stourport and Droitwich – County Council officers reported that a review of the implementation of this scheme in Stourport and Droitwich was undertaken by Worcestershire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Some of the lessons highlighted were ensuring that year 11 children (15 to 16 year olds) were able to access Libraries Unlocked because they were in their final GCSE year; improving communication with the customers, including those who were not local to the library area, to ensure that there was more awareness of the scheme before it was implemented at a specific library was a further key lesson from implementation at the Droitwich and Stourport libraries.
- Use of library for community activities – It was reiterated by Members that libraries were a vital space for community, used not only for library activities but also for a wide range of community activities such as warm spaces.
- Consultation engagement with young users – It was highlighted that there was a focus on engagement with young people (15-16 year olds) on Libraries Unlocked because under 16s were not allowed to access libraries during unstaffed hours currently but this age group had to prepare for GCSE exams. The consultation was to ascertain what arrangements could be made to facilitate

access for young people preparing for GCSE exams. In reference to a Member comment about lack of survey focus on working age people, it was noted that while the core library staff hours would be reduced as a result of Libraries Unlocked, the scheme allowed libraries to remain open in the evenings which was more suitable for working age people. With reference to Rubery Library, it was noted that staff hours would reduce from 35 to 25 per week, however, the opening hours would increase from the current 35 to 72 hours.

- Libraries Unlocked scheme implementation – It was noted that Droitwich and Stourport were the most suitable libraries for piloting the Libraries Unlocked scheme due to their size, building and accessibility perspectives. It was noted that it was deemed that implementation at those locations was successful which meant that the scheme would be rolled out more widely.

RESOLVED that the presentation be noted.

73/23

GOVERNANCE SYSTEMS REVIEW - IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS UPDATE

The Principal Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and in doing so noted that the Constitution Review Working Group (CRWG) had their last meeting on 30th January 2024. At that meeting, the Group considered the suggestion that, wherever possible, opposition Councillors should be appointed to the positions of Chairmen of the Council, Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Board.

It was noted that in 2023-24 Councillors from political groups not represented on the Cabinet were Chairmen of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and Overview and Scrutiny Board (which complied with national best practice) as well as serving as the Chairman of the Council. However, there was not currently a constitutional requirement for the Chairman of the Council to be a member from a political group that was not represented on the Cabinet.

It was reported that Members felt this needed to be formalized and the proposed amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference and the Council Procedure Rules, at Parts 5 and 8 of the constitution, were designed to enable the Council to continue in the future to appoint Councillors who are members of political groups not represented on the Council's Cabinet wherever possible. It was stated that in the event that following future local elections insufficient numbers of opposition Members available to appoint to the positions of Chairmen of the Council, the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Board respectively, provisions were made in the proposed wording of the Committee Terms of Reference and Council Procedure Rules to enable other Councillors to be appointed to those

positions, thereby ensuring that Council business could continue without disruption.

Following the presentation, Members raised questions with regard to the progress in implementation of Cabinet Advisory Group. It was responded that these were in the process of being set up and Members would be informed of any meeting dates once the Cabinet Advisory Group was established. Dates for meetings of Cabinet Advisory Group were also being added to the 2024-25 meetings calendar.

RECOMMENDED

- 1) That the proposed amendments to the Committee Terms of Reference, at Part 5 of the Constitution, in respect of provisions as to the Chairmen of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Board, be approved as detailed in Appendix 1 to the report;
- 2) That the proposed amendments to the Council Procedure Rules, at Part 8 of the Council's Constitution, in relation to the appointments of the Chairman of the Council and the Chairmen of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the Overview and Scrutiny Board, be approved, as detailed in Appendix 2 to the report.

RESOLVED

- 3) That the update in respect of progress with the implementation of actions arising from the Governance Systems Task Group be noted.

74/23

PLAYING PITCH STRATEGY - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Development Services Manager presented the report on the Playing Pitch Strategy and in doing so drew attention to the fact that this was the outstanding strategy arising from the Leisure and Culture Strategy that was endorsed by Cabinet in October 2022 (the Leisure and Culture Strategy included recommendations that had been drawn from three further strategies that underpinned the main strategy. These were the Arts and Culture Strategy, the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and the Built Facilities Strategy).

The Playing Pitch Strategy before Members covered the following aspects:

- How many playing pitch facilities there were in Bromsgrove?
- What was the quality of these facilities?
- Were these facilities accessible?
- What was the current demand?
- What was the future demand up to 2040?

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

Officers explained that the Council worked with a consultancy to ensure the exercise was undertaken in an independent and unbiased manner. In addition, a team of national governing bodies had overseen this work and Sports England acted as a supervisor and was responsible for signing off the Strategy.

It was further explained that the purposes of the Playing Pitch Strategy document were:

- To provide confidence to the Leisure Team when taking actions on playing pitches.
- To support the local planning authority in making confident decisions about protecting / enhancing provision of playing pitches in Bromsgrove.

It was highlighted that Sports England had to be consulted as a statutory consultee whenever an application that proposes removal or modification of playing pitches comes before the planning committee. The playing pitch strategy provided a framework document that allowed to determine applications in terms of implications on the playing pitch provision in the District.

The Development Services Manager presented the recommendations of the report. It was explained that the first recommendation asked that the Playing Pitch Strategy be endorsed, the second recommendation asked that the authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, to implement the first tranche of recommendations of the Playing Pitch Strategy as listed in recommendation two of the report.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the contents of the report. The following points were raised:

- Reporting inaccuracies in the Playing Pitch Strategy – It was reported that as part of stage E of the Strategy, the national governing bodies' representatives would continue to meet with Council officers in a Steering Group to monitor the progress of the Strategy. Elected Members would be able to raise any concerns or comments with Council officers who would then raise them at the Steering Group meetings.
- Section 106 Contributions from Developers – It was explained that the Council already collected money through the Section 106 agreement. The Playing Pitch Strategy document would allow the Council to be more precise in terms of how to spend any contributions on playing pitches and where there was demand. However, it was clarified that agreement with regard to Section 106 contributions are determined at the planning approval stage, and not decided via a Strategy, which provided an overall framework for where there was playing pitch need in the District.
- External Funding Sources – It was noted that the Council was awaiting news as to whether it would be eligible to have access to

a place-based national funding pot from Sports England (£250m) within the next 2 years.

- Specific playing pitches and parks – It was noted that funding via Section 106 developer contributions had been provided to Waseley Hills High School, which was making improvements to the playing pitches located there for the use of the school and the community. With regard to the St Chads Park in Rubery, the officers undertook to investigate and provide answers to Members at a later date.
- Consultants' work and costs – It was noted that consultants' work in terms of playing pitches strategy and associated work was £50,000 (of which circa ¼ was devoted to production of the Strategy itself).

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) The Playing Pitch Strategy at Appendix A be endorsed.
- 2) That delegated responsibility be granted to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change to implement the following recommendations (Listed at Playing Pitch Strategy Executive Summary Appendix B):

1.1, 2.1, 3.1, 3.3, 3.4, 5.1, 6.1, 6.3, 7.1, 7.2, 8.1, 8.3, 8.5

75/23

NOTICE OF MOTION - REQUEST TO INVESTIGATE - ACTIONS AGAINST THE IMPACT OF IMPENDING HEATWAVES

The proposer of the motion at full Council meeting, Councillor M. Marshall, addressed the Board. In doing so, he stated that Overview and Scrutiny had been asked by full Council to undertake a review of how to take immediate action to educate and equip residents for impending heatwaves, which had been made more likely by climate change.

Councillor M. Marshall reported that this was envisaged to be a short sharp review composed of a small group of Members to investigate what steps could be taken in the matter such as awareness campaigns, distributing guidelines and establishing cooling centres.

Members discussed the proposal and it was noted that there were national resources available which could help in undertaking the review, including Government guidance paper on hot weather and health from May 2023, and a report from National Audit Office on governmental resilience in extreme weather from December 2023.

The Interim Executive Director suggested that the Short Sharp Review Group could invite an emergency planning consultant to hear what was already being done locally in terms of planning for extreme weather conditions and what strategies could be usefully implemented.

During the discussion, it was agreed that all Members be contacted to ascertain who was interested in joining the Short Sharp Review Group prior to the membership being agreed by the Group.

RESOLVED that a Short Sharp Review Group be established to investigate actions that could be undertaken to protect residents from the impact of impending heatwaves.

76/23

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman reported that the next meeting of the Group would take place on the 13th February 2024 at which the Tranche 2 of the Medium Term Financial Plan 2024-25 and 2026-27 would be pre-scrutinised.

