



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

MONDAY 27TH JUNE 2016

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, S. R. Colella, B. T. Cooper, M. Glass, L. C. R. Mallett, R. D. Smith, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

### **AGENDA**

1. Election of Chairman
2. Election of Vice Chairman
3. Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes
4. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements  
  
To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
5. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 25th April 2016 (Pages 1 - 10)
6. WCC Increasing Physical Activities in Worcestershire Task Group - Final Report (Pages 11 - 38)
7. Cabinet Response to the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group Final Report (Pages 39 - 42)
8. Making Experiences Count - Annual Update Report (Pages 43 - 54)
9. Write Off of Debts - Annual Update Report (Pages 55 - 70)

10. Overview and Scrutiny Working Groups Membership Report (Pages 71 - 72)
11. Planning Backlog Data as at 31st March 2016 (Pages 73 - 74)
12. Preventing Homelessness Task Group - Verbal Update
13. Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update
14. Cabinet Work Programme 1st July to 31st October 2016 (Pages 75 - 80)
15. Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 81 - 86)
16. To consider any other business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting.

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

16th June 2016



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## BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

25<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2016 AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors L. C. R. Mallett (Chairman), K.J. May (Vice-Chairman), C. Allen-Jones, S. J. Baxter, C. J. Bloore, B. T. Cooper, R. J. Deeming, M. Glass, R. D. Smith and P.L. Thomas

Observers: Councillor G. N. Denaro and Councillor S. A. Webb

Officers: Ms. J. Pickering, Ms. D. Poole, Mrs B. Talbot, Ms. A. Scarce and Ms. J. Bayley

124/15 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. R. Colella.

125/15 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

There were no declarations of interest or whipping arrangements.

126/15 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 21ST MARCH 2016**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on Monday 21st March were submitted.

The Chairman thanked Councillor K. J. May for chairing the meeting in his absence.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 21st March 2016 be approved as a correct record.

127/15 **ANNUAL SICKNESS ABSENCE PERFORMANCE UPDATE 2015/16**

The Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development and the Human Resources and Development Manager presented an update on the sickness absence statistics for Council staff covering the period April 2015 to March 2016. During the delivery of this update the following points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

# Agenda Item 5

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
25th April 2016

- An average of 5.33 days per full time equivalent (FTE) post had been lost due to sickness absence by Bromsgrove staff during the period.
- There had been a decrease in the proportion of days lost due to short-term sickness.
- The Council had worked hard, alongside Redditch Borough Council, to support staff experiencing stress, anxiety and depression.
- Action to support people experiencing difficulties with stress had included the Time to Talk initiative, provision of counselling services and use of the Employee Assistance programme.
- The Council's process for reporting sickness absence was the subject of an ongoing review and a new approach had been trialled in a small number of departments.
- In the trial managers were able to report staff sickness absences directly to the Human Resources team, rather than through Payroll.
- A key finding of the trial had been that the Council's existing Sickness Absence Policy was not supporting managers adequately.
- The trial was due to be extended to other departments over the following months.
- The data arising from the trial would be published on the dashboard and used to help managers to monitor and manage sickness absence levels within their teams more effectively.

Following the presentation a number of points were discussed by Members in further detail:

- The causes of stress and action taken by the Council to identify and address this problem. Members were advised that managers were being provided with training to enable them to identify behaviour which might indicate that a member of staff was suffering from stress.
- The inclusion of statistics for staff employed in Housing, which was solely a Redditch service area.
- The potential for further data to be obtained from the online Employee Assistance programme in order to appreciate the key sources of information required by staff.
- The value of recent initiatives tackling problems with stress in the work place and the extent to which this had helped to address the social stigma associated with mental health difficulties.
- The number of staff absent due to sickness and the size of the teams within which they worked.
- The inclusion of sickness absence statistics for services hosted by Bromsgrove District Council and the extent to which this accurately reflected absences for the local authority in a shared service working environment.
- The potential to reflect sickness absence statistics more accurately for the Council by calculating the proportion of absences in accordance with the division of funding between Councils to support those services.

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- The prevalence of musculo-skeletal illnesses within the Environmental Services team as a cause for sickness absence and access within the team to Occupational Health services.
- The level of contact that the Council had with GP practices in cases where managers had concerns about the health of members of staff.
- The potential for comparative figures to be provided for sickness absence levels in previous years.
- The extent to which staff may feel reluctant to explain the causes of stress as it was often considered to be a private and highly sensitive matter.
- The possibility of providing greater clarification in the reports about the causes of stress (e.g. to determine whether this was due to personal issues or working conditions). Concerns were expressed that if additional information was provided on this subject it would need to be presented in an appropriate manner so as to not compromise staff confidentiality.
- The potential for the Board to receive further information about the findings of the review and to scrutinise the Sickness Absence Policy in the event that any amendments were made to this document in response to the trial outcomes.

At the end of these discussions it was

## **RESOLVED** that

- (1) The following amendments should be made to future editions of the Sickness Absence Update report;
  - (a) comparative data should be included in the report;
  - (b) specific information should be provided about absence levels amongst staff delivering services in Bromsgrove district and references to Redditch only services should be removed from future editions of the report;
  - (c) departmental head counts should be provided; and
  - (d) subject to addressing concerns detailed in the preamble above, greater clarification should be provided about the causes of sickness absence due to stress.
- (2) A Sickness Absence Update report be presented to the Board in six months' time.

128/15

## **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT AND REVENUE OF THE WORK OF THE BOARD**

The Chairman presented a draft of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16. In so doing he highlighted some of the key achievements of the Board and a number of Task Groups during the year and he thanked Members and Officers for their hard work supporting the scrutiny process.

In line with best practice Members were invited to consider action that could be taken to improve the scrutiny process in future years. A number of potential options to enhance the scrutiny process had been identified

by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, in consultation with Officers, during briefings as well as following discussions at Board meetings. These ideas were discussed in turn by the Board:

(a) Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group

Members were advised that a small working group could meet in private to investigate budgetary matters in detail and report their findings back to the Board. Group members would develop expertise which would be helpful when considering the budget. Meetings could be scheduled to take place in a timely manner so as to enable Members to scrutinise both future budget proposals and information about progress in securing efficiency savings as and when the information became available.

Members concurred that a Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group would be useful to establish. There was general consensus that the financial situation for local government would continue to be challenging and under these circumstances detailed consideration by Members of budget proposals would be essential. Furthermore, Officers advised that the external auditors had recommended that there should be greater Member involvement in the budget setting process and this working group would help to achieve this objective.

(b) Performance Dashboard Scrutiny Working Group

Similarly it was proposed that the Board could establish a small working group to review the measures dashboard. To date Members had received limited information about the dashboard, though it had become clear during a presentation on this subject earlier in the year that this would become an increasingly useful tool for the Council. The dashboard contained a vast amount of complex information. A Working Group meeting regularly in private might be in a better position than the Board to develop familiarity with the dashboard and to identify ways in which this could be used to support the scrutiny process. As with the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group the outcomes of these meetings could be reported to the Board.

Again there was general consensus that a working group dedicated to reviewing the measures dashboard would be a useful addition to the scrutiny process. Members noted that a lot of the content of the dashboard appeared to be focused on service performance. There was the potential that the group could help to widen the scope of the dashboard by suggesting content that would focus more on issues which mattered to local residents. Once familiar with the dashboard Members of the working group might also identify key areas of service performance which might be considered suitable for further scrutiny, whether by the Board or by a Task Group. Members were also reminded that the monitoring and scrutiny of performance came within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny.



As with the budget process Members were advised that the Council's auditors had recommended that Members should be more greatly involved in managing service performance and a working group would help the Council to achieve this aim. The Board was also asked to note that the launch of this Working Group would coincide with the provision of access to the dashboard on Members' iPads which would make it easier for Members to access this tool more regularly.

(c) Member Champions on the Board

A further option that had been identified was the potential for members of the Board to be appointed as champions of particular issues. A Member Champion for Risk Management had been appointed to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee at the beginning of the year and this role had worked well by enhancing member involvement in the Council's approach to managing risks. Member champions on the Board would have an opportunity to learn about particular subjects in detail which could enable them to gain expertise in those areas.

Members expressed some reservations about this suggestion and it was questioned how this would work in a meaningful fashion. There was general agreement that the concept of a scrutiny Member Champion required further consideration. The Board therefore agreed that this should be discussed further in the new municipal year.

(d) Training

A training session had been delivered to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and other non-Cabinet Members in June 2015. Officers suggested that the content could be adapted to focus on particular areas of interest to ensure that it remained useful and interesting.

Members concurred that the training which had been delivered in 2015 had been very good, having provided both an introduction to the scrutiny process and an opportunity for Members to consider subjects that might be suitable for scrutiny during the year. Further consideration of the previous list of proposed subjects for scrutiny, in respect of the outcomes that had been achieved, was considered worthwhile. Members also suggested that future training should provide additional opportunities to discuss suitable subjects for scrutiny in 2016/17.

(e) Additional Points

Officers explained that the introduction of Working Groups could impact on the workload of both the Officers who supported the

scrutiny process as well as on the workload of Members. For this reason it was suggested that if the Working Groups were introduced only 1 Task Group or Short, Sharp Review should take place at any one time, rather than the 2 that were currently permitted, to ensure that workloads remained manageable. In 2015/16 there had only ever been 1 Task Group / short sharp review taking place at any point and therefore it was not anticipated that this would have a negative impact on the outcomes of the scrutiny process. The Board would, however, be able to review the impact on the scrutiny process at the end of 2016/17 and could make further amendments to working arrangements then if considered appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) A Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group should be established, with effect from the start of the municipal year in 2016/17.
- (2) A Performance Dashboard Scrutiny Working Group should be established, with effect from the start of the municipal year in 2016/17.
- (3) The membership of both working groups should be determined by the Board at its first meeting in 2016/17.
- (4) Further scrutiny training should be provided to Members early in the new municipal year.
- (5) The concept of scrutiny Member Champions should be considered further by the Board in 2016/17.
- (6) Subject to recording the plans for the future of the scrutiny process, as detailed in the preamble above, the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2015/16 be approved and referred to Council for consideration.

129/15

**BUDGET SCRUTINY - LESSONS LEARNT AND ARRANGEMENTS FOR FUTURE YEARS (PRESENTATION)**

The Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Resources delivered a presentation on the subject of budget scrutiny arrangements for 2016/17 (attached at Appendix 1). Whilst presenting this report the following points were drawn to the attention of Members:

- Officers were keen to learn from and improve upon previous approaches to budget scrutiny at the Council.
- In recent years there had been difficulties obtaining financial information in a timely manner that would enable scrutiny Members to challenge the Cabinet effectively.
- There had also been limited public consultation about the Council's budget and it was possible that the board and / or Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group could help to address this situation.
- Assessing the extent to which expenditure was achieving value for money was challenging; outcomes could be difficult to quantify.

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- Officers were aiming in future to develop a budget covering a 4 year period rather than the traditional 3 years that had been covered in the past.
- There was the potential to improve in year monitoring of budget expenditure.
- In future Scrutiny Members might want to engage more with Heads of Service about expenditure. In recent years finance officers had tended to present budget reports, though did not have the level of familiarity with service delivery that Heads of Service had to explain any variances or to answer particular questions about service expenditure.
- Improvements could be made to the presentation of the Council's Statement of Accounts. The first 10 pages needed be written clearly and easy to comprehend.
- The Council's external auditors had made recommendations about the Council's approach to monitoring the budget and had suggested that this needed to become more robust.
- More detailed information could be provided in future to scrutiny Members about the budget, including a breakdown of the costs of service delivery.
- Budget data needed to be made available to Members in a more timely fashion during the budget scrutiny process. In the past Members had often received updates in the form of presentations at meetings which provided limited time to digest the information and to identify both problems as well as possible opportunities available to the Council.
- The Board was advised that many local authorities had bodies like the Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group and Officers welcomed the positive contribution that this body could make to the budget setting process.
- In future Officers were intending to provide details of expenditure and income for all cost centres per service. This would enable Members to identify patterns where applicable.
- Income levels would also be considered further in future and this would encompass not just fees and charges for Council services but also opportunities to obtain additional income from more creative delivery of services.
- Further information about the capital programme would be provided in future as this had become an important element of Council finances.
- Officers were hoping that the Government would provide more detail about Business Rate assumptions by the end of the year as this would also increasingly be a core element of local government funding.

Once the presentation had been delivered Members discussed the following:

- The use of black and red text in budget spreadsheets and the potential for the way this was presented to cause confusion.

Officers explained that the Council needed to comply with particular requirements on this subject in line with local government accounting principles.

- The potential for an additional column to be added to future budget spreadsheets reflecting variances in expenditure over 10 per cent.
- The time constraints within which any actions needed to be taken in order to set a balanced budget for 2017/18.
- The potential to achieve anticipated efficiency savings for 2016/17.
- The option to use balances to help achieve a balanced budget.
- The level of detail that would be required by the Government in local government efficiency plans by March 2017.

**RESOLVED** that

- (1) A copy of the presentation should be circulated for Members' consideration.
- (2) The report be noted.

130/15

**PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS IN BROMSGROVE TASK GROUP - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Chairman of the Preventing Homelessness Task Group, Councillor C. J. Bloore, provided an update on the progress of the review. The Board was advised that the group had interviewed the Chief Executive of Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and Officers from the Council's Benefits team at consecutive meetings. The impact of the welfare changes at the local level and potential action that could be taken to address this had been discussed during these meetings.

The group had recently met to discuss the next steps in their review. It had been agreed that visits to external service providers would be helpful and the group was aiming to visit both St Basils and the Basement Project in May. Members were also hoping to interview Officers and Councillor C. B. Taylor about Planning Policy matters in June.

131/15

**QUARTERLY RECOMMENDATION TRACKER**

The Board considered the latest update on progress that had been made to implement recommendations which had been made through the scrutiny process. A number of issues were discussed in particular detail during consideration of this update:

(a) Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group

The group's recommendations had been added to the tracker in the amended form of wording that had been agreed by Cabinet. A copy of the background report referred to at Cabinet together with the economic priorities for Bromsgrove was requested to enable Members to appreciate the reasons why Cabinet had amended the group's first recommendation.

(b) Leisure Provision Task Group

The majority of the Leisure Provision Task Group's recommendations had been implemented and could be removed from the tracker. However, in respect of recommendation 4 Members noted that the negotiations with BAM remained ongoing. For this reason it was agreed that this recommendation should continue to feature on the tracker document.

(c) Youth Provision Task Group

The majority of the recommendations that had been proposed by the Youth Provision Task Group had also been implemented and could be removed from the tracker. The Chairman requested that the Board's thanks be reported to the former Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor J. M. L. A. Griffiths, who had attended a meeting of CALC to present the group's findings. One final recommendation from the group remained to be implemented; an investigation of services that could be provided to young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs). This would remain on the Board's Work Programme.

**RESOLVED** that, subject to the comments detailed in the preamble above, all implemented recommendations be removed from the tracker and the report be noted.

132/15

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

Councillor B. T. Cooper, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), advised that there had been no meetings of the Committee since the last meeting of the Board.

The next meeting would take place on 27th April. The main items on the agenda for this meeting would be:

- An update on the position of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals.
- The quality of acute hospital services.

Discussions about the outcomes of the acute services review would remain on hold during the purdah period for local elections.

133/15

**CABINET WORK PROGRAMME 1ST MAY TO 31ST AUGUST 2016**

Officers advised that the following edition of the Cabinet Work Programme would be amended to include the correct title for the Preventing Homelessness Task Group. The group's findings would be reported for the consideration of Cabinet on 5th October 2016.

134/15

## **WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman noted that every member of the Board had been sent a link to a survey that had been launched by Worcestershire County Council in order to obtain suggestions for the content of their Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. No Members of the Board had completed a copy of this survey and the deadline had passed. However, Members concurred that it would be useful for a county Scrutiny Committee to assume responsibility for holding the Health and Wellbeing Board to account. There was general consensus that the Worcestershire HOSC would be in a suitable position to undertake this role. Councillor Cooper, in his capacity as the Council's representative on the Worcestershire HOSC, was therefore asked to report this suggestion for the consideration of partners at the Committee's next meeting.

During consideration of Worcestershire County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme Members questioned progress with the Joint Increasing Physical Activities Task Group. The Board was advised that no date had been set for the group's final report to be presented for Members' consideration. However, Officers reported that the Redditch representative on the review had recently reported at a meeting of the Borough's Overview and Scrutiny Committee that a meeting had been held at the end of March to consider the group's draft recommendations and a date was being investigated for the presentation of their final report to the County Council's Cabinet. Members thanked officers for this update though expressed disappointment in the slow progress that had been made with this review.

135/15

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

Officers advised that the deadline for the Preventing Homelessness Task Group would be recorded in the following edition of the Board's Work Programme as 19th September. The work programme would also be amended to reflect discussions at the following meeting of the Board about the membership of the 2 new working groups.

The meeting closed at 7.15 p.m.

Chairman

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

27th June 2016

#### Joint Increasing Physical Activities Task Group Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Peter Whittaker, Portfolio Holder for Leisure & Tourism
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	John Godwin, Head of Leisure and Cultural Services
Ward(s) Affected	All wards.
Non-Key Decision	

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides Members with an opportunity to view the findings of the Worcestershire County Council increasing Physical Activities Task Group investigation.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Board is asked to consider the content of the final report and to determine whether to refer any of the recommendations for consideration of the Cabinet.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Background

- 3.1 In June 2015 the Chair of Worcestershire County Council's Overview & Scrutiny Performance Board contacted every district council in the County about a task group idea. This proposed that a review should be launched to look at action that could be taken to increase participation levels in physical activities within Worcestershire. The review was also designed to look at whether there was an Olympic legacy within the County. Due to the provision of leisure services at a district level the County Council concluded that this might be a suitable topic for joint scrutiny.
- 3.2 The Redditch Bromsgrove Overview & Scrutiny Board considered an agreed to take place in this joint scrutiny activity. Cllr June Griffiths was appointed as Bromsgrove District Council's representative on this task group. Redditch Borough Council and Worcester City Council also appointed representatives.
- 3.3 Meetings of the Group took place between September 2015 and March 2016. The Group's final report, attached at Appendix 1 details the Group's findings and recommendations.
- 3.4 Following Councillor Griffiths resignation from the Board in December 2015, after consultation with the Chair of the Task Group, it was agreed that Bromsgrove would

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not appoint a replacement for Councillor Griffiths as the Group's investigations were coming to a close.

