



## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

MONDAY 28TH MARCH 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 15th February 2022 (Pages 1 - 10)**

4. **Land Drainage Watercourse Maintenance Operation - pre-scrutiny (Report to follow)**

This report will follow in a Supplementary Papers pack once the report has been published for consideration of the Cabinet.

5. **Equality Annual Report 2021-2022 (Report to Follow)**

This report will follow in a Supplementary Papers pack once the report has been published for consideration of the Cabinet.

6. **Fireworks - Motion - Follow up on Progress - Briefing Note (Pages 11 - 14)**

7. **Planning Determination Timescales - Verbal Update**
8. **Task Group Updates** (Pages 15 - 18)
9. **Topic Proposal - Fuel Poverty** (Pages 19 - 22)
10. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Update**
11. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update**
12. **Cabinet Work Programme** (Pages 23 - 30)
13. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme** (Pages 31 - 38)

K. DICKS  
Chief Executive

Parkside  
Market Street  
BROMSGROVE  
Worcestershire  
B61 8DA

18th March 2022

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

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

**At the current time, seating at the meeting will be placed in such a way as to achieve as much space as possible for social distancing to help protect meeting participants.**

**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 from the NHS website. Should the Member test positive for Covid-19 on the day of the meeting or up to 5 full days before the meeting then the Member is expected not to attend the Committee meeting and should provide their apologies to the Democratic Services team.

Whilst the Council acknowledges that it is no longer a legal requirement to wear face masks, we would really appreciate if the Members who attend a meeting in person would consider wearing a face covering throughout the meeting unless they are exempt or speaking.

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.

## **PUBLIC ATTENDANCE**

Members of the public will be able to access the meeting if they wish to do so. However, due to social distancing arrangements to ensure the safety of participants there may be limited capacity and members of the public will be allowed access on a first come, first served basis. Whilst the Council acknowledges that it is no longer a legal requirement to wear face masks, we would really appreciate if members of the public who attend a meeting in person would consider wearing a face covering throughout the meeting unless they are exempt or speaking. It should be noted that members of the public who choose to attend in person do so at their own risk.

Members of the public are strongly encouraged not to attend a Committee meeting if they test positive for Covid on the day of a meeting or up to 5 full days before a meeting. Should the member of the public test positive for Covid-19 on the day of the meeting or up to 5 full days before the meeting then they are expected not to attend the meeting.

### **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 and for any such items.**



## **INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC**

### **Access to Information**

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- You can inspect minutes of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards for up to six years following a meeting.
- 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.
- A reasonable number of copies of agendas and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards.
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## **BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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

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

PRESENT: Councillors C.A. Hotham (Chairman), J. Till, S. J. Baxter,  
A. J. B. Beaumont, R. J. Deeming, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss,  
C. J. Spencer and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Councillor G. N. Denaro

Officers: J Howse, Ms. D. Poole, Ms J. Willis, Mrs B. Talbot and  
Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

62/21 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Colella, H. Jones and P. McDonald and it was confirmed that Councillor P. Whittaker was attending as a substitute for Councillor Jones.

63/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS**

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

64/21 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 were submitted.

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

65/21 **MILEAGE BENCHMARKING UPDATE**

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy and the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager attended the meeting to present an update on

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benchmarking data in terms of mileage claims received from staff since the start of the pandemic. The report had been prepared as a result of the Board requesting additional information the last time an update on this subject had been delivered. The report provided data for similar local authorities to Bromsgrove District Council, primarily Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council.

Members were advised that since the start of the pandemic there had been a 37.8% decline in mileage claims for Bromsgrove District Council staff. By comparison, there had been decreases of 49% in claims for staff employed by Wychavon District Council and of 22% for staff employed by Malvern Hills District Council. Data for staff employed in Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS), which was hosted by Bromsgrove District Council, showed that there had been a 23.9% fall in mileage claims for that service. Officers from WRS had reported that the decline in claims had been lower than anticipated but this reflected the particularly important roles of WRS staff operating across the country during the pandemic.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling Services, the relevant lead Portfolio Holder for this area, subsequently commented that he welcomed the decrease in mileage claims. The data appeared to show a continuing trend in terms of mileage claims falling for Council staff and this reflected the flexibility of the different ways of working that had emerged during the pandemic.

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

- The potential for the trend in terms of a decrease in mileage claims from staff to continue. Officers clarified that wherever possible, available technology would be utilised to attend meetings to help reduce travel and this would have a beneficial impact on mileage claims.
- The types of technology that could be used to help reduce the need to travel. The Board was advised that this included software such as Microsoft Teams which could be accessed by Officers from home or other offices as a way to participate in meetings remotely.
- The benefits for both the Council's budget and the local environment of a reduction in mileage claims. Members commented that a reduction in travel by staff would have a beneficial impact on climate emissions associated with work for the Council.



