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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

TUESDAY 17TH NOVEMBER 2026, 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.

7. **Bromsgrove Car Parks (Pre-Scrutiny)** (Pages 3 - 30)

8. **Planning Advisory Service (PAS) - Update on Recommendations (Pre-Scrutiny)** (Pages 31 - 42)

Appendices are to follow in a supplementary pack following Cabinet publication.

J. Leach
Chief Executive

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11th November 2026

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet

Wednesday 18 November 2026

Bromsgrove Car Park Strategy

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor K. J. May
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Assistant Director Regeneration and Property Services
Report Author: Lyndsey Berry	Job Title: Economic Growth Manager – Towns and Centres email: lyndsey.berry@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Tel: (01527) 881221	
Wards Affected		(All Wards);
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Council Priority		Economic Development;
Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that:-

1) the Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy 2026-2030 be approved.

The Cabinet is asked to NOTE that

2) the Strategy was updated following consideration by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and subsequent Member engagement; and

3) future decisions relating to Churchfields Car Park will be informed by the content of the Strategy, updated parking data, financial implications and regeneration benefits. The outcomes of this work will be reported back to Cabinet in due course.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 This report details the background in respect of the proposed content of the Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy 2026 to 2030.

2.2 The report also provides further information for noting, regarding the outcomes of Member engagement, including with the Overview and Scrutiny board. Further information relating to Churchfields Car Park is also included.

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3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 Car parking is a significant issue for Bromsgrove. It supports access to the town centre, local businesses, leisure facilities, employment, community services and regeneration. Members have raised long-standing concerns about parking capacity, the distribution of demand across the Council's car parks, permit arrangements, enforcement activity and the future of Churchfields Car Park.

3.2 The Council commissioned a Strategic Parking Review in 2024 and this has been supplemented by parking occupancy surveys undertaken during 2025 and 2026. The evidence shows that Bromsgrove's principal town centre parking challenge is not an overall shortage of spaces, but the concentration of demand in some centrally located car parks while spare capacity remains available elsewhere in the network.

3.3 The draft Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy 2026-2029 has therefore been prepared to provide a clear strategic framework for managing the Council's parking estate, improving the use of existing capacity, reviewing permit and pricing arrangements, strengthening enforcement priorities and supporting the Council's wider town centre regeneration ambitions.

3.4 The draft Strategy was considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board on 15 September 2026. Members provided feedback on several aspects of the document including future monitoring arrangements, accessibility considerations, the role of parking in supporting town centre vitality, the management of permits and the importance of ensuring decisions are informed by robust evidence. They also raised concerns regarding the impact of parking issues outside Bromsgrove Town Centre and decided to set up a Task and Finish Group to further explore these issues.

3.5 Following the meeting, the Strategy has been reviewed and amended where appropriate to reflect Member comments and observations. The revised Strategy attached at Appendix 1 incorporates these changes and provides a clearer framework for the future management of the Council's parking estate.

3.6 To further strengthen the evidence base, and take into account the closure of Stourbridge Road car park, additional parking occupancy surveys have been undertaken across the Council's Town Centre car park network. This provides up to date information on parking demand and utilisation and will ensure any future strategic decisions are informed by the most recent evidence available.

3.7 The revised strategy maintains the central conclusion that Bromsgrove's primary parking challenge relates to the distribution of demand rather than an overall shortage of parking provision. The strategy therefore prioritises measures to improve utilisation of existing capacity through enhanced management, monitoring, signage, wayfinding, permit arrangements and customer information.

3.8 The strategy also establishes a framework for the ongoing review of parking demand across the Council's car park estate. Additional parking occupancy surveys are currently underway and will supplement the Strategic Parking Review and previous occupancy data to ensure the evidence base remains current and reflective of changing demand patterns.

3.9 Churchfields Car Park remains an important strategic asset for Bromsgrove Town Centre. The approved strategy will provide the context within which future options for the site can be assessed. Any future recommendations regarding Churchfields Car Park will be informed by up to date parking evidence, a financial appraisal, consideration of regeneration opportunities and wider placemaking objectives.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The strategy itself does not commit the Council to specific capital expenditure, asset disposal or redevelopment decisions. However, it identifies a number of areas to explore which may have future financial implications, including parking tariffs, season ticket and permit arrangements, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, parking technology, enforcement activity and the ongoing maintenance of the parking estate.

4.2 The future of Churchfields Car Park will require a detailed financial appraisal of the options before any decision is taken. This will include an assessment of the revenue and capital implications of the available options, including continued retention, reopening, demolition and retention as surface parking, redevelopment or other alternative uses. The appraisal will consider ongoing costs, potential income, capital investment requirements, liabilities and wider regeneration benefits.

4.3 Any subsequent decision on Churchfields Car Park will be brought forward with a clear financial assessment so that Members can consider the costs, risks and opportunities of each option alongside parking need and the strategic direction for Bromsgrove town centre.

4.4 The additional occupancy surveys have been undertaken within existing approved budgets and will provide enhanced evidence to support future decision making.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The strategy provides a framework for future decision making and does not, of itself, approve capital expenditure, asset disposal, redevelopment or changes to the Council's Off-Street Parking Places Order. Any future changes to tariffs, permits, charging arrangements, classes of user, designated bays or operational arrangements will be subject to the appropriate legal processes and approvals at the relevant time.

5.2 Any future decision relating to Churchfields Car Park may require further legal advice, including in relation to planning, land ownership, covenants, procurement, redevelopment, disposal or other asset management considerations. These matters will be assessed as part of the options appraisal before a decision is presented to Members.

6. OTHER – IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 Local Government Reorganisation may create opportunities to review and align parking tariffs, permits, enforcement practices and wider parking policies across a future North Worcestershire authority area. The strategy has been prepared to address Bromsgrove's current needs while recognising that future harmonisation may be required.

