



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**TUESDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2022**  
**AT 6.00 P.M.**

**PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE**

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

### **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 17th January 2022 (Pages 1 - 8)**
- 4. Mileage Benchmarking Update (Pages 9 - 14)**
- 5. Sustainable Warmth Funding - pre-scrutiny (Pages 15 - 22)**

The Background Papers for this item have been published in a separate Background Papers Pack for this meeting.

6. **The Council's 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 Draft - pre-scrutiny (Pages 23 - 52)**
7. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Verbal Update**
8. **Task Group Updates (Pages 53 - 86)**
9. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Verbal Update**
10. **Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 87 - 90)**
11. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 91 - 98)**

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

7th February 2022

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

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## **GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS**

**Due to the current Covid-19 pandemic Bromsgrove District Council will be holding this meeting in accordance with the relevant social distancing arrangements for holding face-to-face meetings at a local authority.**

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

### **GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON**

In advance of the Committee meeting, Members are strongly encouraged to take a lateral flow test on the day of the meeting, which can be obtained for free from the NHS website. Should the test be positive for Covid-19 then the Member should not attend the Committee meeting, should provide their apologies to the Democratic Services team and should self-isolate in accordance with national rules.

Members and officers must wear face masks during the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting, unless exempt. Face masks should only be removed temporarily if the Councillor/ officer requires a sip of water and should be reapplied as soon as possible. Refreshments will not be provided by the venue; therefore, Members and officers are encouraged to bring your own supply of water.

Hand sanitiser will be provided for Members to use throughout the meeting.

The meeting venue will be fully ventilated, and Members and officers may need to consider wearing appropriate clothing in order to remain comfortable during proceedings.

## **ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

Members of the public will still be able to access meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in person if they wish to do so. However, due to social distancing requirements to ensure the safety of participants during the Covid-19 pandemic there will be limited capacity and members of the public will be allowed access on a first come, first served basis. Members of the public in attendance are strongly encouraged to wear face masks, to use the hand sanitiser that will be provided and will be required to sit in a socially distance manner at the meetings. It should be noted that members of the public who choose to attend in person do so at their own risk.

In line with Government guidelines, any member of the public who has received a positive result in a Covid-19 test on the day of a meeting should not attend in person and should self-isolate in accordance with the national rules.

### **Notes:**

**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.**



## **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

### **Access to Information**

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- You can have access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to six years from the date of the meeting. These are listed at the end of each report.
- An electronic register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc. is available on our website.
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- Meeting Minutes
- The Council's Constitution

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# Agenda Item 3

Overview and Scrutiny Board  
17th January 2022

## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

**MONDAY 17TH JANUARY 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.**

PRESENT: Councillors C.A. Hotham (Chairman), J. Till, S. J. Baxter, A. J. B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, R. J. Hunter, H. J. Jones, P. M. McDonald, C. J. Spencer and M. Glass (Substitute)

Observers: Councillor K. May – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships  
Councillor G. Denaro – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling.

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks (via Microsoft Teams), Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr. J. Howse (via Microsoft Teams) Mr. G. Revans (via Microsoft Teams), Mr. K. Hirons (via Microsoft Teams) and Mr O. Paparega (via Microsoft Teams) and Mrs. J Gresham.

52/21

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

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A. Kriss with Councillor M. Glass in attendance as named substitute.

53/21

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

There were no Declarations of Interest nor of any Party Whip.

54/21

#### **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL CAR PARKS - ADOPTION OF CASHLESS PAYMENTS AND OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES FOR RECREATION ROAD SOUTH CAR PARK AND CHURCHFIELDS MULTI-STOREY CAR PARK - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Chairman invited Councillor K. May, who was in attendance in her role as Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships, to present the Bromsgrove District Council Car Parks - Adoption of Cashless Payments and Operational Procedures for Recreation Road South Car Park and Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park report. In doing so, the Board were informed that it was recommended that all Pay and Display car parks within the Town Centre were to adopt a cashless payment system. It was confirmed that in addition to the cashless payment option all car parks, except for

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Churchfields Multi-storey Car Park would retain one machine that would still accept cash payments. Members were advised that the decision to not have a machine that accepted cash payments at the Churchfields Multi-Storey car park was as a result of anti-social behaviour that had previously been experienced at this site.

The Environmental Services Manager, Mr. K. Hirons was welcomed to meeting to provide further information regarding the report to the Board. During which the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

- That the negotiations with a third party to take over the running and maintenance of the Recreation Road South Car Park had not been successful.
- The Mi Permit app had been introduced within the Town's car parks in 2021. This had provided flexibility to shoppers who visited the Town Centre.
- A full Equality Impact Assessment had been undertaken by the Council and the results of the survey had shown that 62% of users would use a cashless payment option and that 38% of users would not. This had resulted in the decision that a cash payment option be retained in most car parks and therefore minimise the potential discrimination for certain groups.
- The benefit of the introduction of cashless payments would allow the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) within the District to undertake more of their normal enforcement duties as they would be able to check on the viability of each vehicles' parking period electronically rather than having to visually inspect tickets which was the current process. It was also reported that a cost saving of £10.5k on cash collections and £4.5k on the cost of ticket supplies would be made by the Council as a result of these changes.

Following the presentation there was a detailed debate regarding the implementation of cashless payments and the potential impact on the residents within the District and further afield. Although Members welcomed the report there was some concern expressed regarding the lack of availability of cash payments at the Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park and that this might preclude some visitors from using the car park. In addition to this it was considered that it might be considered unfair to have a cheaper payment of a £3 all day parking fee at the Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park when using the Mi Permit app whilst the remaining car parks charged £5 for all day parking. Some Members wished to explore the possibility of keeping



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a cash payment option within this car park for those who were unable to use the Mi Permit app.

During the debate heritage street lighting within the Town Centre was discussed at length and some Members queried whether there would be a consistent approach in respect of the replacement of heritage street lighting in the future. It was explained to Members that the street lighting within the boundary of the heritage area of the town centre would be replaced by heritage street lighting however this would not be the case of street lighting outside of the heritage boundary.

During consideration of this item the following was also discussed by Members:

- Solar powered parking machines – Although some Members were pleased that some of the parking machines would be solar powered there was some concern that not all of them would be. Officers confirmed that the reason for this was that when making card payments a large battery charge was required and after looking at other Local Authorities who had opted to use solar powered parking machines it was discovered that these kinds of machines were not always consistently reliable.
- The resale price of the old machines that were no longer needed - it was reported that it was difficult to estimate what the potential resale price would be as this was dependent on market need.
- The sum of investment for the Council would be £1m over the next 4 years, with £250k of that amount being spent by the end of the 2021/22 Financial Year
- Life-expectancy of the replacement machines – although it was difficult to provide a definitive life-expectancy of the new machines it was hoped that this would be 10 years.

As a result of consideration of the report, Councillor R. Hunter proposed the following amendment to the recommendation, which was seconded by Councillor P. McDonald:

*That in addition to the cashless payment option at Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park a cash payment option also be made available to the users of the car park.*

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Officers confirmed to Members that this proposal would increase costs at the Churchfields site and that the cost of installing two machines was £10k. In addition to this, any resulting costs of the installation of two machines would be higher due to the ongoing maintenance or if one or both machines were subject to vandalism.

On being put to the vote the recommendation was lost.

In respect of the discussion regarding heritage lighting Councillor R. Hunter proposed a recommendation as follows:

*When any heritage street lighting within the town centre was replaced, it was replaced with the same heritage style lighting.*

This proposed recommendation was not seconded.

Councillor K. May suggested that it might be useful to have a heritage lighting discussion at a future meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. This was agreed by the Chairman and the item would be added to the Finance and Budget Working Group work programme.

**RESOLVED** that the Bromsgrove District Council Car Parks - Adoption of Cashless Payments and Operational Procedures for Recreation Road South Car Park and Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park be noted.

55/21

## **LEVELLING UP FUND - FORMER MARKET HALL AND WINDSOR ST SITES - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships presented the Levelling Up Fund - former Market Hall and Windsor Street site report and advised Members that £14.5m had been awarded from the Levelling Up fund. The Board was informed that some of the funding was to be utilised to develop a cultural and creative hub in Bromsgrove town centre. Prior to the officer presentation Councillor K. May thanked all of the officers involved in putting the successful bid together and stated that this was very exciting and a one-off opportunity for Bromsgrove and its residents.

Mr O. Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR), provided further detail regarding the report and its content and in doing so Members' attention was drawn to the following:

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- Market Hall site – It was planned that this would be the site of the cultural and creative hub. In addition to this there would be flexible working space provision for start-up businesses and a public art gallery would also be included in the project with the hope of attracting people to the town centre.
- Windsor Street – the project at this site would be pre-development i.e., preparing the site in readiness for development.
- The delivery timescales had recently been revised by Central Government to March 2025, which gave officers an extra 12-months to deliver the projects. However, under the Memorandum of Understanding, there was the possibility that a clawback clause could be triggered by Central Government should any of the funding remain unspent by the new deadline. Additional risks included the costs of the developments and delivery risk including resourcing and supplies. A detailed risk register was in place and would be monitored closely.

The Chairman invited Councillor G. Denaro, who was in attendance in his role as Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling to comment on the report and he reiterated that this was a great opportunity and might alleviate revenue pressures on the Council.

Although some Members were interested in the future of the United Reform Church on the Windsor Street site, they were informed that as it was a privately owned building it was not appropriate to discuss at a public meeting.

Some Members were interested in better understanding what the new role of the Programme Manager at NWEDR would be and whether this resource was already available within NWEDR. It was explained that there was a small team at NWEDR and with such complex projects, a wide spectrum of disciplines and strict deadlines involved it was important to have the correct resourcing available.

During a robust debate the following areas were also discussed by Members:

- Public consultation – Officers confirmed that public consultation would certainly take place at the appropriate time and would be publicised accordingly.
- Funding had been received from the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP) for the feasibility study for the bid and from Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

- A Feasibility Study was currently underway regarding the clearance of the Windsor Street site.

