



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**MONDAY 29TH MARCH 2021**  
**AT 6.00 P.M.**

**VIRTUAL MEETING - TEAMS**

**MEMBERS:** Councillors C.A. Hotham (Chairman), J. Till (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, A. J. B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss, P. M. McDonald, C. J. Spencer and M. Thompson

### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes
2. 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.

3. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 15th February 2021 (Pages 1 - 8)
4. Staff Survey (Pages 9 - 12)
5. Mileage - Notice of Motion (Pages 13 - 14)
6. Green Homes Funding

(Report to follow).

7. Impact of Libraries Review Task Group - Final Report (Pages 15 - 48)
8. Impact of Flooding Task Group - Final Report (Pages 49 - 74)
9. Finance and Budget Working Group - Update
10. Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update
11. Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 75 - 82)
12. Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 83 - 90)

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

19th March 2021

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact  
Jo Gresham

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## **GUIDANCE ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS**

Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Bromsgrove District Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant legislative arrangements for remote meetings of a local authority. For more information please refer to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police Crime Panels meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020.

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[Live Stream for Overview and Scrutiny Board - 29th March 2021](#)

If you have any questions regarding the agenda or attached papers please do not hesitate to contact the officer named above.

### **Notes:**

As referred to above, the virtual Skype meeting will be streamed live and accessible to view. Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded and for any such items the live stream will be suspended and that part of the meeting will not be recorded.



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# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
15th February 2021

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**15TH FEBRUARY 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors J. Till (Vice-Chairman), C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss, P. M. McDonald, C. J. Spencer, M. Thompson and P. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor K. May – Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships

Councillor G. N. Denaro – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mr. C. Forrester, Mrs J. Willis Mr. G. Revans, Mr. D. Riley, Mr. M. Austin, and Ms K. Goldey

Democratic Services Officers: Ms. A Scarce and Mrs. J Gresham

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#### **ELECTION OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD CHAIRMAN**

Nominations for the position of Chairman were received in respect of Councillor C. Hotham. On being put to the vote a majority of Members on the Board agreed that Councillor Hotham should be appointed Chairman.

**RESOLVED** that Councillor C. Hotham be appointed as Chairman of the Board for the remainder of the municipal year.

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R. Deeming with Councillor P. Whittaker as named substitute.

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

There were no declarations of interest nor of any whipping arrangements.

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**TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 11TH JANUARY 2021**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 were submitted for Members' consideration.

The Chairman enquired whether it was possible for Councillor R. Hunter to have a dispensation considered in respect of the declaration of the pecuniary interest regarding his employment with a not-for-profit-housing association. Officers undertook to look into this and provide an update at a future meeting.

It was noted that there was a duplication of the subtitle Notice of Motion - Encouraging responsible use of fireworks at item 64/20 Notice of Motions - Request to Investigate. The Democratic Services Officer present undertook to make the correction.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11<sup>th</sup> January 2021 be approved as an accurate record.

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**MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2021/22 TO 2024/25 (INCLUDING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME) - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Head of Financial and Customer Services presented the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2023/24 and in so doing highlighted the following points for Members' consideration:

- District Councils could increase Council Tax by a maximum of 2.99 per cent or £5. Officers were proposing that Council Tax should be increased by £5 in Bromsgrove. This would help the Council to have a robust financial position going forward.
- There was a sizeable gap in the budget which was considered a difficult position to start from and had been compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic and uncertainty in respect of grant funding from Central Government.
- There was pressure on the incremental progression which was driven by the increase in pay award at 2.75% instead of the expected 1%.
- Additional pressures, including loss of income from car parking fees, though some of these losses in income from parking had been offset by the financial support provided by Central Government.

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- There was a correction to the Business Case in respect of Commercial Waste which had been a result of an increase in costs charged by Severn Trent Water.
- New Revenue bids had been received which were mainly concerned with provision of IT Member Support and Training.
- The Corporate Management Team (CMT) and budget managers had reviewed the Council's budget and in doing so had identified a number of savings and income opportunities. The cumulative amount of these identified significant savings of £426k.
- A significant grant had been received from the Lower Tiers Services Grant which had not been expected.
- The proposed budget would result in a return of £22,000 to reserves in 2021/22. However, significant gaps remained in 2022/23 and 2023/24. This would result in a substantial amount of work being done in order to address these gaps for future years.
- New Homes Bonus was likely to no longer be available by 2023-4.
- There had been significant capital funding bids for Disabled Facilities Grants in addition to the 'Green Thread' bids. However, it was clarified that some of the funding in respect of the electric vehicle charge points was to be funded by using grant funding that had been received.
- Covid-19 and Brexit had impacted on the future financial position of the Council. However, both had been placed on the Risk Register and officers were working on mitigating any risks associated with these.

Following the presentation of the report the Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling to comment, and he explained that it had been a significant piece of work to prepare the budget in such difficult circumstances however, despite this, a balanced budget was still being proposed. He thanked the Head of Finance and Customer Services and his team for their hard work.

Following the presentation, the Board discussed the proposed deferral of the recruitment of two Environmental Services Officer roles which had been presented as part of the Medium-Term Financial Plan. After detailed debate regarding the proposed deferral the following recommendation was proposed by Councillor R. Hunter:

***That the two the Environmental Services Officers roles, as outlined in the Medium-Term Finance Plan, be reinstated and not deferred as proposed within the Plan.***

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On being put to the vote this recommendation was lost.

Members questioned officers in respect of the potential loss of parking revenue in the Town Centre for future years. The Head of Finance and Customer Services reported that it was expected that there would be a decrease in car parking revenue in the first quarter and therefore this had been reflected the core budget.

In response to Members' questions regarding the Correction to the Disposal Budget on Commercial Waste. It was clarified by the Head of Environmental Services and Housing Property Services that the increase in costs for the disposal of waste were due to the increase in the amount of waste that was being collected in addition to the cost increases charged by Severn Trent Water for the disposal of waste. Members were informed that during the pandemic the Commercial Waste service figures had been slightly distorted but that new customers were still signing up for the service and which would result in a continued increase in income.

During the consideration of this item further clarification was requested in respect of the following:

- Mileage and professional services. Members were informed that the savings in respect of mileage appeared several times within the Plan across various Service Areas and that mileage claims were still being made.
- Fleet Replacement. It was clarified that work had been undertaken in respect of the replacement of the fleet with electric or hybrid vehicles. It was reported that vehicles with these fuel types were considerably more expensive than the current vehicles and further work would be undertaken, and any findings reported back to Members later in 2021.
- Covid-19 Business Grants. Members were informed that the discretionary grants had been reflected within the Plan in addition to the grants received in respect of fees and charges. The process was explained in detail regarding how the grants would be allocated in the future.

**RESOLVED** to note the report.

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**COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME**



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The Financial Support Manager presented the Council Tax Support Scheme 2021/22 report and in so doing highlighted the following points for Members' consideration:

- The Council Tax Support Scheme was reviewed on an annual basis.
- The amended scheme had been considered by Cabinet in draft form earlier in the municipal year and had subsequently been subject to public consultation in October 2020. The majority of those who had responded through the consultation process were broadly in support of the proposed scheme.
- The proposed changes would result in an increase in costs to the Council of approximately £136,000.
- The new banded scheme worked in a more integrated way with Universal Credit and make the process simpler for the customer.
- There would be an increase in the level of support to the most vulnerable residents.
- The hardship provisions from the previous were to be retained and residents whose eligibility had been reduced under the new scheme would be able to apply for these provisions.

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling to comment on the report. He reiterated the hardship provision included within the proposed new scheme and highlighted that those who were most in need would still receive support going forward. It was confirmed that the hardship provision information was available on the Council's website and it was possible to apply for funding online and claims were dealt with by a specialist team that dealt with applications.

Following presentation of the report Members raised some concerns in respect of the data provided regarding the number of residents that might be adversely impacted by the proposed scheme. Officers were questioned whether any modelling had been conducted to understand the potential impact on residents in the District, particularly those who were to experience a decrease in the amount of Council Tax reduction they received. In addition to this, it was queried what the rationale was regarding the reduced level of support for the single person and childless couple client group which was included within the report. Officers confirmed that any Council Tax scheme was required to incentivise a return to work and the paragraph included within the report was not a comment on any particular client group.

Some Members commented that that although they understood the reservations expressed by some Members that it was positive that

hardship provision was still available for those who were potentially affected by the new scheme. However, it was requested that the scheme be revisited in the next financial year to see if it was operating as expected. It was clarified that this scheme was revised or replaced on an annual basis.

After lengthy debate, Councillor R. Hunter proposed the following:

***The decrease in Council Tax support for the 28% of residents, as detailed in the report, be quantified and presented to Cabinet before their consideration of the Council Tax Support Scheme report.***

On being put to the vote this recommendation was lost.