### Financial Implications

- 3.5 No financial implications are detailed within the report.

### Legal Implications

- 3.6 There are no specific legal implications highlighted in the report.

### Service / Operational Implications

- 3.7 No specific operational implications have been identified. The Head of Services have been consulted about the content and has not raised any concerns.
- 3.8 As this review was co-ordinated by Worcestershire County Council there has been limited District Council and Member involvement. The Chair of the review, Councillor Richard Udall has kindly offered to assist in the presentation of the report.

### Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.9 There are no specific customer or equalities and diversity implications.

## 4. RISK MANAGEMENT

No specific risks have been identified.

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Increasing Physical Activity in Worcestershire Scrutiny Task Group Final Report.

Appendix 2 – Response from WCC Cabinet to the recommendations.

## AUTHOR OF REPORT

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## Scrutiny Report

# Increasing Physical Activity in Worcestershire

## Increasing Physical Activity Scrutiny Task Group Membership

Richard Udall (Lead Scrutiny Member)

Christine Cawthorne (representing Worcester City Council)

Stuart Cross

Liz Eyre

Philip Gretton

June Griffiths (representing Bromsgrove District Council until 2 December 2015 and the County Council thereafter)

Gareth Prosser (representing Redditch Borough Council)

Graham Vickery

### **Officer Support**

Alyson Grice and Samantha Morris, Overview and Scrutiny Officers

### **Further copies of this report are available from:**

Overview and Scrutiny Team

Legal and Democratic Services

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Website: [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/scrutiny)

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## Chairman's Foreword

It is a pleasure to provide a foreword to this report. On first appearance some people were surprised that I agreed to lead this scrutiny exercise. After all, I am middle aged, over weight and lacking in physical activity. However, I believe for those reasons I'm ideally suited to lead the investigation. I know the challenges, the difficulties and the disincentives of attempting any kind of physical activity.

It has been a worthwhile and rewarding investigation. We believe we have developed moderate, progressive and achievable recommendations which are affordable. Scrutiny should be more than just reviewing past policies, we believe in policy development and hope this Report will enable the Executive to consider new ideas and policy changes.

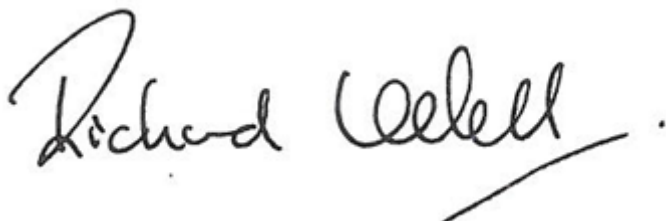
The issue of Olympic legacy was difficult for us; we received a mixed response to the questions we asked on the legacy. Some witnesses claimed it had been a success, others suggested otherwise. Clearly the benefits from the 2012 London Olympics have been felt, but more could be done to harness and promote the activity of those who are working to provide physical activity and to provide a meaningful legacy.

Many witnesses expressed frustration with the lack of support from General Practitioners and the medical profession. Sports clubs and groups are keen to help and would be willing to work with GP Practices if given the opportunity. We hope this report will bring about some change in this area.

As a County Council we also have to do more to promote physical activity among our workforce; we have provided some recommendations to encourage this to happen.

I would like to thank all the members of the Task Group; it was a pleasure to work with you. Also a big thank you to our Scrutiny Officers, who do a great job ensuring we are supported.

On a personal note, the process has encouraged me to be more active. I now have a dog and I am actively walking with my pet and trying to lose weight. I am also determined that we will organise a County Council mixed aged, mixed ability, mixed gender and no contact Touch Rugby team. You have been warned!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Udall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

**Cllr Richard Udall**

**Lead Member, Increasing Physical Activity Scrutiny Task Group**

## Increasing Physical Activity in Worcestershire Scrutiny Report

### Background and purpose of the Scrutiny

1. In February 2015, the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) discussed the Worcestershire Public Health Annual Report 2014. A main theme of the annual report was how to increase opportunities for participation in physical activity. The County Council was keen to ensure that opportunities to access sport and physical activity were available to all, and scrutiny members were also interested to find out what impact the 2012 Olympics had had on participation rates.
2. Therefore, in April 2015, the OSPB added Increasing Physical Activity in Worcestershire to the 2015 scrutiny work programme, which was subsequently approved by Council in May 2015.
3. The Terms of Reference for the scrutiny exercise were to examine and make recommendations on:
  - Current physical activity rates in Worcestershire;
  - What is the County Council's role in promoting physical activity?
  - How is the County Council working with partners to enable more people to take part in physical activity and sport?
  - What can the County Council do to help increase physical activity rates in order to meet the Chief Medical Officer recommendations of 30 minutes a day, 5 days and week?



Members of the Scrutiny Task Group setting out on a Health Walk in St Peters, Worcester.

## Recommendations

4. In drawing up the recommendations, the Task Group has been mindful of what the County Council can and cannot influence from a Public Health perspective and that District Council colleagues have responsibility for Sports and Leisure Services.

### *Olympic Legacy*

5. Recommendation 1: The Public Health Team should continue to work closely with the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire to improve participation rates and extend the Olympic legacy to everyone, maximising both the use of built and natural environment. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

### *Action Plan for Physical Activity*

6. Recommendation 2: We strongly suggest that the Director of Public Health lead on the preparation of a countywide inclusive and overarching Action Plan for Physical Activity, to encourage cultural change and increase physical activity across the County. The Action Plan should be published within 6 months and should include the identification of a responsible officer and focus on those who are most in need of support, for example those residents who are on benefits, **and our more elderly and very young residents**. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be looking at the issue of obesity in the context of their Panel. This Action Plan should form a key part of the business of the Health and Well-being Board, which will oversee the implementation of the new Health and Well-being Strategy which has physical activity as one of its three priorities. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

### *Health Partners*

7. Recommendation 3: The Public Health Team should promote training for all frontline health staff to encourage them to have motivational conversations with service users to support increased physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]
8. Recommendation 4: The Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) representatives on the Health and Well-being Board should be asked to encourage GPs across the county to consider greater use of **'social prescribing'** including referring to sports and physical activity opportunities where appropriate. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

### *Other partners*

9. Recommendation 5: The Public Health Team should facilitate regular partnership meetings to share best practice, case studies and ideas from across the County, linking this with the Action Plan for Physical Activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

### *Public Awareness and Recognition*

10. Recommendation 6: Using the World Class Worcestershire brand, the County Council should raise the profile of elite sports men and women in the County and promote local

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success in amateur sport, providing a platform to encourage greater participation. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]

## *Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme*

11. Recommendation 7: County Councillors should be actively encouraged (not mandatory) to spend at least 10% of their divisional fund on encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, drawing on the support and advice of the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire where necessary. This should be highlighted to new Members as part of the Member Induction Programme following the 2017 Elections. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]

## *Sharing Information*

12. Recommendation 8: As part of the Action Plan for Physical Activity (see Recommendation 2), the County Council should consider ways to share information amongst partners and increase awareness of activities available across Worcestershire, ensuring a joined up approach. A dedicated communications officer should be responsible for this aspect of physical activity using all forms of modern communication methods. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]
13. Recommendation 9: We recommend that the CMR organises and hosts an annual summit of Health Professionals, District and County Councils, the Sports Partnership and other appropriate sporting clubs and organisations (including Scrutiny) to discuss progress, share information and ideas towards meeting the goals of increasing physical activity and to report the outcomes to Cabinet. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

## *Schools*

14. Recommendation 10: The Public Health Team should work with the Worcestershire Association of Governors, the Worcestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers, and representatives of Middle and Primary School Leaders in the county to highlight the importance of a quality PE offer in schools and effective use of their enhanced sports funding, and to promote opportunities available to schools for the involvement of local sporting organisations in their curriculum. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

## *Employees*

15. Recommendation 11: As a large employer, the County Council should do more to encourage its staff to become more physically active. [Leader of the Council/Chief Executive]

## *Barriers to Participation*

16. Recommendation 12: As part of the development of the Action Plan for Physical Activity, the County Council should carry out a Needs Assessment to establish any 'gaps' between what is needed and what is currently provided. The Needs Assessment should also look to identify what are the barriers to taking part in physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

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17. Recommendation 13: The County Council should investigate whether better use can be made of the S106 cycle funds arising from new developments. More cycle ways could be created across the County by being more flexible with regards to the current width restrictions where formal footpaths are changed from bridleways to formal cycle way provision (where safe and appropriate to do so). The County Councils recent response to the governments cycling and walking investment strategy should be aligned with this recommendation [CMR for Highways/Director of Economy and Infrastructure]

## *Learning from successful practice elsewhere*

18. Recommendation 14: The County Council should fully investigate successful work undertaken in other local authorities, such as Camden Council, in order to identify good practice that might be transferable to Worcestershire. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

## *Making Better Use of Public Spaces*

19. Recommendation 15: The County Council should look to maximise the use of **public spaces and the natural environment** by working with planning authorities to identify more local opportunities to encourage physical activity and active travel. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

## *Council Decision Making*

20. Recommendation 16: The practice of including a Public Health Impact Assessment in agenda reports should be extended to all County Council committees and District Councils should be encouraged to do likewise. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change/Director of Public Health]

## Findings

### Why should we be physically active?

21. It was clear from the start of the scrutiny exercise that the health benefits of increasing physical activity are massive. Over time, relatively small changes can be hugely beneficial to individuals of all ages in terms of both mental and physical health. The Council's Interim Director of Public Health told the Task Group that if an obese person started to meet the Chief Medical Officer's recommendation for physical activity, they would straight away halve their heart risk. (For adults aged 18 to 65 the Chief Medical Officer recommends that individuals are physically active for 30 minutes on at least 5 days per week).

22. The Task Group heard that physical inactivity causes 6-10% of all deaths from major cardio-vascular diseases (such as coronary heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and breast and colon cancers), as well as weight gain, decrease in muscle mass, and strength and balance problems.

23. It is also clear that throughout the County there is a huge range of activity aimed at encouraging residents to become more physically active. As well as opportunities to take part in organised sports there are chances to participate in less formal activities



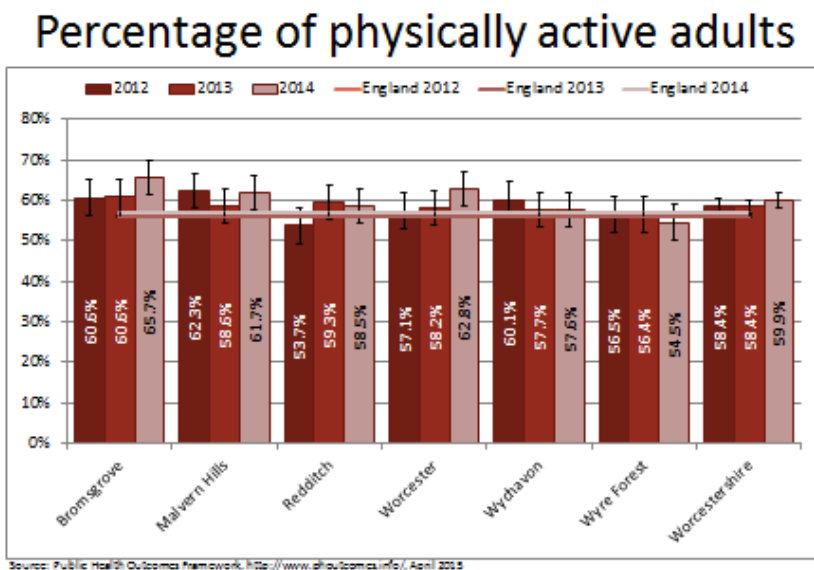
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such as walking in one of the Council's country parks or rambling in the Worcestershire countryside. The Task Group recognises the vital role played by the Community and Voluntary Sector in providing opportunities for sport and physical activity in the County.

24. Over many years, people throughout the country have become increasingly sedentary and sport participation rates have declined. It is a challenge to all Local Authorities and health professionals to encourage residents to become more physically active. Although much can be done to improve the situation, it is also important to acknowledge that what is really needed is a change of culture, whereby it becomes more commonplace for people to take every opportunity to be more active. Achieving this change of culture is an ongoing process and could take many years.
25. The Scrutiny Task Group welcomed the Government's recently published *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*. Members were very pleased to see the enhanced profile that the Government is giving to increasing physical activity.

## The current situation in Worcestershire

26. The Task Group heard that levels of physical activity in the County are low, making Worcestershire typical of the rest of the country. These low levels relate to all ages and socio-economic groups.
27. The table below shows the percentage of physically active adults for the County as a whole and broken down by District Council, and includes a comparison with figures for England.



## Olympic Legacy

28. At the start of the scrutiny exercise, the Task Group was keen to explore whether the 2012 London Olympics had resulted in a legacy of increased participation in Worcestershire. We heard conflicting evidence on this issue. The majority of people we spoke to did not feel that there had been a significant Olympic legacy in the County.

29. However, the view of the Partnership Director of the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire was that closer inspection showed that participation rates had gone up since 2012 and, through lottery funded Sports England projects, the County had benefitted from a number of 'big ticket' items, such as the refurbishment of the Dolphin Centre in Bromsgrove, the Wyre Forest Leisure Centre, the University of Worcester Arena and the new Worcester swimming pool. In addition, over £2 million had been invested via Sport England through legacy funds into local sports clubs and there had been an increase in opportunities for young people to try new sports and activities.
30. The Task Group acknowledged that Worcestershire's stock of sporting facilities had been enhanced since 2012 as a result of Olympic legacy projects. However, these facilities, although welcome, did not reach everyone and participation rates had not risen as much as might have been anticipated. Members felt that it was not too late to harness the enthusiasm generated following the London Olympics and, given the proximity of the Rio Olympics in 2016 and the inevitable enhanced public interest in sporting activity, there was now a further opportunity to create an Olympic legacy of increased levels of physical activity in the County.

## *Recommendation 1*

*The Public Health Team should continue to work closely with the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire to improve participation rates and extend the Olympic legacy to everyone, maximising both the use of built and natural environment. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Action Plan for Physical Activity

31. The Task Group recognised that, during the scrutiny exercise, the Health and Well-being Board agreed its new Health and Well-Being Strategy 2016-19 and Members very much welcomed the fact that 'Being active all through your life' was identified as one of 3 priorities for the Strategy. As part of the scrutiny, Members heard about many projects that the County Council supported with the aim of increasing residents' levels of physical activity.
32. However, Members felt that, to support attempts to encourage cultural change in the County, an overarching Action Plan for Physical Activity should be drawn up to pull together the many activities and raise the profile of ongoing work.
33. Members were impressed with the work undertaken by Camden Council which focused in particular on those residents in receipt of benefits. The Task Group heard that, as well as improving their health, increasing levels of physical activity meant those residents were more likely to return to employment.

## *Recommendation 2*

*We strongly suggest that the Director of Public Health lead on the preparation of a countywide inclusive and overarching Action Plan for Physical Activity, to encourage cultural change and increase physical activity across the County. The Action Plan should be published within 6 months and should include the identification of a responsible officer and focus on those who are most in need of support, for example those residents who are on benefits, and our more elderly and very young residents. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be looking at the issue of obesity in the context of their*

*Panel. This Action Plan should form a key part of the business of the Health and Well-being Board, which will oversee the implementation of the new Health and Well-being Strategy which has physical activity as one of its three priorities. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Health Partners

34. It was clear from our discussions that health partners have an important role to play in emphasising the importance of being more active in relation to health issues and in signposting patients to opportunities to be more physically active.
35. Frontline staff working for the County Council and other health partners throughout the County have countless contacts with residents every day, and the Task Group saw these informal, every day contacts as an ideal opportunity to promote the benefits of increasing physical activity and encourage residents to make the first step. Members heard about the Health Tracks programme which was skilling staff to have difficult conversations with patients but felt there was a need for further training to encourage greater consistency across the County.

### *Recommendation 3*

*The Public Health Team should promote training for all frontline health staff to encourage them to have motivational conversations with service users to support increased physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

36. During discussions with representatives of Worcestershire's CCGs, Members heard that there was lots of variation across the County in relation to levels of 'social prescribing' (prescribing physical activity as an alternative to drugs or other therapy). This was despite evidence that only a small increase in the amount of walking sustained over a long period could have significant health benefits. We heard that a pilot was being run in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Malvern, but elsewhere in Worcestershire practice was variable.
37. A number of organisations, including the Ramblers Association, the organisers of Health Walks and the Worcester Warriors Community Foundation told the Task Group that they had had difficulty in engaging with GPs and other NHS services, even with something as simple as having information leaflets available in GP surgeries. Encouraging greater use of social prescribing would go some way to improve links with organisations supporting increased physical activity. The Task Group was told that the use of social prescribing was more developed elsewhere in the country and health professionals in Worcestershire should be encouraged to learn from good practice elsewhere.

### *Recommendation 4*

*The Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) representatives on the Health and Well-being Board should be asked to encourage GPs across the county to consider greater use of '**social prescribing**' including referring to sports and physical activity opportunities where appropriate. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Other partners

38. As the scrutiny exercise went on it became clear that, although there was a great deal of sporting and other physical activity going on across the County, there was a lack of coordination between clubs and few opportunities for clubs to learn from each other and share best practice. Discussions with the Head of Worcester Warriors Community Foundation and the Cricket Development Director of Worcestershire Cricket confirmed that communication was an issue across sports.
39. Although there was some coordination at District Council level and the Sports Partnership organised club forums and published a regular newsletter, the Task Group felt that there was scope for further work to pull together activities across Worcestershire. Partnership working will be key to ensuring initiatives are sustainable.