The Chairman echoed that this was a very exciting opportunity for the District and that he would be interested to see the funding bid that had been submitted in order to measure the success of the implementation. Officers undertook to provide the summary of the bid for the Board's information. Finally, there was discussion regarding the governance of the Programme Board and the Chairman thought that it would be appropriate to have additional elected Members on the Programme Board e.g., the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services. Councillor K. May informed Members that she would speak to the relevant officers to see if this was a possibility and would be happy to include these members on the Programme Board if appropriate.

**RESOLVED** that Levelling Up Fund - former Market Hall and Windsor Street sites report be noted.

56/21

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

The Chairman introduced the Finance and Budget Working Group update and informed Members that the last meeting of the Working Group had been a lengthy one. The items considered had included the Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums report. Members had been encouraged that there was to be a change in the way Council Tax on empty homes was administered in the future.

In respect of Fees and Charges, the Board was informed that there had been an increase in the cost of memorial benches. However, this was in line with market cost and other Local Authorities. It was explained to the Board that at this meeting there had been discussion regarding gambling licences and the Executive Director Resources explained that the licence fees were set subject to government controls and that the fees collected were kept at a local level.

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

57/21

## **TASK GROUP UPDATES**

Councillor S. Colella, in his role as Chairman of the Impact of the Library Service Review Task Group informed Members that the Task Group had met once since the last meeting of the Board and that another meeting had been scheduled to take place on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022.

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

58/21

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

Councillor S. Baxter provided the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) update and explained that there had been one meeting since the Board had last met. Members were informed that at the meeting Integrated Care Systems (ICS) were considered and what the new systems would mean for patients. It was reported that it was hoped that by implementing ICS there would be a more joined up approach across the County.

The Board were also informed that the last two years had been particularly difficult for critical care but that it was hoped that this would now slowly improve.

Councillor S. Baxter reminded Members that the minutes were circulated by the Democratic Services Officer, and these provided additional detail to the items that were considered at the HOSC meetings.

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

59/21

## **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman highlighted to Members that the Sustainable Warmth Programme had been added to the work programme since the publication of the agenda and it was agreed that this item would be considered at the next meeting of the Board in February 2022.

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

60/21

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

The Democratic Services Officer presented the item in respect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme. In doing so it was confirmed that the reports that had been queried by Councillor R. Hunter at the last meeting of the Board in on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 had been added to the work programme as requested. These items were as follows:

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- Land Drainage Watercourse Maintenance Operation – pre-scrutiny
- Housing enforcement powers and how they are used

In addition to this the Democratic Services Officer undertook to make the addition of the Sustainable Warmth Funding as detailed during consideration of the previous item.

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

61/21

**TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 22ND NOVEMBER 2021**

The minutes from the previous meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 were submitted for consideration by the Board.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the Board meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2021 were a true and accurate record.

The meeting closed at 7.40 p.m.

Chairman

### Overview & Scrutiny Board

15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

#### Mileage Benchmarking Update

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Denaro   |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes   |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Deb Poole, Head of Transformation and Organisational Development  |
| Report Author  | Job Title: Becky Talbot<br>Contact<br>email:becky.talbot@fbromesgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: 01527 64252 |
| Wards Affected   | NA  |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   | NA  |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)  | An Effective and Sustainable Council  |
| 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:-

1) that the update on the mileage be noted

#### 2. BACKGROUND

A paper regarding mileage was presented to the Overview & Scrutiny Board following a motion being put to Full Council. The excerpt from the minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021 indicate that it was agreed benchmarking data would be considered by officers and shared with the committee.

*‘Councillor P. McDonald, who had submitted the original motion to Full Council, queried the decrease compared to other local authorities and whether the data provided had been bench-marked to other Councils. Officers reported that benchmarking had not been undertaken however, they agreed to carry out an exercise with other comparable, local authorities. Although Members were in agreement that this kind of benchmarking exercise be carried out some Members felt that caution should be exercised to ensure that appropriate Councils were used as a comparison’.*

## Overview & Scrutiny Board

15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The Financial implications can be found in the Appendix 1

### 4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no legal implications as a result of this reports

### 5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

#### Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1 An Effective and Sustainable Council

#### Climate Change Implications

5.2 There are no implications as a result of this reports

### 6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

#### Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 There are no implications as a result of this reports

#### Operational Implications

6.2 There are no implications as a result of this reports

### 7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 There are no implications as a result of this reports

### 8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Mileage Briefing Note

Appendix 2 - Notice of Motion



### Overview & Scrutiny Board

15<sup>th</sup> February 2022

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#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department  | Name and Job Title | Date       |
|---|--------------------|------------|
| Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Denaro  | 02/02/2022 |
| Lead Director / Head of Service                               | Deb Poole          | 02/02/2022 |
| Financial Services  | James Howse        | 02/02/2022 |
| Legal Services  | NA                 |            |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)                | NA                 |            |
| Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply) | NA                 |            |

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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.

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### Cabinet

### 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

#### **SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUNDING**

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>   | Councillors Shirley Webb/Michael Thompson  |
| <b>Portfolio Holder Consulted</b>  | Yes  |
| <b>Relevant Head of Service</b>  | Judith Willis  |
| <b>Report Author</b>   | <b>Name:</b><br>Kath Manning<br><b>Job Title:</b><br>Climate Change Officer<br><b>Contact email:</b><br>kath.manning@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br><b>Contact Tel:</b><br>Ext 3044   |
| <b>Wards Affected</b>  | No specific ward relevance.  |
| <b>Ward Councillor(s) consulted</b>  | n/a  |
| <b>Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)</b>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affordable and Sustainable Homes</li> <li>- Living independent, active &amp; healthy lives</li> <li>- Work &amp; financial independence</li> <li>- Communities which are safe, well maintained &amp; green</li> </ul> |
| Non-Key Decision   |  |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |  |

#### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Cabinet **RECOMMEND** that:

- 1) The Capital and Revenue Budgets are increased to receive Bromsgrove District Council's Sustainable Warmth scheme allocation of £429,000.
  
- 2) Delegated authority is granted to the Head of Community & Housing Services in consultation with Portfolio Holders for Housing and Climate Change to administer the funding received in line with the grant conditions.

### Cabinet

16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The Sustainable Warmth Competition originating from the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (“**BEIS**”) awarded funding to the Midlands Energy Hub (“**MEH**”) administered by Nottingham City Council, after MEH successfully submitted a proposal for West Midlands local housing authorities to deliver this funding.

The Sustainable Warmth funding will support energy efficiency measures and low carbon heating, with an aim of upgrading homes with poor energy efficiency (Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating D, E, F or G) to a target energy efficiency rating of EPC C, or EPC D where this is not possible.

Sustainable Warmth Funding has two components:

- Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1 for properties not connected to mains gas
- Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 for properties connected to mains gas

Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) has been allocated funding based on the proportion of housing in the borough likely to have a poor Energy Performance rating and the proportions of properties connected to mains gas.

The deadline to accept the allocation is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

- 2.2. Key information regarding BEIS scheme criteria:

- Eligibility is based on fuel poverty risk – having a low income and living in a home with poor energy efficiency.
- Measures must be targeted at properties with the worst energy efficiency – Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) E, F and G. Up to 30% EPC D properties can also be included.
- Households must be either
  - private owners or renters with an income of less than £30k or with other factors which are a proxy for low income such as receipt of means tested benefits, food and fuel vouchers
  - social housing tenants.
- Sustainable Warmth funding focusses on owner occupier and private rental properties. Social housing stock is capped at 10% of the total number of HUG 1 homes and 10% of the total number of homes for LAD 3 to enabling mixed tenure area-based schemes.

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### 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

- Maximum average grant per property is £10,000 for LAD3 and £15,000 for HUG. For privately rented or social housing properties, the grant can only be up to one third of the cost of measures and of the above amounts. Any owner occupier properties are required by BEIS to be fully funded using the grant monies.
  - Funding must be delivered to Publicly Available Specification (PAS) 2035 (PAS 2035:2019 Specification for the energy retrofit of domestic buildings) using Trustmark accredited contractors. This includes use of Retrofit Assessors, Coordinators and Designers to ensure that measures are appropriate to the whole property and the longer term and delivered to an agreed standard.
  - Any installations proposed should follow the recommendations of the Retrofit Co-ordinator. This means maximising the proportion of insulation and clean heat measures installed (measures including solid wall, cavity wall and loft insulation, and heat pumps) and limiting the proportion of other measures (measures such as Solar PV/thermal, windows and doors).
  - The period of this Grant is from the date of allocation until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 unless extended by MEH with permission from BEIS and HM Treasury as required.
- 2.3. The deadline for delivery of LAD 2 has been extended to July 31<sup>st</sup> 2022 and therefore will overlap with Sustainable Warmth funding.

### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. BDC's allocation is as follows (with the maximum amount for Social Housing shown in brackets):

|  | Capital            | Administrative Allocation (Admin and Ancillary) |
|--|--------------------|---|
| <b>Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) Phase 1</b>      | £190,000 (£19,000) | £19,000 (£1,900)                                |
| <b>Local Authority Delivery (LAD)Phase 3</b> | £200,000 (£20,000) | £20,000 (£2,000)                                |

- 3.2. As per government guidance, the scheme will be targeted at privately owned housing, as there are other funding streams dedicated to Social Housing e.g. the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF). The

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16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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social housing allocation will be used to also enable upgrades to neighbouring social housing stock owned by any Registered Provider e.g., in a mixed tenure block of flats. This may include but is not limited to works by Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT), who are working with BDC on LADS 2 delivery.