Councillor P. McDonald presented an amendment to the Board in respect of the removal of the paragraph within the report regarding reduction in the amount of Council Tax support for those in the single person or childless couple client group. However, this recommendation was withdrawn and not put to the vote.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

76/20

## **EQUALITIES TASK GROUP - FINAL REPORT**

Councillor P. McDonald introduced the Equalities Task Group Final Report for Members' consideration and highlighted the following:

- There had been regular attendance at the Task Group meetings which had resulted in a consistent approach during meetings and enabled the investigation to be completed in good time.
- The recommendations of the Task Group would hopefully enhance the Equalities policies that were already in place within Council operations.

The Chairman reiterated Councillor McDonald's point regarding the importance of consistency for Task Groups and that this should be a consideration when undertaking future task group investigations.

**RECOMMENDED** that the report and recommendations as detailed in it be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021.

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## **FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE**

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The Chairman introduced the Finance and Budget Working Group update and explained that the Working Group had met on 11th February 2021 and had looked at a number of areas in detail.

Members were informed that the Medium-Term Financial Plan had been considered in addition to the additional costs that were associated with Commercial Waste. He explained that due to the increase in septic tank disposal costs from Severn Trent Water the revenue from the Commercial Waster Service would be impacted. He clarified that officers were consulting with Severn Trent Water to see if there were any potential solutions to the increase in charges.

Also highlighted for Member's attention that work was being undertaken regarding the type of lifting mechanism currently used in the bin lorry vehicles. It was explained that there had been some issues regarding the lifting of bins with the current type of mechanisms and that there might need to be a gradual, replacement bin programme in the future. Members queried whether there was the potential to use a hybrid version and the Democratic Services officer present undertook to ask the relevant officers and provide the information to the Committee.

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

78/20

## **TASK GROUP UPDATES**

- a) Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group – Chairman, Councillor S. Colella

Councillor S. Colella presented this update and informed Members that the final meeting had taken place for the Task group and a report had been drafted and would be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting that was due to take place in March 2021.

- b) Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group – Chairman, Councillor R. Hunter

Councillor R. Hunter updated the Board regarding the Task Group and informed Members that the final meeting was due to take place during the following week. He informed Members that he please with the recommendations that had been proposed as a result of the investigation. The report would be presented to the Board at the meeting due to take place in March 2021.

**RESOLVED** that the verbal updates in respect of the Task Groups be noted.

79/20

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

Councillor J. Till presented the update from the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and advised Members that there had been one meeting since the last Board meeting. Members were informed that Peter Pinfield, the Chairman of Healthwatch Worcestershire, had sadly passed away in January 2021.

During the meeting updates on Covid-19 and the vaccination programme had been provided and Councillor Till highlighted that the data fluctuated regularly. It was confirmed that any information received would continue to be circulated to Members as and when it was received.

**RESOLVED** that the verbal update in respect of the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

80/20

## **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The Cabinet Work programme dated 1<sup>st</sup> February 2021 to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2021 was considered by the Board.

**RESOLVED** that the Cabinet Work Programme be noted and that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Work Programme for 2020-21, be updated to include any items that had been discussed and agreed during the course of the meeting.

81/20

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

This item was discussed as part of the previous item.

The meeting closed at 7.49 p.m.

Chairman

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board**

**29<sup>th</sup> March 2021**

### **Staff Survey Update**

This paper provides an update in respect of the ongoing work and the planned approach for the next corporate staff survey.

It was originally the intention for the Staff Survey to be undertaken in the Summer of 2020, however, due to the Covid 19 pandemic and the associated additional work being undertaken across the organisation in respect of other surveys to employees, the staff survey will be reviewed with a view to understanding it in the spring.

As a result of the changes in working practices brought about by the pandemic, including closing some of our buildings to staff, working remotely and the extended use of technology, the decision was taken to carry out a number of smaller surveys to gauge the employee experience during these unprecedented times. Specifically, surveys have been undertaken to explore the effectiveness of communications during this time and another focusing on working arrangements, both surveys were referenced in the last report to O&S although the Working Arrangement Survey was currently out to employees and managers at the time of the O&S meeting.

### **Working Arrangements Surveys**

We have now analysed the results of the remote working survey. There were two surveys, specifically relating to working arrangements during the pandemic. The surveys provide an opportunity to hear employee's thoughts on how the different practices might, or might not, benefit both our workforce and the public we serve.

The two surveys were undertaken, an employee survey and a survey for Managers, specifically to seek the views from fourth and fifth tier officers on the use of mobile and/or home working from both a team and service delivery perspective.

The survey had:

- \* A response rate of over 79% (451 currently working from home, 358 valid returns)
- \* Mixed responses – some positive, some negative
- \* Been carried out after a sufficient time had passed to make responses meaningful.
- \* A rate of return that may be an indication of how strongly people feel about this.
- \* One dataset which should be balanced with other information and knowledge about our services/staff.
- \* Responses from a moment in time when pandemic stresses were in place. In the 'old normal' the experience may have been different to the pandemic normal.

Key findings: (358 staff respondents, 64 managers)

- \* Before lockdown 238 (66.9%) of our staff never worked from home. With (115) 32% who worked from home some of the time.
- \* Managers establishment information indicates that since lockdown 451 members of staff have been working from home.
- \* 89% of respondents said they were clear about the outcomes expected of their work whilst working from home.
- \* 44.5% said wfh had affected their wellbeing and life balance in a positive way.
- \* 40.9% it had affected them both positively and negatively, only 5.5% indicated it had been negative.

How the data is being used:

- \* Services will review the service level data to identify key issues including areas of strength and areas where improvement maybe required.
- \* We will be looking to ensure we can capture the views of our employees on a more regular basis – possibly a few key questions that can be quickly and easily analysed.
- \* There is a potential opportunity for some far reaching changes to be made.

## **Wellbeing Survey**

We had planned to undertake a formal Wellbeing Survey for our staff linked the HSE Stress Risk Audit, this was delayed due to the pandemic. However, we have now undertaken the Wellbeing Survey, 'Caring for the Workforce Audit', a survey to help the council to understand if or where our staff may be in need of additional support or where changes around working practices may be needed to help reduce levels of stress. The audit was carried out by an external organisation – AMC Consultancy – to ensure the highest levels of confidentiality. The data will be fed back to the councils in the form of corporate reports showing any hotspots in terms of service areas and specific stressors. The survey has been shared with all employees, either via work emails, hard copies where necessary or personal emails where staff have requested an electronic copy rather than a hard copy. We are pleased to report that 236 employees have provided their personal email address in order to receive the survey electronically in place of a hard copy. We believe this a positive indication of the result of engaging with our employees in previous surveys and demonstrates the importance of sharing survey feedback with staff, resulting in staff actively wishing to participate in future surveys.

The survey has now closed and we are awaiting the result, however, we are pleased to confirm we have received a response rate of 64% (533 returns). As a comparison we received a response rate of 54% for the previous full staff survey.

## **Staff Survey**

As outlined above, due to the pandemic, the plan to deliver a corporate staff survey has been delayed, the timing of the Remote Working Survey and the Wellbeing Survey will all provide data that we may wish to explore further as part of the wider Staff Survey. As such the full staff survey date will be reviewed in the spring.

It is still the intention to use the same provider to undertake the staff survey. The provider was previously engaged following a workforce engagement project conducted by the Local Government Association, the Councils engaged with Martin Reddington Associates, this company is an expert in the field of employee engagement using a bespoke methodology referred to as The Employment Deal Diagnostic (TEDD). Engaging with the same provider will enable the Council to directly compare results with the previous survey. The TEDD® tool has now been enhanced by Culture FITT® - effectively developing a new 'lenses' on the data to show different organisational climates.

The provider will produce the survey using the bespoke methodology. There is limited capacity to modify the questions too much, however, the questions can be, in part, tailored to ensure they are relevant and appropriate to the Council. The provider also analyses and interprets the data, providing reports by service area and supporting the organisation in interpreting the findings.

We have not yet engaged the provider due to the current circumstances however, we will begin discussions when we are in a position to finalise the timings of this survey.

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## **NOTICE OF MOTION**

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor P McDonald.

That this Council calls upon Overview and Scrutiny to investigate the amount of travelling expenses claimed throughout lockdown: to ensure the efficiency of working from home.

### **Staff Mileage Expenses**

Since March 2020, the Council has been operating in line with central government guidance around working from home. The guidance has been clear that those who could work from home should do so, in order to reduce the spread of the Corona virus during the pandemic. The Corporate Management Team have, during all of the lockdowns, adhered to government guidance in order to try to protect our employees whilst continuing to deliver as many of our services as possible.

In relation to mileage data, the information below is the total mileage undertaken (to date for 2021) and the associated costs in respect of staff mileage. Years 2019/2020 have been included as an indication of how years 2020/2021 have varied from a 'normal' year.