- The financial implications detailed in the report and the extent to which further information could have been provided about the costs of putting together the report. The Board was informed that the financial implications section of reports was designed to focus on the financial implications of any recommendations or decisions required from Members, not the cost of putting together a report.
- The approach to work that would be adopted by staff moving forward and the extent to which officers would continue to work from home in future. Officers explained that many staff continued to work from home, although staff could access Council offices when needed and there would be a transition increasingly towards agile working.

Members concluded the debate by thanking officers for obtaining and presenting the benchmarking information for the Board's consideration.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

66/21

## **SUSTAINABLE WARMTH FUNDING - PRE-SCRUTINY**

The Head of Community and Housing Services presented a report on the subject of Sustainable Warmth Funding. Members were advised that the Council was due to receive £429,000 for a sustainable heating grant, which was designed to help fund actions that could be taken to improve the energy efficiency of properties in the district with an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) rating D – G. There were 2 components to this funding:

- Home Upgrade Grants (HUGs) Phase 1 – these grants were intended for properties that were not connected to the mains gas system.
- Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 – these grants were intended for properties that were connected to the mains gas system.

Members were advised that there had been a typographical error in the report which should have reflected the fact that funding of up to £25,000 in HUG grants could be provided to eligible households. The average HUG grants were £25,000 and the average LAD Phase 3 grants were £10,000. There were a range of measures that could be funded, including cavity wall insulation, roof insulation and air source heat pumps. However, the amount of funding that needed to be spent per property varied, as some houses only required a single change, such as installation of cavity wall insulation, whilst other properties required

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multiple actions to be taken, including the installation of more expensive resources such as air source heat pumps.

The Council was working with Worcestershire County Council and Act On Energy in respect of the administration of the funds and promotion of the funding to eligible residents.

After the report had been presented Members discussed the following points in detail:

- The deadlines for expenditure of the grant funding and the extent to which the Council was likely to be able to ensure that all funding was spent by those deadlines. Officers clarified that the HUG Phase 1 and LAD Phase 3 funding needed to be spent by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 whilst the deadline for expenditure of the previous LAD Phase 2 had been extended to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2022. Members were advised that Officers were anticipating that these deadlines would be met.
- The potential for businesses to apply for this or other sources of funding to upgrade the EPC rating for office buildings. Officers explained that the Council worked with the North Worcestershire Economic Development Unit (NWEDR) to identify businesses that might benefit from this type of funding.
- The availability of this or similar funding to social housing providers operating in the District. The Board was advised that funding had been promoted to Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) and other social housing providers. There was also a separate funding stream that would be made available to social housing providers later in the year which the Council would promote to social housing providers.
- The specific differences between the criteria for use of LAD Phase 2 funding opposed to LAD Phase 3 funding. Officers agreed to provide further information on this subject to Members after the meeting.
- The proportion of houses in Bromsgrove District that were likely to be eligible to receive either HUG Phase 1 or LAD Phase 3 financial support and the availability of data in respect of the EPC ratings for properties in the District. Officers agreed to provide further information on this subject after the meeting.
- The number of houses that were likely to receive HUG Phase 1 and LAD Phase 3 funding in Bromsgrove District. Members estimated that approximately 40 properties would benefit from this funding if each property received £10,000 on average.

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- The action that would be taken to promote the funding to eligible members of the public. The Board was informed that the Council was aiming to target low-income households. A targeted approach to communications was considered preferable to general communications to ensure that the Council was not inundated with requests and that the funding was provided to those most in need.
- The support that was available locally to help eligible households apply for the funding. Officers explained that Act On Energy would be providing this type of support to eligible households and would also be able to help householders identify the most appropriate funding for them.
- The potential for park homeowners to apply for the HUG Phase 1 and LAD Phase 3 funding, following restrictions which meant that they could not apply for LAD Phase 2 funding. Members were informed that park homes were not eligible for HUG Phase 1 or LAD Phase 3 funding, but Officers were monitoring any funding opportunities that might become available to park homeowners in the future.
- The purpose of air source heat pumps. Officers explained that air source heat pumps enabled homeowners to change their heating source.

At the end of the debate it was

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

67/21

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

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Draft 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 for the Board's consideration. Members were advised that the report had been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. The format of the report had also changed, when compared to previous years, to help improve clarity.

There were some key points that underpinned the content of the budget and Medium Term Financial Plan:

- The 2022/23 budget was robust and balanced, although only by using funding from balances.
- The budget and Medium Term Financial Plan had been developed in challenging financial circumstances for local government and in

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a context of particular uncertainty about future funding for the sector.