### *Recommendation 5*

*The Public Health Team should facilitate regular partnership meetings to share best practice, case studies and ideas from across the County, linking this with the Action Plan for Physical Activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Public Awareness and Recognition

40. It was clear to Task Group Members that Worcestershire has many successful sports men and women. However, the County did not always make the most of its successful elite athletes and recognise their achievements. Increased publicity for local success could be used to promote and encourage physical activity amongst the wider population. For example, Members heard that Worcester RFC – Ladies Team currently had 7 international players including 2 from Wales and 1 from Scotland, something that was not widely known.

### *Recommendation 6*

*Using the World Class Worcestershire brand, the County Council should raise the profile of elite sports men and women in the County and promote local success in amateur sport, providing a platform to encourage greater participation. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]*

## Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme

41. The Scrutiny Task Group felt that the Councillors' Divisional Fund had further potential to support activities aimed at promoting increased physical activity in the County. The Worcestershire Councillors' Divisional Fund (WCDF) was created to enable local members to access money to help local initiatives and support 'good works' which play an important role in promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of communities within Worcestershire. Each of the 57 members of the Council has an allocation of £10,000 (per financial year) to spend on locally-determined initiatives within their Divisions. They have reasonable discretion as to how to spend their allocation, as long as they are lawful for the Council, rational and are properly recorded.
42. Although it was acknowledged that many Members already used their Divisional Fund to support sporting activities, the Task Group also recognised that there would be a new

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intake of Members following the 2017 local council elections, who may welcome some guidance as to appropriate use of divisional fund money. The Task Group is grateful to the Partnership Director of the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire who confirmed that the Sports Partnership would be prepared to advise Members on suitable organisations in local divisions.

## *Recommendation 7*

*County Councillors should be actively encouraged (not mandatory) to spend at least 10% of their divisional fund on encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, drawing on the support and advice of the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire where necessary. This should be highlighted to new Members as part of the Member Induction Programme following the 2017 Elections. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]*

## Sharing Information

43. Members felt that the County Council could have an important role in coordinating the many organised activities taking place across Worcestershire and sharing information about what is going on in the County. Sports clubs are often run on a small scale by volunteers and do not have the capacity or expertise to market themselves and broaden their 'catchment'.

## *Recommendation 8*

*As part of the Action Plan for Physical Activity (see Recommendation 2), the County Council should consider ways to share information amongst partners and increase awareness of activities available across Worcestershire, ensuring a joined up approach. A dedicated communications officer should be responsible for this aspect of physical activity using all forms of modern communication methods. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Recommendation 9

*We recommend that the CMR organises and hosts an annual summit of Health Professionals, District and County Councils, the Sports Partnership and other appropriate sporting clubs and organisations (including Scrutiny) to discuss progress, share information and ideas towards meeting the goals of increasing physical activity and to report the outcomes to Cabinet. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Schools

44. Members felt strongly that it was especially important to encourage children and young people to become physically active in order to establish good habits for life. On several occasions, Members were told that sports clubs had had difficulty in engaging with schools to offer their services. Although the Task Group acknowledged that schools have many pressures on their staff and curriculum time, Members were concerned that schools were missing out on exciting opportunities for their pupils to work with local sporting organisations.

45. Given the recent growth in the number of academies and ongoing changes in the Local Authority's relationship with schools, it was suggested to the Task Group that communication with schools should be via phase and other associations.

## *Recommendation 10*

*The Public Health Team should work with the Worcestershire Association of Governors, the Worcestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers, and representatives of Middle and Primary School Leaders in the county to highlight the importance of a quality PE offer in schools and effective use of their enhanced sports funding, and to promote opportunities available to schools for the involvement of local sporting organisations in their curriculum. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## The County Council's role as an employer

46. The representatives of the CCGs suggested to the Task Group that large employers in the County should lead by example and encourage and facilitate staff to be more physically active. For example, the CCGs had set up a Staff Council which was looking to improve the health and well-being of employees and was offering woodland walks for staff.
47. The Task Group believes that, as a large responsible employer, the County Council could undertake workplace campaigning to encourage staff to get more physically active. Members heard from the Director of Public Health that this need not mean additional cost for the Council as many activities would be free of charge, ie supporting staff to take a break from their desks at lunchtime, placing posters at lift doors reminding staff to use the stairs if possible, and encouraging walks around the campus (particularly for those based at County Hall). The Council could also consider promoting in the workplace activities offered by local sports clubs. Members felt that employees playing sport together would improve staff morale and productivity as well as enhancing an individual's well-being.

## *Recommendation 11*

*As a large employer, the County Council should do more to encourage its staff to become more physically active. [Leader of the Council/Chief Executive]*

## Barriers to Participation

48. As the scrutiny exercise progressed Members saw that for many people 'barriers' exist which prevent them from becoming physically active. These might be transport, cost, access to facilities or the intimidating nature of formal sports facilities to those making the first steps to become more active. The Task Group felt that it would be a valuable exercise to undertake a formal Needs Assessment to establish current provision and any gaps, looking to identify what the barriers might be to increasing levels of physical activity.

## *Recommendation 12*

*As part of the development of the Action Plan for Physical Activity, the County Council should carry out a Needs Assessment to establish any 'gaps' between what is needed and what is currently provided. The Needs Assessment should also look to identify what are the*

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*barriers to taking part in physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

49. The Task Group also discussed Section 106 money which is paid by developers to support infrastructure around new developments. Some of this money is specifically allocated to enhance cycling provision and Members would wish to encourage better use of this money in the future. Members also heard examples of the County Council being inflexible when requests were made to change a footway to a cycle way. Given the Council's commitment via the Health and Well Being Strategy to encouraging everyone to be more active, Members felt that greater flexibility in relation to the bureaucracy involved would be helpful.

## *Recommendation 13*

*The County Council should investigate whether better use can be made of the S106 cycle funds arising from new developments. More cycle ways could be created across the County by being more flexible with regards to the current width restrictions where formal footpaths are changed from bridleways to formal cycle way provision (where safe and appropriate to do so). The County Councils recent response to the governments cycling and walking investment strategy should be aligned with this recommendation. [CMR for Highways/Director of Economy and Infrastructure]*

## Learning from successful practice elsewhere

50. Towards the end of the scrutiny exercise, Members held a conference call with representatives of Camden Council and Suffolk County Council. These Councils were selected as they had both undertaken innovative work to encourage their residents to become more physically active and had seen participation rates rise as a result.
51. Members were very impressed by the ambitious projects carried out in both Camden and Suffolk, such as the 'Golden Mile' initiative in Lowestoft which was seen as a safe, simple and accessible way to get all ages walking, and Camden's targeting of those on benefits, offering free or subsidised gym membership on a 'use it or lose it' basis. Throughout the country, there are countless initiatives that Councils are running in order to improve their residents' health and it is clear that Worcestershire would benefit from investigating what other Councils do and looking to learn from their experiences.

## *Recommendation 14*

*The County Council should fully investigate successful work undertaken in other local authorities, such as Camden Council, in order to identify good practice that might be transferable to Worcestershire. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Making better use of public spaces

52. It is clear that there are many ways in which the County Council can influence local residents to be more active. What underpins a sporting nation is a culture of physical activity, with walking and green spaces at its heart, one of these is in relation to public space around the County and the relationship between planning decisions and encouraging physical activity and active travel. Members felt that better liaison between different Council services could result in a more activity friendly public space for the future and the development of place based solutions.

## *Recommendation 15*

*The County Council should look to maximise the **use of public spaces and the natural environment** by working with planning authorities to identify more local opportunities to encourage physical activity and active travel. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]*

## Council Decision Making

53. From May 2016, all agenda reports for Council and Cabinet meetings will include a Public Health Impact Assessment to advise Members on the health impact of the proposals under discussion. The Task Group very much welcomed this development and would wish to see it extended to all Council Committees.

## *Recommendation 16*

*The practice of including a Public Health Impact Assessment in agenda reports should be extended to all County Council committees and District Councils should be encouraged to do likewise. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change/Director of Public Health]*



## Methodology

54. The Scrutiny Task Group comprised cross-party volunteers from Overview and Scrutiny Panels. In addition, to reflect the fact that sports, leisure and park facilities are district council functions, all 6 District Councils in Worcestershire were asked to nominate a representative to work with their County colleagues and provide the District Council perspective. Throughout the exercise and in drawing up recommendations, all Members were mindful of what the County Council could influence.
55. In summary, evidence has been gathered from a wide variety of sources including the Interim Director of Public Health, Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Worcester Rugby Club – Ladies, Worcestershire Cricket Board, Worcester Warriors Community Trust, the Countryside Service, Worcester Ramblers Association, South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group, Wyre Forest, Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG, Worcestershire's Youth Cabinet and the Leisure Services at all 6 District Councils.
56. In addition the Task Group went on a Health Walk starting from St Peters Baptist Church, Worcester and held a conference call with representatives of Camden Council and Suffolk County Council
57. The Task Group members also considered relevant publications and reports, including:
- House of Commons Health Select Committee report on the impact of physical activity and diet on health and Government Response July 2015
  - A means to an end – increasing participation in sport and physical activity. A report from Overview and Scrutiny Birmingham City Council February 2015
  - Promoting Sporting Participation Redditch Borough Council May 2012
  - Youth Provision Task Group Bromsgrove District Council June 2013
  - Leisure Provision Task Group Bromsgrove District Council September 2014
  - Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation HM Government December 2015

## Appendix 1 Schedule of Activity

Date	Event
30 July 2015	Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Frances Howie, Interim Director of Public Health, Directorate of Adult Services and Health
3 September 2015	Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with Steve Brewster, Chief Executive Officer of Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire
18 September	Scrutiny Task Group went on a Health Walk starting from St Peters Baptist Church, Eden Close, St Peters Drive, Worcester WR5 3TZ
16 October 2015	Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with: David Guest, Worcester Rugby Club – Ladies Tom Hill, Worcestershire Cricket Board Carol Hart, Worcester Warriors Community Trust
21 October 2015	Scrutiny Task Group Meeting with: Rachel Datlen, Countryside Greenspace Manager Phil Coulson, Team Leader, Maintenance and Communities Cliff Dimond, Chairman of Worcester Ramblers Association
9 November 2015	Task Group Meeting with: David Mehaffey, Director of Strategy, South Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) Emily Godfrey, Strategic Planning Manager, Wyre Forest, Redditch and Bromsgrove CCG
18 November 2015	Councillor Stuart Cross attended the Youth Cabinet on behalf of the Task Group
7 December 2015	Task Group Meeting with: Hannah Cox, Contracts Manager- Worcester City Council John Godwin, Head of Service, Leisure & Cultural Services Bromsgrove District & Redditch Borough Councils Jem Teal, Wychavon District Council Dale Evans, Wyre Forest District Council Ed Dursley, Projects Manager
15 December 2015	Conference Call between representatives of the Task Group and Nigel Robinson, Head of Sport and Physical Activity, Camden Council and Adam Baker, Most Active County Project Manager, Suffolk County Council
31 March 2016	Task Group Meeting with Marcus Hart, Cabinet Member for Health and Well Being, Frances Howie, Interim Director of Public Health and Steve Brewster, Partnership Director, Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire

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## **Response of Cllr John Smith, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Health and Well-being to Scrutiny Task Group Report on Increasing Physical Activity in Worcestershire on behalf of the Cabinet of Worcestershire County Council.**

I welcome the interest of the Scrutiny Task Group in increasing physical activity in Worcestershire. As chair of the Health and Well-being Board, I am well aware of the importance of physical activity to general health and well-being, including its key role in promoting mental health. Indeed, the Board has recently agreed that increasing physical activity should be one of its three priority areas for the 2016-2021 period, recognising that this is essential to achieve the Board's vision that residents are healthier, live longer and have a better quality of life – especially those communities and groups with the poorest outcomes.

Many of the recommendations of the Task Group relate to areas of work which are already in progress, and I can assure the Task Group that this work will continue to be driven forward and reported in to the Health and Well-being Board through the Health Improvement Group. Others are not ones that I would agree with, and reasons for this are clearly set out below in my individual response to each recommendation.

### Olympic Legacy

1. **Recommendation 1:** The Public Health Team should continue to work closely with the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire to improve participation rates and extend the Olympic legacy to everyone, maximising both the use of built and natural environment. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** This is accepted and in progress. The interim Director of Public Health, as vice-chair of the Sports Partnership, will ensure that Olympic legacy work continues through the Partnership.

### Action Plan for Physical Activity

2. **Recommendation 2:** We strongly suggest that the Director of Public Health lead on the preparation of a countywide inclusive and overarching Action Plan for Physical Activity, to encourage cultural change and increase physical activity across the County. The Action Plan should be published within 6 months and should include the identification of a responsible officer and focus on those who are most in need of support, for example those residents who are on benefits, **and our more elderly and very young residents**. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be looking at the issue of obesity in the context of their Panel. This Action Plan should form a key part of the business of the Health and Well-being Board, which will oversee the implementation of the new Health and Well-being Strategy which has physical activity as one of its three priorities. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** This is accepted and in progress. Since increasing physical activity is one of the three priorities of the Health and Well-being Strategy, an action plan will be drawn up and reported through the Health Improvement Group to the Health and Well-being Board. The first stakeholder event to take this forward takes place on 9<sup>th</sup> June, and has attracted a good level of interest..

## Health Partners

3. **Recommendation 3:** The Public Health Team should promote training for all frontline health staff to encourage them to have motivational conversations with service users to support increased physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** This is accepted and in progress through the Health Chats training offered by the public health team to front line staff across the system. We are already delivering more 'train the trainer sessions' to scale up to reach higher numbers of NHS staff.

4. **Recommendation 4:** The Worcestershire Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) representatives on the Health and Well-being Board should be asked to encourage GPs across the county to consider greater use of '**social prescribing**' including referring to sports and physical activity opportunities where appropriate. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and in progress and we are making sure that social prescribing includes links to sports and physical activities through the Sports Partnership website.

## Other partners

5. **Recommendation 5:** The Public Health Team should facilitate regular partnership meetings to share best practice, case studies and ideas from across the County, linking this with the Action Plan for Physical Activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and in progress.

## Public Awareness and Recognition

6. Recommendation 6: Using the World Class Worcestershire brand, the County Council should raise the profile of elite sports men and women in the County and promote local success in amateur sport, providing a platform to encourage greater participation. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]

**Response:** this is accepted by the CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change.

## Councillors' Divisional Fund Scheme

7. **Recommendation 7:** County Councillors should be actively encouraged (not mandatory) to spend at least 10% of their divisional fund on encouraging participation in sport and physical activity, drawing on the support and advice of the Sports Partnership Herefordshire and Worcestershire where necessary. This should be highlighted to new Members as part of the Member Induction Programme following the 2017 Elections. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change]

**Response:** this is not accepted. CMR for Transformation and Commissioning does not consider that it is appropriate for himself or for Cabinet to dictate to County Councillors how they should spend their divisional funds. Decisions about these funds rest with Councillors and are based on their own assessment of local priorities.

### Sharing Information

8. **Recommendation 8:** As part of the Action Plan for Physical Activity (see Recommendation 2), the County Council should consider ways to share information amongst partners and increase awareness of activities available across Worcestershire, ensuring a joined up approach. A dedicated communications officer should be responsible for this aspect of physical activity using all forms of modern communication methods. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** The CMR for Health and Well-being accepts that we will continue and strengthen a joint approach to increasing awareness of available activities. However, it is not possible or appropriate to provide a dedicated communications officer to this task.

9. **Recommendation 9:** We recommend that the CMR organises and hosts an annual summit of Health Professionals, District and County Councils, the Sports Partnership and other appropriate sporting clubs and organisations (including Scrutiny) to discuss progress, share information and ideas towards meeting the goals of increasing physical activity and to report the outcomes to Cabinet. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** We note this recommendation and will consider it as part of the forward planning of events associated with the three priorities of the Health and Well-being Strategy.

### Schools

10. **Recommendation 10:** The Public Health Team should work with the Worcestershire Association of Governors, the Worcestershire Association of Secondary Headteachers, and representatives of Middle and Primary School Leaders in the county to highlight the importance of a quality PE offer in schools and effective use of their enhanced sports funding, and to promote opportunities available to schools for the involvement of local sporting organisations in their curriculum. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** CMR for Health and Well-being will make sure that the public health team links to education partners to ensure they are aware of on-line resources which can assist in implementing this recommendation.

### Employees

11. **Recommendation 11:** As a large employer, the County Council should do more to encourage its staff to become more physically active. [Leader of the Council/Chief Executive]

**Response:** This is accepted and work is in progress. Workplace Well-being Week at the start of June included a number of physical activities including a table tennis marathon in the Council chamber.

### Barriers to Participation

12. **Recommendation 12:** As part of the development of the Action Plan for Physical Activity, the County Council should carry out a Needs Assessment to establish any 'gaps' between what is needed and what is currently provided. The Needs Assessment should also look to identify what are the barriers to taking part in physical activity. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and will form part of the work behind the development of the Action Plan.

13. **Recommendation 13:** The County Council should investigate whether better use can be made of the S106 cycle funds arising from new developments. More cycle ways could be created across the County by being more flexible with regards to the current width restrictions where formal footpaths are changed from bridleways to formal cycle way provision (where safe and appropriate to do so). The County Councils recent response to the governments cycling and walking investment strategy should be aligned with this recommendation [CMR for Highways/Director of Economy and Infrastructure]

**Response:** this is accepted.

### Learning from successful practice elsewhere

14. **Recommendation 14:** The County Council should fully investigate successful work undertaken in other local authorities, such as Camden Council, in order to identify good practice that might be transferable to Worcestershire. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** the County council will continue to identify examples of good practice with sound evidence of effectiveness that might increase physical activity levels in Worcestershire, and will carefully consider their local applicability.

### Making Better Use of Public Spaces

15. **Recommendation 15:** The County Council should look to maximise the use of **public spaces and the natural environment** by working with planning authorities to identify more local opportunities to encourage physical activity and active travel. [CMR for Health and Well-Being/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** this is accepted and is in progress through the work of the public health team which includes an officer seconded to it from Planning. Three workshops linking health to planning have already been held.