- 3.3. Where the Grant includes capital funding, accounting standards permit, in certain circumstances, the capitalisation of costs incurred when delivering the capital assets for the fund (for example, administrative and ancillary). The Council will keep such costs incurred in delivery to below 10% of the HUG 1 total Grant and 10% of the LAD 3 total Grant independently provided by the Secretary of State. In all other cases capital funding must not be spent on revenue.
- 3.4. The Administrative Allocation may be used for administration and ancillary work including, but not limited to:
  - Project management, reporting and governance costs;
  - Pre-installation EPCs to target households, verify eligibility and evidence improvements to the property;
  - Building works to prepare for installation;
  - Retrofit co-ordinator training costs; and
  - Resident targeting, low-income verification and sign-up including lead generation and communication activities.
- 3.5. The Grant shall be paid in the following way:
  - 10% of the total Grant Amount shall be paid to the Council within 30 days following the receipt by MEH of the signed copy of the grant letter. This is intended to be used to support any required survey works and can be used as capitalisation;
  - 10% shall be released within 30 days of approval by MEH of the Council's Development Plan and meeting of any pre-conditions;
  - Additional 20% quarterly payments will be released within 30 days of the 1st April, 1st July, 1st Oct and 1st Jan following receipt by MEH of ongoing timeline monthly reporting and maintaining 80% of their delivery profile provided in the Development Plan.
- 3.6. The amount of the Grant shall not be increased in the event of any overspend by the Council.
- 3.7. Any unspent Grant monies shall be returned to MEH within 25 calendar days of the end of the Grant Period unless otherwise agreed between the parties.



### Cabinet

16<sup>th</sup> February 2021

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#### 4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The general power of competence in s1 of the Localism Act 2011 empowers the council to undertake such a project.
- 4.2 The Grant is part of a capital funding scheme distribution by way of Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003. The Grant must therefore be used in line with Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003 and any regulations or subsidiary legislation made under that Section.
- 4.3 An existing OJEU compliant framework contract between Bromsgrove District Council and Surefire Management Services will be used to procure delivery of the works.
- 4.4 A legal review of the Grant Conditions will be undertaken prior to acceptance.

#### 5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

##### Relevant Strategic Purposes

- 5.1 The funding aligns as follows:
  - **Affordable and Sustainable Homes:** decarbonising and improving the energy efficiency of homes
  - **Living independent, active & healthy lives:** healthier home environments
  - **Work & financial independence:** addressing fuel poverty
  - **Communities which are safe, well maintained & green:** reducing carbon emissions

##### Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 This funding is specifically to reduce energy consumption with an emphasis on decarbonisation, so is key for addressing Climate Change.

#### 6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

##### Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1. Allocation of the funding will be based on criteria set by BEIS and will not be based on personal characteristics other than related to income.
- 6.2. Equality and Diversity considerations particularly in relation to accessibility will be included in all aspects of the project, with the Policy Team consulted as necessary.

#### Operational Implications

- 6.4. The Council must submit a Development Plan for their project to MEH
- to MEH by 28<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
  - The Development Plan must be submitted in accordance with the Midlands Energy Hub’s Guidance for Local Authorities and BEIS schemes guidance:  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/993972/sustainable-warmth-competition-guidance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/993972/sustainable-warmth-competition-guidance.pdf)
- 6.5 MEH have appointed local energy advice agency Act on Energy to deliver the ‘customer journey’ and all referrals will be directed to them.
- 6.6 As part of the Development Plan, the Council will be responsible for carrying out or arranging for the reasonable ongoing due diligence, controlling, monitoring, reporting, as well as managing any specific cases of suspected or identified fraud.
- 6.7 Capacity for this within the Council is extremely limited, so the intention is to use the administration funding to secure external support e.g. from Worcestershire County Council, otherwise the project would unlikely to be able to go ahead.
- 6.8 To ensure sufficient technical expertise, appropriately qualified and experienced Retrofit Assessors, Coordinators and Designers will be procured, either using the existing SMS framework contract or using the MEH Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS).

#### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

| <b>Risk</b>                    | <b>Effect</b>                                 | <b>Mitigation</b>   |
|--------------------------------|---|---|
| No funding                     | Benefits not realised.                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accept funding</li> </ul>  |
| Timescales - deadlines not met | Funding not accessed or needs to be returned. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Secure adequate capacity.</li> <li>• Regular monitoring of spend.</li> <li>• Close communication with Midlands Energy Hub regarding potential delays and any need for reallocation.</li> <li>• Finance and legal to review Grant Conditions regarding</li> </ul> |

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|  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
|  |  | any risks related to returning funding.   |
| Covid19  | Transmission and resultant harm, impact on timescales. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Covid-secure practices.</li> <li>• Health and Safety involvement in project planning.</li> </ul>     |
| Insufficient experience of low carbon technologies | Measures underperform                                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procure suitably qualified and experienced retrofit assessors, coordinators and designers</li> </ul> |

#### 8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background papers:

- MEH Green Homes Grants Sustainable Warmth – Grant Letter Bromsgrove

#### 9. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department                      | Name and Job Title   | Date      |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------|
| Portfolio Holder                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cllr Shirley Webb<br/>Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being</li> <li>• Cllr Michael Thompson<br/>Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change</li> </ul> | 24/1/2021 |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Judith Willis<br/>Head of Community &amp; Housing Services</li> </ul>   | 24/1/2021 |
| Financial Services              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• James Howse<br/>Executive Director of Resources</li> <li>• Chris Forrester<br/>Head of Finance and Customer Services</li> </ul>   | 25/1/2021 |

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|                        |  |               |
|------------------------|--|---------------|
| Legal Services         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Clare Flanagan<br/>Principal Solicitor</li></ul> | 21/1/2021     |
| Climate Change Officer | Kath Manning<br>Climate Change Officer   | Report author |

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### THE COUNCIL'S 2022/23 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN FOR 2022/23 TO 2024/25 - DRAFT

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Geoff Denaro  |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   | Yes  |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Chris Forrester  |
| Report Author  | Name: Chris Forrester<br>Job Title: Head of Service<br>email: chris.forrester@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk<br>Contact Tel: |
| Wards Affected   | N/A  |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   | N/A  |
| Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)  | All  |
| Non-Key Decision   |  |
| If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting. |  |

#### 1. RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 1.1 The Cabinet RECOMMEND that Full Council approve: -

- 1) the overall net general fund revenue budgets (as set out in Section 4.9) of:

2022/23: £12.069m  
2023/24: £11.947m  
2024/25: £12.076m

- 2) the unavoidable costs as attached at Appendix 1:

2022/23: £0.250m  
2023/24: £0.016m  
2024/25: £0.016m

- 3) the Revenue Bids as attached at Appendix 2:

2022/23: £0.148m  
2023/24: £0.107m  
2024/25: £0.086m

- 4) the Identified Savings as attached at Appendix 3:

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2022/23: £0.176m  
2023/24: £0.176m  
2024/25: £0.176m

- 5) an increase of the Council Tax per Band D equivalent of £5 for 2022/23.
- 6) the transfer from General Fund Balances of £0.411m for 2022/23.
- 7) the planned reallocation of £0.382m from Earmarked reserves to General Fund Balances as set out at Appendix 5.
- 8) the General Fund capital programme as at Appendix 4 of:

2022/23: £2.410m  
2023/24: £1.390m  
2024/25: £1.946m

### 1.2 And that the Cabinet ask the Council to note

- 1) the 2020/21 Capital Outturn as reported at Appendix 7.
- 2) The Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Opinion on Estimates and Reserve Levels as reported in Appendix 6.

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#### 2. BACKGROUND

##### Purpose

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to set the Council's (General Fund) Revenue and Capital Budget for 2022/23, as well as the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.
- 2.2 The Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) provides the framework within which the revenue and capital spending decisions can be made.
- 2.3 The Strategic Purposes that drive the financial considerations are:
- Run and grow successful business
  - Work & financial independence
  - Living independent, active & healthy lives
  - Affordable & sustainable homes
  - Communities which are safe, well maintained & green
- 2.4 This report includes recommendations to Council to enable a balanced budget to be set for 2022/23 and the proposed Council Tax for 2022/23. The recommendations will then be presented to Council on 23rd February 2022 together with the resolutions once we have received all the precepting bodies Council Tax calculations.

##### Financial Context

- 2.5 The Council faces a challenging financial context having:
- i) identified (but still needs to deliver) significant savings over the medium term;
  - ii) reserve balances which are currently adequate (but no more) and above minimum levels – but which are forecast to reduce without further action; and
  - iv) high levels of planning uncertainty with regards to the levels of available funding in coming years and with regard to the impact of Covid-19 on key income streams such as car parking and Leisure.
- 2.6 The Council therefore needs to continue to carefully consider how it prioritises resources and balances budgets in a sustainable and affordable way, as part of this (and future) budget round(s).

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- 2.7 Members and officers have therefore reviewed the services provided by the Council over the last 6 months to consider the levels of funding available to the Council and identified where potential savings can be made or additional income generated.
- 2.8 The Finance and Budget Working Group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Board has met on a regular basis to review budget related issues (including reports on underlying risks, pressures and uncertainties as well as income matters and fees and charges opportunities).

#### **Unprecedented Levels of Uncertainty**

- 2.9 It should be noted that the future of the system of local government finance remains uncertain. The government has committed to re-assess the baseline need for spend in each local authority (through its 'Fair Funding review'). This has been pushed back (again) to 2023/24 at the earliest - but is still expected to happen. This review will have a significant impact on the government's calculation of the Settlement Funding Assessment for (and therefore the amount of funding available to) this council - and remains therefore a significant risk.
- 2.10 It also remains uncertain as to what the Government's plans are with regards to the system of business rates - including the share of business rates retained locally.
- 2.11 A one-year provisional Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and has been incorporated into this report. It remains unclear as to when Government will announce more funding certainty through a multi-year financial settlement for Local Government.
- 2.12 Furthermore, the short, medium and long term impact of the Covid- 19 pandemic and UK's exit from the European Union (on residents, the economy and the state of national and local government finance) remains uncertain. Locally, the impact of Covid-19 on car parking and Leisure services income is particularly relevant given the importance of these income streams.
- 2.13 Taken together therefore (the outcome of the fair funding review, the future of business rates and the local government financial settlement, COVID-19, Brexit and the state of the local and national economy) represents a challenging context within which to set the budget and MTFP - one characterised by an unprecedented level of uncertainty.