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 The strategy supports the Council Plan priorities by helping to create a thriving and resilient town centre, supporting economic growth and investment, making effective use of Council assets and ensuring that infrastructure planning supports the sustainable future development of Bromsgrove District. The strategy also supports the delivery of the Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework and wider regeneration objectives.

Climate Change Implications

6.3 The strategy supports climate change objectives by encouraging better use of existing parking capacity, considering opportunities for electric vehicle charging infrastructure, improving customer information and

supporting more sustainable travel choices where practical. Future investment decisions will take account of sustainability and climate resilience considerations.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.4 The strategy seeks to ensure that parking remains accessible and inclusive for residents, businesses and visitors. It supports continued provision of Blue Badge parking, accessible parking facilities and improvements to wayfinding, lighting, pedestrian routes and perceptions of personal safety. Any future changes to tariffs, permits or parking arrangements will be subject to appropriate equality assessment.

Community Impact Implications

6.5 The car parking arrangements are expected to have a generally positive impact on health and wellbeing by improving access to town centre services, healthcare facilities, employment and community amenities, particularly for older people, disabled users and those with limited mobility. Well-maintained, safe and accessible parking can support social inclusion, community participation and economic vitality. However, increased vehicle use may contribute to traffic, noise and air quality impacts and may discourage active travel for shorter journeys. These effects can be mitigated through measures such as good pedestrian connections, accessible parking provision, electric vehicle charging infrastructure, and appropriate safety and maintenance standards.

6.6 The Parking Strategy aims to support the needs of residents, businesses and visitors while ensuring parking provision remains safe and fit for purpose. Community safety is an important consideration in assessing future parking options.

6.7 Churchfields Car Park was previously closed due to anti-social behaviour and associated safety concerns. Any future decisions regarding the site will need to consider how these issues can be effectively addressed, and the car park should not be reopened unless appropriate measures are in place to mitigate the risk of recurrence and provide a safe environment for users.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 Failure to adopt a clear parking strategy could result in future decisions being taken without an agreed strategic framework or consistent approach to parking management across the district.

7.2 There is a risk that parking demand patterns may change over time due to regeneration activity, economic conditions or changing travel behaviour. This risk is mitigated through the strategy's commitment to ongoing monitoring and the completion of additional occupancy surveys.

7.3 There is also a risk that decisions regarding Churchfields Car Park may not command public confidence if not supported by robust evidence. The Council is mitigating this risk through continued data collection, financial appraisal and alignment with wider town centre regeneration planning.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Draft Bromsgrove Car Park Strategy

Background Papers

Overview and Scrutiny Board minutes – 15th September 2026

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sue Baxter on behalf of Cllr Karen May	29/10/26
Lead Director / Head of Service	Rachel Egan Assistant Director Regeneration & Property Services	28/10/26
Financial Services	James Walton Chief Finance Officer	29/10/26
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings – Principal Solicitor – Governance	26/10/2026
Policy Team	Emily Payne Engagement & Equalities Officer	23/10/26
Climate Change Team	Matthew Eccles Climate Change Manager	23/10/26
Community Safety Team (community impact implications)	Bev Houghton Community Safety Manager	28/10/26

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Bromsgrove Car Parking Strategy 2026 - 2030

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1. Vision

1.1 To provide a well-managed, accessible and sustainable parking network that supports Bromsgrove's economy and regeneration ambitions. The strategy will help ensure that residents, businesses and visitors have access to appropriate parking in locations that meet their needs. It will also support future growth, maintain accessibility and encourage more sustainable travel choices where practical.

2. Policy Alignment

2.1 This Parking Strategy has been prepared in the context of wider local policy, including the Bromsgrove Council Plan, Bromsgrove District Plan, Bromsgrove 2040 Vision, Bromsgrove Town Centre Strategic Framework and Worcestershire Local Transport Plan. It takes account of the priorities set out in these documents, particularly in relation to economic growth, regeneration, accessibility, sustainability and effective use of public assets.

The strategy recognises that parking plays an important role in supporting:

- Economic growth and investment.
- Town centre vitality and resilience.
- Housing and employment growth.
- Regeneration and placemaking.
- Accessibility and inclusion.
- Climate resilience and sustainable transport.
- Efficient use of public assets.

2.2 The strategy also supports wider transport objectives by encouraging better use of existing parking capacity, improving information and wayfinding, supporting active travel and public transport where practical, expanding electric vehicle infrastructure where appropriate and using pricing and permit arrangements to manage demand effectively.

2.3 The key test for future parking decisions will be whether they help create a vibrant and accessible town centre, support planned growth and regeneration, improve customer experience and maintain a financially sustainable parking service.

3. Strategic Context

3.1 Parking plays an important role in supporting Bromsgrove’s economy, regeneration priorities and wider transport network. Historically, Bromsgrove has benefited from a substantial supply of conveniently located parking, which has helped support retail, leisure, employment and community activity while maintaining competitiveness with neighbouring centres and out-of-town destinations.

3.2 As town centre living, regeneration priorities and financial pressures continue to evolve, the strategic management of parking becomes increasingly important. This strategy therefore considers parking not simply as an operational service, but as part of the wider infrastructure that supports access, local activity, regeneration and community life.

3.3 The strategy builds upon the findings of the 2024 Waterman Strategic Parking Review and parking surveys undertaken by Wychavon Parking Services during 2025 and 2026.

3.4 The evidence shows that Bromsgrove's primary parking challenge is not an overall shortage of spaces. Instead, demand is concentrated within a small number of centrally located car parks, while spare capacity exists elsewhere within the Council's town centre parking estate.

3.5 Whilst the Waterman Strategic Parking Review concluded that sufficient parking capacity existed to meet future demand, subsequent counts identified higher demand within several centrally located car parks than previously recorded. This underlines the need for regular monitoring to ensure that future parking decisions reflect changing demand patterns across the town centre.

3.6 The evidence indicates that future parking management should focus on improving utilisation across the existing town centre parking network through measures such as wayfinding, permit management, pricing and customer information before any consideration is given to additional parking provision.