Council Decision Making

16. **Recommendation 16:** The practice of including a Public Health Impact Assessment in agenda reports should be extended to all County Council committees and District Councils should be encouraged to do likewise. [CMR for Transformation and Commissioning/Director of Commercial and Change/Director of Public Health]

**Response:** the HIA is currently being introduced for use in Council and Cabinet meetings and this will be evaluated before consideration of any extension. The County Council is able to share an HIA toolkit and method with those District Councils who want to develop this approach.

Councillor John Smith  
June 2016

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## **Cabinet Response to the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group**

### Introduction

At the Cabinet meeting on 6th April 2016 consideration was given to the report of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group.

The Leader welcomed Councillor M. T. Buxton to the meeting as a representative of the Task Group (as the Chairman of the Task Group, Councillor K. J. May was unable to attend), and thanked her for being present to provide clarification on any matters raised by Cabinet Members.

The Cabinet then discussed and considered each of the recommendations of the Task Group in detail.

### Response to recommendations

Please find below the formal responses to the recommendations contained within the Review report:

#### **Recommendation 1**

The Council needs to formulate a clear Economic Development strategy that includes car parking as soon as possible, whilst considering the following key features of any such strategy:

- a) Ensuring that car parking arrangements are managed in accordance with the interests of the local economy.
- b) Working with partners in business and retail to develop the Economic Development Strategy that includes car parking options and tariffs that encourage customers to visit Bromsgrove.
- c) Ensure car parking arrangements support the Council's Economic Development Strategy.

### **Cabinet Response**

In relation to recommendation 1 the Cabinet agreed that car parking was vital to the economic development of the Town and accepted the principles behind the recommendation. It was felt however that the existing Economic Development Priorities should be reviewed in order to assess the impact of car parking charges, rather than produce a new Economic Development Strategy which may need to alter in 6 months time. It was fully accepted that the needs and views of businesses in the Town needed to be taken into account and the new Centre

Manager would be fully involved in this review process and in working with local businesses. The process should be undertaken prior to the consideration of the next round of changes to fees and charges. The existing Economic Priorities needed to focus more strongly on car parking. Officers and Members from Economic Development, Car Parking and Planning would need to work very closely together on the further regeneration of the Town Centre.

The recommendation was therefore accepted in the amended form below:

- (1) that the Council reviews its Economic Development Priorities to assess the impact of car parking charges as soon as possible, whilst considering the following key features:
  - (a) ensuring that car parking arrangements are managed in accordance with the interests of the local economy;
  - (b) working with partners in business and retail to review the Economic Priorities that includes parking options and tariffs that encourage customers to visit Bromsgrove; and
  - (c) ensuring that car parking arrangements support the Council's Economic Priorities.

## **Recommendation 2**

Having formulated the Economic Development Strategy it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council, with a clear remit of what the Council wishes to achieve, it is suggested that such a consultant would need to consult with the following Council officers/Members:

- a) Economic Development Team
- b) Environmental Services Team
- c) Relevant Portfolio Holders
- d) Members of the Evening and Weekend Car Parking Task Group
- e) Local businesses and retailers.

## **Cabinet Response**

This recommendation was largely accepted, with a minor change to the wording to reflect the changes made to recommendation 1 above . In addition the new Centres Manager has been added to the list of officers/Members to be involved in the consultation on car parking.

- (2) that whilst reviewing the Economic Priorities it is recommended that an external expert be engaged by the Council, with a clear remit of what the Council wishes to achieve. It is suggested that they would need to consult with the following Council officers/Members:

- (a) Economic Development Team
- (b) Environmental Services Team
- (c) Relevant Portfolio Holders
- (d) Members of the Evening and weekend car Parking Task Group
- (e) Local businesses and retailers
- (f) Town Centres Manager

### **Recommendation 3**

Prior to any further trials (of any nature) being agreed and carried out any necessary data should be collected in order to have appropriate comparative data and information available to ensure that any such trial can be measured successfully.

### **Cabinet Response**

Recommendation 3 was agreed.

### **Recommendation 4**

Until the introduction of a strategy the current parking charges and concessions should be maintained (including the continuation of free evening car parking).

### **Cabinet Response**

This recommendation was agreed subject to a minor change in wording to reflect the changes within recommendation 1.

- (4) that until the review of the Economic Priorities, the current parking charges and concessions should be maintained (including the continuation of free evening car parking).

The Leader and the Portfolio Holder thanked the Task Group Chairman and Members for the detailed work they had undertaken and for the recommendations arising from this.

**Councillor Rod Laight – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Regulatory Services .**

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016

### MAKING EXPERIENCES COUNT - QUARTERLY COMPLAINTS REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	√
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda Singleton – Head of Customer Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

This report provides the Board with customer feedback data for the fourth quarter of 2015/16

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**The Board is asked to:**

**2.1 Note the contents of the report.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

3.1 This report details the customer feedback received by the authority during the 4th quarter of 2015/16, including Local Government Ombudsman complaints and some examples of outcomes of customer complaints.

3.2 The report also provides demand data across the main access channels.

#### Financial Implications

3.3 There are no direct financial implications, although failure to deal appropriately with complaints can lead to financial recompense being necessary.

#### Legal Implications

3.4 There are no specific legal issues arising from this report. Any legal issues arising from complaints are dealt with on a case by case basis.

#### Service/Operational Implications

3.5 The Every Customer, Every Time, Customer Experience Strategy was launched in March 2011 and sets out our vision for excellent customer

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD**

Date: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016

service provision and improving the customer experience when having contact with the Council.

- 3.6 As an authority committed to improving customer care customer feedback and demand data is used to measure what is happening in our systems, and to inform improvements.
- 3.7 Quarterly reporting is intended to ensure Members of the Council and customers are updated in respect of customer feedback, especially complaints made in respect of service provision.
- 3.8 Good customer service has improved value for money by reducing failure demand. Improvements to the way we handle complaints has resulted in less officer time spent chasing responses and re-investigating.

### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.9 It is important to monitor aspects of customer service to ensure that we are improving and developing. Customers need to know that we respond properly to complaints and act on the issues raised to reduce the possibility of them happening again.

## **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 It is important to use the Council's complaints or compliments to measure how well the system is meeting its purpose and to act on those complaints to fix the system where it is failing.

## **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - **Quarterly Customer Feedback Report Quarter 4  
2015/16**

## **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

The details to support the information provided within this report are held by Head of Customer Services

## **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

Name: Lynn Jones  
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Tel: 01527 881288 extension 3851





**EVERY CUSTOMER, EVERY TIME -  
“Everybody Matters”**

**Making Experiences Count  
Quarterly Customer Service Report**

**BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**1 January 2016 – 31 March 2016**



**Bromsgrove**  
District Council

[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

## 1. Introduction

# Agenda Item 8

This report details the customer feedback received by Bromsgrove District Council during the period from 1 January 2016 to 31 March 2016.

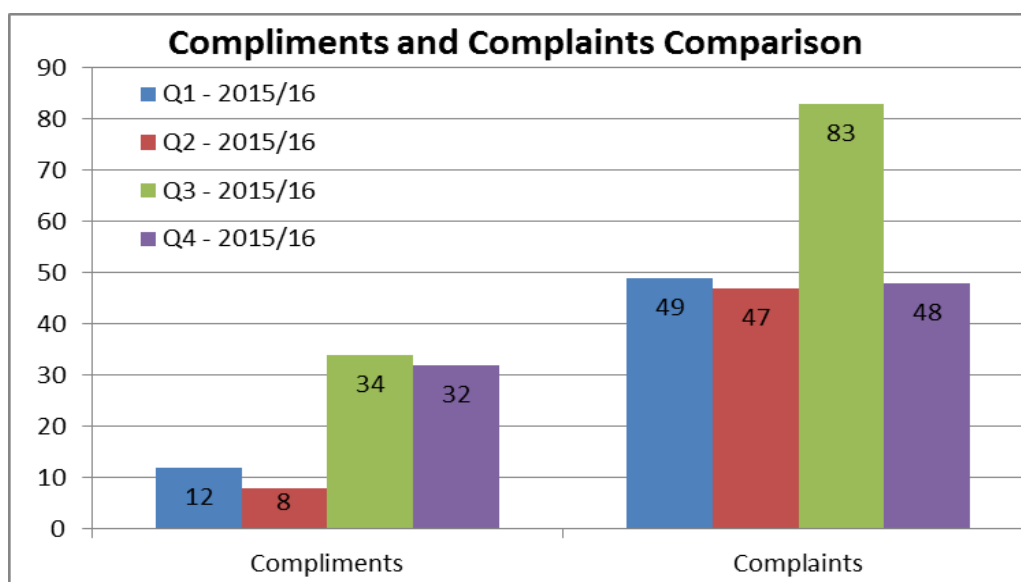
It also provides information about the customer demand received through the customer service team and payment channels.

## 2. Customer Feedback Analysis

**48** complaints were received during this quarter because we did not meet the customer's expectations, failed to meet our own standards, or the customer was unhappy with an outcome. A sample of complaints received can be found at the end of this report in Appendix 1.

We also received **32** compliments.

This chart shows number of complaints and compliments per quarter in 2015 – 2016.



We can see from the comparison chart above that last year that there were 40 less complaints in the same quarter this year.

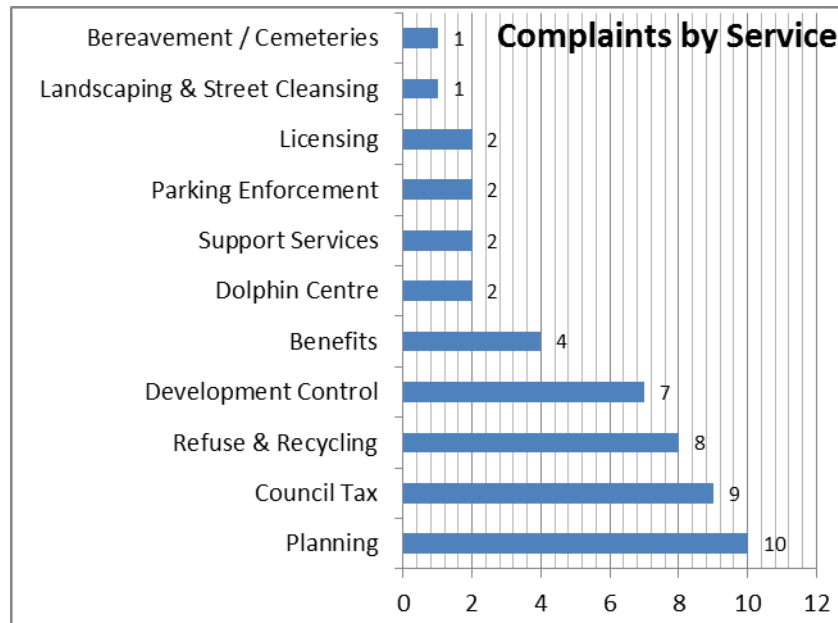
The common themes in the complaints received this quarter were:

- Lack of understanding of our processes
- Delays in customer contact with services

## Number of complaints by service (detailed)

# Agenda Item 8

The following table provides a more detailed breakdown of complaints by service for Qtr.4. 2015/2016 This includes all complaints and MP enquiries.



## “You said – we listened” – what have we changed as a result of complaints?

Some of the changes made as a result of complaints include:-

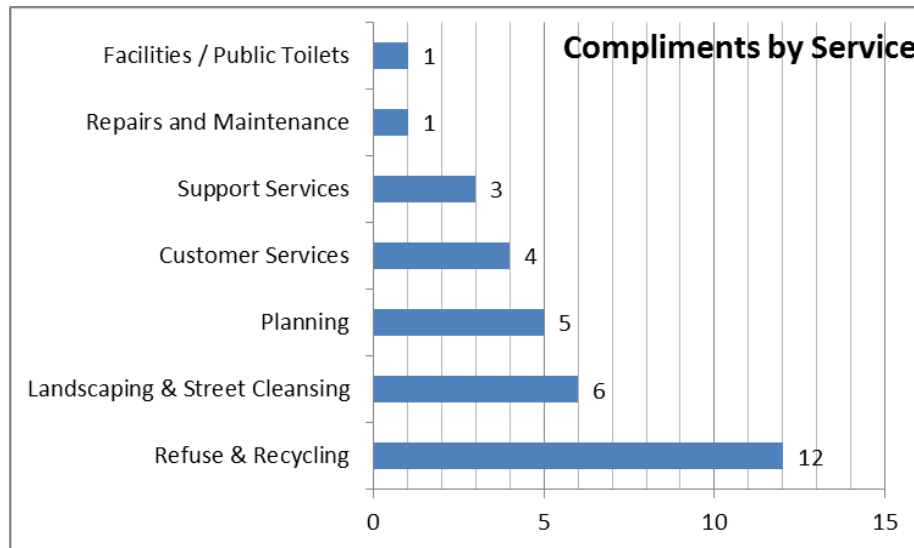
- Complaints process now advises Officers to make contact as quickly as possible after receiving the complaint, preferably by phone or face to face. This has improved the time taken to resolve majority of complaints quickly.
- Provide full explanation to customer and check their understanding

## Number of MP enquiries

During Qtr.4 there were 24 MP enquiries

## Happy Customers!

From the 32 compliments received we can see that customers appreciate the range of services the Council provides, especially when we deal with their requests in a timely and professional manner.



### Sample of the compliments received during Qtr.4 2015/2016.

#### Customer Services

Mrs Jones attended the centre to make a payment and said that Andy was very helpful in resolving her query regarding the payment and she said she felt much more relieved about it after speaking to Andy.

Nicki is great, she's fantastic, she's really helpful, she's made sure I've got all the details I need for my enquiry.

You've been so helpful you and Kelly (Work Experience) I wouldn't have got this sorted out. You've both been really good. I got a good service coming here, thank you. (Blue Badge application)

#### Environmental Services

Dear Councillor Jones, On behalf of The Royal British Legion and the residents of Catshill, I would like to express my sincere thanks for sorting out the fallen tree at the War Memorial earlier this week. Could you please convey our thanks to the team who carried out the work? It is such acts that enable us to maintain the War Memorial as a permanent reminder of those men from Catshill who have made the ultimate sacrifice for their country and never returned home. Once again, thank you all.

#### Refuse/Recycling(RBC/BDC) + Street Cleansing for BDC

On Friday afternoon she reported moss on the pavements today 11/1/2015 team went out and sprayed the pavement very prompt service

Residents in Windsor Street want to compliment Shaun Nash on how clean Bromsgrove area is kept.

Resident has advised that Shaun the sweeper driver, was in the area 18/02/2016 and he went out of the way to clear the brook in the area of Crown Close, The resident advised that he was removing the rubbish from the brook and this would allow the brook to flow freely, and that he went out of his way and did an excellent job and the resident was advised

that Shaun was polite and well-mannered when he and the resident had a conversation.

Just wanted to pass on a huge thank you to the waste crew in Bromsgrove yesterday who assisted my daughter. It was her first day out in her car & the car cut out at a roundabout (believe it was at Oakalls or Town Centre) in Bromsgrove. The guys managed to push her car out of the way of harm. Don't know which crew it was but just really grateful with a massive thank you to them.

## **Planning**

Impressed with how helpful everyone she has dealt with in the Planning department has been and wishes everyone was as helpful as us. Believes there must be something in our culture which means we are customer friendly! She said how she was really pleasantly surprised that Ruth Bamford had personally rung her back when she didn't have to.

Went on site meeting (11/03/2016 09:30) with agent and applicant. Agent was complimenting the way that Bromsgrove Council work, and that it is better than Birmingham City Council. He said that we do not wait until the 8 week deadline to issue a refusal and contact applicants right away to work together for an approval scheme. He mentioned that he is a local businessman in the area and has used the Council often.

### **3. Local Government Ombudsman Complaints**

There was 1 complaints referred from the Ombudsman this quarter.

### **4. Customer Service Centre Information**

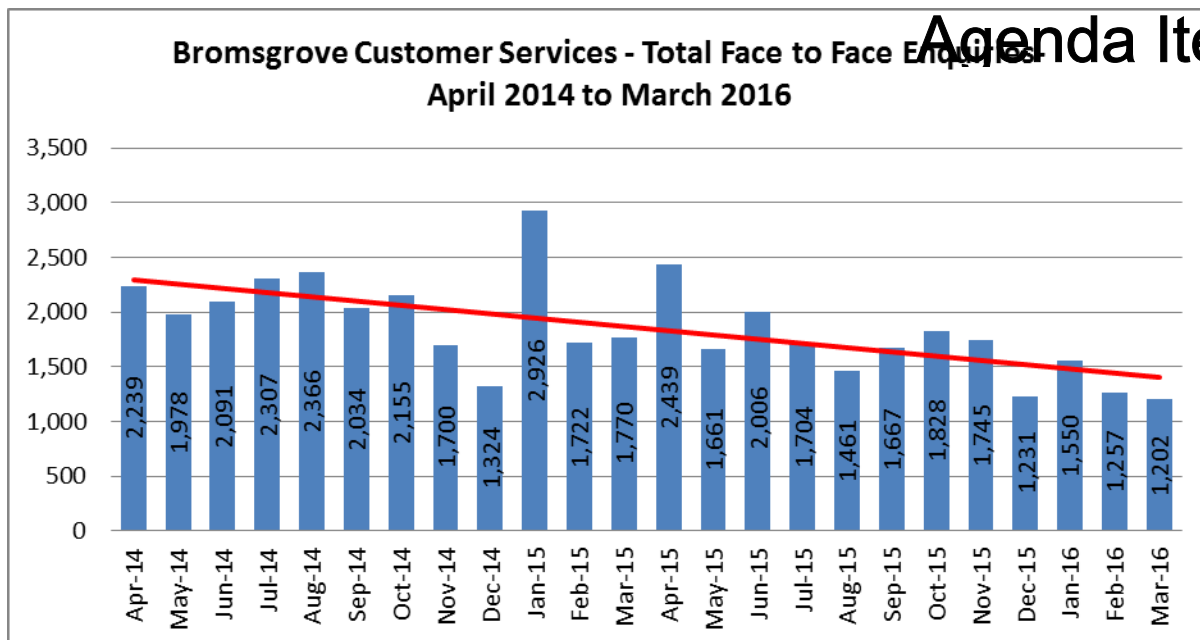
This section provides some statistical information in respect of the amount of customer demand received via the telephone, face to face and through our payment channels.