It was commented that as this was a key report which set out the budget, it should be pre-scrutinised by the parent Overview and Scrutiny Board, rather than a Working Group. It was asked that as part of the next year's budget process, the item be on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

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

77/23

TASK GROUP UPDATES

The Chair of the Food Bank and Community Supermarket Provision Task Group, Councillor E. Gray, reported that the Group had almost finalised visits to all known food banks in the District. The Group would be able to meet and prepare recommendations once the visits had been undertaken and the Group had the chance to hold its second formal meeting.

RESOLVED that the Task Group Update be noted.

78/23

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

The Council's Representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), Councillor B. Kumar, reported that that HOSC was next due to meet on 19th February 2024. It was reported that a communication had recently been received by HOSC representatives regarding the statistics on the number of calls to West Midlands Ambulance Service (WMAS) made during the Christmas and New Year period. It was highlighted by Councillor B. Kumar that the capacity of the ambulance response system was under strain in 2023-24 where there were 2076 calls made to 111 and 999 on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day alone. This represented a 16 per cent increase in calls compared to the previous year. It was reported that WMAS was looking at ways to minimise waiting times for people calling 111 and 999 numbers.

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

79/23

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

It was requested that the Cabinet item relating to the Local Heritage List Strategy be pre-scrutinised at the next Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 11th March.

RESOLVED that the Cabinet Work Programme be noted and that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated as per the pre-amble above.

80/23

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

It was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme would be updated with the item requested for pre-scrutiny under the previous item.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme be updated as noted under the previous item.

81/23

TO CONSIDER, AND IF CONSIDERED APPROPRIATE, TO PASS THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION TO EXCLUDE THE PUBLIC FROM THE MEETING DURING THE CONSIDERATION OF ITEM(S) OF BUSINESS CONTAINING EXEMPT INFORMATION:-

RESOLVED: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of scheme 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

Item No Paragraph

14 3

15 3 and 4

(Following this item, the meeting adjourned from 8.00pm to 8.10pm).

82/23

LEVELLING UP FUNDING UPDATE

The Deputy Chief Executive presented the update report in respect of Levelling Up Funding (LUF).

In doing so, it was noted that the Council had been awarded £14.1m of LUF in 2022. In addition to this, the Council had added £1.6m of its own funding.

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

Members were reminded that NWEDR provided overall programme management for the Bromsgrove LUF programmes. Given the changes to this arrangement in the future, plans were to be put in place on how these programmes were to progress moving forward.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was to be signed with Worcestershire County Council (WCC) to undertake the Public Realm works.

Officers reminded Members that the Planning application for the Market Hall site was to be considered at the Planning meeting due to take place on 19th February 2024.

The present plan for the Market Hall site would result in a construction completion date of September 2025, which was six months after the present deadline for spending of any Government LUF Grant. The Council had been in communication with DLUHC and sought a six month extension to this project. This was provisionally approved by DLUHC on 5th February 2024.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

(During consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

83/23

TERMINATION OF SHARED SERVICE ARRANGEMENT: NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Interim Executive Director presented a report which detailed proposals for the termination of the shared service for North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWeDR).

Members were informed that in the summer of 2023, the Leader of Wyre Forest District Council had approached the Leader of the Council and the Leader of Redditch Borough Council, which also formed part of the shared service, to advise them of Wyre Forest District Council's intention to ask to end the shared service agreement. This shared service had been in place for over 10 years and had provided economic development and regeneration services in the north of the county during this time.

Subsequent to this approach, Officers had been attending meetings with representatives of Wyre Forest District Council to discuss this matter further and, subject to an exit agreement between all parties, the shared service would cease to operate on 30th June 2024. End of terms were

Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board
12th February 2024

still being negotiated and would need to address issues such as indemnity clauses.

RECOMMENDED:

- 1) To agree that the Collaboration Agreement relating to the Provision of Economic Development and Regeneration Services should be terminated mutually under clause 15.1 (Determination of this Agreement), with effect from 30 June 2024 and that a new Exit Agreement be entered into;
- 2) Delegate to the Executive Director (interim) following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Regeneration, and Executive Director Resources to negotiate, finalise and approve the Exit Agreement and to take any other steps that arose from the termination process; and
- 3) That an additional budget of £72,836 be approved for the new structure.

(During the consideration of this item, Members discussed matters that necessitated the disclosure of exempt information. It was therefore agreed to move to exclude the press and public prior to any debate on the grounds that information would be revealed which related to the financial and business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information) and which related to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority).

The meeting closed at 9.16 p.m.

Chairman

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Agenda Item 3

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3, 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

Bromsgrove Local Heritage List

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Kit Taylor
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Report Author Mary Worsfold	Job Title: Principal Conservation Officer Contact email:m.worsfold@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881329
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

- 1) The Cabinet approve the revised Local Heritage List Strategy Document at appendix 1
- 2) The Cabinet delegate the authority to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services to publish for consultation draft sections of the Local Heritage List including those in Appendix 2.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Heritage List (LHL) is about identifying locally important heritage assets. The identification is done by Conservation professionals but as importantly the local community. This report provides an update to the progress on the LHL and outlines an amendment to in the public engagement processes in the adopted Local Heritage List Strategy.
- 2.2 The Local Heritage List Strategy (LHLS) is the document which sets out how the Council will produce its local list. The Council adopted a LHLS in 2016, since then progress has been made on the list but a number of factors have prevented the finalisation of any of the individual sections, one of the issues we have faced has been the public engagement element. A updated version of the LHLS can be seen at appendix 1 of this report and members are asked to approve this strategy.

**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

2.3 Summary of the Local Heritage List Strategy

- Local lists identify heritage assets which are valued by local communities and contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of an area.
- The use of local lists is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)
- The Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) acknowledges the importance of adopting a local list to identify the locally important heritage assets within the district,
- Heritage assets on the Local Heritage List will not have the same protection as those on the statutory list, although the Historic Environment policies in the District Plan support the retention of heritage assets on the list. Assets identified on a local list will merit consideration in the planning process.
- The more robust the process for adding a heritage asset to the local list, particularly in terms of the selection criteria, the greater the weight for protecting the asset.
- Inclusion of a heritage asset on the list will provide clarity to owners, developers and the local planning authority allowing all parties to consider the significance of the asset at an early stage.
- Criteria for inclusion on the Local Heritage list have been identified, and include Age, Authenticity and Rarity, Architectural Interest, Historic Interest and Townscape/Villagescape/Landscape interest. Candidates need to satisfy the first criteria and at least one other.
- The LHL will be prepared on a parish by parish basis. The conservation team will consider all nominations and will also survey the area to identify further properties which meet the criteria. They will then prepare a draft list.
- Following a period of public consultation, including with the owners of these properties, a final report will be prepared for Cabinet with the proposal that the Parish LHL is adopted and becomes a material consideration in the planning process.

2.4 The Historic England Guidance Document 'Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition) 2021', and its predecessors stresses the importance of community engagement in the process. The original LHLS document promoted public engagement, by inviting the public, local history groups etc to nominate properties to be included on the list, with nominations being justified with reference to the selection criteria in the strategy.

2.5 Prior to the work on the lists for Beoley and Dodford, public consultation events were held to gain feedback on the draft

**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

conservation area appraisals for Beoley and Dodford Conservation Areas, and the opportunity was taken to publicise the forthcoming local heritage lists. A local list information banner was displayed in addition to the conservation area banner, which provided information on local heritage lists and copies of the local heritage list strategy document were also available together with nomination forms.

- 2.6 The conservation area appraisal also listed properties within the CA which might be eligible for the local list. Conservation staff attended all events and were able to discuss what local heritage lists were and how they would be assembled, and what it would mean for property owners if a building was added to the list.
- 2.7 Despite these attempts to engage with the public through consultation events and contacting parish councils, public response has been limited and the draft lists which have been prepared largely result from the survey and assessment of each parish by a conservation officer. Only a handful of nominations have been received from the public.
- 2.8 In the original LHLS the nominations were then to be considered by an Assessment Panel, consisting of no more than 5 persons. They were to consider the suitability of all the assets nominated against the selection criteria. The panel was to include people with a professional interest in the historic environment such as local conservation architects, local historians, archaeologists, any other relevant local group and the conservation officer. No other local authorities in the area included such a panel in their LHL strategies, and identifying potential members with the relevant experience has proved problematic.
- 2.9 At the time the original document was adopted there was only one conservation officer, the conservation resource has now doubled which has allowed for internal benchmarking of the proposed list. It is now considered that the assessment panel is less relevant to the process, however public engagement is an extremely important element. It is therefore now proposed to amend the process by seeking further more meaningful public engagement later in the process.
- 2.10 The public will still be asked for nominations at an early stage, by contacting any relevant Parish Councils, community groups or interest groups such as local historic societies, we will also use the now much improved social media communications that were not as widely used in 2016. It is now proposed that in addition to the early engagement seeking nominations, when the list has been drafted, public consultation will take place inviting comments on the proposed LHL.