3.7 Clear and proportionate signage is important to support effective use of the parking network. The Council will therefore review directional, entrance and on-site signage to ensure users can easily identify where to park, understand the different roles of car parks and make informed choices. This will be proportionate to Bromsgrove’s scale and character, while learning from examples of good practice elsewhere.

3.8 The strategy also recognises the role parking will play in supporting major projects and planned growth, the Town Centre Strategic Framework, Nailers Yard and future housing and employment development.

3.9 Whilst this strategy focuses on Bromsgrove Town Centre, the Council also manages car parks in district centres and villages such as Barnt Green, Alvechurch and Aston Fields. As parking needs vary across the district, the

Council will undertake local parking reviews, subject to available resources, to help inform future management and investment decisions.

4. Strategic Objectives

4.1 Objective 1: Support Economic Growth and Town Centre Vitality

Ensure parking continues to support retail activity, leisure destinations, employment, community facilities and town centre living.

4.2 Objective 2: Optimise the Use of Existing Parking Capacity

The Council will maximise the efficiency and utilisation of existing parking assets, ensuring available capacity is used effectively across the network before considering any additional parking provision. This will be supported by improved signage, wayfinding and customer information so that users are directed to appropriate and available car parks, including those with spare capacity.

4.3 Objective 3: Support Regeneration and Growth

The parking estate should help deliver the Council's regeneration ambitions by balancing operational parking requirements with future development opportunities.

4.4 Objective 4: Improve Customer Experience, Accessibility and Inclusion

The Council will provide a modern, accessible and easy-to-use parking service that is safe, convenient and meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors. This will include clear information and signage to help users understand where parking is available, how car parks connect to key destinations and which facilities best meet their needs, including disabled users and those with mobility requirements.

4.5 Objective 5: Support the Transition to Sustainable and Low-Emission Travel

The Council will manage its parking assets to support wider environmental and transport objectives, including the expansion of electric vehicle charging infrastructure, while encouraging sustainable travel choices and maintaining access for those who rely on private vehicles.

4.6 Objective 6: Deliver Effective Parking Management and Enforcement

Enforcement activity will focus on improving compliance, supporting accessibility, maintaining parking turnover and addressing issues that affect road safety and traffic movement.

4.7 Objective 7: Ensure the Long-Term Sustainability of the Parking Network

The Council will manage its parking assets and services in a financially responsible manner, ensuring they remain well maintained, fit for purpose and capable of supporting residents, businesses and visitors over the long term.

5. Bromsgrove Car Park Estate

5.1 The Council currently manages a portfolio of car parks in the town centre, providing 942 spaces in total, of which 904 are available for public use following the closure of Stourbridge Road car park. The Parkside offices car park is only available to staff working at those offices and is therefore discounted from the usage analysis in section 6. All of these car parks other than St John Street are owned on a freehold basis, St John Street car park is leased until 2032.

Car Park	Spaces
Recreation Road South	292
North Bromsgrove	185
School Drive	128
Parkside	94
St John Street	82
Windsor Street	65
New Road	58
Parkside offices	38

5.2 Other car parks in the town centre not owned or managed by the Council include Aldi (88 spaces) and Bromsgrove Retail Park (over 200 spaces).

5.3 The Council also owns and manages car parks outside the town centre:

Car Park	Spaces
Sanders Park (following expansion)	122
Alvechurch	45
Aston Fields	40
Catshill	15
All Saints Church Hall	33

5.4 These facilities provide important parking provision for local communities and support local centres.

6. Current Town Centre Demand

6.1 Parking surveys undertaken during 2025 and 2026 provide a clear picture of how the Council's town centre parking estate is being used. The main conclusion is straightforward: Bromsgrove does not have an overall shortage of town centre parking spaces, but demand is unevenly distributed. Some central car parks are very busy, while others have significant spare capacity for much of the week. The tables below outline overall occupancy across the town centre parking estate (Table 1) and occupancy by car park (Table 2). These counts were undertaken between 17th October 2026 and 23rd October 2026 to demonstrate the distribution of parking behaviour following the closure of Stourbridge Road car park at the end of September 2026.

6.2 *Table 1 – Overall Town Centre Car Park Occupancy*

Day / date	AM filled	PM filled	AM occupancy	PM occupancy
Sat 17/10/2026	707	619	78.2%	68.5%
Sun 18/10/2026	382	238	42.3%	26.3%
Mon 19/10/2026	441	575	48.8%	63.6%
Tues 20/10/2026	577	430	63.8%	47.6%
Weds 21/10/2026	724	464	80.1%	51.3%
Thurs 22/10/2026	659	487	72.9%	53.9%
Fri 23/10/2026	546	511	60.4%	56.5%

6.2 *Table 2 - Occupancy by Car Park*

Car park	Capacity	Avg filled	Avg occupancy	Peak filled	Peak occupancy	Low filled	Low occupancy
Parkside	94	83	88.4%	94	100.0%	24	25.5%
New Road	58	52	89.2%	58	100.0%	36	62.1%
North Bromsgrove	185	48	26.0%	145	78.4%	19	10.3%
Rec Rd South	292	156	53.3%	280	95.9%	80	27.4%
School Drive	128	76	59.7%	123	96.1%	4	3.1%
St John St	82	63	77.3%	82	100.0%	14	17.1%
Windsor St	65	48	73.1%	65	100.0%	20	30.8%

6.3 Across the survey period, overall occupancy ranged from 26.3% on Sunday afternoon to 80.1% on Wednesday morning. Even at the point of highest recorded demand, 180 spaces remained available across the operational town centre parking estate. This indicates that the network has sufficient overall capacity to meet current demand, although availability varies by location and time of day.

6.4 The highest network-wide utilisation was generally recorded on weekday mornings and on Saturday, reflecting a combination of commuter, business, service and visitor activity. Lower occupancy at other times, particularly on Sunday and during several weekday afternoons, demonstrates that demand fluctuates considerably and that spare capacity is available across much of the week.