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#### 3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 In order to clearly explain the basis of the Budget proposals this report (which sets out all financial implications) will be structured as follows:

#### 4) **General Fund Revenue**

##### i. **The Prior Year MTFP 2021/22 – 2023/24**

*This section which will summarise the previous Council approved MTFP as a reminder of the previously approved starting point.*

##### ii. **Updated Forecast Outturn Position for 2021/22**

*This section will update the starting revenue position for 21/22 and therefore update the opening balances for 22/23.*

##### iii. **The 22/23 Budget and (updated) MTFP for the period 22/23 – 24/25**

*This section will set out the updated Budget and MTFP forecast for approval.*

##### iv. **The Updated MTFP and General Fund Forecasts**

*This section will summarise the impact of the updated 22/23 Budget and MTFP forecast on the Council's General Fund balance position over the medium term.*

##### v. **Reconciling the current updated MTFP to the Feb 2021 Approved MTFP**

*This section will analyse and explain the movements from the previous approved Budget and MTFP to the updated 22/23 Budget and MTFP.*

##### vi. **Council Tax increase**

##### vii. **Reallocation of Earmarked Reserves to General Fund**

This section sets out those reserves previously earmarked for specific purposes that can be release back to the General Fund Reserve.

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#### viii. Covid General Grant

This section summarises the position on general Covid grant funding received by the Council.

#### 5) Collection Fund and Precepts

#### 6) Capital Programme

### 4. GENERAL FUND REVENUE

#### The Prior Year MTFP 2021/22 – 2023/24 (approved February 2021)

- 4.1 The Council's MTFP is updated annually and was previously approved for the three-year period 2021/22 to 2024/25 by full Council in February 2021.
- 4.2 The following table sets out what, at that point (Feb 2021) the MTFP forecast in terms of annual budget deficits and opening and closing general fund balances.

Table 1: The Prior Year MTFP and General Fund Balance Forecasts

|                            | <b>21/22</b>  | <b>22/23</b>  | <b>23/24</b>  |
|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| <b>General Fund</b>        | <b>£000's</b> | <b>£000's</b> | <b>£000's</b> |
| Opening Balance            | 4,284         | 4,306         | 3,206         |
| Annual (Deficit) / Surplus | 22            | (1,099)       | (1,472)       |
| <b>Closing Balance</b>     | <b>4,306</b>  | <b>3,206</b>  | <b>1,735</b>  |

- 4.3 Table 1 shows that the previously (Feb 2021) approved MTFP predicted a surplus of £22k in 2021/22. The Council was expected to move to an in-year deficit position of £1.099 million in 2022/23 and £1.472 million in 2023/24.
- 4.4 Annual deficits require the Council to utilise its General Reserve balances. As at February 2021, the MTFP, based on the annual deficits forecast above, showed that the Council's General Fund Balances would reduce from £4.284 million a 1st April 2021 to £1.735 million at 31st March 2024.

#### Updated Forecast Outturn Position for 2021/22

- 4.5 The forecast outturn position for the General Fund balance at the end of this current year (2021/22) is currently £4.257m (after forecast 21/22 Outturn and technical adjustments but before any unplanned transfers from Earmarked Reserves).

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#### **The 22/23 Budget and (updated) MTFP for the period 22/23 – 24/25**

- 4.6 The MTFP has been updated for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 to model the impact of changes in assumptions, budgetary pressures, reductions in funding and savings.
- 4.7 The 22/23 Budget and updated MTFP is summarised (in terms of its annual revenue and general fund forecasts) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25 in the table below:

**Table 2: The Updated MTFP and Annual Revenue Budgets**

- 4.8 The proposed budget is summarised in the table below:

|  | 2022-23        | 2023-24        | 2024-25        |
|--|----------------|----------------|----------------|
|  | £000           | £000           | £000           |
| <b>Departmental base budget</b>                | 11,673         | 11,682         | 11,890         |
| Incremental Progression/Inflation on Utilities | 174            | 318            | 260            |
| Unavoidables Pressures                         | 250            | 16             | 16             |
| Revenue Bids & Revenue impact of capital bids  | 148            | 107            | 86             |
| Savings and Additional income                  | -176           | -176           | -176           |
| Changes in Specific Grant/Funding Movements    | 0              | 0              | 0              |
| <b>Net Revenue Budget Requirement</b>          | <b>12,069</b>  | <b>11,947</b>  | <b>12,076</b>  |
| <b>Financing</b>                               |                |                |                |
| Funding from reserves                          | -100           | 0              | 0              |
| Lower Tier Services Grant                      | -700           | 0              | 0              |
| Business Rates Net Position                    | -2,510         | -2,510         | -2,510         |
| New Homes Bonus                                | -363           | 0              | 0              |
| Collection Fund Deficit (Council Tax)          | -175           | 0              | 0              |
| Council Tax                                    | -8,937         | -9,243         | -9,560         |
| Investment Income                              | -0             | -0             | -0             |
| Interest Payable                               | 260            | 262            | 249            |
| MRP (Principal)                                | 1,081          | 1,172          | 1,078          |
| Discount on advanced pension payment           | -214           | -40            | -120           |
| <b>Funding Total</b>                           | <b>-11,658</b> | <b>-10,360</b> | <b>-10,864</b> |
| <b>General Balances</b>                        | <b>2022-23</b> | <b>2023-24</b> | <b>2024-25</b> |
|  | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    | <b>£000</b>    |
| Opening Balances 21/22 (projected)             | 4,257          | 3,846          | 2,259          |
| Contribution (from) / to General Balances      | -411           | -1,588         | -1,213         |
| <b>Closing Balances</b>                        | <b>3,846</b>   | <b>2,259</b>   | <b>1,046</b>   |

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Explanatory Notes

- 1) All Service Teams / Departments have a base budget which includes staff budgets.
- 2) Staff budgets are subject to incremental progression as staff become more experienced within graded posts.
- 3) A number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable” and are further analysed in this report.
- 4) Budget setting includes a ‘bidding process’ for additional resources – set out below.
- 5) Budget setting includes the identification of savings and income – set out below.
- 6) Specific grant funding, where confirmed, is set against services as appropriate.
- 7) Financing includes an element of planned reserve usage.
- 8) The Council receives a ‘Lower Tier’ grant from Central Government.
- 9) The Council retains an element of its business rates receipts to fund services.
- 10) The Council retains its own element of council tax bills (it collects for all precepting authorities). The budget includes an increase of £5 (band D) - the maximum allowable without a referendum.
- 11) An element of Collection Fund surplus / deficit impacts on the Council General Fund.
- 12) New Homes Bonus has been confirmed by Central Government.
- 13) The Council earns interest on investment balances.
- 14) Minimum Revenue Provision costs reflect capital borrowing / repayment costs.
- 15) Borrowing costs based on forecast interest rates.
- 16) The Council has benefitted financially from paying some of its Pension commitments calculated at the last Actuarial Review in one lump sum (to Worcestershire Local Government Pension Fund).

4.9 The above table sets out how the Council’s expenditure profile will be met by a combination of external funding and use of reserves over the period.

4.10 The table also shows that the General Reserve Balance is forecast to remain above minimum levels (currently set at £1.5m) until partway through the 24/25 financial year.

**Analysis of key changes to the MTFP – Forecast General Fund Balances**

4.11 The following table sets out how the draft MTFP (as summarised in Section 4.9) compares to the previous MTFP in terms of forecast closing general fund balances:

4.12 Table 3: The Updated (versus Previous) MTFP and General Fund Forecasts

| General Fund Closing Balance     | 21/22        | 22/23        | 23/24        | 24/25        |
|----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
|                                  | £000’s       | £000’s       | £000’s       | £000’s       |
| <b>Previous approved</b>         | <b>4,306</b> | <b>3,206</b> | <b>1,735</b> | N/A          |
| <b>Updated (per this report)</b> | <b>4,257</b> | <b>3,846</b> | <b>2,259</b> | <b>1,046</b> |

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- 4.13 The table above shows that the 2021/22 General Fund closing position remains largely unchanged (£4.257 million as opposed to £4.306 million) than that forecast when the budget was approved in Feb 2021.
- 4.14 The table demonstrates that the updated MTFP forecasts a General Fund Balance of £3.846 million at the end of 2022/23 (compared to £3.206 million) which remains above minimum set levels of £1.5 million.
- 4.15 Table 4 shows that the General Fund balance is now forecast to total £2.259 million at the end of 2023/24 (compared to £1.735 million in the previous MTFP), and (without further action) reduce to £1.046m at the end of 24/25 which is below minimum set levels.