Cabinet 2024

13th March

- 2.11 The owners of properties on the proposed list and the relevant parish council will be specifically consulted. The consultation process will therefore be similar to the one undertaken when conservation area appraisals are drafted, which has proved to be relatively successful with a reasonable level of public engagement. The public could also nominate properties at this stage that did not appear on the draft list.
- 2.12 It is considered that there may have been a degree of confusion by the public in what they were originally being asked to do in nominating buildings or structures for the LHL, possibly because of a lack of understanding in respect of the difference between national and local listing, and what might qualify a building for inclusion. It is hoped that by producing a draft list, which will include details of how the criteria have been met, it will encourage people to suggest other buildings or comment on those proposed for inclusion. By enhancing the consultation process in this way the views of the public will be better captured, and one of the aims of local listing to identify what is valued by local communities is fulfilled.
- 2.13 The revised process can be summarised as follows:

Request nominations/survey the parish/named area/Complete Draft LHL for parish/named area

Contact parish Council/other prominent stakeholder (Bromsgrove/Lickey End/Rubery) with a view to arranging a consultation event

Book consultation event

Draft consultation letters

Publish Parish LHL on BDC Website

Start Consultation Process – 6 Weeks

- **Contact owners/parish council/any other consultees**
 - **Use Council social media to publicise consultation and consultation event**
 - **Hold consultation event**
 - **Comments to be submitted preferably on a form to be found on the LHL page on the BDC website, hard copies of the form will be available at consultation events.**
 - **Tabulate consultation comments**
-

**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

**Consider all comments against the criteria and amend the draft LHL accordingly
Prepare a summary of consultation comments & Conservation responses**

Prepare Cabinet Report with consultation responses and recommendation that the Parish LHL is adopted and it becomes a material consideration in the planning process.

- 2.14 It is hoped that with an actual document to look at which identifies properties for inclusion on a LHL together with an explanation as to how the buildings meets the criteria that the public will be more willing to engage. This has been the case with the conservation area appraisals. It may also encourage the public to suggest other buildings as they will hopefully have a better understanding of what we are trying to achieve.
- 2.15 Heritage assets on the local list do not attract additional consent requirements, unlike statutory listed buildings where listed building consent is required for all alterations, over and above those required for planning permission.
- 2.16 Heritage assets identified on a local list, are recognised by the local authority as having heritage significance, and therefore will merit consideration in planning matters. When considering planning applications which impact on heritage assets on the local list, the LPA is required to take a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset, in determining the application.
- 2.17 There will be no appeal procedure if an owner believes thier property should not be included on the list. The statutory listing process similarly has no appeal process.

The Draft Local Heritage List

- 2.18 Draft lists in respect of Beoley, Alvechurch, Belbroughton and Dodford have now been prepared. These lists add 140 properties to the draft LHL, and cover a diverse range of properties including houses, schools, village halls, places of worship and canal infrastructure. Work is underway on Bromsgrove, Lickey and Blackwell and Wythall. Appendix 2 identifies the properties which are going to be subject to the consultation processes as outlined above.

Cabinet 2024

13th March

- 2.19 An example of a full list entry can be seen below , a photograph will be included in the final document, and this is what we will use as the basis for consultation. The final list once adopted will be published on the Councils website, and used as a material consideration when making planning decisions.

**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

Bromsgrove Draft Local List 2023

Scarfield Wharf Stables			
Scarfield Hill	B48 7SQ	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV001

Description / Summary

Stable building, probably built in 1861 after the 1847 wharf enlargement. A smaller building appears on the 1842 tithe map, and this may be incorporated in the current building, but there are no obvious indications in the building fabric. Scarfield Wharf was originally constructed around 1806, following the construction of the canal stretch between Hopwood and Tardebigge, and included a winding hole, stables, machine house and weighbridge, the latter of which was taken from Hopwood Wharf. In 1808 the wharf was the southern terminus for a horse-drawn packet boat service, conveying goods and people between Alvechurch and Birmingham, although this enterprise only lasted 5 years. The stables likely used bricks from the then nearby Wynn's Brickworks, which operated from 1860-1939.

Age, Authenticity and Rarity

Mid-19th century with possible earlier parts incorporated. There are minimal signs of change to principal form and fabric since 1861, although windows and rainwater goods appear to be modern. The building is one of only a handful of surviving historic wharf buildings in the area.

Architectural Interest

Simple, utilitarian form with interesting brickwork.

Historic Interest

Historic association with the canal, particularly associated with Wynn's Brickworks as probable supplier for its principal fabric, and subsequent occupier as the brickworks leased the wharf for transporting its goods.

Townscape/Villagescape/Landscape Interest

Positive contribution to canal corridor, strengthening the line of the bridge and marking an intersection of travel modes.

New Alvechurch Marina Building			
Scarfield Hill	B48 7SQ	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV002

Description / Summary

Marina Offices and Chandlery, built in the 1980s-90s, to designs from local firm Frank Helm Associates.

Age, Authenticity and Rarity

Late 20th century, but an authentic and unique design; possibly the only purpose-designed modern canal building in the area.

Architectural Interest

Unique, modern form appearing to reference the 'cloth and plank' cargo section of historic working canal boats. The building is designed specifically for visual interest as opposed to a utilitarian 'shed'.

Historic Interest

The conversion of the wharf from industrial use to leisure use was a key moment in its history and ensured its ongoing survival as a piece of canal infrastructure. The Marina building has been the hub of local canal life for over 40 years.

Townscape/Villagescape/Landscape Interest

Positive contribution to canal corridor, modern but not jarring or harmful.

- 2.20 It is proposed going forward that officers will prepare further lists for the remaining areas of the District and in consultation with the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure these will be published for consultation as per the delegation requested at 1.2 above. Once the

**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

consultation has been undertaken, the final sections of the list will be presented to members for formal adoption as the Local Heritage List for Bromsgrove. It is envisaged that officers will prepare a number of reports over the next 12-18 months each one covering a number of parishes / areas so that we can get LHL coverage in as soon as possible, rather than wait for the whole district to be assessed before we finalise the list. It is also expected that overtime the list will be updated as further assets are identified.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of implementing the proposed changes to the Strategy and carrying out the consultation process will be met by the existing Strategic Planning Team budget.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The use of local lists is promoted by the NPPF, which advises local planning authorities in Paragraph 190 to 'set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment'. It is emphasised that 'they (LPAs) should recognise that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance'. In light of the NPPF, the Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) acknowledges the importance of adopting a local list to identify the locally important heritage assets within the District. (See paras BDP 20.12, BDP 20.13 & BDP20.14)

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green

The identification and inclusion of local heritage assets on the LHL will help to ensure that the local distinctiveness of Bromsgrove will be maintained and managed further, enhancing the sense of a well maintained and safe communities.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 It is not considered that the proposed action will have any climate change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

**Cabinet
2024**

13th March

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are not considered to be any customer/equality or diversity implications. The consultation will be carried out in line with established consultation processes the planning department frequently use.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There are no associated risks with this report.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 Revised Draft Local Heritage List Strategy Document
Appendix 2 Draft Local Heritage lists for Alvechurch, Belbroughton, Beoley and Dodford

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APPENDIX 1

LOCAL HERITAGE LIST STRATEGY (REVISED NOVEMBER 2023 DRAFT)

What is Local Listing?

Local lists identify heritage assets which are valued by local communities and contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of an area. There are a significant number of heritage assets within the District which are important to our local communities and make a valuable contribution to our sense of history and understanding of place.

Heritage Assets are defined in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as ‘A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. Heritage asset includes designated heritage assets and assets identified by the local planning authority (including local listing)’. These assets can include buildings, structures, landscapes, archaeological sites or places associated with significant local, historical events, important people, trades or industries, craftsmen or locally distinctive buildings in terms of their architecture or materials, to name but a few examples.

Overall, they are heritage assets which are valued by local communities and contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of an area.