The operational purpose of the Customer Services team is 'Help me get the support I need with my issue or problem'. Most customer demand is now passed to expert teams and the customer service teams act as a filter to ensure that the customer gets to see or speak to the right expert. We use this information to help us understand the demand on all Council services.

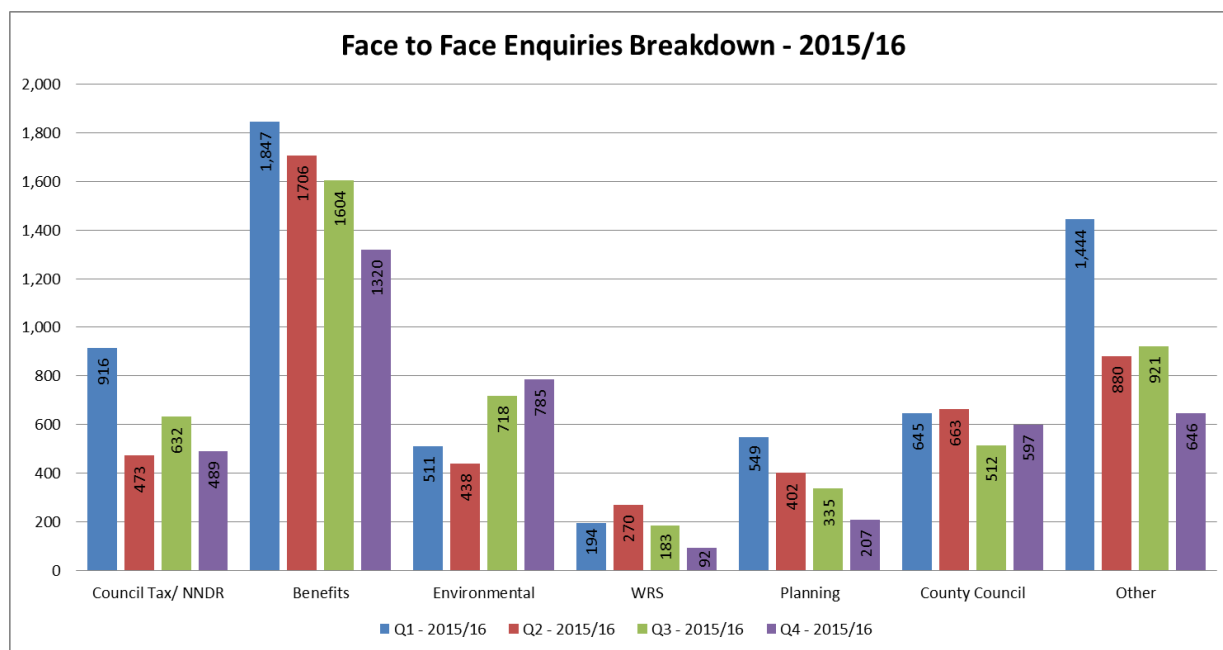
The following tables and charts show the numbers of customer transactions recorded and trends over time.

#### **Face to face demand at the Customer Service Centre**

The following chart shows the total face to face enquiries being dealt with at the customer service centre on a month by month basis since April 2014 to March 2015. It informs of patterns that occur and the data is then used to plan for busy times and to check the reasons for the peak, this may identify waste in systems which can then be addressed.



The following chart shows the breakdown of face to face customer enquiries received during all quarters in 2015/2016.



In the data shows that demand in Benefits, WRS, Planning and Council Tax has reduced compared to the previous quarters. This is a trend we would normally expect for this time of year.

The decrease in the number of benefits face to face enquiries is a result of a trial that has been introduced at the customer service centre, enabling officers to have 'understand me' conversations with each customer. This is with the aim of understanding why the customer has made the initial contact, with the purpose of reducing the need for the customer to make repeat unnecessary contact. It also enables us to identify customers with complex enquiries who need to support of a specialist officer. In most cases this resolves the enquiry at the time, which means customers not having to make repeat visits.

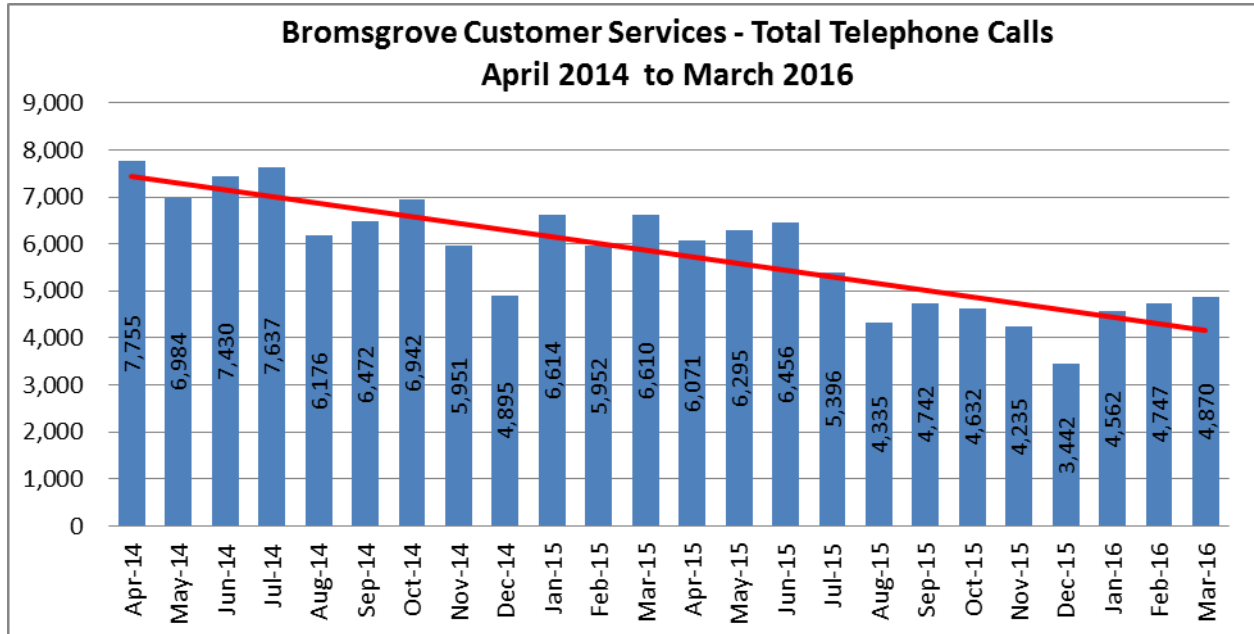
The Financial Inclusion Team (FIT) to deal with the majority of customers with complex life events. These officers take ownership of the customer, and bring in other specialists as and when required, reducing the need for the customer being sent to different places.

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## Telephone demand received

The following chart shows the total telephone calls recorded on the customer service systems from April 2014 until the end of March 2016

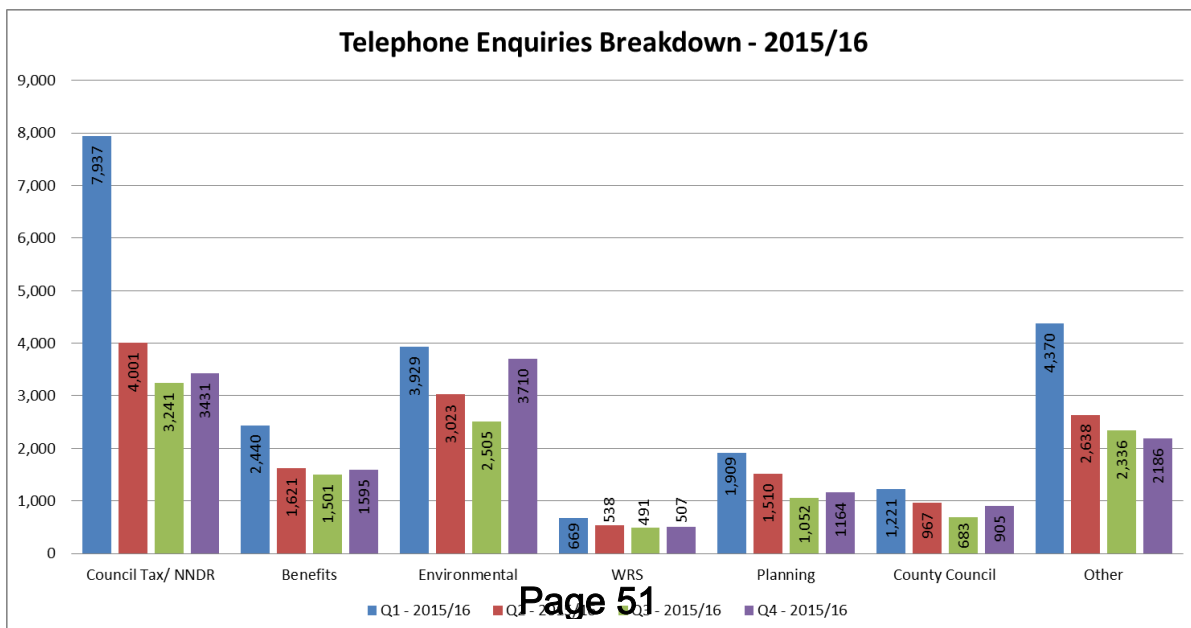
The data shows an overall reduction in calls in quarter 4 2015/2016 compared with quarter 4 2014/2015



## Telephone Demand

The following chart shows the breakdown of calls received via the switchboard and customer contact centre phone lines by department during the quarter. (Calls made to direct dial lines are not recorded and therefore not included.)

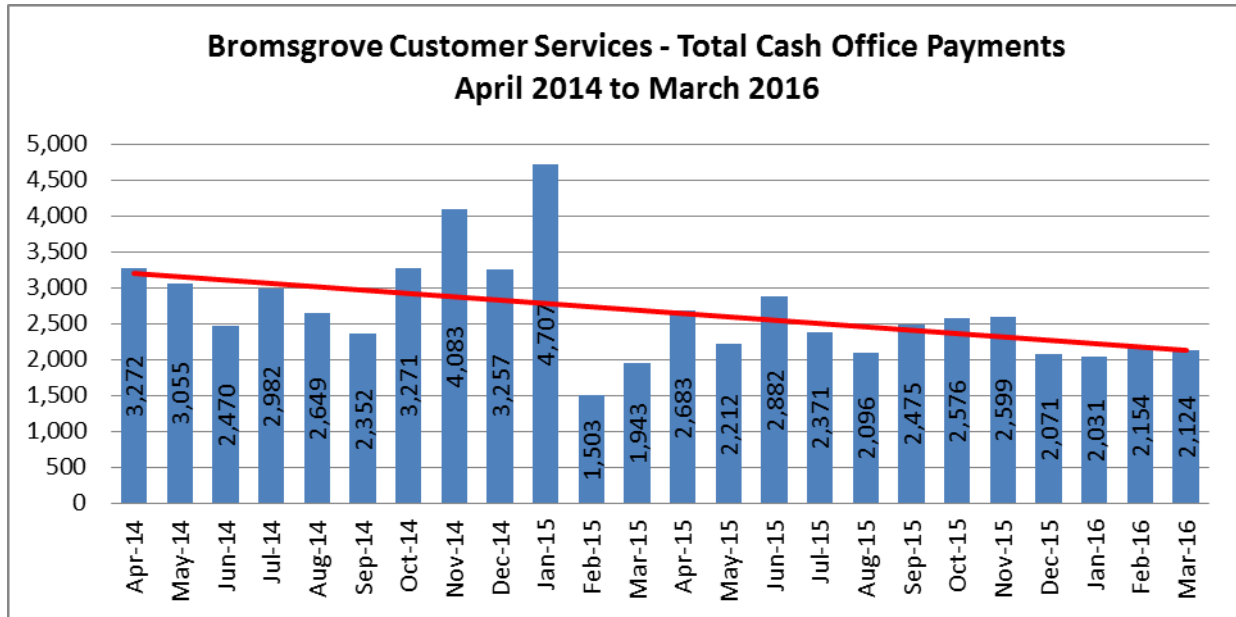
Council Tax/ NNDR, Benefits and Environmental calls go through to the service direct which means the caller enquiry is answered by Officers with the knowledge of the service.



## Payments

The following chart shows a month by month comparison of payments received by the cash office and customer services staff during the period April 2014 – March 2016.

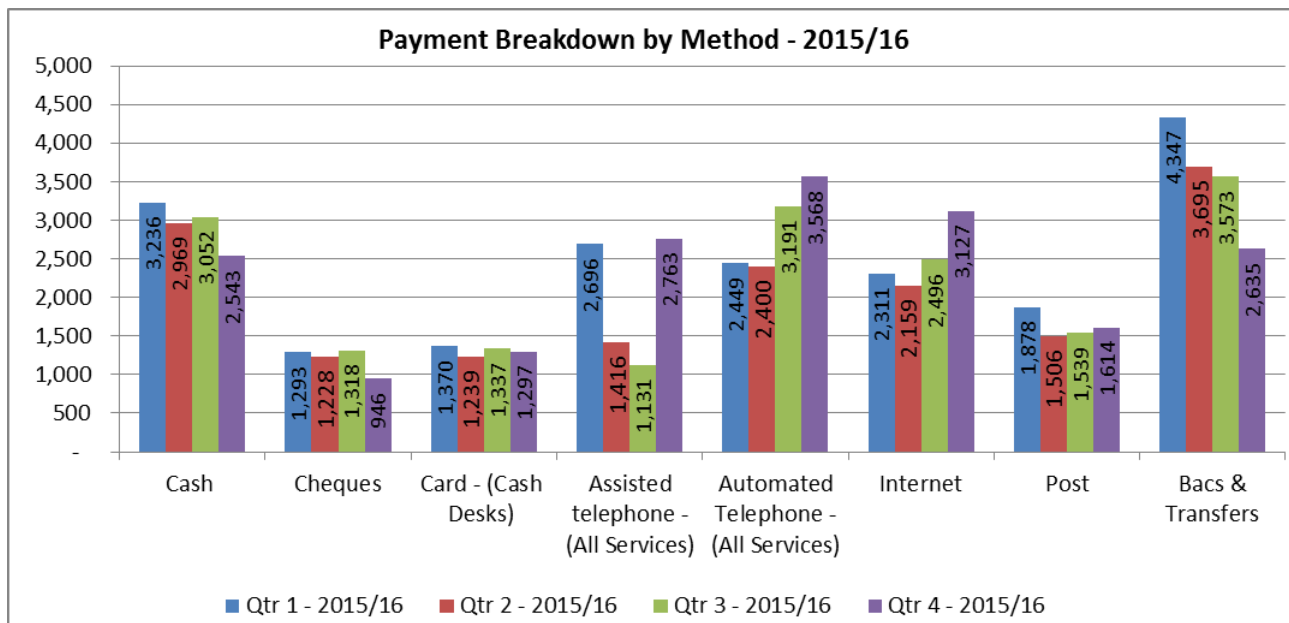
Comparison shows a consistent level in payments through the cash office from April 2015 to March 2016.



The chart below shows the breakdown of payments across all payment channels.

This table shows a reduction in cash payments during quarter 4 2015/2016 and an increase in Automated Telephone and Internet payments. This evidences customer confidence in using automated payment methods available at a time that suits them.

We can also see an increase in assisted telephone payments during quarter 4. The majority of these payments are for Environmental Services, i.e. Garden Waste.





## Appendix 1

### BDC

### Sample Complaint Details January – March 2016

Complaint details	Action taken
<b>Benefits</b>	
Customer said he wrote to the Benefits section on 7th December but did not receive a reply.	Officer spoke to customer and apologised for the length of time taken to respond, and resolved the enquiry.
<b>Council Tax</b>	
Customer contacted the MP as she has cancer and the Council has instigated enforcement action to recover unpaid Council Tax.	Telephoned customer and explanation provided that recovery had been suspended pending information required. This information has not been received. Recovery procedures suspended again giving customer chance to send the necessary information to the Council Tax Department.
Customer unhappy with the way they were dealt when trying to resolve the fact that they have been charged double for 2 months. Customer was trying to enter into an agreement to repay as she was going to struggle to pay it all in one payment.	Apology given and arrangement for payment set up.
<b>Development Control</b>	
Concerns about procedures for planning permission relating to the Norton Farm development.	Contact with customer and full process explained.
<b>Licensing</b>	
Asking for explanation for the proposed changes to the by- laws for the taxi business. Customer has a meeting MP and MP's office is asking if a response could be sent before that meeting date.	Response sent explaining the process
<b>Parking Enforcement/Workshop/Stores</b>	
Taxi driver in Bromsgrove - He had booked a mid-term test on 16th February at 2pm at BDC Depot. He arrived at 1.40pm and when he went to hand in his keys at reception, was told they could not test his vehicle because they were	Officer spoke to customer and apology given for double booking and explanation regarding vehicle test failure.  Customer requested response in writing.

## Agenda Item 8

double booked. He was offered an appointment the following day, but couldn't do that because of a hospital appointment. He had a full refund. Was offered a free retest for today, 22nd February. On the 16th, he had a pre- test at an independent garage in Birmingham which was fine (and he had spent money beforehand to prepare the vehicle). He took the vehicle in for its test today (22nd Feb) and it has failed on 8/9

### **Planning**

Enquiry regarding the future impact of the Bromsgrove station train platform extension, increased traffic on A38 and additional housing created in Aston Fields.

Officer responded answering all customer enquiries

### **Refuse/Recycling(RBC/BDC) + Street Cleansing for BDC**

Customer had advised that he is not happy in regards to the letter that was received sent in regards to payment via direct debit for the garden waste service. Please see attached letter from resident that we have received.