#### **Reconciling the current updated MTFP to the Feb 2021 Approved MTFP**

- 4.16 Changes need to be made to the Council's budget and MTFP to keep them up to date and robust. In order to make these changes as transparent as possible these changes have been summarised in Table 4 below.
- 4.17 Table 4: Reconciliation of Previous and Updated MTFP - Adjustments made to the Annual Budget Forecasts 22/23 and 23/24

|  | <b>22/23</b> | <b>23/24</b> |
|--|--------------|--------------|
|  | <b>£000s</b> | <b>£000s</b> |
| <b>Previous Forecast Deficit (Feb 21 Budget)</b> | <b>1,099</b> | <b>1,472</b> |
| + Corrections and Assumption changes             | 45           | 169          |
| + Pressures                                      | 250          | 16           |
| + Funding impact                                 | -956         | 0            |
| + Resource Planning and Prioritisation (RPP)     | -28          | -69          |
| <b>= Updated Forecast Surplus / Deficit</b>      | <b>411</b>   | <b>1,588</b> |

- 4.18 The above summary shows that the annual budget deficits (before appropriation of General Fund Balances or General Covid Grant) are now forecast at £0.411m for 2022/23 (previously £1.099m), and £1.588m for 23/24 (previously £1.472m).
- 4.19 In order to better explain what is driving these changes in budget forecasts, this summary is further explained and analysed below:

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#### Corrections and Assumption changes (net £45k in 22/23)

- 4.20 All budgets include estimates and assumptions. Eg. Inflation and interest rates. These are updated annually.
- 4.21 One of the outcomes of budgetary control, closedown and setting procedures is also the identification of inaccuracies. There are a large number of such amendments which are individually usually small. The larger factors to the overall changes here include:
- Inflation. One of the pressures to the budget is general inflation on utility costs along with additional costs in relation to pay. The costs relating to pay inflation are above that initially anticipated. The original budget included a 1% pay award however the best estimate is now 2% which adds an additional pressure of circa £80k pa. Other pressures have been contained within budgets where possible.
  - MRP, interest costs and investment income budgets lines have all been reviewed and reduced compared to prior year forecasts. These changes are due to a review of the capital programme to reflect more accurately planned spend. This reduces significantly MRP and borrowing costs – but also investment income (which has also been revised to take account of the short-term focus on delivering the Levelling up Programme of work rather than alternative strategic investments). The overall net impact is a £129k saving in 22/23.
  - This budget also includes the impact of recent decisions to amend the Council's policies with regards to Council Tax premiums and discounts which aim to incentivise more empty homes being brought back into use from 2022/23.

#### Pressures

- 4.22 Expenditure (and income) budgets required to deliver previously approved strategies and plans are subject to a multitude of market forces, sector issues, demographics and other matters.
- **Unavoidable Costs/Bids (£250k 22/23).** When proposing the budget officers have also identified a number of budget pressures that have been deemed “unavoidable”. These unavoidable pressures include the ongoing effects of pressures identified during 2021/22 together with any issues that have been raised as fundamental to maintaining service provision as part of the budget process. In addition, income shortfalls that cannot be managed by improved marketing or price increases have been addressed during the budget planning. They are set out in full in Appendix 1.

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- Unavoidable pressures include a £200k estimated reduction on car park income which represents the best estimate of the impact of Covid-19 on usage in 22/23. As part of the RPP process, proposals to increase car park income through higher charges were put forward and discussed. In light of concerns about the impact of price increases on demand, and the knock-on impact on the High Street, these proposals were not progressed within this Budget. This budget area remains an area of risk for the Council which will require careful monitoring – particularly given the circa £1 million (pre Covid) annual budgeted income level. Fees will inevitably also need to be revisited in future budget rounds.
- It should be noted that the Council's Leisure budgets remain a risk area for the Council given the degree of uncertainty concerning Covid-19 and its impact on the leisure sector. The Council's budget includes (Pre Covid agreed contracted) income levels of £0.557m for 2022/23. It is not proposed that this income budget is amended at this time. However, it is acknowledged that this is an area of very specific risk that must be considered in the context of the Council's reserve balances (including Covid General Fund grant funding).

#### Resource Planning and Prioritisation (RPP):

4.23 RPP is the outcome of the steps taken to identify options to do things differently and more efficiently, to identify savings but also required areas of investment. It is the culmination of a 'check and challenge' process with regards to the Council's budgets, led by the Corporate Management Team and presented to Cabinet (and ultimately full Council). It is a critical element of the Council operating within available resources.

- **Bids (£148k 22/23).** In addition to the unavoidable pressure's revenue bids have been identified and included at Appendix 2. Bids relate to new funding requests made by officers to improve service delivery or to realise future efficiencies. Revenue 'bids' included in these budget proposals include developments relating to ICT (re maintaining core digital and cyber security related infrastructure) and supporting greater agile work. Work is also planned in relation to lower carbon emissions which requires investment. Additional capacity is also required for Business Improvement activity.
- **Identified Savings/additional income (£176k).** A number of savings have been identified which are set out in Appendix 3. These relate to a variety of areas and relate to delivering efficiencies (eg cutting paper and print costs and reduced insurance costs) and additional income (eg bulky waste, lifeline and recharge income).

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#### Funding Impact (£0.956m in 22/23)

4.24 The main factors to the changes related to funding include:

- **Lower Tier Services Grant (£0.7m).** The finance settlement in December announced we are due to receive a Lower Tier Services Grant for £0.7million in 2022/23 most of which was not previously budgeted for. This grant is intended to compensate those local authorities whose core spending power did not increase in the finance settlement.
- **New Homes Bonus (NHB) (£0.068m).** The amount of NHB for 2022/23 has been confirmed as £0.363 million which is £68k more than anticipated in the MTFP. This is due to the Government funding an additional year of New Homes Bonus.
- The Councils share of the Collection Fund surplus is £175k which was not budgeted for previously.

#### Council Tax Increase

4.25 As part of the Financial Settlement the Council can increase Council Tax by up to 2% or £5 whichever is higher without the need for a referendum. These budget proposals include £5 increase for 2022/23 (Band D). The Council Tax relating to the Councils services will rise for Band D from £233.00 to £238.00. This is unchanged from the previous approved MTFP.

#### Reallocation of Earmarked Reserves to General Fund

- 4.26 A review has been undertaken of reserves previously earmarked for specific purposes. This has identified £0.382 million that can provisionally be released back to the General Fund Reserve. See Appendix 5.
- 4.27 In addition as set out in Appendix 5, some reallocations have been made within Earmarked Reserves to reflect current priorities.

#### Covid General Grant

4.28 In recognition of this negative impact on the Council's resources (and particularly for councils reduced income levels achievable for car parks and Leisure), the Council was awarded £1.666 million of General Covid-19 Grant across a number of tranches received in 2020/21 and the early part of 2021/22.



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4.29 After allocating this funds against Covid related pressures in 20/21 some £0.949 million of this grant was carried forward to the current financial year (ie 21/22). It is forecast that £397k of this General Covid Grant will be carried forward at 31/3/2022 (after funding the negative impact on 21/22 Budgets). This will be available (alongside General Fund balances) to mitigate pressures on budgets – at least in the short term – particularly in relation to prevalent risks associated with car park income and contracted income from the Council's Leisure services provider.

4.30 It must however be emphasised that this funding is not expected to be a recurring income stream to the Council. Further work must therefore be done to reduce the gap between spend and income on a sustainable and ongoing basis.

### **5. COLLECTION FUND AND PRECEPTS**

5.1 The anticipated collection fund surplus £1.431m, which will be distributed amongst the major preceptors using the prescribed formulae. The Councils share of the surplus payable as a one-off sum is £175k (prior year £36k).

5.2 The precepts from Worcestershire County Council, Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner are due to set their precepts in the week commencing 8<sup>th</sup> February. This will enable the Council to set the Council Tax on 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2022. The precepting bodies Council Tax requirements will be included in the formal resolutions which will be presented to Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> February.

### **6. CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

6.1 The Capital Programme has also been updated including proposed new bids required to deliver services to the community. These are included in the proposed Capital Programme at Appendix 4. The borrowing costs have been factored into the revenue budget for the financial plan. It should be noted that a housekeeping review of the Capital Programme has been recently undertaken in order to challenge the deliverability (and timing) of some schemes which has resulted in some rationalisation.

6.2 It should also be noted that there are a number of capital related businesses cases in the pipeline that may require further consideration, and subject to those business cases, amendment to the budget in line with the Council's constitution.

### Cabinet

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#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 As part of the budget and the Council Tax approval process, the Council is required by the Local Government Finance Act 1992 to make specific calculations and decisions in approving a balanced budget for the following financial year and setting the Council Tax Level. These will be included in the resolutions and presented to Council on 23rd February 2022.
- 7.2 The Council has a legal obligation to set a balanced budget (s32 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992). The amount of the budget requirement must be sufficient to meet the Council's budget commitments and ensure a balanced budget. The 2022/23 budget requirement must leave the Council with adequate financial reserves.
- 7.3 A lawful Council Tax is required to be made on or before 11 March 2022.
- 7.4 Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to report to the Council the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax or precept. See Appendix 7.

#### **8. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

##### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 8.1 The Strategic purposes are included in the Council's corporate plan and guides the Council's approach to budget making ensuring we focus on the issues and what are most important for the district and our communities. Delivering against all our Strategic Purposes is therefore integrated within our MTFP.

##### **Climate Change Implications**

- 8.2 No direct implications identified.

#### **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 No direct equalities and diversity implications identified.

##### **Operational Implications**

- 9.2 The MTFP will enable services to be maintained.

### Cabinet

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#### 10. RISK MANAGEMENT

10.1 The risks posed by the challenging financial context and the unprecedented levels of uncertainty (re the outcome of the fair funding review, the future of business rates and the local government financial settlement, COVID-19, Brexit and the state of the local and national economy) with regard to the budget have been set out within Section 2 as background to this report.

10.2 Risks prevalent in this area also include:

- Reductions in government funding leading to a reduction in the level of services delivered to the public
- Reductions in business rates income as a result of appeals or reduction in the rateable value leading to a lower level of income for the Council.
- Identification of sufficient and ongoing revenue savings to deliver a balanced budget.
- Allocation of sufficient resources to meet the needs of service delivery and the Councils priorities.
- Maintain adequate revenue and capital balances as identified in the MTFP to ensure financial stability.

10.3 This budget (and the processes underpinning it including the check and challenge of the Resource Planning and Prioritisation and 'bidding' processes, revisiting all budget assumptions and the identification of income and savings) provides a framework for managing and mitigating this risk.

10.4 In addition, Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003 requires the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) to report to the Council the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the reserves when it is making the statutory calculations required to determine its Council Tax or precept. This is set out in full within Appendix 7.