6.5 Demand is not evenly distributed between individual car parks. Parkside and New Road recorded average occupancy of 88.4% and 89.2% respectively and both reached full capacity during the survey. St John Street and Windsor Street also experienced high average occupancy and reached full capacity at peak times. These locations are among the most convenient for key town centre destinations and are therefore likely to remain particularly attractive to visitors and regular users.

6.6 Other car parks retain greater capacity. North Bromsgrove averaged 26.0% occupancy, while Recreation Road South averaged 53.3%, notwithstanding periods of higher demand. School Drive also showed substantial variation, ranging from 3.1% to 96.1% occupancy. Taken together, the survey evidence shows that Bromsgrove's current parking challenge is the concentration of demand in preferred locations rather than an overall shortage of spaces.

7. Future Growth and Capacity Assessment

7.1 Bromsgrove District is expected to continue growing over the period covered by this strategy. Population and housing growth, increased town centre living, commercial investment and regeneration projects, including Nailers Yard, may all influence the level, location and duration of future parking demand.

7.2 The Council's approach is to plan for this growth by making effective use of the existing parking estate, monitoring changes in demand and retaining flexibility to respond where evidence identifies a need. Additional parking provision will not be pursued solely in anticipation of growth where capacity can be managed within the current network.

7.3 The 2024 Strategic Parking Review concluded that Bromsgrove Town Centre had sufficient capacity to accommodate anticipated future demand without bringing Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park back into operational use. The more recent occupancy surveys recorded higher utilisation in some central car parks than the review identified, but they also confirmed spare capacity elsewhere in the network.

7.4 Future capacity requirements have therefore been assessed using both sources of evidence. Together, they indicate that the operational estate can accommodate current demand and a reasonable level of growth, provided that the Council improves the distribution of users between heavily used central car parks and locations with available capacity.

7.5 The disposal of Stourbridge Road Car Park has removed 71 spaces from the Council's operational town centre estate and reduced the margin between supply and demand. However, the post-closure survey shows that 180 spaces remained available at the network peak. The loss of the site has therefore not created an immediate shortage, although its effect should continue to be monitored as demand changes.

7.6 On current evidence, there is no immediate operational requirement to bring Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park back into use. The Council's priority will be to optimise the existing estate through improved signage and wayfinding, better customer information, and reviews of parking fees and permit arrangements that encourage longer-stay users towards car parks with spare capacity and protect convenient central spaces for visitors.

7.7 Future parking requirements will be reviewed as the effects of Nailers Yard, wider town centre regeneration, new housing and commercial growth become clearer. Regular occupancy monitoring will be used to test whether management measures are improving the distribution of demand and whether the available capacity remains sufficient.

7.8 Although this assessment focuses on Bromsgrove Town Centre, parking conditions in district centres and villages may differ. The Council will consider place-based reviews where local evidence indicates a need and will use the findings to inform future parking management, investment and capacity planning decisions.

8. Parking Management Framework

Car Park Roles and Functions

8.1 To support more effective parking management, the Council will adopt a framework that assigns a clear role to individual car parks based on their location, demand profile and strategic function

8.2 Core Visitor Parking

- St John Street
- Parkside
- Windsor Street
- New Road

8.3 These car parks are located closest to the town centre and should prioritise short-stay visitor parking, retail trips and leisure activity. The Council will seek to maximise turnover within these locations to support town centre businesses and visitor access.

8.4 Mixed-Use Parking

- Recreation Road South

8.5 This car park will accommodate a mix of users, including visitors, leisure users, permit holders and longer-stay parkers. Its location and capacity provide flexibility within the overall parking network and make it an important location for balancing demand across the town centre.

8.6 Long-Stay, Permit and Leisure Parking

- North Bromsgrove
- School Drive

8.7 These car parks are well suited to longer-stay parking and permit holders due to their significant spare capacity and proximity to key destinations. North Bromsgrove will continue to play an important role in supporting leisure centre users, while both locations will be used to accommodate permit parking and longer-stay demand. Over time, season ticket provision may be focused increasingly within these car parks and Recreation Road South, subject to demand and operational requirements.

Permit and Pricing Strategy

8.8 Parking fees in Bromsgrove car parks were last reviewed in 2024, ending a 13-year period during which tariffs had remained unchanged since 2011. The review increased standard parking charges to £1.00 per hour and introduced free disabled parking and free parking for stays of up to 30 minutes, providing a balance between supporting town centre visits and generating income to maintain the parking estate.

8.9 There are currently approximately 210 season ticket holders using Bromsgrove town centre car parks providing an income of £67,200 per annum. Evidence from occupancy surveys indicates that a significant proportion of permit holders are concentrated within the most conveniently located car parks, particularly Parkside and New Road. This contributes to reduced availability for short-stay visitors and customers in locations that also experience the greatest demand throughout the day. At peak periods, the continued allocation of season ticket holders to these central car parks can limit turnover and reduce opportunities for visitor parking, despite substantial spare capacity existing elsewhere within the Council's parking estate.

8.10 Survey evidence shows that North Bromsgrove and School Drive consistently retain significant spare capacity. These locations are therefore well suited to accommodating a proportion of longer-stay parking demand, including town centre employees, Council staff, permit holders and other regular users. North Bromsgrove also performs an important role in serving Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre and will continue to provide convenient parking for leisure centre users. Directing a greater proportion of long-stay parking demand towards these locations would help release capacity within the core visitor car parks while making more effective use of existing parking assets.

8.11 The Council will therefore review its season ticket arrangements and pricing structure during the lifetime of this strategy. Consideration will be given to differential permit pricing, with lower-cost permits offered in peripheral car parks such as North Bromsgrove, School Drive and, where appropriate, Recreation Road South, whilst premium pricing is retained for the most convenient centrally located facilities. The review will also consider whether specific permit arrangements, discounted parking products or other incentives should be introduced for Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre users and members to support continued access to leisure facilities whilst ensuring parking capacity is managed effectively. This approach would provide a financial incentive for long-stay users to choose less heavily utilised car parks while protecting visitor access in key town centre locations.