Letter sent to customer explaining the approach officers, O&S Committee and Cabinet had taken to facilitate payments for this service

Received e-mail notification from Resolver website to alert that customer has not had complaint dealt with already. Has an issue that the bin crews are driving over the grass verge outside his house which is churning up the ground. He says that the bin lorry can and have got through the road, so doesn't understand when some drivers mount the curb. Can we ring to discuss the issues here?

Officer called customer to discuss complaint and crew spoken with.

### Overview & Scrutiny Board

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#### MONITORING OF WRITE OFFS - APRIL 2015 – MARCH 2016

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Amanda Singleton, Head of Customer Access and Financial Support
Wards Affected	All

#### 1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 Members are requested to consider the action taken by officers with respect to the write off of debts during the Financial Year 2015/16 and to note the profile and/or level of outstanding debt.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

**That subject to any comments, the Overview & Scrutiny Board note the contents of the report.**

#### 3. KEY ISSUES

##### Financial Implications

- 3.1 Provision is made within the Council's budget to allow for bad debts to be written off. The value of total write offs is well within the existing provisions. The current bad debts provisions are as follows:

	£
Housing benefit Overpayments	684,877
NDR (Business Rates)	263,349
Council Tax	270,063
Sundry Debtors (other debts)	31,493

The provisions above are set aside to reflect the costs associated with BDC element of the debt. The figures as provided within the Appendices show the total debt including that funding by the precepting partner agencies.

- 3.2 Details of written off debts during the period for Council Tax, Sundry Debts, and Overpaid Housing Benefit including a breakdown of the number of debtors, are attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The total of £392,684 in irrecoverable debt was written off during 2015/16. This compares with £263,173 in 2014/15.
- 3.4 Fluctuation in the value of write offs is due to the timing of write off action being taken and does not indicate a trend. A debt is only written off when officers are confident that there is no further economical action that can

### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016

be taken to recover the debt, and as such there is no timetable for the write off of debts.

- 3.5 Due to challenges presented by the introduction of a new finance system there has been no write off of sundry debts ( eg trade waste, cesspools) during this period. Some of the debts migrated from the outgoing system were exceedingly old and officers will be reviewing whether continuing to take recovery action is appropriate and/or cost effective in respect of these old debts.
- 3.6 It is important to note that officers write back debts where information later comes to light that enables further recovery action to be taken.

#### Legal Implications

- 3.7 Legal advice is sought where appropriate in respect of the recovery of outstanding debts and action taken in accordance with procedures dependent on the debt in question. Further Legal action in respect of the cases written off is not considered to be appropriate, or likely to result in repayment of the debt.

#### Service / Operational Implications

- 3.8 The following table shows the value and number of accounts of write off for 2014/15 compared with 2015/16 for Council Tax

	2014/2015					2015/2016			
Quarter	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4
Total Write off (£)	23,831	28,522	16,039	13,581		7,636	11,800	40,657	6,786
Number of Accounts	136	108	53	55		35	104	170	141

- 3.9 The following table shows the value and number of accounts of write off for 2014/15 compared with 2015/16 for Business Rates.

	2014/2015					2015/2016			
Quarter	1	2	3	4		1	2	3	4
Total Write-off (£)	62,966	46,935	127,625	25,647		148,258	9,315	104,662	37,022
Number of Accounts	244	102	161	106		47	14	32	21

- 3.10 An analysis of Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates arrears is attached at Appendix 2.

### **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

**27th June 2016**

- 3.11 This shows the outstanding balance of Council Tax debt at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2016 from 1995/96 was £2,829,636 compared with an outstanding balance at the end the same time in 2015 was £2,384,287. Therefore an additional £445,349 of debt has accrued during 2015/16. However, this is against an increase in possible collectable council tax of £1,581,664.
- 3.12 Non-Domestic Rates debt has decreased from £1,870,350 to £1,542,733
- 3.13 Collection rates in respect of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates remain high. Changes to council tax support has not had the anticipated negative impact on the overall collection rates. Comparative data is shown at Appendix 3.
- 3.14 76.2% (31,146) of Council tax bills and 45% (1,357) of NDR accounts are paid by direct debit. Considerable effort has been made to sign customers with recurring sundry debts up to pay by direct debit and there are now 11,555 direct debit payers for sundry debts compared with 2,829 in 2014/15.
- 3.15 Recovery action has a number of stages and whilst a consistent approach is taken in the main officers will also use discretion as to the best course of action to take.
- 3.16 The standard process of recovery for Council Tax and NDR debts are:
- Reminders
  - Final Notices
  - Summons and Liability Order Applications
  - Request for Financial Information - Council Tax Debt
  - Attachment of Earnings Order - Council Tax Debt
  - Deductions form Benefits - Council Tax Debt
  - Attachment of Allowances - Council Tax Debt
  - Enforcement Agents- Council Tax and NDR Debt
  - Insolvency - Council Tax and NDR Debt
  - Charging Orders - Council Tax Debt
  - Committal to Prison - Council Tax and NDR Debt
  - Security for Unpaid Debt - NDR Debt
  - Recovery in a Court of Competent Jurisdiction - NDR Debt, from a reminder through the summons, attachment of earnings.

It is important to note that cases are assessed by officers in relation to the issues that may be faced those facing recovery action. More details regarding these processes are attached at Appendix 4.

- 3.17 Officers use collect data at all stages of recovery. Measures charts showing this data are attached at Appendix 5. Although collection rates are good, the recovery picture has become more erratic in 2015/16.

### **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

27th June 2016

- 3.18 This is due to a number of factors. Understanding of customer demand in relation to recovery showed that much of the demand was being generated by our inability to keep up to date with the high volume of correspondence received by the department, with changes to be actioned to accounts,. This resulted in some out of date information, increased customer telephone contact and re-work on accounts to react to that customer demand. A trial to slow down recovery action and focus resources on outstanding changes of circumstances was in place from June 2015 – September 2015.
- 3.19 Through this period there was only a very small reduction in the collection rate, and we learnt that the vast majority of people will pay their Council Tax without intervention. Based on our learning a decision was also taken not to take carry out recovery action in December 2015.
- 3.20 However, all possible recovery action is taken in respect of debts before write off of the debt is considered. Write offs are made only as a last resort and to comply with Audit requirements. The timing, amount and value of write offs vary due to the recovery work undertaken and are not representative of any specific trend in that year.

#### **Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 3.21 Every option is explored to recover outstanding debts and staff work with individuals to try to find suitable solutions. In some cases pursuing a debt is going to lead to such hardship that a write off is the most appropriate option. However, if circumstances change a case can be re-opened.
- 3.22 The Council's Write Off Policy makes provision for customers to be treated fairly and equally.

#### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Failure to authorise the write off debts results in unrecoverable debts remaining on our financial systems. This is not in accordance with audit requirements.

#### **5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Write offs April 2015 – March 2016  
Appendix 2- Council Tax and Non Domestic Rates Arrears Analysis  
Appendix 3 – Collection rates measures  
Appendix 4 – Recovery Processes  
Appendix 5 – Recovery Measures

#### **6. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

27th June 2016

There are no background papers to this report.

### **AUTHORS OF REPORT**

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Tel 01527 881241

### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016

#### Appendix 1

### Write Offs of Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates April 2015 - March 2016

<b>Council Tax Period 01/04/15 – 31/03/16</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>	<b>Number of Accounts</b>
Deceased no funds in estate	6,257.28	28
Bankruptcy	27,082.42	94
Uneconomical to pursue	9,069.42	113
Outside Jurisdiction	331.03	2
Credit Write Off	-7,009.59	122
Gone Away	3,167.63	25
Other	26,415.18	55
Small Balances	83.09	8
Outside 6 year Limit	1,482.77	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>66,879.23</b>	<b>450</b>

<b>NDR Period 01/04/15 – 31/03/16</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>	<b>Number of Accounts</b>
Administration Unsecured Claim	1,365.17	2
Bankruptcy	58,499.34	7
Ceased Trading – No Assets	167,076.32	2
Company Dissolved	22,302.16	15
Company in Liquidation	187,854.72	46
Uneconomical to Pursue	1,329.36	5
Other	9,176.66	4
Costs written off	2,652.85	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>299,256.58</b>	<b>114</b>

### Write off of Overpaid Housing Benefit April 2015 – March 2016

<b>Reason</b>	<b>Amount (£)</b>	<b>Number of cases</b>
Bankruptcy	£9,305.33	7
Uneconomical to recover	£859.20	13
Not reasonable to recover	£1,473.43	3
Cannot trace	£2,089.29	7
Old debt-recovery options ex	£10,878.16	10
Deceased	£1,943.58	3
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£26,548.99</b>	<b>43</b>



### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016

### Appendix 2

#### Council Tax Arrears

Year	Arrears Total as at 31/03/2014	Arrears Total as at 31/03/2015	Arrears Total as at 31/03/2016
1995/96	-1,558	-2,001	-3,934
1996/97	-2,748	-3,077	-3,822
1997/98	68	-480	-1,150
1998/99	1,287	921	69
1999/00	6,894	8,727	7,245
2000/01	14,957	13,979	12,202
2001/02	24,491	22,467	20,252
2002/03	35,751	33,018	29,410
2003/04	32,645	29,221	25,206
2004/05	35,245	31,991	26,828
2005/06	70,593	62,890	55,350
2006/07	89,681	80,885	67,268
2007/08	84,540	71,209	58,918
2008/09	89,762	77,715	65,732
2009/10	96,734	80,705	72,349
2010/11	158,836	133,036	122,143
2011/12	201,944	160,918	139,731
2012/13	315,014	250,782	207,425
2013/14	753,030	478,898	348,308
2014/15		852,483	518,771
2015/16			1,061,335
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,007,166</b>	<b>2,384,287</b>	<b>2,829,636</b>

### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016

#### Business Rates Arrears

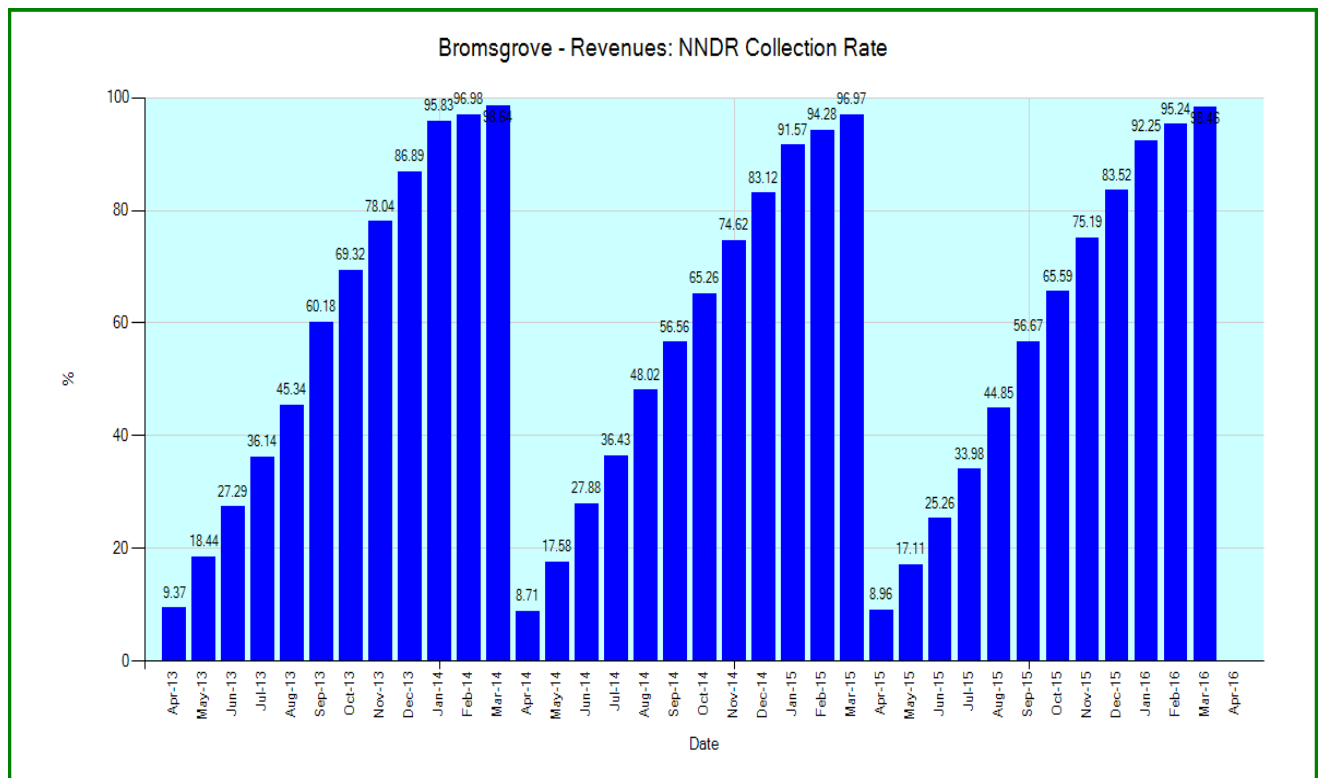
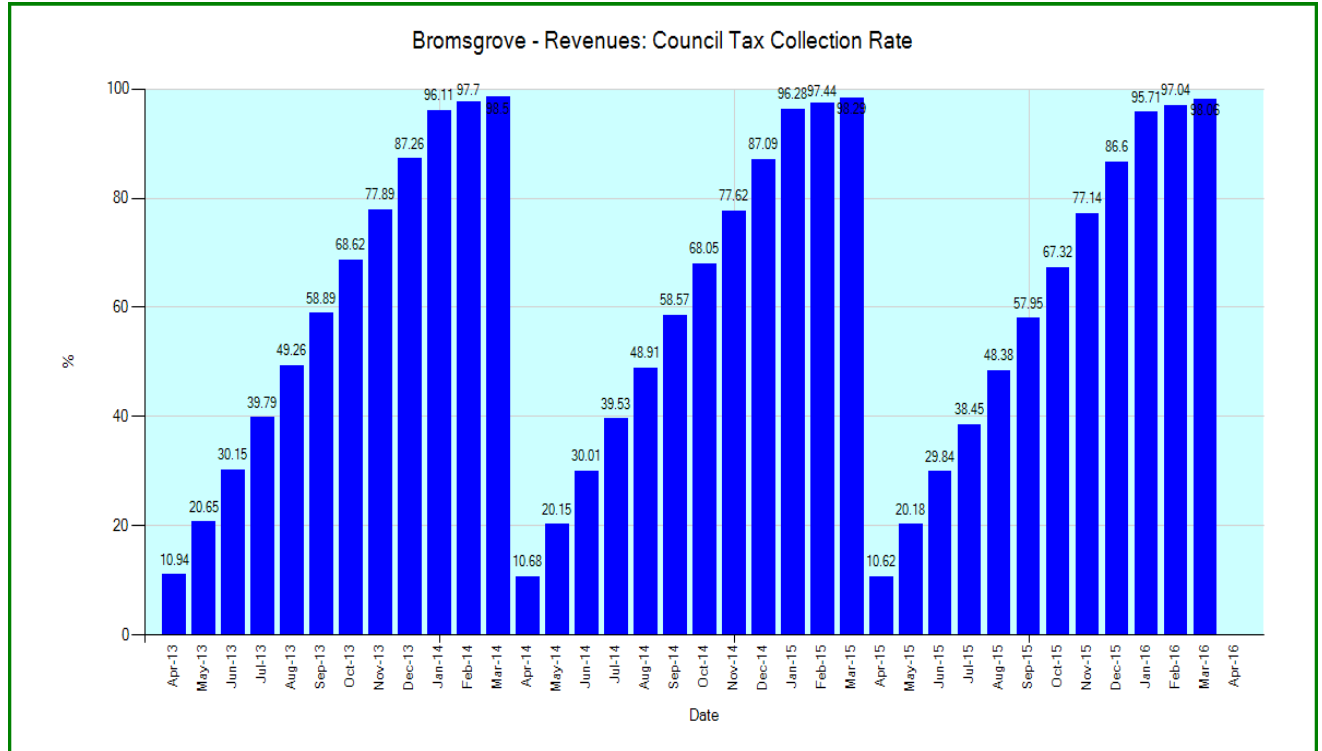
Year	Arrears Total as at 31/03/2014	Arrears Total as at 31/03/2015	Arrears Total as at 31/03/2016
1991/92	54,066	74,825	72,573
1992/93	0	0	0
1993/94	0	0	0
1994/95	0	0	0
1995/96	0	0	0
1996/97	0	0	0
1997/98	0	0	0
1998/99	0	0	0
1999/00	0	0	0
2000/01	84	84	84
2001/02	0	0	20
2002/03	1,426	732	732
2003/04	1,018	79	79
2004/05	1,035	80	80
2005/06	719	160	160
2006/07	5,933	5,933	5,933
2007/08	4,591	1,391	572
2008/09	3,820	2,038	2,038
2009/10	25,977	22,563	10,189
2010/11	62,602	49,018	12,211
2011/12	88,730	68,729	25,380
2012/13	124,962	73,703	35,637
2013/14	844,451	157,075	80,288
2014/15		1,413,939	142,585
2015/16			1,154,172
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,219,414</b>	<b>1,870,350</b>	<b>1,542,733</b>

### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016

### Appendix 3

### Collection Rates Measures



## Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016

### Appendix 4

#### **Recovery processes**

##### **Reminders**

Reminders will be issued between 10 to 18 days of the instalment becoming due. However, during certain times of the year this may be reduced to 7 days particularly in February and March as the end of the charge year approaches.

The reminder will allow seven days for the overdue amount to be paid, or for an arrangement to be made.

If the amount is not paid then, after a further seven days, a complaint will be made to the Magistrates' court and a summons for non-payment will be issued.

In accordance with the regulations, two reminders will be issued to a Council Tax payer, and only one reminder will be issued to NDR payers, in any charge year.

##### **Final Notice**

Where the amount due is payable by one instalment, all instalments have fallen due or the taxpayer has defaulted on an instalment for the third time in a charge year a Final Notice will be issued.