#### 11. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Appendix 1 - Unavoidable costs
- Appendix 2 - Revenue Bids
- Appendix 3 - Identified savings
- Appendix 4 - Proposed Capital programme
- Appendix 5 - Earmarked Reserves
- Appendix 6 - Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Opinion on the Estimate Process and Reserve Levels.
- Appendix 7 – Capital Outturn Position

### Cabinet

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#### 12. REPORT SIGN OFF

| Department  | Name and Job Title                                     | Date |
|---|--|------|
| Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Geoff Denaro                                |      |
| Lead Director / Head of Service                               | James Howse, Exec Director of Resources (S151 Officer) |      |
| Financial Services  | Chris Forrester, Head of Finance and Customer Services |      |
| Legal Services  |  |      |
| Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)                |  |      |
| Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply) |  |      |

## UNAVOIDABLE PRESSURES - BDC

Appendix 1

| Department             | Strategic Purpose                                     | Description of Pressure  | 2022-23<br>£'000 | 2023-24<br>£'000 | 2024-25<br>£'000 |
|------------------------|---|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Building Control       | Communities which are safe well maintained and green  | New dangerous structures budget line   | 3                | 3                | 3                |
| Building Control       | Communities which are safe well maintained and green  | Shared service recharge to RBC   | -1               | -1               | -1               |
| Development Control    | Communities which are safe well maintained and green  | Underacheived planning application income  | 22               | 0                | 0                |
| Development Control    | Communities which are safe well maintained and green  | Overspend on advertising and publicity   | 3                | 0                | 0                |
| Development Control    | Communities which are safe well maintained and green  | Overspend on advertising and publicity   | -1               | 0                | 0                |
| ICT                    | Enabling the Authority                                | Idox Uniform Application (Extension of contract)   | 7                | 7                | 7                |
| ICT                    | Enabling the Authority                                | Idox Uniform Application (Extension of contract) - Shared service recharge to RBC  | -4               | -4               | -4               |
| ICT                    | Enabling the Authority                                | Orb Intranet Upgrade and migrate to Hyrbid Cloud   | 10               | 0                | 0                |
| ICT                    | Enabling the Authority                                | Orb Intranet Upgrade and migrate to Hyrbid Cloud - Shared service recharge to RBC  | -5               | 0                | 0                |
| ICT                    | Enabling the Authority                                | Power Bi - his is to provide additional licenses required for the Corporate Dashboard  | 5                | 0                | 0                |
| ICT                    | Enabling the Authority                                | Power Bi - his is to provide additional licenses required for the Corporate Dashboard - shared services recharge to RBC  | -5               | 0                | 0                |
| Reg Client             | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | Additional WRS Hosting Charges   | 5                | 5                | 5                |
| Democratic Services    | Enabling the Authority                                | Member Remuneration - recommendation from Independent Remuneration Panel   | 5                | 5                | 5                |
| Environmental Services | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Agency budget due to Covid & Other Sickness affecting front line staff   | 5                | 0                | 0                |
| Environmental Services | Run and Grow a Successful Business                    | Due to the effects of Covid we have seen a rapid decline in car park usage which is stedely returning. However we are not seeing a return to usage and income levels pre-covid | 200              | 0                | 0                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>           |   |  | <b>250</b>       | <b>16</b>        | <b>16</b>        |

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**NEW REVENUE BIDS - BDC**

Appendix 2

| Department              | Strategic Purpose                                     | Description of revenue bid  | 2022-23<br>£'000 | 2023-24<br>£'000 | 2024-25<br>£'000 |
|-------------------------|---|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Business Transformation | Enabling the Authority                                | Addition of one Business Improvement Advisor - shared with RBC  | 40               | 40               | 40               |
| Business Transformation | Enabling the Authority                                | Addition of one Business Improvement Advisor - shared with RBC - recharge   | -20              | -20              | -20              |
| ICT                     | Enabling the Authority                                | Internet & Customer Portal  | 117              | 59               | 59               |
| ICT                     | Enabling the Authority                                | Internet & Customer Portal  | -59              | -29              | -29              |
| ICT                     | Enabling the Authority                                | Members 2nd ICT Support Person  | 42               | 42               | 0                |
| ICT                     | Enabling the Authority                                | Members 2nd ICT Support Person -shared service recharge to RBC  | -21              | -21              | 0                |
| ICT                     | Enabling the Authority                                | Cyber Security Post   | 42               | 42               | 42               |
| ICT                     | Enabling the Authority                                | Cyber Security Post - shared service recharge to RBC  | -21              | -21              | -21              |
| Policy                  | Enabling the Authority                                | Youth Council Support   | 5                | 5                | 5                |
| Environmental Services  | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | We are currently looking to procure the services of a consultant who could offer us the detailed advice needed to gradually change our fleet to Low Carbon emmision vehicles. | 12               | 0                | 0                |
| Environmental Services  | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Increase to promotional budget to support increased income generation.  | 10               | 10               | 10               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>            |   |   | <b>148</b>       | <b>107</b>       | <b>86</b>        |

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## SAVINGS & ADDITIONAL INCOME - BDC

Appendix 3

| Department                                      | Strategic Purpose                                     | Description of saving   | 2022-23<br>£'000 | 2023-24<br>£'000 | 2024-25<br>£'000 |
|---|---|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening | Enabling of the Authority                             | Non recruitment to vacancy post - Shared Service Rchg Reduction           | -19              | -19              | -20              |
| Reg Client                                      | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | Additional WRS Hosting Charge   | -10              | -10              | -10              |
| Environmental Services                          | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Increase to promotional budget to support increased income generation.    | -10              | -10              | -10              |
| Environmental Services                          | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Bromgrove District Council Place teams review                             | -30              | -30              | -30              |
| Environmental Services                          | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Bulky waste income  | -10              | -10              | -10              |
| Environmental Services                          | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Savings from vacant post not required                                     | -52              | -51              | -50              |
| Environmental Services                          | Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green | Savings from vacant post not required - shared service recharge           | 27               | 26               | 26               |
| Lifeline  | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | Future income generation options  | -20              | -20              | -20              |
| Financial services                              | Enabling of the Authority                             | Life insurance scheme saving  | -35              | -35              | -35              |
| Corporate Administration / Central Post Opening | Enabling of the Authority                             | Reduction in consumables eg paper and reduction of MFDs in print contract | -14              | -14              | -14              |
| Democratic Services                             | Enabling the Authority                                | Services restructure  | -3               | -3               | -3               |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                    |   |   | <b>-176</b>      | <b>-175</b>      | <b>-175</b>      |

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| Description   | Department   | Strategic purposes                                    | 2022/23 Total<br>£ | 2023/24 Total<br>£ | 2024/25 Total<br>£ |
|---|--|---|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Cisco Network Update  | Business transformation & Organisational Development | Enabling the Authority                                | 5,717              | 11,574             | 0                  |
| Server Replacement Est(Exact known Q2 2022)   | Business transformation & Organisational Development | Enabling the Authority                                | 83,250             | 2,000              | 177,500            |
| Laptop Refresh  | Business transformation & Organisational Development | Enabling the Authority                                | 5,000              | 25,000             | 150,000            |
| Home Repairs Assistance   | Community & Housing GF Services                      | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 50,000             | 50,000             | 50,000             |
| Energy Efficiency Installation  | Community & Housing GF Services                      | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 110,000            | 0                  | 0                  |
| Funding for DFGs  | Community & Housing GF Services                      | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 913,000            | 913,000            | 913,000            |
| New Digital Service   | Community & Housing GF Services                      | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 33,668             | 33,668             | 0                  |
| Bus Shelters  | Environmental Services                               | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 18,000             | 0                  | 0                  |
| Cemetery extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two                                 | Environmental Services                               | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 6,500              | 0                  | 0                  |
| Fleet Replacement   | Environmental Services                               | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 600,000            | 204,000            | 175,000            |
| Wheelie Bin Purchase  | Environmental Services                               | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 144,000            | 55,000             | 60,000             |
| Cashless Parking Scheme   | Environmental Services                               | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 253,000            | 96,000             | 421,000            |
| Install Solar panel and Upgrade lighting  | Legal, Democratic and property services              | Enabling the Authority                                | 150,000            | 0                  | 0                  |
| Play Area, POS and Sport improvements at Lickey End Recreation Ground in accordance with the S106 Agreement | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services            | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 37,956             | 0                  | 0                  |
|   |  |   | 2,410,091          | 1,390,242          | 1,946,500          |

Note:

\* The Council has previously approved a Regeneration Fund of £20 million. Levelling Up Grant funding has now been secured (subject to an approved programme business case) in order to drive regeneration. The capital programme therefore excludes any Regeneration Fund activity and will therefore be updated, in line with the Council's constitution, following any business case approval.