Local lists identify what is valued at a local level as opposed to national level. Nationally important heritage assets are identified as either scheduled Ancient Monuments, or on the Statutory List (occasionally they appear on both) or Register of Parks and Gardens. Other heritage assets do not satisfy the criteria for any of these national designations, and if not located in a conservation area they have no formal recognition and consequently no protection.

The process of preparing a local heritage list allows local people to identify the local heritage assets which are important to them as well as enabling local authorities to work in partnership with their local communities. A local list will identify the location of such assets and will define their significance.

Policy Context NPPF

The use of local lists is promoted by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which advises local planning authorities in Paragraph 196¹, to ‘set out in their local plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment’. It is emphasised that ‘they should recognise that heritage assets are

¹ Plans should set out a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment, including heritage assets most at risk through neglect, decay or other threats. This strategy should take into account:

- the desirability of sustaining and enhancing the significance of heritage assets and putting them to viable uses consistent with their conservation;
- the wider social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits that conservation of the historic environment can bring;
- the desirability of new development making a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness; and
- opportunities to draw on the contribution made by the historic environment to the character of a place.

an irreplaceable resource and conserve them in a manner appropriate to their significance’.

In respect of non-designated Heritage Assets, Paragraph 209 states ‘The effect of an application on the significance of a non-designated heritage asset should be taken into account in determining the application. In weighing applications that affect directly or indirectly non designated heritage assets, a balanced judgement will be required having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset.’

Local Plan Policies

In light of the NPPF the Bromsgrove District Plan (2017) acknowledges the importance of adopting a local list to formally identify the locally important heritage assets within the district, and includes the following policies;

BDP20.12 The District Council will update the current draft local heritage list and formally adopt it. It would include all heritage assets recognised as being of local importance, including those which are locally distinctive such as nailers cottages, assets associated with the scythe industry and assets associated with the use of the Worcester and Birmingham canal which runs the length of the District, to name but a few.

BDP20.13 The District Council will support development that:

- i. Retains Heritage assets on the local list.
- ii. Involves sympathetic alterations and extensions to Heritage assets on the local list.
- iii. Does not have a detrimental impact on the setting or context of Heritage assets on the local list.

BDP20.14 In considering applications that directly or indirectly affect locally listed buildings, a balanced judgement will be applied having regard to the scale of any harm or loss as a result of proposed development and the significance of the locally listed building.

Historic England Guidance

Local lists have been promoted in planning policy since the 1990s. Historic England’s Guidance document ‘Local Heritage Listing: Identifying and Conserving Local Heritage, Historic England Advice Note 7 (2nd edition) 2021 and its predecessors advised local authorities how they should go about preparing and maintain local lists. The guidance document has assisted in the preparation of this document.

What protection do locally Listed Buildings have?

Heritage assets on the local list do not attract additional consent requirements, unlike statutory listed buildings where listed building consent is required for all alterations, over and above those required for planning permission.

Heritage assets identified on a local list, are recognised by the local authority as having heritage significance, and therefore due to Paragraph 208 of the NPPF(outlined above), will merit consideration in planning matters. When

considering planning applications which impact on heritage assets on the local list, the LPA is required to take a balanced judgement having regard to the scale of any harm or loss and the significance of the heritage asset, in determining the application.

Heritage assets on the Local Heritage List will not have the same protection as those on the statutory list, although the Historic Environment policies in the District Plan support the retention of heritage assets on the list.

The level of protection afforded to a heritage asset on a local list will be dependent on how the local list was prepared. The more robust the process for adding a heritage asset to the local list, particularly in terms of the selection criteria, the greater the weight for protecting the asset.

Inclusion of a heritage asset on the list will provide clarity to owners, developers and the local planning authority allowing all parties to consider the significance of the asset at an early stage. It should be noted that if a heritage asset is not included on a local list, it does not indicate that it is of no heritage value, only that at this point in time it does not meet the criteria for inclusion on the list. The fact that it is a 'heritage asset' will still be a material consideration in the planning process.

Consultation

The process of compiling the Local Heritage List and the criteria to be used have been arrived at following public consultation.

The first step in the process of preparing and adopting the local list was to consult on the draft selection criteria which had been identified and the process for compiling the Local Heritage List. Following Cabinet approval a 6 week consultation was undertaken. The consultation process involved inviting comments from key stakeholders including the parish councils, neighbouring councils, Historic England, the statutory amenity societies, local history groups, other local societies and the general public. A Local Heritage List page was created on the conservation section of the Bromsgrove District Council website, with further information on the process, and details on how to submit comments. Two information evenings were also held at the Council House in Bromsgrove.

A number of comments were submitted in respect of the document and the criteria. The document and criteria have been amended in light of these comments and the changes approved by the Head of Planning and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder.

Compiling the Local Heritage List

Although a draft local list was drawn up in 2006, it was on the basis of nomination only and there were no defining criteria. All the properties on this list will be considered in light of the adopted criteria. As the task is a large one and the local authority wants to work with local communities to draw up the list it is proposed that the list is drawn up on a parish by parish basis where parishes exist, where no parishes exist the areas will be split up in manageable selection areas.

Agenda Item 5

Local groups including parish councils, local history groups, local interest societies, to name but a few, as well as individuals will be invited to nominate heritage assets for consideration for inclusion on the Local List. They will need to submit evidence on a nomination form to justify the proposal having considered the selection criteria.

The conservation team will consider all nominations and will assess them against the criteria. The team will also survey the area to identify further properties which meet the criteria.

The Conservation Team will then assemble a draft list for the parish/area

They will then commence a consultation process as follows

Publish LHL on BDC Website

Start Consultation Process – 6 Weeks

- **Contact owners/parish council/any other consultees**
- **Use Council social media to publicise consultation and consultation event**
- **Hold consultation event**
- **Comments to be submitted preferably on a form to be found on the LHL page on the BDC website, hard copies of the form will be available at consultation events.**
- **Tabulate consultation comments**

Consider all comments against the criteria and amend the draft LHL accordingly

Prepare a summary of consultation comments & Conservation responses

A final report, together with a summary of the consultation responses, will be prepared for Cabinet with the proposal that the Parish LHL is adopted and becomes a material consideration in the planning process.

There will be no appeal procedure if an owner believes his/her property should not be included on the list. The statutory listing process similarly has no appeal process although the issue of whether or not a building should be on the national list can be raised during development control procedures.

The process will be repeated until the whole District has been assessed. Following which there will be a similar process for subsequently adding any further heritage assets to the list on an annual basis.

If for any reason a HA loses its significance, for example due to unsympathetic alterations, or additions, it could be considered for removal from the list following a similar process to the one outlined above.

What will the list look like?

It is envisaged that it will comprise address details, photograph, description and brief reasons for inclusion, including how it meets the criteria.

Availability/Accessibility

There will be a link to the list from the conservation pages of the BDC Website, with a hard copy maintained in the office.

Why do we need Selection Criteria?

The local list can incorporate all types of heritage assets, and selection criteria are important for defining the scope of the local heritage list, ensuring that a range of local assets including the locally distinctive are included.

More weight can be given to preserving the significance of assets on the local list, if the list has been objectively prepared. Criteria therefore need to be subject to public consultation and there has to be a clearly defined process for compiling the list as well as adding to it in the future.

Summary of special interest for Bromsgrove District

Bromsgrove District is situated in North Worcestershire, and although the town of Bromsgrove is located only 14 miles from the centre of Birmingham, the district is predominately rural, with approximately 91% designated as Green Belt.

Away from the built up areas around Bromsgrove the District is characterised by settlements of farmsteads and wayside dwellings with the occasional village. The Historic Environment Assessment of Bromsgrove District indicated that there was generally a moderate to high survival rate of historic character, although many of the historic assets are undesignated.

There are 492 listed buildings, 13 Scheduled Ancient Monuments, 839 known sites of archaeological interest, 2 registered parks and gardens and 12 conservation areas. The conservation areas vary greatly in character, however most are centred around village cores such as Belbroughton and Alvechurch, but this also means that that village buildings of interest, of which there are many, not situated in this central core are unprotected.

The more unusual conservation areas include a stretch of the Birmingham and Worcester Canal, however not all buildings and structures associated with the waterway are within the boundary of the conservation area, and the Chartist settlement at Dodford.

Most of the Dodford settlement is protected by the conservation area designation and the best surviving cottages are listed. Dodford was one of only five Chartist settlements in the country, and is considered to have been one of the key events in agricultural development in Worcestershire.