The Final Notice will inform the tax or rate payer that they have lost the right to pay by instalments, that the whole balance of Council Tax or NDR for the charge year is payable, the amount due for payment, the property for which the payment is due, the ways in which payment can be made and the action that will be taken if the amount is not paid.

The Final Notice will allow seven days for the overdue amount to be paid. If the amount is not paid then a complaint will be made to the Magistrates' court and a summons for non-payment of Council Tax or NDR will be issued.

##### **Summons and Liability Order Application**

Failure to make payment or suitable arrangements to pay will result in a summons being issued.

In some circumstances if a tax or rate payer has agreed to make payments under a special arrangement then a summons may still be applied for to protect the Council's interests.

A summons is issued as a result of the Council commencing the application for a liability order. A complaint will be made to the magistrates' court requesting the issue of a summons directed to that person to appear before the court to show why he has not paid the sum which is outstanding.

The summons will be served in accordance with the regulations and will provide a minimum of 14 days between being served and the hearing date.

### **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

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The issue of the summons and the application for a Liability Order will incur costs which are debited to the debtor's Council Tax or NDR account.

In exceptional circumstances the costs may be deemed not to be payable. These circumstances may include cases where the summons has been issued solely to protect the Council's interests or where the Council Tax or NDR outstanding is below the level of the Council's costs.

Costs are set in accordance with guidelines and only cover the actual cost incurred by the Council.

In cases where the costs are removed the debtor will still be expected to pay the administration costs charged by the magistrates' court for the issue of the summons.

Revenues Officers may withdraw a summons. They will use their own discretion and evidence justification for their decision. As a general rule a summons will only be withdrawn if it has not been served, it is incorrect, or there are other exceptional circumstances.

If the debtor has a claim for Council Tax Benefit outstanding then a summons maybe issued and a liability order applied for but no further action will be taken pending the outcome of the benefit application.

If the benefit application is successful then consideration will be given to utilising the Council's powers to request that the liability order be quashed. In most cases this power will only be exercised where the subsequent benefit award reduces the balance of the liability order to the level of the costs debited to the account.

A Liability Order provides the Council with further powers to recover the debt. These powers are:

- The request for financial information - Council Tax only.
- Attachment of Earnings Orders - Council Tax only.
- Deductions from Benefit - Council Tax only.
- Attachment of Allowances - Council Tax only.
- Distress - Council Tax and NDR
- Insolvency Proceedings - Council Tax and NDR.
- Charging Orders - Council Tax only.
- Committal to Prison - Council Tax and NDR.
- Security for Unpaid NDR
- Recovery in a court of competent jurisdiction - NDR Debt

The method of recovery action will be made based on the most appropriate and effective remedy available for individual cases.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

27th June 2016

### **Request for Financial Information - Council Tax Debt**

Within five days of the Liability Order being granted we will write to the debtor requesting that they provide details of their employment, earnings or benefits. Information must be provided within fourteen days.

If the information is not provided, or if information provided is shown to be false then we may take action against the debtor. The debtor will be prosecuted in the Magistrates' court and a punitive fine may be issued and costs awarded. These financial penalties are distinct and separate to the Council Tax and are collected by the court.

### **Attachment of Earnings Order - Council Tax Debt**

Where a debtor is employed an Attachment of Earnings order will be the preferred method of recovery. If it is shown that the debtor will suffer undue hardship then a payment arrangement may be agreed in preference to the Attachment of Earnings.

### **Deductions from Benefits - Council Tax Debt**

Where an debtor is in receipt of benefits applications for deductions will be made from a debtor's Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support, Pension Credits or Employment Support Allowance in preference to any other recovery method, unless where it appears that the debtor may have other means with which to pay the outstanding amount. This may be

- Cases where the debtor has other people resident in the property who are not liable for Council Tax but contribute towards household expenses.
- The debtor owns property and a charging order or bankruptcy petition may be appropriate.
- The debtor has savings or capital which could be used to discharge the debt.

### **Attachment of Allowances - Council Tax Debt**

Attachments of Allowances may be made against an elected member of a billing authority or a precepting authority.

### **Enforcement Agents - Council Tax and NDR Debt**

Where an attachment of earnings or a deduction from benefits/allowances not appropriate and a debtor does not make an offer of payment, or the debtor fails to maintain an existing payment arrangement, the Council's appointed enforcement agents (Bailiffs) may be instructed to recover the balance outstanding.

In some circumstances we may choose to issue a pre-enforcement warning letter. This is discretionary and may be done where the debt is deemed to be at a low level and warning of action may prompt payment or the debtor is making payments but the payments are made late which has resulted in the account progressing through the recovery stages

### **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

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If enforcement action is unsuccessful and the debtor is not employed nor in receipt of benefits then the available recovery actions will be limited to insolvency, charging orders or committal to prison.

Insolvency action and charging orders are remedies which will only be utilised where the debtor has realisable assets and it appears that there is likelihood that the debt will be discharged.

If the debtor has no realisable assets then committal action is the only available option. The costs of obtaining a committal order are substantial and therefore in preference to this action the Council will consider secondary distress.

#### **Insolvency - Council Tax and NDR Debt**

Where the balance outstanding under a Liability Order or a number of Liability Orders is greater than £750.00 the Council may apply for a bankruptcy order, or in the case of a company, an order for the winding up the company.

The commencement of bankruptcy proceedings will not be undertaken if the debt can be recovered by alternative methods.

#### **Charging Orders - Council Tax Debt**

Where the balance outstanding from a debtor under a Liability Order or a number of Liability Orders is greater than £1000.00 we may attempt recovery of the debt by application for a charging order.

An application for a charging order will usually only be made where recovery by way of attachment of earnings, deductions from benefits or distress has been unsuccessful.

Charging Orders can only be made against the property for which the debtor was liable for Council Tax at the time the liability order was made.

In considering the application for a charging order the Council will consider whether bankruptcy proceedings are more appropriate.

#### **Security for Unpaid Rates - NDR Debt**

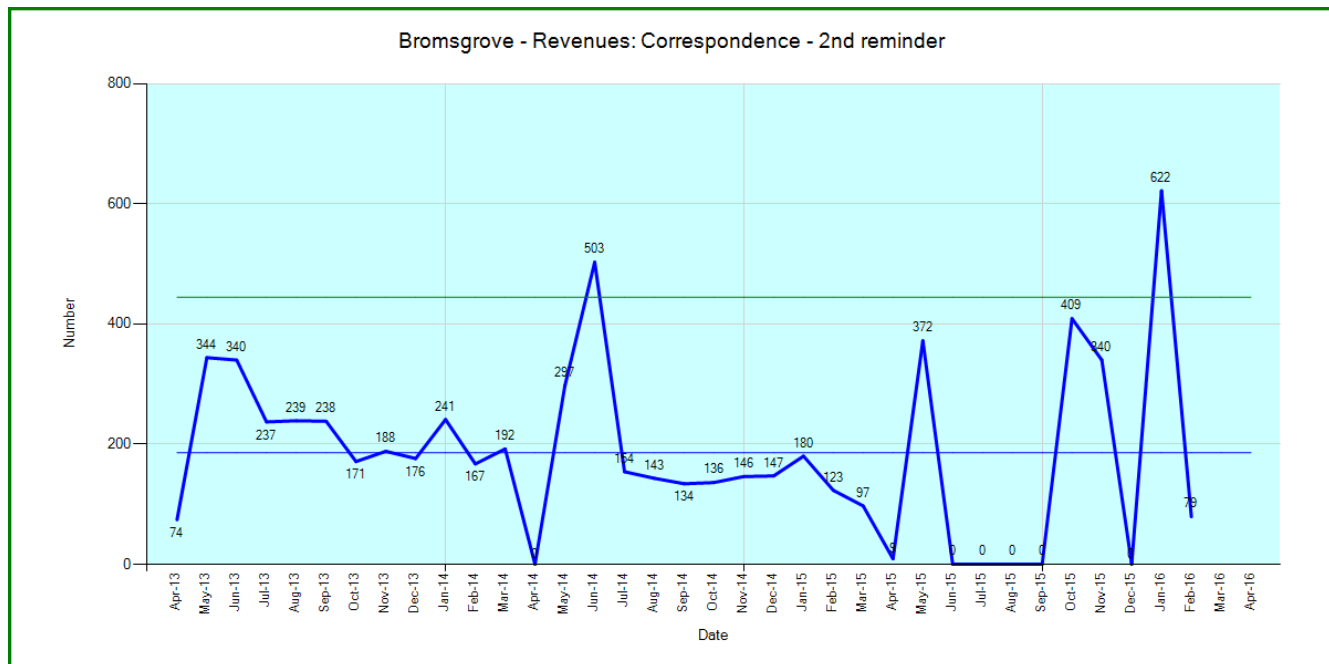
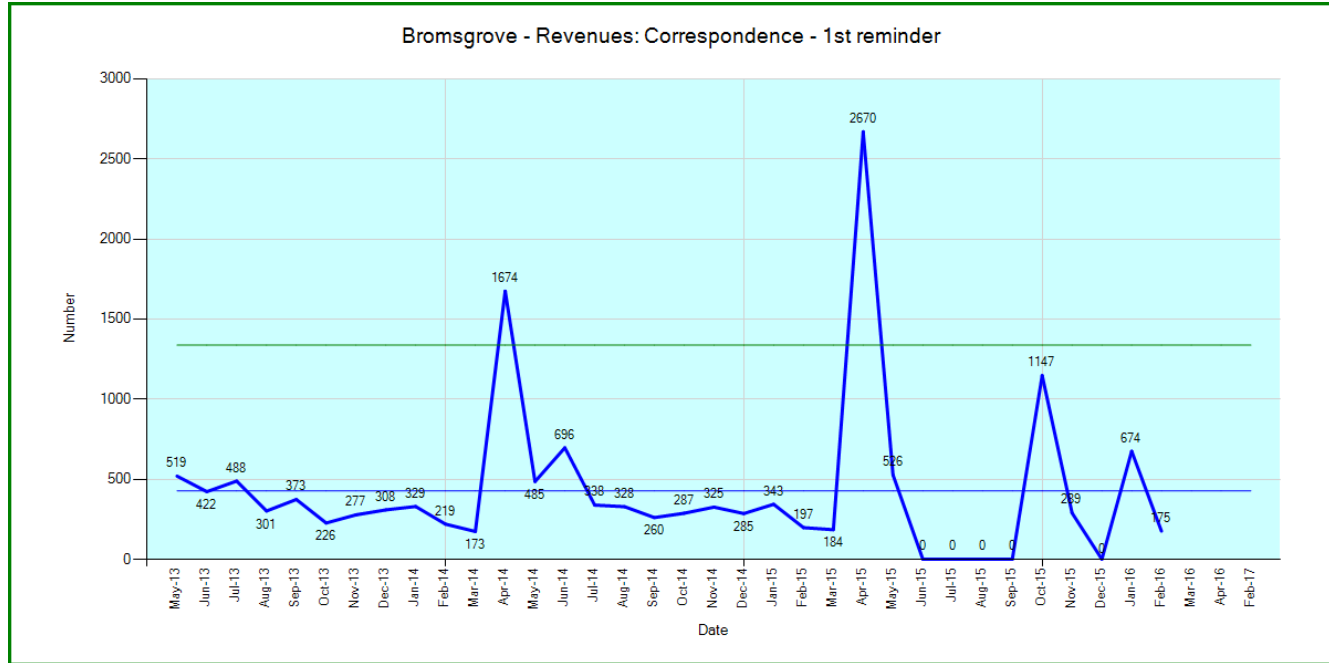
On agreement between the ratepayer and the Council a charge may be placed on the debtor's interest in the property for which the liability has accrued.

#### **Committal to Prison - Council Tax and NDR Debt**

Where enforcement agents have not successfully collected the debt the Council will have the option to apply for a warrant committing the debtor to prison.

Before committal action is taken the Council will consider all other methods of recovery.

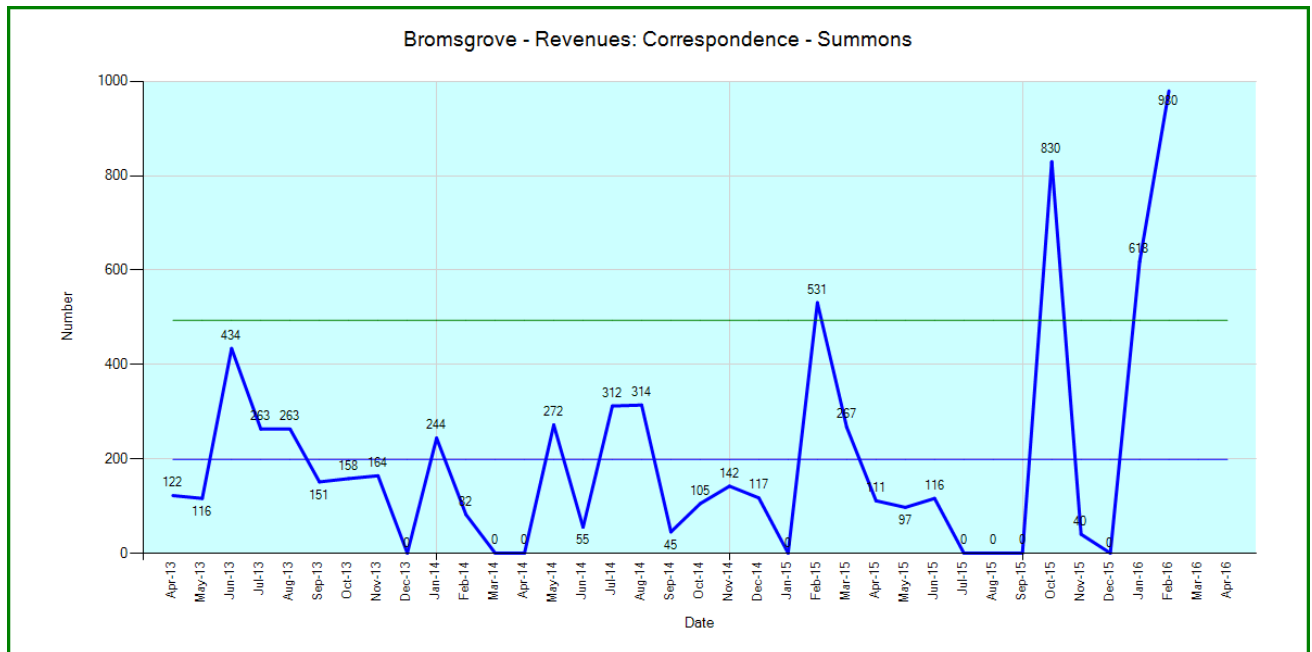
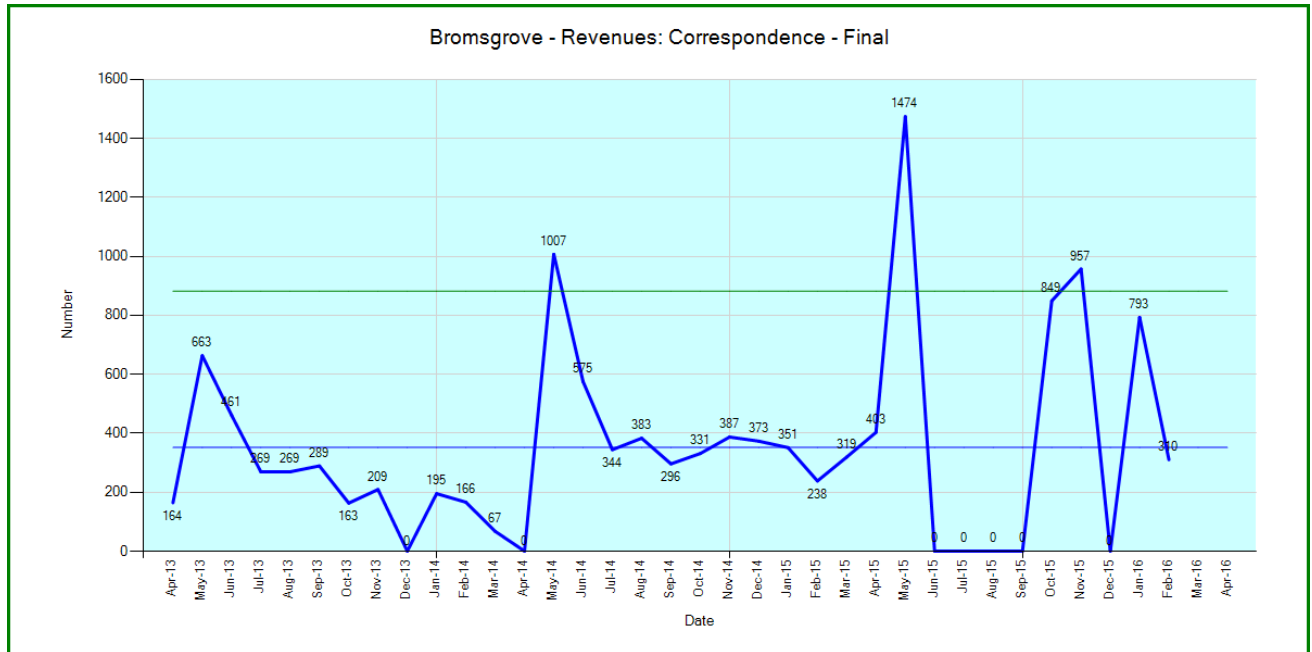
### Recovery Measures