#### **2019 - 2020**

Mileage – 333,401 miles  
Cost - £152,686

#### **2020 - 2021**

Mileage - 163,280 miles  
Cost - £73,616

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### Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

29<sup>th</sup> March

#### Impact of the Review of Library Services in the District

Relevant Portfolio Holder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships</li> <li>• Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Community Safety</li> </ul>
Portfolio Holder Consulted	The Portfolio Holders have been informed of the recommendations
Relevant Head of Service	N/A
Report Author	Democratic Services Officer <a href="mailto:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk">joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk</a> Contact Tel: 01527 881443
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Live independent, active and healthy lives
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to **RESOLVE** that:-

(a) the report and the recommendations attached at Appendix 1 be approved;

and **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

(b) the report and recommendations (as detailed at Appendix 1) be approved.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Any financial implications are detailed within the main body of the report.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021**

29<sup>th</sup> March

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### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 Any legal implications are detailed within the main body of the report.

### **5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

5.1 This report would come under live independent, active and healthy lives, which relates cultural opportunities in the District.

#### **Climate Change Implications**

5.2 There are no Climate Change Implications arising from this report.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

#### **Operational Implications**

6.2 There would be some resource implications arising from approval of the recommendations which have been highlighted to the relevant Head of Service.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the Council's democratic decision-making process and enables non-executive Members of the Council to put forward recommendations for policy development, policy review and service improvement.

### **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Impact of the Review of Library Services in the District – Final Report

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board** 2021

29<sup>th</sup> March

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(Background papers are listed within the main report.)

### Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

29<sup>th</sup> March

#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships and the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Community Safety are aware of the report	March 2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	K. Dicks, S. Hanley and J. Howse are aware of the report.	March 2021
Financial Services	No direct financial implications	
Legal Services	No direct legal implications	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

# **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD**

## **IMPACT OF THE REVIEW OF LIBRARY SERVICES TASK GROUP**

### **FINAL REPORT**

**March 2021**



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

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## MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



Councillor Steve Colella (Chairman)



Councillor Sue Douglas



Councillor Janet King



Councillor Adrian Kriss



Councillor Maria Middleton



Councillor Caroline Spencer

### Supporting Officer Details

Jo Gresham – Democratic Services Officer

[joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

## Foreword from the Chairman

The purpose of this report is an 'Investigation into the effects of the impacts of Library Service Changes in Bromsgrove'.

The Task Group took a very pragmatic view looking at the overall impact on Library Services in the Bromsgrove District, taking the opportunity to question Worcestershire County Council senior Officers and WCC Cabinet member for Community Services Councillor Lucy Hodgson.

The recommendations made by this Task Group are focused on ensuring that the review of the Library service has not undermined service delivery to an extent that public amenity in Bromsgrove has been disadvantaged and that there has not been any long-term loss and derogation of service.

The task group heard how Libraries are dynamic, far reaching excellent services offering a varied and high-class public amenity. The review highlighted the wide range of age groups, social demographics and stakeholders that rely on libraries and how enthusiastic local people are ensuring its survival. However, there is a 'but'; under the service review the County Council's objective is to reduce costs through staff reorganisation, cost reduction and income maximisation.

The Task Group identified several important issues that although have not formed recommendations should be noted. The review of Library Services has resulted in an organisational restructure, staff role and responsibility review, added pressures on the voluntary sector and in many cases resulted in pressures on other organisations to make financial contributions and a shifting of asset management to local administrators.

Whilst I personally welcome greater local control by local stakeholders there is a balance between the statutory duty of Worcestershire County Council and the sustainability of local communities to pick-up the impact of such service changes. To expect the voluntary sector and district and parish councils to fund service gaps merely moves the problem rather than addresses the long-term existence of the service as we know it today.

Continuation of this strategy would mean that services in Libraries being reduced further. To date the County Council's review has been met with enthusiasm by local communities and ward councillors to ensure that the overall public amenity is maintained. The pressure to continue to backfill service changes by local stakeholders would result in an unsustainable over reliance on goodwill and third-party funding.

# Agenda Item 7

I would like to thank the Democratic Services' Officers for their hard work and dedication to this task group and fellow councillors for their valuable contributions, and importantly sincere thanks go to Worcestershire County Council officers and Portfolio Holder for their open and transparent approach to this Task Group.

I strongly believe that the value of undertaking this Task and Finish Group is reflected in the thanks given by the Portfolio Holder that this district is the only one to hold such a review.

**Councillor Steve Colella**  
**Chairman, Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group**

## Summary of Recommendations

### Chapter 1 – Promotion and Location of Libraries in the District

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
<b>That all Members continue to receive up to date information in relation to any proposed changes to libraries in their Wards.</b>
<b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b> There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b> There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Resource Implications:</b> There are no direct resource implications

<b>Recommendation 2</b>
<b>That all Members be consulted when any proposed changes are to be made to the Strategic Libraries in the District.</b>
<b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b> There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b> There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Resource Implications:</b> There are no direct resource implications

<b>Recommendation 3</b>
<b>That a publicity campaign be undertaken to promote the facilities available at Libraries.</b>
<b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b>  There may be a small financial implication, depending on the type of the publicity campaign.
<b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b>  There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Resource Implications:</b>  Officer time.

## **Chapter 2 - Areas for Consideration by Worcestershire County Council**

<b>Recommendation 4</b>
<b>That Worcestershire County Council ensure that any grant funding received is distributed to Libraries accordingly.</b>
<b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b>  There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b>  There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Resource Implications:</b>  There are no direct resource implications

## Background Information

Councillor S. Colella presented a topic proposal form containing proposed terms of reference for a Task Group entitled 'Investigation into the Effect of the Impact of Library Service Changes in Bromsgrove' supported by other Councillors and library users, many of whom attended the Library consultation meetings. Councillor Colella wished this Task Group to investigate the Library Service Review which had been undertaken by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) in order to ascertain the effect on Bromsgrove's Libraries.

At the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020, during consideration of the topic proposal 'The Wigan Deal' was discussed with Members of the Board and Councillor Karen May, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships. During this discussion, the main Overview and Scrutiny Board were informed that an announcement was only 10-12 weeks away regarding libraries in the District and therefore this Task Group may not be needed. However, Members agreed that they would like more certainty around the potential closures of certain libraries as there was some confusion between a statement made by the Member of Parliament and information from the Place Partnership. It was therefore agreed at that meeting that a Task Group should be established and Councillor S. Colella was appointed as its Chairman. The Membership and quorum were set at the meeting of the Board held on 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

Although the first meeting was held on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2020 when the work programme and witnesses for the investigation were agreed, the impact of Covid-19 meant that there was a delay in the subsequent meeting, which was held virtually on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

The Task Group held six meetings (two of which were not quorate) in total which included scrutinising the research carried out in respect of services the libraries currently provided and interviews with officers and Councillor L. Hodgson, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities from Worcestershire County Council. During these interviews, the witnesses were provided with questions prior to the meeting in order for them to provide members with as much detail as possible during the session.

## Chapter 1 – Promotion and Location of Libraries in the District

During the investigation, the Task Group agreed that an area that they wanted to understand more fully was what activities currently took place in libraries across the District and it was agreed that the Democratic Services Officer would undertake research to ascertain library facilities pre-Covid. The research provided Members with a clear picture of what was available to residents and enabled Members to understand what services, if any, might not be included following the implementation of the new strategy (see Appendix 5). There was also detailed discussion throughout the investigation regarding the promotion of meeting rooms within the libraries (which had the potential to also create a small income stream) and whether residents were aware that there were rooms available for hire. It was noted by some Members that although there was some pricing information available on the WCC website it was difficult to navigate and might be an area that required clarification to encourage increased use of the facilities for residents. In addition to the room hire information some Members queried the facilities that were included on the website and whether it was all up to date. The Democratic Services Officer contacted WCC and it was clarified that their officers did aim to keep the web pages updated and that a check of the web pages would be completed shortly. This was welcomed by Members of the Task Group.

During the interview with Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director for Communities and Carol Brown, Head of Service for Libraries, WCC it was acknowledged that advertising within the communities had not always been successful. However, officers confirmed that future plans included greater use of social media, webpages and the use of more local channels including Parish Councils to publicise libraries and the facilities that were available within them.

As a result of this discussion Members agreed that further efforts were required to inform residents and businesses of those facilities and meeting room spaces that were available in libraries. It was felt that this was particularly important, in light of the positive changes to the Digital Strategy including the upgrade of library PC's to Windows 10 and the introduction of digital champions and the potential for an income revenue stream from room hire.

Councillor Lucy Hodgson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities - WCC attended a meeting of the Task Group in December 2020 and a number of questions regarding areas of interest were provided prior to the meeting. During the interview she provided information regarding the shared plans for a new community hub with multi-purpose modular functionality which was being considered for Rubery Library, as there had been little investment at this library for many years. It was confirmed by Councillor Hodgson that Members had been kept up to date with the



# Agenda Item 7

plans and that updates would also be sent to all Ward Members and further consultation would be undertaken in wards that had a library, in due course. Although this was welcomed by Members, they were keen for assurances that the provision of up-to-date information regarding any proposed library changes would continue to be provided to Ward Members in the future.