8.12 The current permit structure means that a season ticket holder only needs to use a car park for approximately one day per week to achieve a financial saving compared with paying the standard daily parking charge. This represents a significantly greater discount than is typically seen in parking permit schemes, where the break-even point is often closer to four days per week. The Council will review permit pricing and eligibility to ensure that permits support the strategic management of parking demand, encourage use of appropriate long-stay locations and provide a fair balance between affordability and efficient use of parking assets.

8.13 The Council's permit strategy will therefore seek to:

- Prioritise visitor parking within core town centre car parks.
- Increase parking turnover in the most popular locations.
- Relocate long-stay parking demand to car parks with available capacity.
- Encourage more efficient use of the overall parking network.
- Support town centre businesses by improving visitor access.
- Ensure permit pricing remains fair, proportionate and aligned with demand.
- Future permit allocation will primarily focus on car parks with available long-stay capacity, including North Bromsgrove, School Drive and, where appropriate, Recreation Road South.
- Maintain appropriate parking provision for Bromsgrove Sport and Leisure Centre users, including consideration of targeted permit, validation or discount schemes where these support wider parking management objectives.

8.14 Annual reviews of permit allocations, permit pricing and parking tariffs will be undertaken to ensure that parking management arrangements continue to support town centre vitality whilst making the best use of the Council's available parking capacity.

<u>Sustainability and Accessibility</u>

8.15 The Council recognises that many residents, businesses and visitors will continue to rely on private vehicles for the foreseeable future. However, the parking service also has an important role in supporting wider environmental, accessibility and public realm objectives.

8.16 During the lifetime of this strategy, the Council will seek to improve the sustainability, accessibility and user experience of its parking estate through ongoing investment and maintenance programmes. This will include

maintaining appropriate Blue Badge provision, improving pedestrian routes and wayfinding, enhancing lighting and perceptions of personal safety, and supporting better connections between parking facilities and other modes of transport.

8.17 The Council will undertake an accessibility review of its car parks during the lifetime of this strategy. The review will be undertaken with reference to recognised accessibility standards and, where appropriate, informed by engagement with accessibility representatives and users. This will consider the location, number and condition of disabled parking bays, pedestrian routes, dropped kerbs, surface condition, lighting, signage and access to nearby destinations. The review will identify practical improvements that can be incorporated into maintenance, investment and future parking management decisions.

8.18 The Council will also continue to review opportunities to expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure where there is demonstrated demand. Whilst rapid charging facilities are available within Bromsgrove, there is currently limited provision of destination charging infrastructure suitable for longer-stay parking. Future investment will therefore consider the appropriate balance between rapid charging and lower-powered charging facilities that support longer visits to the town centre, workplaces and leisure destinations.

8.19 Sustainability, accessibility and climate resilience considerations will be incorporated into future parking infrastructure, maintenance and investment decisions wherever practicable.

9. Parking Assets and Regeneration

9.1 The Council's parking estate provides essential parking capacity for residents, visitors and businesses while also representing a significant strategic asset. Future decisions regarding parking provision will therefore take account of operational requirements alongside regeneration, placemaking and wider Council priorities.

9.2 The current assessment indicates that the town centre car park estate continues to provide sufficient capacity to meet existing and forecast demand. As a result, there is no immediate requirement to make significant changes to parking provision or to determine the long-term future of individual car park assets. However, recognising the importance of these assets to the wider regeneration and growth of the town centre, the Council will continue to review the performance, utilisation and strategic role of the estate as part of its ongoing planning for the town centre.

9.3 In particular, the future role of Churchfields Car Park should be considered as part of a comprehensive review of the town centre car park estate rather than in isolation. While current parking capacity means there is no immediate need for a decision regarding the site, the Council will proactively explore and evaluate a range of potential future options for Churchfields and other town centre parking assets. This work will be undertaken alongside wider regeneration, transport and development initiatives to ensure that future decisions are informed by robust evidence, an understanding of long-term parking demand, and the Council's wider place-making and regeneration objectives.

10. Parking Enforcement

10.1 Effective parking enforcement helps keep roads safe, prevents inconsiderate parking and makes sure parking spaces are available for residents, visitors and businesses. Enforcement is not about generating income. Its purpose is to ensure parking rules are followed and to support the safe and efficient movement of traffic.

10.2 The Council delivers Civil Parking Enforcement through its partnership with Wychavon District Council. This service includes the provision of on-street parking enforcement on behalf of Worcestershire County Council, together with off-street parking enforcement, permit administration, Blue Badge enforcement, school patrols, parking dispensations, appeals administration and the recovery of unpaid Penalty Charge Notices.

10.3 Over the lifetime of this strategy, the Council will adopt a more intelligence-led approach to enforcement activity, using parking data, customer feedback, member enquiries and local intelligence to target locations where non-compliance has the greatest impact. Priority will be given to locations where parking behaviour affects safety, accessibility, traffic movement, town and local centre vitality and public confidence in the parking service.

10.4 Priority Enforcement Areas

- Rural and district centre enforcement locations - a minimum level of enforcement resource will continue to be directed toward locations outside Bromsgrove town centre. The current arrangement is for 25% of Civil Enforcement Officer (CEO) time to be spent outside Bromsgrove town centre. This will continue to be reviewed throughout the duration of the strategy period.
- Town centre parking turnover and misuse of short-stay parking.
- Blue Badge misuse.

- School safety and school entrance obstruction.
- Parking on tactile crossings and dropped kerbs (subject to relevant powers).
- Obstruction of pedestrian routes and accessibility features.
- Environmental offences associated with vehicles, including littering from vehicles where enforcement powers permit.

11. Technology and Innovation

11.1 Technology has an important role in helping the Council manage the parking estate more effectively and improve the customer experience.