In addition, there are other smaller but equally notable groups of assets which are important in terms of local character and distinctiveness and these include;

- The cottages and workshops relating to the nailing industry, which boomed around Bromsgrove during the 18th and 19th centuries, and they can be found throughout the district.
- The numerous vernacular cottages and farmsteads found throughout the district, although many farmsteads have been converted to residential use.
- The houses designed by prominent Birmingham Arts and Crafts architects at the end of the 19th and at the beginning of the 20th century, particularly around Barnt Green.

- Work by the Bromsgrove Guild of Applied Arts, founded at the end of the 19th century which attracted craftsmen to the area from across Europe before it closed in the late 1960s.
- Structures and other evidence relating to the scythe industry in Belbroughton
- The significant number of parks and gardens of regional importance, identified in the Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust, Survey of Parks and Gardens in Worcestershire².

Selection Criteria

To be considered for the local list each heritage asset should satisfy criteria 1 and one other criteria.

1 Age, Authenticity and Rarity

- Any heritage asset proposed to be considered for selection under any of these criteria the asset would need to have retained a significant and recognisable amount of its original form and fabric.

- If there are a number of examples of a particular asset the best examples in terms of their authenticity, should be selected for the Local Heritage List

2 Architectural Interest

This would include;

- Assets which can be attributed to nationally and locally important architects, designers, builders, gardeners or craftsmen, and illustrate a high quality of design or innovation. Locally important architects might include John Cotton and A V Rowe, as well as Birmingham Arts & Crafts architects such as Charles Bateman. Locally important craftsmen could include members of the Bromsgrove Guild or Birmingham Guild.

- Assets which illustrate distinctive artistic, craftsmanship, design, construction or landscaping qualities of interest. This might include a distinctive architectural style, or a good example stained glass or other decorative detailing,

² A Survey of Historic Parks and Gardens in Worcester shire, Richard Lockett, Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust. 2019

- Assets which are a good example of a locally important building type (e.g Nailers Cottages).

3 Historic Interest

This would include;

- Assets which are associated with a locally important historic person, family or group
- Assets which illustrate a particular phase or period of local, social, religious, political or economic history (e.g nailers cottages or assets associated with the Chartist Movement at Dodford)
- Assets which are associated with a locally important historic event or movement.

4 Townscape/Villagescape/Landscape Interest

This would include;

- Assets which are locally important building types such as churches, chapels, schools and other distinctive features in the streetscape.
- Assets which are landmarks or features which make a positive contribution to the distinctive character of the area.

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Agenda Item 5

Bromsgrove Draft Local List 2024

Scarfield Wharf Stables			
Scarfield Hill	B48 7SQ	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV001
New Alvechurch Marina Building			
Scarfield Hill	B48 7SQ	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV002
The Weighbridge Freehouse			
Scarfield Hill	B48 7SQ	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV003
School House Private Day Nursery			
Priory Road	B61 9DF	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD005
Dodford lodge			
Priory Road	B61 9DF	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD006
Little Dodford Farm			
Priory Road	B61 9DF	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD007
The Tower House			
Priory Road	B61 9DF	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD008
Westbrook Victoria Road and Building to the Rear of Westbrook			
Victoria Road	B61 9BZ	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD009
Chapelgate			
Warbage Lane	B61 9BE	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD010
Orchard Cottage			
Whinfield Road	B61 9BG	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD011
Sundays Hill			
Whinfield Road	B61 9BG	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD012
The Dodford Inn			
Whinfield Road	B61 9BG	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD013
Highfields			
Woodland Road	B61 9BP	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD014
Hollybank			
Woodland Road	B61 9BN	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD015
Trefoil Court			
Woodland Road	B61 9BN	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD016
The Millstone			
Woodland Road	B61 9BS	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD017
The Homestead			
Woodland Road	B61 9BN	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD018

Agenda Item 5

The Latch			
Brimstone Lane	B61 9AX	Dodford with Grafton	BDC ID DOD019
Hopwood Village Hall			
Birmingham Road	B48 7AL	Hopwood	BDC ID ALV011
Wharf Cottages			
Callow Hill Road	B48 7LR	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV013
The Bakery, 1A			
Latimer Road	B48 7NP	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV014
Rosemary Cottages			
Bittell Road	B48 7BN	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV018
457			
Birmingham Road	B97 6RL	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV022
The Crown Inn			
Withybed Lane	B48 7PN	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV031
Havencroft Nursing Home			
Formerly The Elms, Birmingham Road, H		Hopwood	BDC ID ALV032
1 & 2 Birmingham Road			
1 & 2 Birmingham Road, Hopwood	B48 7TR	Hopwood	BDC ID ALV036
Post Office and Adjoining Building, 1			
Bear Hill	B48 7JX	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV037
Town Mill			
Radford Road	B48 7LD	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV038
The Old School House			
School Lane	B48 7SA	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV039
Methodist Chapel			
Chapel Lane	B48 7QH	Rowney Green	BDC ID ALV040
Baptist Chapel			
Red Lion Street	B48 7LG	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV041
Old Railway Station			
Station Road	B48 7SE	Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV042
Park at Bordesley Hall, Alvechurch			
Alvechurch NP View E is into this park			BDC ID ALV043
Deer Park at Bordesley Park, Alvechurch			
			BDC ID ALV044
Bordesley Park Farmhouse, Beoley			
Dagnell End Road		Beoley	BDC ID ALV045

Agenda Item 5

Alpine Lodge Farm (Lodge Farm), AKA Rowney Green Farm, Rowney Green			
Rowney Green Lane		Rowney Green	BDC ID ALV046
Village Hall, Bear Hill, Alvechurch			
Bear Hill		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV047
Tunnel House, Wast Hills Lane, Alvechurch			
Wast Hills Lane		Hopwood	BDC ID ALV048
2, 4, and 6 Swan Street, Alvechurch			
Swan Street		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV049
Groveley Hall (Groveley House), Alvechurch			
Birmingham Road		Hopwood	BDC ID ALV050
Station Road Bridge (Bridge 60), Worcester and Birmingham Canal, Alvechurch			
Station Road		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV051
Bittell Bridge (Bridge 66), Worcester and Birmingham Canal, Alvechurch			
Bittell Farm Road		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV052
Hopwood Bridge (Bridge 68), Worcester and Birmingham Canal, Alvechurch			
N/A		Hopwood	BDC ID ALV053
Uplands, Coopers Hill, Alvechurch			
Coopers Hill		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV054
Former School, now a church, School Lane, Alvechurch			
School Lane		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV055
The Peacock, Icknield Street, Alvechurch			
Icknield Street		Forhill	BDC ID ALV056
Dingle House, Alvechurch			
Birmingham Road		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV057
Outbuildings at Brookhouse Farm, Alvechurch			
Stonehouse Lane			BDC ID ALV058
Farmhouse, Woodlands Farm (Woodlands), Alvechurch			
Chapel Lane		Rowney Green	BDC ID ALV059
Lea End House, Alvechurch			
Lea End Lane		Lea End	BDC ID ALV060
Peacock Cottage, Alvechurch			
Icknield Street		Forhill	BDC ID ALV061
20-22 Bear Hill, Alvechurch			
Bear Hill		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV062
The Swan Public House, Swan Street, Alvechurch			
Swan Street		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV063

Agenda Item 5

Fairfield, Radford Road, Alvechurch			
Radford Road		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV064
Hopwood House Inn, A441, Alvechurch			
Birmingham Road		Hopwood	BDC ID ALV065
Wast Hills House, Alvechurch			
Wast Hills Lane		Alvechurch	BDC ID ALV066
Bordesley Hall, Alvechurch			
The Holloway		Rowney Green	BDC ID ALV067
Belbroughton Primary School			
	DY9 9TF	Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL001
No. 22-26			
	DY9 0DT	Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL002
Old School House, 28			
	DY9 0DT	Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL003
Outbuilding to Fieldhouse Farm			
	...	Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL004
Outbuilding east of 8 Drayton Road			
		Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL005
The Old Chapel			
	DY90DT	Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL006
The Talbot			
		Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL007
44			
	DY9 9SU	Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL008
Ye Old Horse Shoe Inn			
		Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL009
4 to 10			
		Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL010
Former Nash Works Building			
		Belbroughton	BDC ID BEL011
Rosecroft			
Alcester Road		Beoley	BDC ID BEO001
Arrowdale & Holt End Farm			
Beoley Lane		Beoley	BDC ID BEO003
Beoley Village Hall			
Beoley Lane		Beoley	BDC ID BEO004