Throughout the investigation all Members were in agreement that the new strategy was dynamic and had the potential to be a positive step forward for libraries in the District.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
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<b>That all Members continue to receive up to date information in relation to any proposed changes to libraries in their Wards.</b>
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<b>Recommendation 2</b>
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<b>That all Members be consulted when any proposed changes are to be made to the Strategic Libraries in the District.</b>
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<b>Recommendation 3</b>
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<b>That a Joint publicity campaign be undertaken to promote the facilities available at Libraries.</b>
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## Chapter 2 - Areas for Consideration by Worcestershire County Council

During the interviews with Councillor Lucy Hodgson and officers from WCC further information was provided to the Task Group regarding the implementation of the Strategy. It was confirmed that it was hoped that the strategy would deliver efficiencies to the service and it was explained to Members that a library should be considered as a community asset that was used as much as possible and should be a vibrant community hub. This opinion was echoed by the Task Group who were pleased that this had been considered as part of the new strategy.

It was discussed that WCC needed to make budget cuts of £300k across the service, however officers explained that they would not be made by taking a certain amount of money away from each library across the County and indeed the District. It was reported that some libraries may change, and some may not change at all. It was noted that the decrease in budget would be managed predominantly by restructure and remodelling, in addition to some potential streams of Covid-19 funding which had been received to support libraries during the lockdown. Members were informed that as part of the restructure new roles of a Library Services Development Manager and a Library Service Communications Manager had been established to help develop the services. In addition to these, a new staff position was to be established who would be responsible for identifying and bidding for extra funding for libraries e.g., Arts Council funding.

Members were keen to clarify whether the Open Plus staffing model utilised in some libraries was not being considered for the District. It was explained that the Open Plus model was a system that allowed libraries to provide more flexible hours, making them more accessible to the community. Members were in agreement that staffed libraries, whether supervised by voluntary or paid staff, were more appropriate and although it was recognised that staffing had been identified as the largest potential cost saving, the consultation undertaken by WCC had indicated that residents were still keen to have a service where staff were present during opening hours.

During the investigation, the Chairman shared the current experience at Hagley Library with Members of the Task Group. It was explained that the Parish Council (of which he was the Chairman) currently paid for the 'bricks and mortar' of the library. This had been possible due to the support for the library from the residents of Hagley who were satisfied that some of their Parish Council precept taxes be used to manage the upkeep of the library there. However, the Chairman did raise concerns regarding this approach and highlighted that in addition to the Parish Council precept taxes, library services were reflected directly through precept council tax being included in WCC. It was thought by the Chairman that this might not be a resilient

approach to library support going forward as residents (in a parished ward) could feel that they were paying for the service twice and that Parish Councils were being asked to financially support the continuation of the service. (Further reference to this is highlighted in the areas to note section of this report.)

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<b>Recommendation 4</b>
<b>That Worcestershire County Council ensure that any grant funding received is distributed to Libraries accordingly.</b>

## Chapter 3 - Areas to Note

Some of the Members of the Task Group wanted to further understand the Green Thread within the new library strategy. There was a discussion that a potential recommendation might be appropriate regarding any future remodelling and new build libraries, as there may be the potential to include solar panels on those new buildings. This would not only provide an opportunity to encourage a more sustainable library service but might be beneficial in areas where budget savings needed to be made. This was raised with WCC officers and it was advised that when any library property remodelling scheme was pursued, improvements were identified in order to increase energy efficiency for the scheme. It was clarified that the installation of solar panels would be managed as part of any corporate facilities management initiatives. The Task Group therefore felt it was not appropriate to include a recommendation in this respect but wanted to highlight this within its report that this was something which they had considered and had raised with WCC.

Members also wished to highlight that during the interview with Councillor Hodgson the Task group were thanked for taking the time to consider the Impact of the Review of Libraries and the new strategy. She advised that Bromsgrove District Council was the only Council to have done so. Members were pleased to hear this as it confirmed the importance of the scrutiny process in areas of particular interest for the residents of Bromsgrove.

Members raised concerns that public support of the library services was being reflected directly through precept council tax being included in WCC as well as in Parish Council precept taxes (for those parished wards). The Task Group therefore wanted to highlight that residents could feel that they were “paying for the service twice” and that Parish Councils were being asked to financially support the continuation of the service. It was questioned whether this was sustainable for the Parish Councils in the long term.

### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD – Impact of the Review of Library Services Task Group**

#### **Terms of Reference as at March 2020**

The Impact of Library Service Task Group has been set up by the Overview & Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny/pre-scrutiny of the Impact of the Review of Library Services in the District.

1. The Task Group be made up of 7 Members with a quorum of 4. The Task Group will meet throughout the next six months at intervals to be decided by the Group.
2. The Task Group will be a standing item on the agenda of the Overview & Scrutiny Board and either a verbal or written report will be provided at each of the Board's meetings.
3. The Task Group is able to make recommendations to the Overview & Scrutiny Board who will then put forward its recommendations for consideration by Cabinet or directly to Cabinet/Council.
4. The Task group is expected to complete the investigation in six months and provide its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in a written report at that time.

#### **Aims and Objectives of the Task Group**

Scrutiny of the Impact of the Review of Library Services Task Group will cover the following areas, although this list is not exclusive:

- The task group proposes to review the outcome of the consultation and the implications for Library services across the district of Bromsgrove.
- Determine any loss of service, any degradation of service and impacts on local communities that each Library servers.
- BDC to consider what support it can give to the continuity of the Library Service

## Background Papers

### External Documents

Worcestershire County Council Library Strategy 2020-2025  
The Wigan Deal

## Witnesses

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

### **External Witnesses**

Hannah Perrott, Assistant Director (Families, Communities and Partnerships) -  
Worcestershire County Council

Carol Brown, Head of Service for Libraries - Worcestershire County Council  
Councillor Lucy Hodgson, Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities -  
Worcestershire County Council

### Questions for Councillor Lucy Hodgson

1. We have considered the content of the Worcestershire Library Strategy 2020-2025 as part of this review and noted the changes included within the plan. What implications, if any, would the actions detailed in this strategy have for library services in Bromsgrove District specifically?
2. Will there be an expectation that Bromsgrove District Council provide budgetary support for their District libraries as part of the new strategy?
3. Do you think that there will be a degradation of any Bromsgrove library services once the Worcestershire Library Strategy 2020-2025 is fully implemented?
4. As Hagley, Rubery Bromsgrove and Catshill now form a Bromsgrove North Group of Libraries what are the differences between this and the previous grouping in terms of Management, Budget and Resourcing (including IT and books)?
5. As Members we tend to receive queries from the public about libraries and their services. Are there any guarantees we can have to reassure residents that any changes that are made as part of the strategy will not impact negatively on their local library service?
6. This year's savings and changes to the library service has been disrupted by Covid-19. Has this changed future year's changes or budget savings?
7. Is there anything further that you would like to add for our consideration?



### **Library Services and Opening Times in the District**

#### **Alvechurch**

Birmingham Road  
Alvechurch  
Birmingham  
B48 7TA

#### **Normal Opening Times**

- Monday: 9.00am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm – 5.00pm
- Tuesday: 9.00am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm – 5.00pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 2.00pm – 5.00pm
- Friday: 9.00am – 1.00pm, 2.00pm – 5.00pm
- Saturday: 10.00am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 4.00pm

#### **Adult Learning Courses**

French for Improvers - £30.00 or £50.00

Spanish Continuing Beginners - £40.00

Watercolours for Improvers - \$50.00

#### **Notices and Promotions**

*Children's Spoken Word Promotion:*

Keep your children entertained by borrowing any Children's Spoken Word Cassettes or CDS for FREE.

Alvechurch Library is working as part of an Eco Communities project with the local schools and a village nursery to encourage sustainability together and individual in our settings. The Library has adopted very different ways of using our resources in order to be able to reduce our impact, support our community and apply for a Green Flag award.

#### **Events at Alvechurch Library**

Showing 1 to 5 of 5 events.