The Council will continue to invest in:

- Cashless payment options
- Digital permits
- Improved reporting systems
- Data-led decision making

11.2 The Council will also monitor opportunities presented through the National Parking Platform and other emerging technologies that improve customer choice and operational efficiency. The National Parking Platform aims to enable motorists to pay for parking using their preferred parking app across participating local authority car parks, reducing the need to download multiple applications and creating a more consistent parking experience for customers.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)

11.3 The Council has considered the potential use of ANPR technology within its car parks. However, current legislative limitations mean ANPR cannot be used by local authorities to independently enforce off-street parking contraventions, and Civil Enforcement Officer patrols would still be required to monitor compliance, including disabled bays, electric vehicle charging bays and other parking restrictions. As a result, the anticipated benefit of releasing Civil Enforcement Officer capacity would not be realised. Given the significant capital and ongoing revenue costs associated with ANPR systems, the technology is not currently considered to offer sufficient operational or financial benefit. The Council will keep this position under review throughout the lifetime of the strategy to reflect any changes in legislation, technology, operational requirements or business need.

12. Monitoring and Delivery

12.1 The success of this strategy will depend on regular monitoring and evidence-led decision making. Whilst continuous occupancy monitoring across every car park is not considered proportionate or necessary, the Council will maintain a programme of periodic surveys and utilisation reviews. This approach provides a robust evidence base for parking decisions whilst ensuring resources are used efficiently

12.2 To support value for money and transparent decision making, the Council will improve the way parking income and expenditure is monitored. Each car park should be allocated an appropriate finance budget code, enabling income, maintenance costs, enforcement-related costs and investment requirements to be tracked more clearly at car park level. This will strengthen the evidence base for future tariff reviews, investment decisions and assessments of the financial sustainability of the parking estate.

Action Plan

Action	**Outcome**	**Target Date**
Review season ticket and permit allocations, including options to prioritise long-stay parking at North Bromsgrove and School Drive	Increase availability within centrally located visitor car parks	Q3 2026/27
Review parking tariffs and season ticket pricing structure to encourage use of underutilised car parks	Better distribution of demand across the network	Q3 2026/27
Consider the findings of the Alvechurch Parking Review and consider other areas that may benefit from similar reviews, incorporating agreed actions into future parking service planning and investment programmes as appropriate	Ensure local parking issues are addressed through an evidence-led approach	Q3 2026/27
Establish a quarterly parking occupancy monitoring programme across the Council's parking estate	Improved evidence base for future decision making and capacity planning	Q4 2026/27
Undertake annual review of town centre parking demand and utilisation	Monitor effectiveness of parking management measures	Annually from Q3 2027/28

Action	Outcome	Target Date
Develop and implement an enforcement improvement plan with Wychavon Parking Services	Improved compliance and turnover in key town centre locations	Q4 2026/27
Develop and assess future options for Churchfields Car Park and the wider town centre car park estate, taking account of the impact of this Strategy on parking demand, utilisation and customer behaviour, together with regeneration opportunities and wider place-making objectives.	A robust evidence base and range of deliverable options to support future decisions on the long-term role of Churchfields Car Park and the wider town centre car park estate.	Q1 2027/28
Review opportunities to improve car park signage, wayfinding and customer information directing users to available capacity	Increased awareness and use of alternative parking locations	Q2 2027/28
Undertake an accessibility review of Council car parks, including disabled bay provision, pedestrian routes, signage, lighting and access to nearby destinations	Clear evidence of accessibility issues and practical improvement opportunities	Q2 2027/28
Work with Finance to allocate budget codes to each car park and establish regular income and expenditure reporting at car park level	Improved value for money evidence, financial transparency and asset-level monitoring	Q2 2027/28
Review EV charging provision across the parking estate, to consider a mix of rapid and longer-stay charging opportunities	Support transition to lower emission vehicles	Q2 2027/28
Review opportunities to introduce additional digital parking services and occupancy monitoring technology	Improved customer experience and operational intelligence	Q3 2027/28
Prepare for implementation of the National Parking Platform, subject to national rollout arrangements	Greater payment flexibility and improved customer choice	By 2029

Longer-Term Strategic Considerations

12.3 The following matters will be kept under review throughout the life of this strategy:

- The need for additional town centre parking capacity.
- Recommendations arising from the Alvechurch Parking Review
- The outcome of any future reviews of local parking issues outside the town centre
- Regeneration opportunities involving parking assets.
- Expansion of EV charging infrastructure.
- Emerging parking technologies.
- Parking implications of future Local Plan growth.

Monitoring and Review

12.4 Implementation of the strategy will be monitored throughout its lifetime through:

- Quarterly occupancy surveys.
- Annual reviews of parking tariffs and permit arrangements.
- Monitoring of parking income and usage trends.
- Monitoring of enforcement activity and compliance levels.
- Monitoring of EV charging infrastructure usage and demand.
- Annual review of progress against the Strategy Action Plan.

12.5 Key measures will include:

- Occupancy levels within core visitor car parks.
- Utilisation of North Bromsgrove, School Drive and other long-stay parking locations.
- Permit allocation by car park.
- Parking income and season ticket usage.
- Customer complaints and satisfaction levels.
- Enforcement outcomes and compliance rates.
- Demand for and utilisation of EV charging infrastructure.

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Update on Actions taken to meet the Planning Advisory Service (PAS Recommendations)

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Sue Baxter
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Assistant Director		Guy Revans, Executive Director – Environment and Communities
Report Author	Name: Guy Revans, Job Title: Executive Director – Environment and Communities Contact email: guy.revans@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Council Priority		All four Council Corporate Priorities
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that

1) The contents of the updated Action Plan in response to the Planning Advisory Service's Recommendations are agreed.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 In light of the significant reforms introduced through the Levelling-Up and Regeneration Act 2023, the Planning and Infrastructure Act 2025, and updates to the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Bromsgrove District Council's Chief Executive, in agreement with the Council Leader, commissioned an independent review of the Council's planning service to ensure it is well placed to meet the challenges ahead.