Agenda Item 5

Beoley First School & Woodland House Day

Beoley Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO005

Madeley Green

Billesley Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO006

Billesley Farm & Billesley Farm Cottage

Billesley Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO007

Longfield

Bleachfield Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO008

Carpenters Hill House

Carpenters Hill Beoley BDC ID BEO009

Hawthorn Cottage

Chapel Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO010

Uplow Cottage & The Cottage

Holt Hill Beoley BDC ID BEO011

The Village Inn

Holt Hill Beoley BDC ID BEO012

Old Forge Cottage

Icknield street Beoley BDC ID BEO013

Walled Garden at Brook Farm (Former Walled Garden to Beoley Hall)

Icknield street Beoley BDC ID BEO014

Lilley Green Hall

Lilley Green Road Beoley BDC ID BEO015

Old Farm (including barn to north of farmhouse)

Old Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO016

Hob Hill Farm (including The Coach House and The Barn)

Seafeld Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO017

Newlands

Seafeld Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO018

Wren's Nest

Wapping Lane Beoley BDC ID BEO020

Greenfields

Church Road B61 9BY Dodford with Grafton BDC ID DOD001

Dodford First School

Fockbury Road B61 9AW Dodford with Grafton BDC ID DOD002

Post Office and The Old Post Office

Priory Road B61 9DA Dodford with Grafton BDC ID DOD003

Agenda Item 5

Sumach

Priory Road

B61 9DA

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD004

Fockbury House (Inc. brick boundary wall to the north) and Fockbury Farm: The buildings include "Acorn House", "Oak L

Fockbury Road

B61 9AP

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD020

Tower

Bromsgrove Road

B61 9JD

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD021

Top House

Woodcote Lane

B61 9EF

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD022

Park Farm and Park Farm Barns

Kidderminster Road

B61 9AL

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD023

Parkgate Inn

Kidderminster Road

B61 9AJ

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD024

Battlefield Farm (Farmstead and Farmhouse)

Kidderminster Road

B61 9AJ

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD025

Battlefield House

Kidderminster Road

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD026

Rodenhurst Farm

Timberhonger Lane

B61 9DP

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD027

Grafton Cottage

Grafton Lane

B61 7HA

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD028

Foxwalks Farm and Foxwalks Farmstead: The buildings include "Foxwalks Farm", "Farm Cottage", "The Coach House", "T

Grafton Lane

B61 7HB

Dodford with Grafton

BDC ID DOD029

Cabinet
2024

13th March

Bromsgrove Centres Action Plan 2024/25

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Sue Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		Ruth Bamford Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services
Report Author	Job Title: Lyndsey Berry Contact email: Lyndsey.berry@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881221	
Wards Affected		Bromsgrove Central, Sanders Park, Hagley West, Hagley East, Rubery North, Rubery South, Barnt Green, Alvechurch Village, Drakes Cross, Catshill North, Catshill South, Aston Fields
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RESOLVE that:-

The Bromsgrove Centres Action Plan 2024/25 attached at Appendix 2 be approved.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In January 2023 members approved the Bromsgrove Centres Strategy and action plan 2023-2026. The strategy is based upon eight centres across the district working to those boundary's outlined within the Bromsgrove Local Plan. The key focus of the strategy is to develop and implement centre management initiatives that aim to improve the vitality and viability of the various centres, to identify and co-ordinate opportunities, to inject a new vibrancy and energy into Bromsgrove centres, strengthen communication and support local businesses. The purpose of this report is to review the summary of activity for 2023/24 (Appendix 1) and agree the action plan for the forthcoming year 2024/25 (Appendix 2)

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The Bromsgrove Centres Action Plan sets out Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness and success of the plan. Monitoring and evaluation of the plan will be undertaken in partnership with Council colleagues, businesses, and key stakeholders.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Implementation of the action plan is supported by the Bromsgrove Centres Manager budget. Larger and more significant projects are incorporated into existing revenue and capital budgets, such as the Public Realm Phase 2 programme included within the Levelling Up Fund Programme.
- 4.2 The Bromsgrove Centres Manager is also responsible for attracting external funding to support the aims and objectives of the action plan. Further funding will be explored from external sources to deliver future objectives.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications arising out of the report.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 The Bromsgrove Centres Action Plan 2023-2026 is aligned with the Strategic Purpose 'Run and grow a successful business: strengthen the vibrancy & viability of our towns & district centres'.
- 6.2 The action plan will also complement and support the work of the Parish Councils, Business and Trader Associations and other key stakeholders in each of the centres with a focus on developing shared ambitions.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 The strategy and action plan will seek to address climate change where appropriate with a key focus on Shop Local and Shop Green.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 The Bromsgrove Centres Manager will consider the impact of changes that might arise because of implementing the action plan on those with

protected equality characteristics where there is likely to be an impact on residents or service users from any changes of existing services.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Risks associated with the delivery of individual projects and activities will be overseen by the Bromsgrove Centres Manager and will also be monitored and managed by the Head of Service.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1	Action Plan 2023 Summary
Appendix 2	Action Plan 2024/25

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sue Baxter	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Ruth Bamford Head of Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services	24 Jan 24
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter	24 Jan 24

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Bromsgrove Centres Strategy
Activity Overview – 2023/2024

The past year has been incredibly busy with building relations, new initiatives for the centres and day to day operational issues. Using the themes from the Centres Strategy 2023-2026 below is a summary of activity.

Accessibility

Traffic Management – work has continued with retailers, BDC CCTV & Monitoring Centres and traffic wardens to reduce the number of vehicles on the high street during the Traffic Order times of 10:30-4pm. Feedback from stakeholders has shown an improvement however this work is ongoing and a formal change to the TRO has been requested with WCC & BDC Member support.

Safety and Security

Taxi Marshall Schemes have continued at key dates throughout the year agreed by the TC Management group and supported by the Police.

Regular meetings of Bromsgrove Pubwatch occur on a bimonthly basis facilitated by the Centres Manager with collaboration from Redditch Pubwatch to ensure a joined-up approach across both areas. This has resulted in costs savings for both Pubwatch groups and the council who provide the software platform DISC. The Licensing L Savi Initiative has been introduced by Police supported by the Council and will be driven forward this year.

Early March 2024 will see the launch of a Shopwatch scheme and new radio system across Bromsgrove and Redditch. Collaboration with Redditch Business Improvement District will ensure a linked approach in deterring shoplifting in retail outlets and anti-social behaviour across the areas, supported by the Police, RBC and Community Safety.

Street Pastors continues to support and help the night-time economy. Regular catch-up meetings are in integral part of the pub watch forum and TC Management meetings.

Marketing/Promotion & Events

Shop Local and Independent Campaigns have continued with Small Business Saturday & Love Your Market campaigns.

Collaboration with external groups and internal service areas has seen support for the following events.

- Rubery Festival
- Rocking Bromsgrove (Kings Coronation Event)
- Aston Fields Coronation Event
- Christmas Lights switch on across several centres.
- Friends of St John Christmas Market
- Indie Club Christmas Food Event

Talk of the Town Visa Award

Agenda Item 6

In partnership with Visit Worcestershire and Bromsgrove Indie Club a Bromsgrove Food Month is being established

- To build on Bromsgrove's reputation for Food & Drink
- To celebrate the towns independent scene
- To draw people into the town/area during the shoulder season
- To attract residents and visitors to the High Street and outlying centres
- Wider Marketing and PR to promote the event

This will be held in the Town Centre late Spring/early summer and will be funded through Visa, UKSPF and Visit Worcs. Bespoke marketing, advertising and website will be included to promote businesses with a view to this being an annual event.

Markets

Regular attendance at traders' meetings and internal catch ups with the market manager to ensure Market & High Street activity work in tandem.

Business Support

Through the UKSPF programme the Centres Enhancement Grant launched in January 2024 with a grant of up to 5k for shop front improvements and 10K to use a vacant unit. Applications closed on the 16th of February 24 and over 25 applications have been received which are currently being processed.

Public Realm

All tarmac areas to Bromsgrove High Street repaired with matching blocks and March 2024 will see new planters mounted on lamp columns to provide much-needed colour to the high street.

Targeted letters /enforcement progressed to unsightly or problem premises.

Phase 2 Public Realm concept designs have been progressed with NWEDR & WCC through Levelling Up Fund monies, improvements to Chapel Street and High Street South should commence late Spring 2024.

Communication & Networking

TC database of contacts

Bromsgrove Town Centre Management Group

Merging of Bromsgrove Indie Club with town centre steering group

Database of landlords/agents

Safer Bromsgrove Meetings

Footfallⁱ



Figures have remained static for High Street visitors with an increase on last year's numbers averaging at around 13,000 visits per day.