**Baby Bounce & Rhyme at Alvechurch Library – weekly, free**

**Bounce and Rhyme - weekly, free**

**Saturday Story time at Alvechurch Library - weekly, free**

**Tuesday Story Time at Alvechurch Library - weekly, free**

**Alvechurch Readers Group - meets: Last Tuesday of the month, free**

Alvechurch Library Meeting Room for hire (see charges in appendix 1)

Size: medium

- Capacity: up to 15 people
- Category: Bronze, Silver

Facilities: Available during opening hours (closed Wednesdays)

- Toilets
- Chairs / Tables
- Plug sockets
- Flip chart
- Suitable for exhibition space
- Vending Machine

## **Bromsgrove Library**

Parkside  
Market Street  
Bromsgrove  
B61 8DA

### **Normal Opening Times**

- Monday: 9.00am - 7.00pm
- Tuesday: 9.00am – 5.00pm
- Wednesday: 9.00am – 5.00pm
- Thursday: 9.00am – 5.00pm
- Friday: 9.00am – 5.00pm
- Saturday: 10.00am - 4.00pm

### Author and Poetry Event – An Afternoon of Poetry with Jo Bell at Bromsgrove Library

Cost: Free

Author Event – An Evening with Philip Caine, author of the Jack Castle series of adventure novels at Bromsgrove Library

Cost: £3

### **Adult Learning Courses**

Computer Skills Stage 2 - £144.00/Free (subject to conditions)

Computer Skills Stage 3 - £144.00/Free (subject to conditions)

### **Weekly Events**

Baby, Bounce and Rhyme at Bromsgrove Library – **weekly, free**

Bounce and Rhyme at Bromsgrove Library - **weekly, free**

Bromsgrove Readers Group - **one day every month, free**

Code Club at Bromsgrove Library – **weekly, free (term time only)**

Job Club at Bromsgrove Library – **weekly, free**

Sewing Group at Bromsgrove Library – **weekly, free**

Talking About Books Group at Bromsgrove Library - **one day every month, free**

### **Bromsgrove Library Meeting Rooms** (see charges in appendix 2)

#### *Medium Room*

- Capacity: Up to 15 people

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- Category: Bronze, Silver

## *Small Room*

- Capacity: up to 6 people
- Category: Bronze, Silver

Facilities for both rooms:

- Vending Machine access
- Tables and Chairs
- Equipment available on request
- Late night opening on Monday

## **Catshill Community Library**

The Community Room  
Catshill Middle School  
Meadow Road  
Catshill  
Bromsgrove  
B61 0JW

### **Normal Opening Times**

- Monday: 9:15am - 12:15pm
- Tuesday: 3:00pm - 7:00pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 3:00pm - 5.30pm
- Friday: 9:30am - 12:00pm
- Saturday: 9:30am – 12:30pm
- Sunday: Closed

### **Adult Learning Courses**

None available

### **Activities**

Baby, Bounce & Rhyme at Catshill Library – ***weekly, free (term time only)***

Catshill Readers Group – ***2nd Monday of every month, free***

Saturday Storytime at Catshill Library – ***weekly, free***

## Hagley Library

Worcester Road  
Hagley  
Stourbridge  
West Midlands  
DY9 0NW

### Normal Opening Times

- Monday: 9.00am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Tuesday: Closed
- Wednesday: 9.00am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Thursday: 9.00am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Friday: 9.00am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Saturday: 9.00am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 4.30pm

### Adult Learning Course

None available

### Activities

Active Tots at Hagley Library Every Monday – **weekly, free (term time only)**.

Book Buzzers at Hagley Library on the First Thursday of Every Month – **weekly, free (term time only)**

Bounce and Rhyme at Hagley Library Every Monday – **weekly, free (term time only)**

Bounce and Rhyme at Hagley Library Every Other Wednesday – **every fortnight, free (term time only)**

Hagley Library Book Club Every Month – **once a month, free**

Hagley Library Healthy Walking Group - **1st and 3rd Wednesday of each month, free**

Storytime at Hagley Library Every Thursday – **weekly, free (term time only)**

Hagley Readers' Group - **third Thursday of the month**

## Rubery Library

7 Library Way  
Rubery  
Birmingham  
B45 9JS

### Normal Opening Times

- Monday: 9:30am – 5.00pm
- Tuesday: 9:30am – 5.00pm
- Wednesday: Closed
- Thursday: 9:30am – 6.00pm
- Friday: 9:30am - 5.00pm
- Saturday: 10.00am – 2.00pm

### Activities

Easter Wreath Meeting £30.00

Baby, Bounce & Rhyme at Rubery Library – **weekly, free**

Creative Writing Group at Rubery Library – **fortnightly, free**

Rubery Stitchers – **weekly, free**

Rubery's Readers Group - **fourth Thursday in the month, free**

Walkers Group for adults at Rubery Library – **weekly, free**

**Rubery Library Meeting Room** (see charges in appendix 1)

Size: medium

- Capacity: up to 12 people
- Category: Bronze

Facilities: Available during opening hours (closed Wednesdays) °Toilets access

- Vending Machine access
- Table
- Chairs
- Flipchart
- Plug sockets
- Space on the upper floor for hire

## Wythall Library

Woodrush Community Hub  
Shawhurst Lane  
Hollywood  
Birmingham  
B47 5JW

### Normal Opening Times

- Monday: 9.30am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Tuesday: 9.30am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Wednesday: 9.30am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Thursday: Closed
- Friday: 9.30am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 5.00pm
- Saturday: 9.30am - 1.00pm, 2.00pm - 4.00pm

### Adult Learning Courses

None available

### Activities

Baby, Bounce & Rhyme at Wythall Library – **weekly, free**

Chatterbooks Group at Wythall Library – **weekly, free**

Digital Champion Computer Training at Wythall Library – **weekly, free**

Hollywood and Wythall Mental Health Group at Wythall Library – **weekly free**

Lego Club at Wythall Library – **once a month, £1**

Library Readers Group at Wythall Library - **free**

Saturday Storytime at Wythall Library - **weekly, free**

Tuesday Storytime at Wythall Library - **weekly, free**



## Library Facilities

	Alvechurch	Bromsgrove	Catshill	Hagley	Rubery	Wythall
Library Service at Home	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Wi-Fi	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Exhibition facilities	✓	✓				✓
Meeting room	✓	✓				✓
Internet public access terminals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printing (A4) b&w and colour (costs incurred)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Scanner		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Access for wheelchairs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Self-Issue Terminal	✓		✓	✓		✓
Photocopying A4 and A3	✓	✓			✓	
Public toilets	✓	✓	✓			
Disabled toilets	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Baby changing facilities	✓	✓			✓	✓
USB Memory Sticks available to buy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Reading Glasses available to buy	✓			✓		✓
Earphones available to buy	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Children's Events and activities	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local History publications on sale		✓				
Energy Saving Monitors				✓		
Cafe						✓
Vending Machine						✓

## Worcestershire County Council

### Libraries & Learning Service

#### Meeting Room & Library Space Hire – Pricing Matrix

<b>*Equipment availability will vary at each location, please check with venue prior to your event</b>	<b>Size</b>		
<b>Facilities (equipment used in room)</b>	<b>Small (less than 6 people)</b>	<b>Medium (6-12 people)</b>	<b>Large (12+ people)</b>
<b>Standard</b> (*tables & chairs)	Bronze	Bronze	Silver
<b>Intermediate</b> (*As 'standard' plus flip chart, whiteboard etc)	Silver	Silver	Gold
<b>High</b> (*Projector, electronic smart board, plasma screen, DVD player, WiFi)	Silver	Gold	Gold
<b>Executive – The Hive only</b> (*Very high standard of equipment/very large sized room)	Platinum	Platinum	Platinum

<b>Non-profit making (per hour or part of an hour)</b>	<b>Profit making (per hour or part of an hour)</b>	
<b>Bronze</b>	<b>£8.25</b>	<b>£16.50</b>
<b>Silver</b>	£11.00	£22.00
<b>Gold</b>	£13.75	£27.50
<b>Platinum</b>	£22.00	£44.00
<b>Hiring library space (where available) - Daily rates are based on 50% of the Bronze full hourly category- £4 per hour for non-profit making or £8.25 per hour for profit making. The Hive rates are based on the full hourly bronze category - £8.25 non-profit making/£16.50 profit making.</b>		
Prices exclude Public Liability Insurance - 10% of the hire fee or £2 whichever is the greater.		
Activities promoting the work of Libraries & Learning – Free of charge		

Direct costs attributable to the letting to be in addition to the above. Staff costs outside normal working hours of caretaker or other staff is currently charged at the rate of £10.00 per hour. Please check with the Library Manager at the venue if these are payable.

Commercial organisations using the premises in connection with a profit-making business may be charged an additional fee dependent on the circumstances at the discretion of the Head of Libraries & Learning.

All activities of commercial organisations and profit making activities of non-profit making bodies attract the full rate.

All wishing to hire library premises will be asked to sign and agree to the standard list of terms and conditions. A £50 damage waiver deposit may be requested for non-standard activities, e.g. Children's parties

## **Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services**

Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside Offices, Market Street

Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8DA

Telephone: (01527) 881443

Email: [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk)

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### Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

29<sup>th</sup> March

#### Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Sherrey – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans – Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author Jo Gresham	Job Title: Democratic Services Officer Contact email:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Communities which are safe, well-maintained and green
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board is asked to **RESOLVE** that:-

- (a) the report and the recommendations attached at Appendix 1 be approved;

and **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

- (b) the report and recommendations (as detailed at Appendix 1) be approved.

#### 2. BACKGROUND

#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Any financial implications are detailed within the main body of the report.

#### 4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any legal implications are detailed within the main body of the report.

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021**

29<sup>th</sup> March

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### **5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 This report would come under Communities which are safe, well-maintained and green.

#### **Climate Change Implications**

- 5.2 Any Climate Change implications are detailed within the main body of the report.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

#### **Operational Implications**

- 6.2 There would be some resource implications arising from approval of the recommendations which have been highlighted to the relevant Head of Service.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 7.1 Overview and scrutiny is a key part of the Council's democratic decision-making process and enables non-executive Members of the Council to put forward recommendations for policy development, policy review and service improvement.

### **8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 – Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group – Final Report

(Background papers are listed within the main report.)

### Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

29<sup>th</sup> March

#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services is aware of the report	February 2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services is aware of the report	March 2021
Financial Services		
Legal Services		
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

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# **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD**

## **REVIEW OF SERVICES TO PREVENT FLOODING TASK GROUP**

### **FINAL REPORT**

**March 2021**



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

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## MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



Councillor Rob Hunter



Councillor Andrew Beaumont



Councillor Steve Colella



Councillor Harrison Rone-Clark



Councillor Caroline Spencer

### Supporting Officer Details

Jo Gresham – Democratic Services Officer

[joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk)

## Foreword from the Chairman

Flooding can cause severe damage to homes and possessions and disrupt communities. It can also pollute the environment and threaten ecosystems. In the worst cases it can cause injury and even loss of life. With the onset of climate change, flooding events are becoming more frequent, more severe and less predictable. The importance of good mitigation and flood alleviation work is now widely recognised. We must do whatever we can to reduce the risk of harm to our residents, businesses and the natural environment.

Bromsgrove District Council is not the Lead Local Flood Authority, but we do have some responsibility for flood alleviation work and a strong history of working successfully with our partner agencies to minimise the risks faced by local communities. This Task Group was established to see how we can build on this to tackle the increasingly severe threat that flooding now presents. I am pleased to report that we have taken a pragmatic approach, examining the roles and functions that BDC already has, to see where our flood alleviation work might be strengthened.

I am extremely grateful to Councillors Beaumont, Colella, Rone-Clarke and Spencer for their commitment to this important work over the last six months. I am delighted to have been able to work cross party to agree a number of practical and realistic proposals that will go a long way to improve flooding prevention in Bromsgrove. Our proposals cover a broad range of functions from Environmental Services to Planning and I believe they have real potential to make a positive difference to our communities.

Of course, we could not have done any this without the expert advice and guidance of colleagues at Bromsgrove District Council, alongside those from North Worcestershire Water Management, Worcestershire County Council and Severn Trent Water. On behalf of the task group, I would like to thank all our dedicated Bromsgrove officers and those from partner agencies for advising and facilitating our group. I'm really looking forward to seeing the proposals we developed together being put into action.

**Councillor Rob Hunter**  
**Chairman, Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group**

## Summary of Recommendations

### Chapter 1 – Staffing

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
<b>That consideration be given to the appoint two full-time specialist land drainage operatives for Bromsgrove and that a business case be undertaken.</b>
<b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b>  There will be financial implications for regarding the appointment. The approximate costs would be £100k. This is subject to confirmation from any business case undertaken.
<b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b>  There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Resource Implications:</b>  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Increase in land drainage staff.</li><li>2. Officer time to undertake the business case</li></ol>

### Chapter 2 – Information and Communications

<b>Recommendation 2</b>
<b>That a publicity campaign within the local community to raise the profile of North Worcestershire Water Management be carried out.</b>
<b>Financial Implications for recommendations:</b>  There would be no financial implications if the campaign were carried out online but if campaign materials such as posters or leaflets were to be used then there would be a small cost involved.
<b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b>  There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
<b>Resource Implications:</b>  Officer time

**Recommendation 3**

**That the responsible authority(ies) publish a timetable of road sweeping and gully cleaning across the district.**

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time.

**Recommendation 4**

**That an annual item in respect of flooding be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme.**

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time.

**Chapter 3 – Local Plan****Recommendation 5**

- 1. RECOMMENDED that**
  - a) as part of the review of Bromsgrove’s local plan, adopt strict new planning policies requiring all new developments to consider the use of sustainable drainage facilities should be adopted; and**
  - b) this should include measures for watercourse enhancement and flood alleviation where necessary; and**

**c) the Council will, subject to S106 funding, adopt land featuring watercourses and SuDS features on new developments.**

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct financial implications in relation to a) and b) of this recommendation. In respect of recommendation c) if adoption of all the sites were agreed there would be financial implications, although these would currently be difficult to predict.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications in relation to a) and b) of this recommendation. In respect of recommendation c) if adoption of all the sites were agreed there would be legal implications, although these would currently be difficult to predict.

**Resource Implications:**

Officer time.



## Background Information

In February 2020, Councillor R. Hunter presented a topic proposal form containing proposed objectives for a Task Group entitled Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group. Councillor Hunter highlighted the severe flooding that many areas of Bromsgrove had experienced during Autumn 2019 and the difficulty in ascertaining who was responsible for remedying flooding events due to the number of agencies involved and their areas of responsibilities.

The key objectives of the proposed Task Group were as follows:

- Review key incidents of flooding in the district, their causes and the effectiveness of responses.
- Assess whether sufficient work is being undertaken to reduce the risk of flooding
- Assess whether sufficient resources are made available for this work
- Assess whether there is sufficient transparency over responsibilities for managing and reducing the risk of flooding

Following consideration of the topic proposal at its meeting on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February 2020, the Overview and Scrutiny Board agreed that a Task Group should be set up and appointed Councillor R. Hunter as its Chairman and requested that the Group report back with its findings within 12 months.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 there had been a delay in confirmation of the Members of the Task Group. However, at the June 2020 meeting of the Board, the Terms of Reference of the Task Group were confirmed. It was agreed that the work of the Task Group would begin as soon possible. Councillor Hunter requested that Members be contacted again to see if there was any further interest in joining the Task Group.

Following its initial meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> July 2020, the Task Group agreed the work programme for the Task Group and key witnesses they would like to interview.

The Group has held 6 meetings in total since that date and carried out interviews with a number of key witnesses. The interviews were focussed on the following questions and the Task Group's recommendations reflect the areas that the Task Group investigated in detail:

1. What kind of work does the agency carry out with residents to mitigate flooding issues?
2. How do all the agencies work together?
3. What monitoring and flood alleviation projects are currently being undertaken?

# Agenda Item 8

4. Are there any additional measures that this authority in partnership with the other agencies could be taking to reduce the risk of flooding in the key hot spots?
5. Are any more resources required?

## Chapter 1 – Staffing

During the investigation, one of the main areas Members were interested in was understanding more fully the regularity of works undertaken by officers from all of the agencies involved. During their interview with Senior Water Management Officers from North Worcestershire Water Management (NWWM) it was reported that the Place Team from Environmental Services at Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) carried out minor maintenance of grids in advance of heavy rain, and watercourse maintenance when required. NWWM reported that the Place Team did a very good job of carrying out these works, however the approach was more reactive than proactive due to the limited resources.

When interviewing the Environmental Services Manager from BDC, Members were informed that currently Worcestershire County Council (WCC) worked to a schedule of clearing road drains using high level data gathered by GPS monitoring for each ward, with areas more prone to flooding and debris being visited for clearance more often. It was clarified to the Task Group that sometimes the schedule was not able to be carried out as planned due to inclement weather or needs in other areas of the District. Indeed, it was noted that WCC previously had a schedule of works for the Wythall area in respect of road gully clearance. It was noted that these works had decreased over time in order to deal with needs in other known sites in the District. Members were informed that the cycle of works could be every 18 months and it was felt by the Task Group that this length of time was not satisfactory particularly as the cleaning of gullies and watercourses could reduce the risk of future flooding events.

As a result of the information received from both Environmental Services Manager at BDC and the Senior Water Management Officer from NWWM the Task Group agreed that there seemed to be issues with the regularity of maintenance works and that this might be linked to staffing levels.

Currently there are no land drainage operatives that operate for Bromsgrove District Council. Work undertaken regarding the maintenance of water courses and culverts is currently carried out by the Place Team or Parks and Leisure Team in Bromsgrove. This does not occur as a part of a schedule of works but when there is capacity or if a need is identified. The group initially discussed the option to hire one drainage operative. However, it was clarified by the Environmental Services Manager that teams had to undertake work with water in pairs (at least) for Health and Safety reasons and that a team of two BDC operatives would be needed to monitor the water courses and culverts in the Bromsgrove region to provide proactive maintenance. Members agreed that a team would be beneficial and would go towards reducing the costs involved in restoring homes, businesses, and highways after a flooding event.

# Agenda Item 8

The employment of two officers to join the team would enable regular maintenance of the 12.6km of Bromsgrove watercourses that were owned or maintained by BDC or that lacked maintenance due to unclear ownership. This would replace the current ad hoc approach which did not always provide enough resources to reduce the risk of serious flooding incidents from occurring. The Task Group agreed that where necessary, if flood alleviation work was undertaken on watercourses not owned by BDC a recharge policy would be pursued, bringing in additional revenue to the Council to help mitigate any costs from increased staffing levels.

A comparison to the cost of the Redditch Borough Council team was made and an estimate of approximately £100,000 was given, this included salaries, vehicles, maintenance and equipment for the drainage operatives. Officers advised that a business case would detail the exact costs and would be more appropriate given the costs involved.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<b>Recommendation 1</b>
That consideration be given to appoint two full-time specialist land drainage operatives for Bromsgrove and that a business case be undertaken.