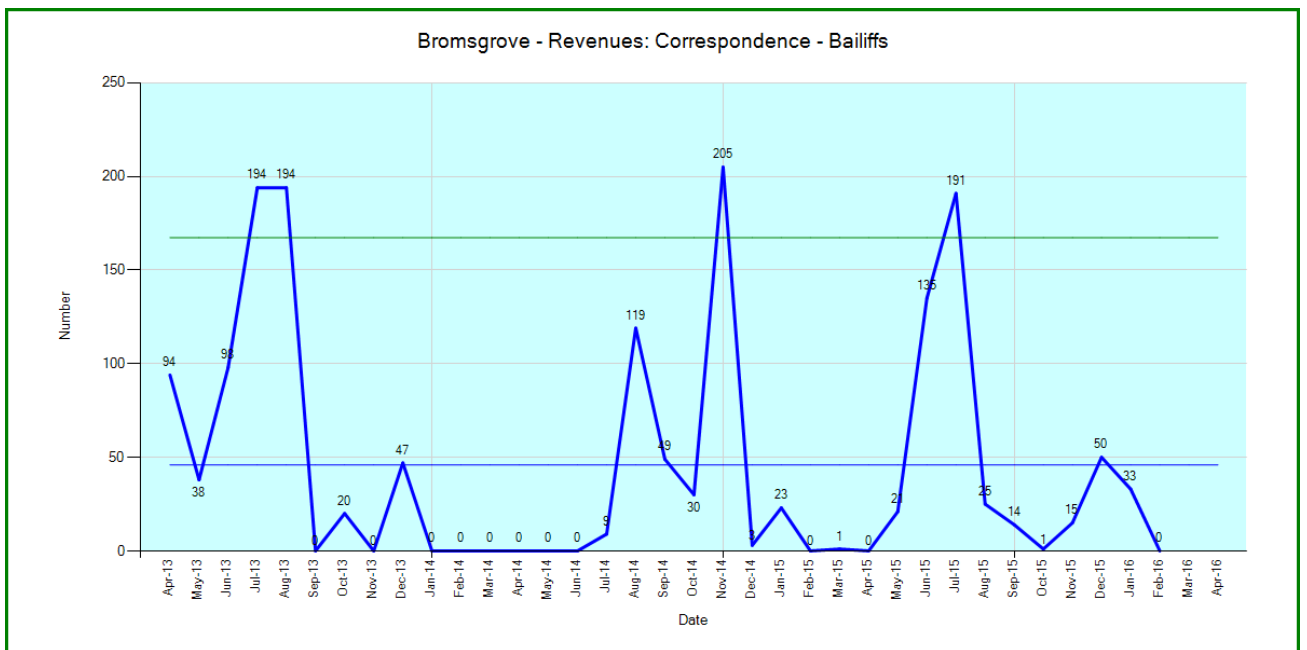
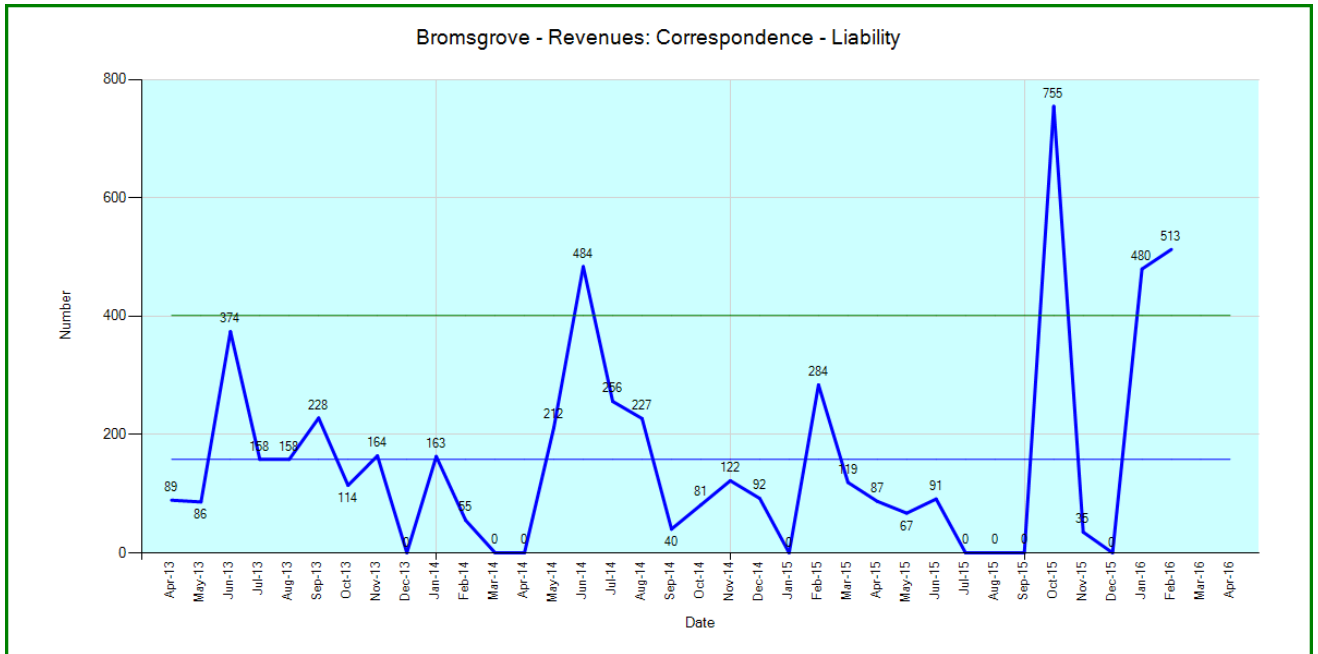
### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016



### Overview & Scrutiny Board

27th June 2016



## Overview and Scrutiny Board – 27<sup>th</sup> June 2016

### Introduction of Working Groups

At its meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2016 the Board agreed to set up 2 working groups to consider Finance and Budgetary matters and the Performance Dashboard. The information below was provided to Members when reaching this decision. Officers recommend that each group consists of no more than 5 Members. Terms of Reference for each working group will be discussed at the first meetings and reported back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for its consideration. Regular updates will also be provided to the Overview and Scrutiny Board together with any areas which the working groups suggest would warrant further investigation by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

The introduction of working groups will inevitably impact on the workload of officers who support the Overview and Scrutiny Board. It should be noted that those officers also support other Committees and services provided by Democratic Services.

Currently, the Board has the capacity for 2 task groups and/short sharp reviews to run concurrently at any one time. In 2015/16 task group/short sharp review work has been limited to only one being completed; in 2014/15 a total of 3 were completed. In fact 3 per year is the average when looking back over previous years. The introduction of working groups will therefore replace one task group/short sharp review, though in reality this would have limited impact on the output from the Overview and Scrutiny board during the year.

The introduction of the working groups would enhance the work of the Board and allow for them to concentrate on specific areas of scrutiny and for the work programme to become more focused. Major items on an agenda could be limited to 2, for example, thereby providing an opportunity for more detailed questioning to take place. There could potentially also be a small financial saving to this arrangement as there is a special allowance paid to the Chairman of a task group.

#### 1. Finance and Budget Working Group

- A working group of a small number of Members of the Board.
- The Working Group could meet in private to consider finance and budgetary matters throughout the year rather than just before the budget is set.
- This would enable Members on the Working Group to develop expertise in terms of local government finances and to dedicate time to investigating particular areas in detail.
- To make it easier to arrange meetings Officers would suggest it might be worth limiting membership to 5 members of the Board.
- Meetings could be convened at times that would enable scrutiny Members to pre-scrutinise details before any decision is made by Cabinet.

- Key findings and recommendations could be reported back by the Chairman of the Working Group to the Board.
- Recommendations proposed through this process would have an evidence basis and would enhance informed decision making at the Council.

## 2. Performance Dashboard Working Group

- A working group of a small number of Members.
- The working group could meet throughout the year to monitor performance data on the dashboard.
- The group might want to focus on different areas of the dashboard, perhaps in accordance with each strategic purpose, via a set work programme.
- This would enable Members of the Working Group to develop expertise in respect of using the dashboard and have some influence over the areas/measures covered within the dashboard.
- The Working Group could also highlight any areas of concern about service performance and, where considered appropriate, report back to the Board which could lead to a variety of outcomes (a presentation to the Board, a Task Group etc.)
- Recommendations could also be reported back to the Cabinet via the Board by the Chairman of the Working Group.
- This Working Group could help the Council to address the role that Overview and Scrutiny has to play in respect of performance management from a best practice perspective.

**Members are asked to determine membership of each working group, together with the appointment of a lead Member for each.**

Amanda Scarce & Jess Bayley  
Democratic Services Officers

11<sup>th</sup> May 2016

## Major application determination times

From 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2016

The rolling two year period (until the end of March 2016) for the processing of major applications shows that performance is still improving.

The government requirement is for over 50% of major applications to be determined within an agreed time frame. Bromsgrove Council was below 40% at the time of designation. As a result of improved performance the Council wrote to the DCLG and requested that the designation be lifted. This was confirmed in February 2016.

Last time performance figures were reported to this Committee 63% of major applications were determined in time. Current performance, at the end of March 2016, has risen to 67%.

All major applications in the Planning Service have an allocated case officer, i.e. there are no unallocated major cases.

Number of applications	Number in time	Quarter
14	7	Jan - March '14 Q4
6	2	April - June '14 Q1
6	2	July - Sept '14 Q2
3	2	Oct - Dec '14 Q3
5	2	Jan - March '15 Q4
4	3	April - June '15 Q1
7	7	July - Sept '15 Q2
10	8	Oct - Dec '15 Q3
7	6*	Jan - March '16 Q4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>32</b> <b><math>32 \div 48 \times 100 = 66.7\%</math></b>

~~Previous quarter shown as crossed through.~~

\*All 6 applications used Extensions of Time.

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# **CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME**

**1 JULY 2016 TO 31 OCTOBER 2016**

**(published as at 3 June 2016)**

This Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken in the coming four months by the Council's Cabinet

(NB: There may be occasions when the Cabinet may make recommendations to Council for a final decision e.g. to approve a new policy or variation to the approved budget.)

Whilst the majority of the Cabinet's business at the meetings listed in the Work Programme will be open to the public and media organisations attend, there will inevitably be some business to be considered that contains confidential, commercially sensitive or personal information.. This is called exempt information. Members of the public and media may be asked to leave the meeting when such information is discussed.

If an item is likely to contain exempt information we show this on the Work Programme. You can make representations to us if you consider an item or any of the documents listed should be open to the public.

The Work Programme gives details of items on which key decisions are likely to be taken by the Council's Cabinet, or full Council, in the coming four months.

**Key Decisions** are those executive decisions which are likely to:

- (i) result in the Council incurring expenditure, foregoing income or the making of savings in excess of £50,000 or which are otherwise significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; or
- (ii) be significant in terms of its effect on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the district;

**Key Decisions** will include:

1. A decision which would result in any expenditure or saving by way of a reduction in expenditure of £50,000 provided the expenditure or saving is specifically approved in the Medium Term Financial Plan.
2. A virement of any amount exceeding £50,000 provided it is within any virement limits approved by the Council;
3. Any proposal to dispose of any Council asset with a value of £50,000 or more or which is otherwise considered significant by the Corporate Property Officer;
4. Any proposal to cease to provide a Council service (other than a temporary cessation of service of not more than 6 months).
5. Any proposal which would discriminate for or against any minority group.

The Work Programme is available for inspection free of charge at Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove, B61 8DA from 9am to 5pm Mondays to Fridays; or on the Council's web-site [www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

If you wish to make representations on the proposed decision you are encouraged to get in touch with the relevant report author as soon as possible before the proposed date of the decision. Contact details are provided, alternatively you may write to the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services, Parkside, Market Street, B61 8DA or e-mail: [democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:democratic@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 881409) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you.

The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.



**CABINET MEMBERSHIP**

Councillor M. A. Sherrey	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and the Town Centre
Councillor C. B. Taylor	Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Planning Services and Housing
Councillor G. N. Denaro	Portfolio Holder for Finance, ICT, HR and Enabling Services
Councillor R. J. Laight	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and regulatory Services
Councillor K. J. May	Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, Community Safety and Partnerships
Councillor P. J. Whittaker	Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Cultural Services

<b>Decision Including Whether it is a Key Decision</b>	<b>Decision Taker including Details of Exempt Information (if any)</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List</b>	<b>Contact for Comments</b>
Application in respect of Asset of Community Value Register The New Inn, Bournheath	Cabinet	6 July 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor C. B. Taylor
Modifications to the Bromsgrove District Local Plan and Revised Local Development Scheme and Statement of Community Involvement	Cabinet <i>(recommendations to Council)</i>	6 July 2016	Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration	Mike Dunphy Strategic Planning Manager 01527 881325 Councillor C. B. Taylor
Application in respect of Asset of Community Value Register Blackwell Methodist Church Hall	Cabinet	6 July 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor C. B. Taylor
Planning Transformation Updates	Cabinet	6 July 2016	Report of the Head of Planning and Regeneration	Ruth Bamford 01527 64252 Councillor C. B. Taylor
Financial Outturn 2015/16	Cabinet	6 July 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor G. Denaro

<b>Decision Including Whether it is a Key Decision</b>	<b>Decision Taker including Details of Exempt Information (if any)</b>	<b>Date of Decision</b>	<b>Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List</b>	<b>Contact for Comments</b>
Council Tax Support Scheme 2017/18 Consider Draft Scheme	Cabinet	6 July 2016	Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	Amanda Singleton 01527 881241 Councillor G. Denaro
New Policy on Animal Welfare Matters	Cabinet	7 September 2016	Report of the Head of Culture and Leisure Services	John Godwin 01527 881742 Councillor P. Whittaker
Review of CCTV in the District	Cabinet	7 September 2016	Report of the Head of Community Services	Rachel McAndrews CCTV and Telecare Manager 01527 64252 x 3126 Councillor K. May
Road Traffic Islands – Update of Sponsorship Policy	Cabinet	7 September 2016	Report of the Head of Culture and Leisure Services	John Godwin Head of Culture and Leisure Services 01527 881472 Councillor P. Whittaker
Efficiency Statement	Cabinet	7 September 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor G. Denaro

Decision Including Whether it is a Key Decision	Decision Taker including Details of Exempt Information (if any)	Date of Decision	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Council Plan	Cabinet	7 September 2016	Report of the Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development	Deb Poole 01527 881256 Councillor G. Denaro
Consideration of Statement of Accounts and Audit Opinion	Cabinet <i>(recommendations to Council)</i>	21 September 2016	Report of the Executive Director Finance and Resources	Jayne Pickering 01527 881400 Councillor G. Denaro
Report of the Potential Homelessness in Bromsgrove Task Group	Cabinet	5 October 2016	Report of the Head of Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services	Claire Felton 01527 881400 Councillor G. Denaro
Council Tax Support Scheme – Final Scheme	Cabinet <i>(recommendations to Council)</i>	2 November 2016	Report of the Head of Customer Access and Financial Support	Amanda Singleton 01527 881421 Councillor G. Denaro

## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

### WORK PROGRAMME

2016/17

#### RECOMMENDATION:

That the Board considers and agrees the work programme and updates it accordingly.

#### ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Additional Information</b>
<b>27/06/16</b>	Write Off of Debts Report	Last received 22/06/15
	Making Experiences Count - Annually	Last received 13/04/15
	Increasing Physical Activities in Worcestershire Task Group – Final Report	
	Working Group Membership to be considered.	Following discussion at meeting on 25/04/16
	Preventing Homelessness Task Group – Verbal Update	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Planning Backlog Data up to 31/03/16	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>08/08/16</b>	Quarterly Recommendation Tracker	
	Summary of Environmental Enforcement	Last received 16/03/15
	Planning Backlog Data up to 30/06/16	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>19/09/16</b>		
	Preventing Homelessness Task Group– Final Report	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	

# Agenda Item 15

Date of Meeting	Subject	Additional Information
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>31/10/16</b>	Sickness Absence Update Report	6 month update requested at meeting on 25/4/2016
	Quarterly Recommendation Tracker	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>28/11/16</b>		
	Planning Backlog Data up to 30/09/16	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>19/12/16</b>		
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>16/01/16</b>		
	Quarterly Recommendation Tracker	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>13/02/17</b>	Dolphin Centre - Update on work with displaced Groups	
	Planning Backlog Data up to 31/12/16	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	
<b>27/03/17</b>	Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Partnership	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	

# Agenda Item 15

Date of Meeting	Subject	Additional Information
	O&S Work Programme	
24/04/17		
	Quarterly Recommendation Tracker	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Work Programme	
	Action List	
	O&S Work Programme	

## **Training/Work Programme Planning Event**

This has been provisionally planned for Monday 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016 at 6.00 pm in the Training Room.

## **Items to be included on the Work Programme at future meetings (dates to be confirmed)**

Staff Survey – Results of the April 2016 survey

## **Updates Received - Monthly**

The Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (who must be a member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board) provides a verbal update to the Board each month.

The Council's representative on any Joint Scrutiny Task Group's will be expected to provide an update (verbal or written) on the work of that Group at each Board meeting.

The Chairman of any Task Group set up by the Board will be expected to provide a written or verbal update in respect of the work being carried out and progress of the investigation by the Task Group Members.

## **Reports to be Received Annually by the Board (at its discretion)- dates to be confirmed**

Write Off of Debts Report (last report received 27/06/16)  
Sickness Absence Performance (last report received 25/04/16)  
Making Experiences Count - Annually (last report received 27/06/16)  
Summary of Environmental Enforcement (last report received 27/06/16)

Artrix SLA Annual Report – it is anticipated that this will be received at the July 2016 meeting of the Board.

## **Scrutiny of Crime & Disorder Partnership**

The Board must hold at least one meeting at which it considers the scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Partnership.

## **Areas for further discussion and possible inclusion within the Work Programme**

- Community Transport facilities
- Planning Issues – Particularly enforcement
- Local Plan Development
- Residential developments causing traffic problems
- Social Housing issues
- Lack of affordable social housing for young people
- BDHT addressing issues re sites.
- Youth provision
- Town Centre shops
- Town Centre Regeneration



When considering topics for investigations Members may wish to take into account the Council's Strategic Purposes as detailed below:

## Our Strategic Purposes for Bromsgrove



*Help me to live my life independently*

*Help me to be financially independent*

*Keep my place safe & looking good*

*Help me find somewhere to live in my locality*

*Provide good things for me to see, do & visit*

*Help me run a successful business*

**Support services enable us to deliver our purposes**

 **Bromsgrove District Council**  
[www.bromsgrove.gov.uk](http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk)

For more information view the Council Plan at:  
<http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/cms/council-and-democracy/council-plan.aspx>

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