Vacant Units

High Street Figures	2021	16 vacant units
	2022	17 Vacant Units
	2023	15 Vacant Units (7 of which are under offer or had lets agreed)

These numbers are provided by Strategic Planning who carry out a yearly health check of the Centres. The check is carried out in November each year and are based on the boundary's within the local plan.

The future

The Centres action plan 2024/25 shows ongoing initiatives with the following new actions.

- Landlords Group
Database of landlords/agents
Update emails
Produce Marketing pack for prospective tenants/landlords
- Business Improvement District
Commission feasibility study
- Shopwatch Scheme
Implementation of scheme using Disc
- Busking Policy
Implementation of busking policy
- Banners/adverts
Designated space & Booking System

ⁱ Data from Geolytix Footfall Tracker

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Bromsgrove Town Centre						
Objective		Output	Delivery Responsibilities	Timescale/Milestone	Funding	Performance Indicator
1	Bromsgrove Town Centre Management Group	Meets regularly to pro-actively determine priorities, address issues and works closely with Bromsgrove Pub watch. Reports to Safer Bromsgrove	BDC Centres Manager	Every 6 weeks	n/a	Regular attendance at meetings
2	Bromsgrove Pubwatch	Meet regularly Introduce Licensing L Savi Initiative DISC newsletter	Pubwatch WRS BDC Centre Manager	Every 8 weeks	TC Budget	Regular attendance at meetings Increase of venues joining Implementation of scheme
3	Radio Link Scheme	Usage of radio scheme and link with Police/CCTV	BDC Centres Manager BDC CCTV	TBC	UKSPF	No of users actively using radios
4	Street Pastors	Continues to support and help the night-time economy and other areas of High Street. Regular catch-up meetings and attendance at pub watch forum.	Street Pastors Team BDC Centres Manager	Attendance at Pubwatch and receipt of weekly reports	n/a	Regular attendance at meetings
5	Taxi Marshall Scheme	Provide taxi marshalling service for night-time economy on key dates throughout the year – to be agreed by TC Management Group.	BDC Centres Manager	Yearly as required	TC Budget	Feedback from businesses/street pastors
6	Bromsgrove Town Centre Steering Group	Provide support to merging of Indie Club and Steering group with processes, constitution, and meetings. Attend meetings and widen communication	BDC Centres Manager	Every 6 weeks	n/a	Regular attendance at meetings
7	Digital High Street	Investigate Wifi and other digital opportunities to implement on the high street. Digital signage would be a good way of providing vital information to the community as well as generating advertising income for Bromsgrove District Council.	BDC Centres Manager	Throughout 2024-2025	UKSPF	Business Case compiled
8	Public Realm	Implementation of LUF public realm improvements	BDC Centres Manager NWEDR BDC Env. Services WCC	Throughout 2023-2025	LUF UKSPF	Update provided to members yearly Improved perception through customer and business surveys
9	Traffic Management	Continue with amendments to TRO Consultation on delivery times and requirements with businesses. Explore alternative barrier solutions	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Implement by end of financial year	TC Budget	Reduced number of vehicles accessing the high street. Feedback from businesses/monitoring centre
10	Shop Local and Independent Campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Business Saturday • Love Your Market 	BDC Centres Manager External Groups	Throughout the year	TC Budget UKSPF	Calendar of events and marketing strategy Increased footfall on event days

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bromsgrove Bites – Festival and foodie month 	Pubwatch BDC Leisure WCC		Visa Award	
11	Business Support	Centres Enhancement Grant Growth support Start up support F&B Sector support	BDC Centre Manager BDC Business Advisor NWEDR Growth Manager	Throughout the year	UKSPF	No of businesses in receipt of financial and non-financial business support
12	Town Centre Events Programme	Collaborate with Market/Leisure teams and external stakeholders to create an attractive and engaging cultural and events programme. Events could include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Food, drink and music festivals / events Outdoor cinema / screenings Bromsgrove Festival events Street theatre performances Halloween event Christmas Lights switch on Christmas Market (& events) 	BDC Centres Manager BDC Comms BDC Leisure External Groups	Throughout the year	UKSPF & Revenue Budgets	Production of online calendar Increased footfall on event days
13 Page 60	Communication & Networking	Build up TC database of contacts Possible newsletter Consult with businesses on networking events	BDC Centres Manager BDC Comms	ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events Increased responses to business surveys
	Landlords Group	Database of landlords/agents Update emails Produce Marketing pack for prospective tenants/landlords	BDC Centres Manager	ongoing	n/a	No. of agents active
15	Business Improvement District	Commission consultation to explore feasibility of a BID	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing	TC Budget	Report to show appetite from businesses, defined boundary and potential levy income
16	Shopwatch Scheme	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform	BDC Centres Manager	Ongoing		Implementation of scheme using Disc platform No of users signed up
17	Busking Policy	Implementation of busking policy	BDC Centres Manager	Implement by end of financial year	n/a	
18	Banners/adverts	Designated space/s within the Town Centres for banners through a booking system	BDC Centres Manager/BDC Planning	Implement by end of financial year	n/a	Reduction in banners across town centres. No of users actively using booking system.
Rubery Village						
19	Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & potential future improvements	BDC Centres Manager WCC	ongoing	UKSPF	Improved perception through customer and business surveys
20	Communication & Networking	Build up TC database of contacts Networking events as required Newsletter With work retailers to bring back Rubery Village	BDC Centres Manager	ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events Increased responses to business surveys

		Association/meetings				
21	Shopwatch Scheme	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform	BDC Centres Manager RBVA	ongoing	TC Budget	no of businesses actively using the Disc Platform
22	Events & Promotion	Establish event support and promotional ideas.	BDC Centres Manager	ongoing	Events & Promotion	Establish event support and promotional ideas.
Alvechurch, Aston Fields, Catshill, Hagley & Wythall						
23	Public Realm	Audit of existing public realm & potential future improvements	BDC Centres Manager WCC	Ongoing	UKSPF	Improved perception through customer and business surveys
24	Communication & Networking	Build up database of contacts Regular communication with PC and Traders	Parish Councils Community Groups BDC Centres Manager	ongoing	TC Budget	Increase communication with businesses. No of businesses attending network events/actively engaging
25	Events & Promotion	Establish event support and promotional ideas.	BDC Centres Manager Parish Councils Community Groups	ongoing	TC Budget	Increased footfall on event days
26	Shopwatch Scheme	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform	BDC Centres Manager	ongoing	TC Budget	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform No of users signed up
27	Pubwatch Scheme	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform	BDC Centres Manager	ongoing	TC Budget	Implementation of scheme using Disc platform

Page 27

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**Cabinet
2024**

13 March

Cost of Living Funding Proposal

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		
Report Author	Job Title: Judith Willis Contact email: Judith.willis@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Work and financial independence Living independent, active & healthy lives
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that:

£150,000 contained within earmarked reserves be allocated as a one-off investment to support the estimated costs of the following cost of living initiatives as set in section 3.7:

- (a) Citizen’s Advice specialist housing adviser - £52k**
- (b) Voluntary sector money adviser - £32k**
- (c) Enhancing the support of the Council’s Financial Inclusion Team - £42k**

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 In 2020/21 the Council allocated £50,000 within the budget to support Community Hubs. This allocation was then further made in 2021/22 and 2022/23 providing a total budget of £150,000. This budget is currently sat in earmarked reserves.
- 2.2 The budget was approved by Cabinet in February 2020 as a revenue bid to support the development of community hubs in libraries. This was an initiative being taken forward by Worcestershire County

**Cabinet
2024**

13 March

Council. It was explained that discussions had taken place regarding the libraries and the part they played in the District in particular with at risk and vulnerable residents. The piece of work was part of a bigger piece of work led by the County Council and would provide connectivity between rural and urban centres.