## Chapter 2 – Information and Communications

During the interview with the Environmental Services Manager, it was clear that many agencies were involved in dealing with flooding in the District, including Worcestershire County Council (WCC) as Lead Local Flood and Highway Authority, NWWM, Severn Trent Water and the Environment Agency. In some areas it was reported that there were overlaps which caused complexity and roles were sometimes not as clearly defined as they might have been. This was confirmed at other interviews throughout the investigation and Members discovered that although the agencies involved knew their responsibilities it was not always so clear to members of the public when reporting a flooding event.

In addition to the clarity of roles there was evidence provided during the investigation that communication and engagement with local communities was a powerful tool in the prevention of flooding in the District. Evidence was presented by NWWM that closer working with local landowners had helped when enforcement was needed in cases of blocked culverts and ditches on their land which might result in a flood.

Severn Trent Water also suggested that Members should encourage residents to report flooding issues when experienced, as more notifications that were received resulted in greater leverage for agencies to investigate and reduce the risk of flooding and for future potential sources of funding. In addition to this, it was reported during the interview with Severn Trent Water that the majority of residential flooding issues were caused by wastewater misuse such as incorrect disposal of wet wipes, nappies and food waste and any communication by Members in respect of correct disposal of waste would be appreciated. Members thought this was useful information and that there needed to be heightened awareness within communities of the problems of water misuse. It was agreed that this was an area where Members could certainly provide assistance.

In respect of reporting a flood on the highway, the Task Group were informed by WCC officers that flood events could be reported through the portal on the WCC website. Signposts were also detailed on the portal for residents to report all types of flooding events including those on a main river, watercourse, surface water and sewer flooding. In fact, all agencies had mechanisms to report an incident and Members acknowledged that this was useful but agreed that residents who did not have a clear picture of the structure of flood management agencies would not necessarily always report to the most appropriate agency.

During the investigation Members were also keen to understand the schedule of works carried out regularly by agencies so that when residents contacted them regarding a flooding issue, they were able to refer them to information of when works were last carried out and when they would be carried out in the future.

Although both BDC and WCC confirmed that works were cyclic and planned, there were times when there needed to be amendments to respond to unexpected events or adverse weather conditions which meant that the work could not be carried out as planned. Members felt that this was an area that needed to be addressed for the future.

Across all of the interviews that were carried out by the Task Group there was evidence that greater engagement with local communities and communication helped when dealing with flooding issues in local communities. It was also suggested that greater engagement resulted in more reporting of flooding, better relationships between communities and agencies which resulted in a more proactive approach from both parties.

Members were keen to have an online campaign that promoted the work of NWWM and highlighted the roles of Flood Management agencies. It was noted that previously campaigns such as these had been carried out on the Council's social media platforms and websites and that these might be an appropriate way to communicate with a larger number of residents. In addition to this, press releases and the provision of information to Members in order for them to distribute to their networks would also be an appropriate way of communicating to local communities.

During the discussion of potential recommendations, it was suggested that it might be useful for an annual report in respect of flooding to be prepared for 2021 and annually thereafter and provided to Members. It was queried what the purpose would be for this presentation of this report as it could potentially take up a lot of officer resource and might only be used to gather information that could be accessed in an alternative way. There was particular interest from some Members regarding flood plains and any reported changes to them. It was confirmed that the information regarding flood plains was the responsibility of The Environment Agency and that they were not updated annually as it was an expensive and detailed project and so it would not be possible to include this information as part of an annual report. It was agreed that the most effective way to monitor any flooding work being undertaken by the Council was the addition of an annual Flooding item to the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<b>Recommendation 2</b>
Run a publicity campaign within the local community to raise the profile of North Worcestershire Water Management, the work it does and how the public can get in contact with the various flood risk management authorities if they are concerned about flooding or drainage issues

**Recommendation 3**

That the responsible authority(ies) publish a timetable of road sweeping and gully cleaning across the district.

**Recommendation 4**

That an annual item in respect of flooding be included in the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme.

## Chapter 3 – Local Plan

The Task Group discussed the importance of measures that were currently taken by BDC regarding Flood Management. All agencies that were interviewed by the Task Group provided information and evidence that Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) were part of future flood risk management planning and, as the Council was responsible for contributing to their implementation, this was considered by Members as an important topic to look at as part of their investigation and that Water Management was a significant area for the Council going forward.

NWWM provided evidence during their interview with the Task Group that SuDS were designed to drain an area in a more sustainable fashion compared to some more conventional techniques. In addition to this, it was reported to Members that, SuDS aimed to improve water quality, biodiversity and the amenity of an area while managing the quantity of water. WCC had also provided evidence that one of its future challenges was the exploration of options for the future maintenance of SuDS.

The Task Group were provided with a copy of the current Local Plan and discussed in detail the inclusion of SuDS within it. Members acknowledged that SuDS were already included in the Local Plan as part of the Water Management policy. However, it was noted that currently a review of the Local Plan was underway, and the Task Group members were keen to ensure the inclusion and consideration of SuDS in any future iterations of the Local Plan, particularly as they were considered such an important area for future local developments. Members also agreed that this would ensure that Planning Officers could be supported to enforce sustainable and appropriate new developments. Members were all in agreement with this. It was agreed that clarification was required on whether SuDS features are being considered for all developments. The Chairman added that the recommendation would clarify the existing plans.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

<b>Recommendation 5</b>
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RECOMMENDED that
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- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) as part of the review of Bromsgrove's Local Plan, adopt strict new planning policies requiring all new developments to consider the use of sustainable drainage facilities should be adopted; and</li><li>b) this should include measures for watercourse enhancement and flood alleviation where necessary; and</li><li>c) the Council will, subject to S106 funding, adopt land featuring watercourses and SuDS features on new developments.</li></ul> |
|--|



### **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD –Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group**

#### **Terms of Reference as at July 2020**

The Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group has been set up by the Overview & Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny/pre-scrutiny of the Review of Services to Prevent Flooding in the District.

1. The Task Group will be made up of 5 Members with a quorum of 3. The Task Group will meet throughout the next six months (with a caveat to extend, if necessary) at intervals to be decided by the Group.
2. The Task Group will be a standing item on the agenda of the Overview & Scrutiny Board and either a verbal or written report will be provided at each of the Board's meetings.
3. The Task Group is able to make recommendations to the Overview & Scrutiny Board who will then put forward its recommendations for consideration by Cabinet or directly to Cabinet/Council.
4. The Task group is expected to complete the investigation in six months (with a caveat to extend, if necessary) and provide its findings and recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in a written report at that time.

#### **Aims and Objectives of the Task Group**

Scrutiny of the Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group will cover the following areas, although this list is not exclusive:

- Review key incidents of flooding in the district, their causes and the effectiveness of responses.
- Assess whether sufficient work is being undertaken to prevent flooding
- Assess whether sufficient resources are made available for this work
- Assess whether there is sufficient transparency over responsibilities for managing and preventing flooding.

### OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

This form can be used for either a Task Group or a Short Sharp Review topic proposal.

Completed forms should be returned to [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk) – Democratic Services, Bromsgrove District Council.

<b>Name of Proposer: Rob Hunter</b>
Email: <a href="mailto:r.hunter@bromsgrove.gov.uk">r.hunter@bromsgrove.gov.uk</a>
Date: 16/01/2020

<b>Title of Proposed Topic</b>  (including specific subject areas to be investigate)	Review of services to prevent flooding
<b>Background to the Proposal</b>  (Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.)	Many areas across Bromsgrove experienced severe flooding during Autumn 2019. Anecdotally there is evidence to suggest the problems were exacerbated by a lack of prevention work such as keeping brooks, drains and culverts clear. Furthermore, as flood prevention transcends the remit of a number of authorities it can be difficult to establish which agency is responsible for remedying problems.
<b>Links to national, regional and local priorities</b>  (including the Council's strategic purposes)	Bromsgrove District Council Plan strategic purpose:  'Communities which are safe, well-maintained and green'
<b>Possible Key Objectives</b>  (these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review key incidents of flooding in the district, their causes and the effectiveness of responses</li> <li>- Assess whether sufficient work is being undertaken to prevent flooding</li> <li>- Assess whether sufficient resources are made available for this work</li> <li>- Assess whether there is sufficient transparency over responsibilities for managing and preventing flooding</li> </ul>
Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.	One year
Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)	Task Group

## Background Papers

### **External Documents**

Bromsgrove Flood Risk Management Plan – Worcestershire County Council

### **Internal Documents**

Bromsgrove District Plan – 2011 - 2030 (adopted January 2017)

## Witnesses

The Task Group considered evidence from the following sources before making its recommendations:

### **Internal Witnesses:**

Kevin Hirons – Environmental Services Manager, Bromsgrove District Council  
Councillor Margaret Sherrey – Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services,  
Bromsgrove District Council

### **External Witnesses**

Fiona McIntosh, Senior Water Management Officer - North Worcestershire Water Management

Kristen Huizer, Senior Water Management Officer – North Worcestershire Water Management

Michael Green, Senior Flood Risk Consultant – Worcestershire County Council  
Glen Lucitt - Worcestershire County Council