2.2 The outcomes of that review were presented to the Cabinet on the 25th March 2026 where the following was resolved

- The findings of the Planning Advisory Service ("PAS") Report dated January 2026 be noted.
- The comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Board regarding consideration of the PAS Report be noted.

- The recommendations made by the PAS be accepted and implemented.
- The progress already made be noted and the Planning Advisory Service Recommendations Action Plan be adopted

3. OPERATIONAL ISSUES

3.1 As can be seen in Appendix 1, a progress update has been prepared showing progress against the PAS review recommendations covering both: Development Management (RDM1-RDM8) and Local Plan Review (RLP1-RLP7).

3.2 Overall, substantial progress has been made on governance including the introduction of the national scheme of delegations for planning functions, establishment of the Local Plan Cross-Party Working Group (LPCPWG), and improved collaboration with Worcestershire County Council (WCC). The remaining challenge is achieving political consensus on the future Local Plan strategy. Notwithstanding this, the role of the LPCPWG is supporting a collaborative approach to plan making in the District which is delivering agreed outcomes from each meeting enabling the Council to remain on track against the timeline for a new Local Plan covering the District. Below is a summary of progress against all recommendations.

3.3 **RDM1 - an urgent need for a reset in the relationships and interaction between councillors and officers.**

- Extensive engagement between officers and members, resulted in full Council approving the National Scheme of Delegations for Planning functions on 14 October 2026.
- Additional workshops and briefing material have been provided.

3.4 **RDM2 - Strengthen and formalise councillor planning training**

- Grey Belt Training (29 April 2026)
- NPPF Training (29 September 2026)
- National Scheme of Delegation for Planning Functions Training
- Planning Refresher Training
- PAS Training Session (8 September 2026) and two others to follow.

3.5 **RDM3 - To continue exploring ways of working more effectively with Worcestershire County Council (especially highways).**

- WCC has agreed to upload consultation responses directly through Public Access.
- Discussions are underway with Idox (website publishing platform) regarding implementation.

- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been agreed (see Appendix 3).

3.6 **RDM4 – to undertake a review of the processes and performance monitoring associated with planning enforcement**

- There is a dedicated planning resource now supporting enforcement.
- Improvements are being made to reporting systems and performance monitoring.
- The focus is moving towards priority-based case management rather than enforcement notice statistics.

3.7 **RDM5 -To undertake a review of officer presentations to the Planning Committee.**

- Presentations have already been shortened.
- Key discussion topics have been highlighted during the Committee debate.

3.8 **RDM6 - Review the quality of streaming of Planning Committee meetings and the timescale for retention of recordings.**

- Subject to the spending review, a budget was approved for a new Audio Visual and live-streaming system in February 2026.
- A procurement exercise is ongoing with bids received.
- A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) is required.
- Current retention remains in accordance with records management requirements, which is that live streams are deleted after the minutes of the meeting have been approved.
- Under data protection rules, there needs to be a specific purpose for retaining live streams.
- Members have previously suggested retaining live streams of meetings for training purposes. However, this is not the original purpose for which meetings are live streamed so would be inappropriate from a data protection perspective.

3.9 **RDM7 - To provide greater encouragement for councillors to contribute to pre-application work and to explore how interaction between councillors and officers outside of the planning committee more generally can be improved.**

- Review of the Pre-Application protocol is being prepared.
- Member training has been provided that included engagement in pre-application processes.
- Further PAS training is planned about member involvement in pre application discussions.

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3.10 **RDM8 - To undertake a review of the planning committee site visit process to encourage better attendance.**

- The Constitution Review Working Group was updated in September 2026.
- Average attendance is approximately three members per monthly site visit.
- Attendance records are maintained by the Development Management Manager.

3.11 **RLP1 - Build political consensus**

- Independent support from DAC Planning was commissioned and delivered through facilitated workshops and training.
- Members have developed a stronger understanding of Local Plan requirements, and progress has been made in building consensus, including unanimous support for Gateway 1 and agreement that the Green/Grey Belt Assessment is complete.
- There is consensus on the need to progress the Local Plan. Further work through the LPCPWG will focus on building consensus as detailed spatial and site choices are considered.

3.12 **RLP2 Review the operation and terms of reference for the strategic planning steering group (SPSG)**

- The LPCPWG is established and operating in accordance with its agreed Terms of Reference.
- The LPCPWG is now the primary forum for member consideration of Local Plan matters and includes a non-voting Chair.
  The Group provides an established framework for maintaining progress and supporting developing cross-party consensus as the Local Plan develops.

3.13 **RLP3 Develop the strategic spatial vision and complete evidence base.**

- Completion of a Green Belt Assessment.
- Member workshops on spatial vision and development strategy.
- Commissioning of the Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA).
- Other evidence base elements are being commissioned.

3.14 **RLP4 Secure infrastructure delivery commitments as a priority.**

- Positive engagement has occurred with WCC.

- An MoU has been agreed - please refer to Appendix 3
- Ongoing NHS engagement is taking place on health infrastructure planning.
- Procurement of viability and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) assessment work is ongoing.

3.15 **RLP5 Strengthen Programme Management and Resources.**

- The Local Plan timetable was approved by full Council in May 20.26, and a detailed project management framework has been established.
- The Local Plan programme is now a standing item at meetings of the LPCPWG, with regular monitoring of progress and risks.

3.16 **RLP6 Continue active senior leadership support**

- The Local Plan has been included on the Corporate Risk Register.
- Regular reporting occurs to senior leadership.
- There is Senior Leadership Team (SLT) attendance at LPCPWG meetings.

3.17 **RLP7 Introduce a training and support programme for councillors.**

- All members were invited to take part in local plan training over the summer of 2026.

3.18 Additional Actions Following the PAS Review:

Officers have further built on the recommendations following the PAS review and developed several additional actions.