- 2.3 Following a new direction of travel by the County Council with the introduction of the Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) Model, this budget was never provided to the County Council. The funding has remained within reserves with a further £50,000 allocated in years 2021/22 and 2022/23

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

- 3.1 The purpose of the budget allocation was to support the development of community hubs in libraries.
- 3.2 As the initiative of community hubs was not progressed as originally proposed, consideration is asked to be given to awarding this funding towards a Cost-of-Living initiative. This would be to support residents who need extra support to manage with the recent increases in daily costs including food, rents, mortgages and utility costs. The proposal would retain a link to Bromsgrove libraries, with the ability to provide outreach work at these and other community locations.
- 3.3 In respect of the impact of the cost-of-living situation nationally for residents, according to the Joseph Rowntree Foundation:
- a) low-income mortgage holders are struggling with their mortgages and almost half of them are now in arrears with at least one bill and 54% of those are in arrears with three bills or more
 - b) 57% of low-income householders have faced food insecurity in the last six months
 - c) 73% of low-income households have gone without an essential, such as a shower or cleaning items including clothes.
- 3.4 In respect of the impact on housing locally, intelligence from local Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations is that:
- a) mortgage holders who are coming to the end of their fixed terms, are facing increases from £200 a month through to £1,200 a month. Some of these individuals simply do not have that additional money to pay out on their mortgage. This will result in more homelessness, people moving, children having to move, increased mental health issues and as 40% of relationship breakdown is caused by financial challenges, then more relationship breakdown.

**Cabinet
2024**

13 March

- b) the fact that interest rates have been so low for so many years, has caused people to believe that this would always be the case and so many have committed their "spare" income in other areas.
 - c) the level of house prices compared to average income is now so high that mortgage models are beyond historically accepted safe norms to allow people to even get on the housing ladder.
 - d) If mortgages continue to rise people who are privately renting are likely to be impacted with evictions because landlords cannot afford their increased mortgage costs.
- 3.5 The VCS are further reporting that they have seen an increase in food parcels and that with the increases in mortgage & utilities etc means that those working are also accessing VCS services more. This is evidenced by Citizens Advice, who have seen a 75% increase in clients seen in 2022/23 compared with 2019. Act on Energy have also reported that they are seeing unprecedented need to provide additional support to their energy advice that covers budget/money/and debt advice.
- 3.6 In response to the Cost-of-Living situation, the Council recognised that it could not tackle the impact on the District on its own and that other statutory and voluntary agencies had a part to play. Consequently, a multi-agency Cost of Living Group was established. This Group agreed to undertake a Cost-of-Living Survey with Bromsgrove residents and this took place last Spring and Autumn. Key highlights from the survey results were:
- a) it clearly showed that this is not a crisis that is just hitting people on benefits or lower paid, but rather a broad range of people.
 - b) many people are being significantly affected and whilst some easing of pressure can be achieved by better management of household budgets etc but for many this is not enough.
 - c) people who own their house are in trouble and most are in work, so the answer is not about getting people into jobs. It is a concern that people are borrowing on credit cards with the high percentage running out of options. This is not a crisis hitting those on benefits/lower waged, it is a crisis hitting a broad range of people.
- 3.7 The Cost-of-Living Group has considered what additional services would be best provided to residents to support them in the crisis and to improve their outcomes. The Group have determined that there is a need for additional debt worker advice that works across agencies and with all partners, as well as providing outreach work within communities. Integral to this would be a piece of work to integrate debt

**Cabinet
2024**

13 March

advice across organisations, it would also inform work that Citizens Advice will be exploring later this year around the effectiveness of developing different types of outreach work alongside growing their volunteer base. The debt advisor roles would focus on the areas outlined below. This proposal would be a trial for 14 months with a view to it informing a lottery bid by the VCS to further sustain the work. If the lottery bid was successful any monies not spent on the project would be put back in to reserves.

- (a) Specialist housing adviser who would deliver housing advice directly; support Citizen Advice volunteers in delivering more in depth housing advice including contacting landlords; provide more affordability checks for BDHT; lead on proactive communications to help raise awareness amongst private tenants about their rights and sources of funding/help that may be available for them. (Cost £52k per annum)
- (b) Voluntary sector money adviser to help residents improve their well-being when facing financial difficulties offering financial education, debt management, budgeting, benefits and entitlements, crisis intervention, emotional support and referrals. (Cost £32,500 per annum)
- (c) Enhancing the support of the Financial Inclusion Team with a focus on making residents aware of the many cost of living schemes available and providing a mobile service accessible locations such as: BDHT, Citizens Advise, libraries, VCS organisations and event, and crucially with local employers. (Cost £42k per annum)

There will be an emphasis on providing outreach services such as at libraries and in community premises. This will include liaising with the Parish Councils. The services will also be provided to meet the needs of residents, so potentially beyond the traditional Monday to Friday, 9 – 5.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The budget of £150,000 is within the Council's Earmarked Reserves and is available to support this initiative. Any underspend on the Scheme would be put back in to reserves.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council needs to ensure that it has a transparent and fair scheme, ensuring that we comply with the 2015 Local Government Transparency Code. The Council has the power to incur expenditure

**Cabinet
2024**

13 March

which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its inhabitants. The direct benefit accruing must also be commensurate with the expenditure to be incurred.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 6.1 This proposal will support the following Strategic Purposes:
- Work and financial independence
 - Living independent, active & healthy lives

Climate Change Implications

- 6.2 The proposals have not direct impact on climate change. However, cost of living support to residents may include advise on energy costs and lead to energy efficiency improvements in residents homes.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.3 The proposed services will be available to all residents but there will be a targeted approach to reach those most adversely affected.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 There is a risk that the proposals for delivering additional services to those affected by the cost-of-living situation will not reach the intended audience and/or provide quality outcomes. This will be mitigated by the establishment of a funding agreement with clear outcome measures that will be monitored half yearly. This will be reported to the Cost-of-Living Group alongside regular service updates.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

**Cabinet
2024**

13 March

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Karen May, Portfolio Holder for Partnerships	31 January 2024
Lead Director / Head of Service	Guy Revans, Interim Director	31 January 2024
Financial Services	Pete Carpenter, Director	31 January 2024
Legal Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal & Property Services	31 January 2024

Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee 19th February 2024 Meeting

Access to GP Appointments

This meeting was attended by Simon Trickett, Chief Executive of Integrated Care Board (ICS), NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire along with Lynda Dando, Director of Primary Care NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire and Dr Roy Williams.

Over 5.5 million appointments are delivered in General Practice across Herefordshire and Worcestershire every year. This is 19% more appointments than before COVID-19 pandemic. – *there was no information how many face-to-face and how many telephone consultations!*

They presented a comparative data highlighting best access to and experience of primary care:

Question	Herefordshire and Worcestershire ICS	National
% pf patients reporting that it was easy to get through to the GP practice by telephone	56% (Rank 7/42)	50%
% of patients rating their overall experience of making an appointment as good	61% (Rank 6/42)	54%
% of patient rating their overall experience with their GP practice as good	76% (Rank 6/42)	71%

However, there was a significant variation and not all patients have the same experience:

Question	Best	Worst
% of patients reporting that it was easy to get through to the GP practice by telephone	98%	25%
% of patients rating their overall experience of making an appointment as good	96%	35%
% of patients rating their overall experience with their GP practice as good	98%	54%

% do not add up!

Herefordshire and Worcestershire Primary Care Access Recovery Plan

This plan has two central ambitions:

- To tackle the 8 am rush
- To enable patients to know on the day they contact their practice how their request will be managed.

The plan focusses on four key areas to deliver the main ambitions and to support recovery:

- Empower patients to manage their own health including using the NHS App, Self-referral pathways and via more services offered from Community Pharmacy.

Agenda Item 12

- Implement modern general practice access to tackle 8 am rush, provide rapid assessment and response and avoid asking patients to ring back for an appointment.
- Build capacity to deliver more appointments from more staff and add flexibility to the types of staff recruited.
- Cut bureaucracy and reduce the workload across the interface between primary and secondary care so that practices have more time to meet the clinical needs of their patients.

There was a discussion on expanding community pharmacy which include:

- Community Pharmacist Consultation Service
- Common conditions
- Independent Prescriber Pathfinder Programme
- Blood pressure
- Oral contraception
- Discharge medicines.

Significant Challenges

- Patient satisfaction rates are declining – satisfaction rates fell by 10% in 2022 across 85% of local GP practices, including “experience of making an appointment”.
- Despite 19% more appointments this is not enough to meet current levels of demand.
- GP workforce is shrinking – leaver rate 10%, joiner rate 8.9%.
- However, a new grade called Medical Physician Associates are being appointed who will take some of the load from the GPs.

Problems in Worcestershire

- More of our residents rely on telephone contact rather than online.
- 40% of the people who live in affluent areas find it difficult to access as compared to 51% of people in deprived area.
- People who were unable to get GP appointment, almost a third (31%) went to A&E.
- 68% decided to try 111, however we have no data how many landed in A&E.

Report from Bromsgrove District Council’s Representative on Worcestershire HOSC, Councillor B. Kumar