Tim Smith, Flooding and Partnerships Manager – Severn Trent Water

Jacqui Whitehead, Waste Network Asset Planning, Chief Engineer – Severn Trent Water

Mathew Jeynes, Waste Networks Operations Manager for Worcestershire - Severn Trent Water

Brandon Smith, Waste Catchment Lead - Severn Trent Water

## **Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services**

Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside Offices, Market Street

Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8DA

Telephone: (01527) 881443

Email: [scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk)

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# CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

**1 APRIL 2021 TO 31 JULY 2021**  
**(published as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 2021)**

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

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;

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 881443) 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 K J May	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships
Councillor A. Kent	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services (including Governance/Policy and Performance/HR)
Councillor S Webb	Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being
Councillor G. N. Denaro	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Councillor M Sherrey	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services
Councillor P Thomas	Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Community

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
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Bromsgrove District Council's Duty to Co-operate statement with Solihull <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021  Council 16 Jun 2021		Report of the Head of Planning Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325  Councillor A. D. Kent
Declaration of Land Surplus to Requirement - Marsh Way, Catshill South, Penshurst Road, Sideslow and Foxglove Way, Norton <b>Key:</b> Yes	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development Tel: 01562 732192  Councillor K. J. May
Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021		Report of the Head of Environmental and Property Services	Joanne Gresham, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252  Councillor M. A. Sherrey



Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Impact of Library Service Changes Task Group <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 2 Jun 2021		Report of the Chief Executive Officer	Joanne Gresham, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252  Councillor K. J. May
Local Development Scheme - Bromsgrove District Council <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 2nd Jun 2021  Council Not before 16th Jun 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325  Councillor A. D. Kent
Audit, Standards and Governance Committee - Annual Report 2020/21 <b>Key:</b> No	Council 16 Jun 2021		Report of the Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	Joanne Gresham, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2020/21 <b>Key:</b> No	Council 16 Jun 2021		Report of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board	Joanne Gresham, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252
Gatshill Neighbourhood Plan Adoption <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 7th Jul 2021  Council Not before 14th Jul 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325  Councillor A. D. Kent
Growth Options for Garden Waste Service <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 15 Sep 2021		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Matthew Austin, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01572 882537  Councillor M. A. Sherrey

01527 881325

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Bromsgrove District Council's Duty to Co-operate Statements with the Black Country <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 15th Sep 2021  Council Not before 29th Sep 2021		Report of the head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325  Councillor A. D. Kent
Bromsgrove District Council's Duty to Co-operate Statements with South Worcestershire Councils <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 15th Sep 2021  Council Not before 29th Sep 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325  Councillor A. D. Kent

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 15th Sep 2021  Council Not before 29th Sep 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development Tel: 01562 732192  Councillor K. J. May
Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Former Market Hall Site <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 15th Sep 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development Tel: 01562 732192  Councillor K. J. May
Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at Windsor Street <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 15th Sep 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development Tel: 01562 732192  Councillor K. J. May

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 20 Oct 2021 Council 3 Nov 2021		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01527 881705  Councillor M. A. Sherrey
Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and Homelessness Reduction Grant 2022/23 <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 19 Jan 2022		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284  Councillor S. A. Webb
Independent Remuneration Panel Report 2022/23 <b>Key:</b> No	Council 26 Jan 2022		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Darren Whitney, Electoral Services Manager  Councillor G. N. Denaro

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

### WORK PROGRAMME

2020/21

#### 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>
Monday 29 <sup>th</sup> March 2021	Staff Survey	Following presentation at the February 2020 meeting it was agreed that a further update would be received work programme in September 2020
	Mileage – Notice of Motion	
	Green Homes Funding	It was requested that this item be added to Board's Work Programme in January 2021 and considered depending on the date for consideration of the report by Cabinet.
	Impact of Libraries Review Task Group	
	Impact of Flooding Task Group	
	Working Group Updates	
	Cabinet Leader's Work Programme	
	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	
26 <sup>th</sup> April 2021	Annual Report 2020-2021 – review and Lessons Learnt	
	Recommendation Tracker	
	Equalities Task Group – Cabinet Response	
	Fireworks – Notice of Motion	
	Finance and Budget Working Group	
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader's Work Programme	
	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	

## **2021-22 Meeting Dates**

1<sup>st</sup> June 2020  
6<sup>th</sup> July 2021  
13<sup>th</sup> September 2021  
18<sup>th</sup> October 2021  
22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021  
11<sup>th</sup> January 2022  
14<sup>th</sup> February 2022  
28<sup>th</sup> March 2022  
25<sup>th</sup> April 2022

## **Items for consideration in 2021-22**

- Homelessness – Post Covid (including Homelessness - The Overview and Scrutiny Board could revisit recommendations made by a previous Task Group on this subject)

## **Areas Identified at the Work Programme Planning Event held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019 and to be scheduled into meetings on an as and when basis**

### **Potential Areas for further investigation**

- Public Transport / Bus Routes / Community Transport - Members agreed that this subject should be reviewed by a Task Group. The review could focus on public transport provision in rural areas and would require Members to consult with both the bus companies, Worcestershire County Council and BURT.
- Affordable and Social Housing Task Group - This review could focus on the accommodation provided by social housing organisations, planning enforcement and housing development controls and the impact of planning on the green belt.



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



**Run & grow a successful business**

**What does this mean to me?**

Businesses choose to come to Bromsgrove & grow here, providing services & jobs.

Further development enhances the town & district centres as places that people want to visit.

Improved connectivity makes life easier, whether that's on the roads or online.

**Why?**

As an entrepreneurial area, supporting business is incredibly important for the District. Through North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration we will continue to support new businesses. We will also work with established companies within the District to help them grow & flourish.

We are committed to making the Town & district centres places that residents & visitors can enjoy & that attract a variety of businesses.



**Priority: Economic development & regeneration**

**We will:**

Consult businesses to understand current needs & growth plans, working with partners to support business growth.

**How we will measure it:**

- Number of businesses engaged through the consultation
- Number of existing businesses supported to grow & develop

## Work & financial independence



### *What does this mean to me?*

There are more opportunities for young people, with the right skills for local businesses.

Money management support will help to reduce debt & increase financial confidence.

People get the benefits they are entitled to, when they need them.

### *Why?*

The economic picture for Bromsgrove District is positive, with consistently low unemployment. However, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (specifically income, employment & education indicators) show there were issues, particularly in parts of Charford & Sidemoor.

We will support our residents to access work opportunities in new industries, focusing on the skills agenda. We will also work with residents to help them manage their money & access the right benefits.



### **Priority: Skills for the future**

#### **We will:**

Undertake a skills audit with partners & work together with them to address any gaps.

#### **How we will measure it:**

- Number engaged through the skills audit.



**Live independent,  
active & healthy lives**

**What does this  
mean to me?**

People are supported to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Communities & individuals feel less isolated.

There are more positive things to do through improved access to sport & cultural activities.

**Why?**

Whilst the health of people in Bromsgrove District is generally good, health priorities include improving mental well-being, increasing physical activity & ageing well. Increasing numbers of people living with reduced mobility, dementia & diabetes are an issue for the District. Through the Bromsgrove Partnership, Bromsgrove District Council will continue to play its part in addressing these issues.

We also want to enhance sport & cultural opportunities in the District, which will have health & social benefits.



**Priority: Improving  
health & well-being**

**We will:**

Support targeted activities for healthy lifestyles.

**How we will measure it:**

- Number of people accessing targeted activities
- Number of people with diabetes
- Number of people who have had a stroke

## Affordable & sustainable homes



### *What does this mean to me?*

More affordable & appropriate homes become available.

Private tenants have homes which are safe & tenancies which are secure & affordable.

Homes can adapt to changes in circumstances & are increasingly energy efficient.

### *Why?*

Bromsgrove has the highest level of home ownership in Worcestershire, & the smallest private rented sector in the county; demand for housing within the district has had a significant impact on property prices.

Access to affordable housing is recognised as an issue, as is ensuring homes are sustainable into the future.



## Priority: A balanced housing market

### **We will:**

Develop & implement a District Housing Strategy.

### **How we will measure it:**

- Number of affordable homes (commitments & completions)

## Communities which are safe, well-maintained & green



### What does this mean to me?

Crime & anti-social behaviour reduces even further & the fear of crime also starts to decrease.

The district is well-maintained & people feel involved in keeping it clean.

It's easier to recycle more & reduce waste going to landfill.

### Why?

Bromsgrove District Council has committed to playing its part in addressing the impact of climate change; from work to increase recycling to support to reduce fuel poverty, a **green thread** runs throughout this Council Plan.

It is important to ensure that Bromsgrove remains attractive for everyone, & our Place Teams, in partnership with local communities, provide a strong service across the District.

The District is a low crime area; through the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership we continue to work hard to address the causes of crime & anti-social behaviour & to support victims.



### Priority: Reducing crime & disorder

#### We will:

Target the causes of crime affecting the night-time economy.

#### How we will measure it:

- Anti-social behaviour reports in the Town & district centres
- Crimes in the Town & district centres

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