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# FINANCIAL RESERVES STATEMENT 2020/21

Appendix 5

Please note these figures have been rounded

| Description                         | Balance b/fwd<br>1/4/2020 | C/fwd 31/3/2020 | Planned use for<br>2021/22<br>Budget | Estimated<br>closing balance<br>2021/22 | Proposed<br>release/addition<br>of reserves from<br>RPP exercise | Planned use for<br>2022/23 Budget | Comment   |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------|---|--|-----------------------------------|---|
|                                     | £'000                     | £'000           | £'000                                | £'000                                   | £'000  | £'000                             |   |
| Building Control                    | (7)                       | (7)             | 0                                    | (7)                                     | 7  | 0                                 | To Fund the mobile working project  |
| Building Control Partnership        | (69)                      | (83)            | 0                                    | (83)                                    | 0  | 0                                 | Partnership income has to be reinvested back in to the service.   |
| Commercialism                       | (10)                      | 0               | 0                                    | 0                                       | 0  | 0                                 | To help fund costs in relation to commercialism projects  |
| Community Services                  | (43)                      | (274)           | 0                                    | (274)                                   | 0  | 0                                 | To help towards a district network feasibility study and unauthorised trespass prevention.  |
| Economic Growth Development         | (1,342)                   | (1,347)         | 350                                  | (997)                                   | 75   | 0                                 | To fund the Economic Development opportunities across the District. There is provision within this reserve to take into account the potential impact of Covid 19 on service delivery in particular Leisure Services.  |
| Election Services                   | (96)                      | (51)            | 0                                    | (51)                                    | 25   | 0                                 | To support the delivery of individual electoral registration and to set aside a reserve for potential refunds to government   |
| Environmental Services              | 0                         | (47)            | 0                                    | (47)                                    | 0  | 0                                 | To support the costs of the Environmental Services Vehicles   |
| Financial Services                  | (479)                     | (1,422)         | 0                                    | (1,422)                                 | (50)   | 0                                 | A number of reserves / grants have been set aside to support residents through the changes to welfare reform along with a reserve to support our Business continuity plans. This also includes funds to support the new enterprise system and the balance of the Covid general grant received in 20-21. The proposed addition is in recognition of the need to strengthen the finance team and short term capacity issue risk |
| Corporate Financing                 | (2,784)                   | (3,906)         | 100                                  | (3,806)                                 | 100  | 100                               | The reserve has been created to offset the loss on Business rates collection and appeals in 2019/20.  |
| Housing Schemes                     | (475)                     | (487)           | 142                                  | (345)                                   | 0  | 0                                 | To support the feasibility and implementation of housing schemes across the district  |
| ICT/Systems                         | (87)                      | (80)            | 0                                    | (80)                                    | 80   | 0                                 | To provide replacement ICT and systems across the authority.  |
| Leisure/Community Safety            | (291)                     | (329)           | 0                                    | (329)                                   | 0  | 0                                 | Grant received and reserves set aside to support a number of leisure and well being schemes across the District   |
| Local Neighbourhood Partnerships    | (16)                      | (16)            | 0                                    | (16)                                    | 0  | 0                                 | Grant received in relation to liveability schemes   |
| Other                               | (115)                     | (107)           | 44                                   | (63)                                    | (75)   | 0                                 | General reserves including - support for apprentices, set up costs and Brexit reserve.<br>Funds to create an Invest to save reserve to increase efficiencies within the organisation  |
| Planning                            | (108)                     | (133)           | 0                                    | (133)                                   | 20   | 0                                 | Reserves in relation to a custom build grant to provide support to the council towards expenditure lawfully incurred in relation to the provision and maintenance of a self-build register, along with reserves to help towards future planning appeals.  |
| Regulatory Services (Partner Share) | (35)                      | (47)            | 0                                    | (47)                                    | 0  | 0                                 | BDC Share of WRS grant related reserves   |
| Shared Services Agenda              | (311)                     | (311)           | 0                                    | (311)                                   | 200  | 0                                 | To fund potential redundancy and other shared costs   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>                  | <b>(6,268)</b>            | <b>(8,648)</b>  | <b>638</b>                           | <b>(8,011)</b>                          | <b>382</b>   | <b>100</b>                        |   |

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#### **Appendix 6: Section 25: Report of the CFO - Robustness of the Estimates**

In line with Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, this report of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) sets out the robustness of estimates included in the budget and the adequacy of the Council's reserves.

#### **The Chief Financial Officer's opinion is that the estimates are robust.**

Relevant budget holders are responsible for individual budgets and their preparation. All estimates are then scrutinised by Financial Services staff and the Corporate Management Team prior to submission to Members.

All budget assumptions have been reviewed and reconsidered – including those related to inflation, business rate growth and interest rates.

The Council's revenue and capital budgets are 'joined up', both for next year's budget and for the longer term. This means that the full cost of the proposed Capital Programme is reflected in the revenue estimates. Both revenue and capital budgets include the funding needs of the Council.

There are however a number of risks and uncertainties as set out below.

The main risks in the 2021/22 budget relate to:

- General levels of uncertainty regarding the outcome of the fair funding review, the future of business rates and the local government financial settlement, COVID-19, Brexit and the state of the local and national economy. This has been mitigated by prudent business rate growth assumptions and by close monitoring of the Covid Grant account.
- The delivery of income and managing the impact of savings proposed. Mitigating actions are in place within departmental to ensure managers are aware of budgeted savings.
- Business Rate Income – whilst this is essentially part of Central Government funding, the actual income received will vary depending on actual Business Rates growth. It is difficult to precisely predict this growth. It is also difficult to predict the level of appeals by ratepayers against their rating assessments. That said, prudent assumptions in this area have been applied.
- Central Government Funding – the MTFP shows income from NHB continuing in 2022/23, however the longer term future of this income stream remains unclear.
- Costs associated with the delivery of the Council's Levelling Up Fund programme. The Council holds some risk on this programme – including

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the cost of overruns. As the Accountable Body close monitoring will take place to manage effective delivery (to time and to budgeted cost).

- General inflationary pressures – particularly in relation to pay costs and utility bills. This budget therefore includes significant additional pressures for these matters.
- The impact of Covid and Leisure Services. The Council's Leisure budgets could be further impacted by Covid-19. Significant levels of income are assumed within this budget report in 2022/23 – in line with the Council's contract with its Leisure provider. The risks in this area will continue to be mitigated through working closely with our Leisure services contractor to oversee its progress, operations and cost, and through appropriate contractual and legal advice concerning that contract.
- The impact of Covid on the capacity of management to deliver change, efficiencies and associated savings. This continued to be a watching brief. Budget proposals include an investment in Business Improvement capacity and an 'Invest to Save' Earmarked Reserve.

### **Adequacy of Reserves**

Budget and MFTP proposals forecast the level of General Fund balances to remain above minimum set levels of £1.5m until 2024/25.

The reserves position, alongside the General Covid Grant account, will allow the Council to be robust and make coordinated plans to address the deficit position.

Taking account of the above, and the level of risk within the budget, the Chief Finance Officer judges that reserves are at an appropriate level throughout the period of the MFTP. This will be subject to ongoing review.

That said, further work must be undertaken to ensure that expenditure levels are sustainable and matched by income over the medium to long term. Plans are therefore in place to continue to review budgets and identify further savings opportunities.

**The Chief Financial Officer's opinion is that the estimates are robust.**

Report by: James Howse, Executive Director of Resources (Chief Financial Officer / Section 151 Officer)



**BDC Capital Programme 2020-21 Outturn**

**Appendix 7**

| Description   | Department                                | NEW Strategic Purpose                                 | Revised Budget April - Outturn 21 £ | Actual spend 2020-21 £ | Variance 2020-21 £ | Previously approved slippage to 2021/22 | Revised & additional slippage into 21-22 £ |
|---|---|---|-------------------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---|--|
| Funding for DFGs  | Community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 600,000                             | 595,930                | -4,070             | 503,101                                 | 507,171                                    |
| OLEV ULEV Taxi infrastructure scheme  | Community & Housing GF Services           | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 200,000                             | 0                      | -200,000           | 200,000                                 | 200,000                                    |
| New Digital Service   | Community & Housing GF Services           | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 57,400                              | 22,281                 | -35,119            | 0                                       | 35,119                                     |
| Affordable homes (BDHT)   | Community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 150,000                             | 150,000                | 0                  | 0                                       | 0  |
| Home Repairs Assistance   | Community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 30,000                              | 0                      | -30,000            | 61,221                                  | 91,221                                     |
| Energy Efficiency   | Community & Housing GF Services           | Work and financial independence                       | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 5,000                                   | 5,000                                      |
| CCTV  | Community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 100,000                             | 129,726                | 29,726             | 67,376                                  | 37,650                                     |
| Energy Efficiency Installation  | Community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 30,000                              | 19,182                 | -10,818            | 65,988                                  | 76,806                                     |
| Greener Homes   | community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 180,000                             | 0                      | -180,000           | 0                                       | 180,000                                    |
| Burcot Hostel   | community & Housing GF Services           | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 35,000                              | 35,384                 | 384                | 0                                       | 0  |
| Bus Shelters  | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 18,000                                  | 18,000                                     |
| Boundary Security at Depot  | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 20,000                              | 12,908                 | -7,092             | 0                                       | 7,092                                      |
| Fleet Management Computer System  | Environmental Services                    | Enabling the Authority                                | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 16,600                                  | 16,600                                     |
| Environmental Services Computer System                                      | Environmental Services                    | Enabling the Authority                                | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 157,200                                 | 157,200                                    |
| Cemetery Extension infrastructure at at North Bromsgrove Cemetery Phase Two | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 4,000                               | 9,884                  | 5,884              | 4,000                                   | 0  |
| Fleet Replacement   | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 1,441,253                           | 834,976                | -606,277           | 95,000                                  | 701,277                                    |
| Wheelie Bin Purchase  | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 94,000                              | 181,051                | 87,051             | 0                                       | 0  |
| Replacement lighting at the Depot   | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 3,642                               | 3,642                  | 0                  | 19,358                                  | 19,358                                     |
| Infrastructure Works Bdc Depot  | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 252,000                                 | 252,000                                    |
| Replacement Parking machines  | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 12,000                              | 0                      | -12,000            | 108,000                                 | 120,000                                    |
| BDC Combined F/Path & Cycl  | Environmental Services                    | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 71,357                              | 0                      | -71,357            | 0                                       | 71,357                                     |
| New Finance Enterprise system   | Financial & Customer Services             | Enabling the Authority                                | 218,108                             | 380,562                | 162,454            | 0                                       | 0  |
| Burcot Lane   | Financial & Customer Services             | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 830,000                             | 24,592                 | -805,408           | 0                                       | 805,408                                    |
| Regeneration Fund   | Financial & Customer Services             | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 4,350,000                               | 4,350,000                                  |
| Salix project   | Legal, Democratic and property services   | Enabling the Authority                                | 615,000                             | 0                      | -615,000           | 0                                       | 615,000                                    |
| Re-landscaping of Recreation Ground   | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 211,000                                 | 211,000                                    |
| Sanders Park Play Area - Replacement for Tripod Swing (Health and Safety)   | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Living independent, active & healthy lives            | 0                                   | 0                      | 0                  | 35,000                                  | 35,000                                     |
| BDC Christmas lights  | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 13,000                              | 5,490                  | -7,510             | 0                                       | 7,510                                      |
| Bittell road recreation ground  | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 44,000                              | 43,603                 | -397               | 18,000                                  | 18,000                                     |

|                                 |   |   |                  |                  |                   |                  |                  |
|---------------------------------|---|---|------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|------------------|
| New Leisure Centre              | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 0                | 712,816          | 712,816           | 0                | 0                |
| Rubery Redevelopment Works      | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 0                | -3,262           | -3,262            | 32,738           | 32,738           |
| Sanders Park dda play provision | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 3,550            | 0                | -3,550            | 0                | 3,550            |
| Wythall Park POS Improvement    | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 15,000           | 15,547           | 547               | 0                | 0                |
| Birdbox                         | Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services | Communities which are safe, well maintained and green | 210,180          | 209,522          | -658              | 0                | 0                |
|                                 |   |   | <b>4,977,490</b> | <b>3,383,832</b> | <b>-1,593,658</b> | <b>6,219,582</b> | <b>8,574,057</b> |

**Notes:**

- \* The new enterprise system had an increase in budget over that presented above funded from the flexible use of capital receipts. This was approved as part of the treasury strategy and so the difference is funded from this approval.
- \* The expenditure on Scheme New Leisure centre is due to funds not yet being settled with external contractors. Should these monies come in the subsequent year they will be added back into the capital programme.