1) Providing more regular updates in the members' bulletin to keep all members informed of local plan progress.
2) Regular meetings with the chair of planning committee to review the functioning of planning committee meetings
3) Regular portfolio holder meetings to address matters across all planning functions
4) Regular review of resources to ensure teams can continue to deliver and respond to demands placed on the service
5) Informing members of national changes as they occur with an invitation to contact officers with any queries
6) Maximising staff training and development opportunities

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no financial implications related to agreeing the updated action plan as further training can be accommodated from existing budgets and income. Spend to date has been managed via some direct support from PAS and planning budgets.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Planning Committee members have consistently been provided with bespoke planning training over many years. Providing the additional planning training identified in the PAS review and clarifying roles will strengthen compliance with the statutory framework for planning and enforcement decisions as well as embed new arrangements following the introduction of a new national scheme of delegations for planning functions.

5.2 Similarly, Members' Code of Conduct and standards training has been consistently provided to Members on an annual basis. Further training in future also is intended to reinforce the legal framework governing councillor behaviour, including the Code of Conduct.

5.3 Other actions will clarify expectations between parties and strengthen compliance with administrative law.

5.4 The plan-making process is governed by the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012, although changes are being made via the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023 (LURA). Preparing a development plan is a statutory requirement for Local Planning Authorities.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

6.1 Strategic Planning and Development Management functions remain statutory functions and must continue to be implemented irrespective of the progress on Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

6.2 The information provided in this report has implications for the following Council priorities:

Economic Development;
Housing; and
Environment and Infrastructure.

Climate Change Implications

6.3 Planning plays a central role in delivering the Council's Net Zero and climate resilience objectives. Both the Local Plan and day-to-day development management decisions shape future carbon emissions, transport patterns, energy use and the District's ability to adapt to climate impacts.

6.4 Continuing to implement the PAS recommendations will help ensure climate considerations are embedded more consistently and defensibly in planning decisions by strengthening governance, evidence, and Member training.

6.5 To support sustainable growth and align with national policy requirements, future planning work should:

- Promote low-carbon, energy-efficient development, using design codes and updated policy to require higher energy standards and low-carbon heating.
- Enable renewable and low-carbon energy infrastructure, including solar, wind, and heat networks, where appropriate.
- Prioritise sustainable transport, integrating active travel, public transport and electric vehicle (EV) infrastructure to reduce car dependency.
- Strengthen climate adaptation, particularly regarding flood risk, surface water management, overheating and water efficiency.
- Protect and enhance green and blue infrastructure, supporting biodiversity, carbon sequestration and climate resilience.
- Ensure development delivers Biodiversity Net Gain and other statutory environmental outcomes.

6.6 The emerging Local Plan will be the primary mechanism through which these climate objectives are delivered. Early decisions on spatial strategy, infrastructure, and green belt considerations will have long-term implications for carbon reduction and environmental resilience. Embedding robust climate evidence and maintaining strong Member–Officer collaboration will be essential in achieving a sustainable and future-proofed development strategy for the District.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.7 Implementing these recommendations supports equality and diversity by strengthening fairness, transparency and consistency in decision making. It also improves the accessibility of the planning process and helps councillors better understand their duties under the Equality Act 2010. To implement them lawfully, the council must ensure that all training and processes are accessible to every councillor and that no new procedures inadvertently disadvantage people with protected

characteristics. It is also important that equality considerations are embedded in revised approaches, MOUs or enforcement frameworks.

Community Impact Implications

6.8 The new local plan and sound development management decisions will contribute to community safety, health and well-being objectives. In this context implementing the PAS recommendations is positive.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The risks associated with the progression of the Bromsgrove District Plan are being monitored by the Council's corporate risk register COR0017 and as a standing item for discussion at LPCPWG meetings. Currently the Council remains on track to deliver the local plan in line with the adopted timetable.

7.2 From a Development Management perspective, risk centres around the speed and quality of decision making and government sanctions are in place if either fall below relevant thresholds. Implementing the action plan to address the issues identified by the PAS report, reduces the risks especially around the quality assessment and would ensure that good decisions are being made. Departmental risk monitoring and mitigation remains in place and is regularly discussed with the Service's Assistant Director.

7.3 Lack of five-year housing land supply is an issue. This exposes the council to the tilted balance, increasing the likelihood of additional development pressure.

7.4 There is a risk of government intervention in plan-making if progress is not made.

7.5 Fragmented political control increases the risk of inconsistent decision making and difficulty achieving cross-party consensus on strategic planning matters.

7.6 Councillors face ongoing tension between green belt protections and government housing delivery expectations, increasing decision risks.

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7.7 Delays and unresolved issues can lead to appeals for non-determination, removing control from the Council.

7.8 Focus on minor details at Planning Committee risks missing strategic planning considerations and weakens the planning balance.

7.9 Limited early engagement in terms of councillor involvement at pre-application and pre-committee stages leads to unresolved concerns surfacing late
in the process.

7.10 With approximately 89% of the District designated green belt, options for growth are severely constrained. This is added to by the complexity of “grey belt” policy.

7.11 In terms of planning enforcement, Competing workloads can delay enforcement investigations and undermine confidence in the system. An overreliance on notice numbers rather than resolution outcomes risks a misleading performance assessment.

7.12 Strain between officers and councillors risks deterioration in working relationships and organisational culture. This could result in staff departures and recruitment difficulties, reducing capacity and institutional knowledge, which would add to pressures on staff.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 - Planning Advisory Service Recommendations updated Action Plan

Appendix 2 – Local Plan Cross Party Working Group Terms of Reference

Appendix 3 – Memorandum of Understanding between Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council (this appendix may contain exempt information).

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	**Name and Job Title**	**Date**
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Sue Baxter	30/10/26
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Guy Revans Executive Director Ruth Bamford Assistant Director	
Financial Services		
Legal Services	Nicola Cummings, Principal Solicitor – Governance Jess Bayley-Hill, Principal Democratic Services Officer	28/10/26
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)		
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	Matt Eccles Climate Change Lead	

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