### Overview & Scrutiny Board 2022

15<sup>th</sup> February

#### Impact of Review of Library Services – Task Group

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  |   | Councillor K. May – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships<br><br>Councillor P. Thomas - Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted   |   | No   |
| Relevant Head of Service   |   | N/A  |
| Report Author<br>Jo Gresham  | Job Title: Senior Democratic Services Officer<br>Contact<br>email:joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk |  |
| Wards Affected   |   | N/A  |
| Ward Councillor(s) consulted   |   | N/A  |
| 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: -

- 1) **The Impact of Review of Library Services – Task Group update report be noted.**

#### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.2 The final report of the Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for its consideration on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The findings of the task group were discussed, and the recommendations agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
- 2.3 Cabinet considered the recommendations made by the task group at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> September 2021. At this meeting, none of the recommendations of the task group were agreed and the Cabinet response was submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for their consideration on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2021. As a result of the response received from Cabinet it was agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny

## **Overview & Scrutiny Board 2022**

15<sup>th</sup> February

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Board that the Task Group should be re-established in order to look more closely at the Cabinet response with a view to potentially making some amendments to the recommendations. In addition to this, it was agreed that it would be important for the task group to meet with the relevant Portfolio Holders to discuss the Cabinet response.

- 2.4 An initial meeting of the task group was held on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 when potential changes to recommendations were considered, and a further meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2021 with the Leader and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships and former Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Community Safety in attendance. At this meeting each recommendation was discussed in turn and information provided as to the rationale behind the Cabinet response. The potential amendments to the wording of the recommendations were also considered.
- 2.5 The final meeting of the task group was held on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2022. Members agreed that the investigation had been useful as it had helped to clarify the impact of the Library Service Review in the community and raised awareness of this review for the benefit of local residents of the District. However, Members agreed that no amendments to the recommendations should be made. The Chairman therefore proposed that this would conclude the Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group and thanked Members for their time in carrying out a detailed investigation.

### **3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications associated with this report.

### **4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications associated with this report.

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

#### **Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 There are no Strategic Purposes implications associated with this report.

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### **Climate Change Implications**

5.2 There are no Climate Change implications associated with this report.

### **6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

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

6.1 There are no Equalities and Diversity implications associated with this report.

#### **Operational Implications**

6.2 There are no operational implications associated with report.

### **7. RISK MANAGEMENT**

7.1 There are no risks associated with report.

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

#### **Background Papers**

The final report of the Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group published in March 2021.

**Overview &  
Scrutiny Board  
2022**

15<sup>th</sup> February

**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

| Department                      | Name and Job Title                      | Date      |
|---------------------------------|---|-----------|
| Portfolio Holder                | N/A                                     | N/A       |
| Lead Director / Head of Service | Kevin Dicks, Sue Hanley and James Howse | 1/02/2022 |
| Financial Services              | N/A                                     | N/A       |
| Legal Services                  | N/A                                     | 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.

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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><br>There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation. |
| <b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b><br>There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.         |
| <b>Resource Implications:</b><br>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><br>There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation. |
| <b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b><br>There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.         |
| <b>Resource Implications:</b><br>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><br><br>There may be a small financial implication, depending on the type of the publicity campaign. |
| <b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b><br><br>There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.                       |
| <b>Resource Implications:</b><br><br>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><br><br>There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation. |
| <b>Legal Implications for recommendations:</b><br><br>There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.         |
| <b>Resource Implications:</b><br><br>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



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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> |
|-------------------------|

|   |
|---|
| <b>That all Members continue to receive up to date information in relation to any proposed changes to libraries in their Wards.</b> |
|---|

|                         |
|-------------------------|
| <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>Recommendation 3</b> |
|-------------------------|

|  |
|--|
| <b>That a Joint publicity campaign be undertaken to promote the facilities available at Libraries.</b> |
|--|

## 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

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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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# CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

**1 MARCH 2022 TO 30 JUNE 2022**  
**(published as at 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022)**

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, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships   |
| Councillor G. Denaro   | Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance (including Governance/Policy and Performance/HR) |
| Councillor M. Sherrey  | Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety   |
| Councillor P. Thomas   | Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services  |
| Councillor M. Thompson | Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change   |
| Councillor S. Webb     | Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being and Strategic Housing   |

| Decision including Whether it is a key Decision | Decision Taker<br>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 2040 Vision<br><b>Key: No</b>   | Cabinet 30 Mar 2022<br><br>Council 20 Apr 2022 |  | Report of the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration               | Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration<br>Tel: 01562 732192<br><br>Councillor K. J. May |
| Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre<br><b>Key: No</b> | Cabinet 30 Mar 2022<br><br>Council 20 Apr 2022 |  | Report of the Chief Executive  | Kevin Dicks, Joint Chief Executive<br>Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3250<br><br>Councillor K. J. May   |
| Equalities Strategy<br><b>Key: No</b>  | Cabinet 30 Mar 2022<br><br>Council 20 Apr 2022 |  | Report of the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy | Rebecca Green, Policy Manager<br>Tel: 01527 881616<br><br>Councillor G. N. Denaro   |

| Decision including Whether it is a key Decision                                     | Decision Taker<br>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  |
|---|--|---|---|---|
| Land Drainage Watercourse Maintenance Operation<br><b>Key:</b> No                   | Cabinet 30 Mar 2022<br>Council 20 Apr 2022 |   | Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services | Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager<br>Tel: 01527 881705<br><br>Councillor M. A. Sherrey         |
| Treasury Management and Investment Strategy<br><b>Key:</b> No                       | Cabinet 30 Mar 2022<br>Council 20 Apr 2022 |   | Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services               | James Howse, Executive Director Finance<br>Tel: 01527 881205<br><br>Councillor G. N. Denaro               |
| Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2021/22<br><b>Key:</b> No | Council 22 Jun 2022                        |   | Report of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee           | Joanne Gresham, Senior Democratic Services Officer<br>Tel: 01527 64252<br><br>Councillor L. C. R. Mallett |
| Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22<br><b>Key:</b> No                       | Council 22 Jun 2022                        |   | Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee                     | Joanne Gresham, Senior Democratic Services Officer<br>Tel: 01527 64252<br><br>Councillor C. A. Hotham     |

| Decision including Whether it is a key Decision          | Decision Taker<br>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  |
|--|--|---|---|---|
| Homelessness Prevention Grant 2023/24<br><b>Key:</b> Yes | Cabinet 18 Jan 2023                        |   | Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services              | Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer<br>Tel: 01527 881269<br><br>Councillor S. A. Webb     |
| Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet<br><b>Key:</b> No   | Cabinet 15 Feb 2023<br>Council 22 Feb 2023 |   | Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services | Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager<br>Tel: 01527 881705<br><br>Councillor M. A. Sherrey |

06/08/2023



## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

### WORK PROGRAMME

2021/2022

#### 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>  |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 15 <sup>th</sup> February 2022 | Mileage Benchmarking Update   |  |
|                                | Sustainable Warmth Funding  | Due to be considered at Cabinet on 16 <sup>th</sup> February 2022      |
|                                | Draft Medium Term Financial Plan  |  |
|                                | Working Group Updates   |  |
|                                | Any Task Group Updates  |  |
|                                | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative           |  |
|                                | Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme   |  |
| 28 <sup>th</sup> March 2022    | Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre - pre-scrutiny | Due to be considered at Cabinet not before 30 <sup>th</sup> March 2022 |
|                                | Land Drainage Watercourse Maintenance Operation – pre-scrutiny                  |  |
|                                | Fireworks – Motion – Follow up on progress                                      |  |
|                                | Community Safety Partnership  | Annual Update  |
|                                | CCTV Update   | Requested at the meeting held in October 2021                          |
|                                | Working Group Updates   |  |
|                                | Any Task Group Updates  |  |
|                                | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative           |  |
|                                | Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme   |  |
| 25 <sup>th</sup> April 2022    | Housing enforcement powers and how they are used                                | Requested at the meeting in November 2021                              |
|                                | Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2021-22                               |  |
|                                | Overview and Scrutiny Board – Recommendation Tracker                            |  |
|                                | Working Group Updates   |  |
|                                | Any Task Group Updates  |  |
|                                | WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative           |  |
|                                | Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme   |  |

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|

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

- Declaration of Land Surplus to Requirement – Marsh Way, Catshill South, Penshurst Road, Sideslow and Foxglove Way – pre-scrutiny
- Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet – due for consideration not before 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2022
- Strategic Transport Assessment
- 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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