- The Council's general fund balances were forecast to go below minimum levels considered acceptable by the Section 151 Officer in 2024/25 if no action was taken to address challenges in the budget prior to that date.
- The in year deficit position for the Council had improved by in excess of £400,000 when compared to the budget and Medium Term Financial Plan that had been agreed by Council in February 2021.
- Pressures on the budget included costs and budget bids. In many cases, costs were increasing due to the impact of inflation.
- Savings and income opportunities had been identified in some areas and these had been incorporated into the budget.
- Interest costs and costs associated with the Minimum Revenue Position (MRP) had been reduced.
- Officers were anticipating that reduced income from car parking, due to a decrease in demand following the Covid-19 pandemic, would create a £200,000 pressure in the budget in 2022/23.
- The decision not to increase fees for car parking also placed a pressure on the budget.
- The Council had received £700,000 in Service Improvement Grant funding from the Government and this had had a positive impact on the budget position moving forward, as the funding had not been anticipated when the budget was set the previous year.
- A total of £389,000 had been identified provisionally for release back to general fund balances from reserves.
- The budget proposed a £5 increase in Council Tax per annum over the full three year period of the Medium Term Financial Plan.

Following the presentation of the report, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling explained that the £700,000 Service Improvement Grant had helped with balancing the budget in the short and medium-term. However, given the challenges in the third year of the Medium Term Financial Plan in particular, there would be a need for action to start to be taken in respect of the 2023/24 budget and 2023/24 to 2025/26 Medium Term Financial Plan as soon as the 2022/23 budget had been agreed.

The Board subsequently discussed the content of the report in detail and, in doing so, highlighted the following points:

- The estimate that had been included in the report that staff would receive a 2% pay rise and the extent to which this was appropriate

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given that nationally inflation rates were closer to 5%. Officers explained that inflation in some areas of the budget were higher than in others and most Councils were anticipating a 2% pay increase. A 5% pay increase would add a pressure of approximately £400,000 – 600,000 to the budget.

- The Council's involvement in national pay bargaining and the extent to which it was likely that the 1.75% pay offer, backdated to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2021, for 2021/22, would be accepted by the Trades Unions on behalf of their members.
- The authority's approach to estimating pay inflation and pay bargaining, which involved working with other Councils.
- The importance of Council balances to covering any unexpected costs that might arise during a financial year.
- The action that could be taken by the Council to improve the financial position of the authority moving forward. Members were advised that there were actions that could be taken, including making efficiency savings and introducing additional income. Some difficult decisions might also need to be made by Members.
- The potential to influence the Government to provide greater clarity about future funding arrangements for local government. Members were advised that the Council was lobbying the Government for greater certainty about local government funding. The authority was also working with the Local Government Association (LGA) and District Councils Network (DCN), which lobbied the Government on Councils' behalf.
- The significant range of efficiency savings that had already been achieved by the Council over the previous 10 year period and the extent to which there was the scope to achieve any further efficiency savings. Officers acknowledged that a lot of progress had already been made with efficiency savings, but circumstances changed, and this could create opportunities for further efficiencies.
- The impact that increasing fuel costs would have on the Council's budget. The Board was informed that fuel costs had implications for a range of service areas, particularly refuse collection services and on property management costs. The Council was aiming to manage the Council's property assets in a more efficient way moving forward to help address the impact.
- The extent to which it was appropriate to describe the 2022/23 budget as balanced when this had only been achieved by using funding from balances. Officers advised that there was a statutory requirement for the Council to set a balanced budget each year. The Section 151 Officer could use all resources at the Council's disposal to achieve a balanced budget and as part of this process it

was possible to use balances and funding from reserves to balance a budget.

- The impact that decisions taken by Members, particularly at meetings of the Planning Committee, could have on the Council's financial position in cases where decisions were overturned at appeal.
- The impact that Covid-19 had had on footfall at Leisure Centres in the District, which meant that income from Leisure Services would be lower than anticipated prior to the pandemic.
- The pressure that had been placed on the Finance team when working on the budget and the recent capacity issues within the team. Members thanked officers in the team for their hard work in difficult circumstances.
- The format of the report, which was different to the style that had been adopted in previous years. Members commented that the content was clearer than it had been in previous years and thanked officers for making these changes.

**RESOLVED** that the report be noted.

68/21

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

The Chairman of the Finance and Budget Working Group, Councillor C. Hotham, provided an update on the meeting of the group that took place on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2022. The Board was advised that the group had pre-scrutinised the 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25. The Executive Director for Resources and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling were both thanked for attending this meeting and contributing to the debate.

69/21

## **TASK GROUP UPDATES**

The Chairman explained that the Chairman of the Libraries Task Group, Councillor S. Colella, had requested that the report from the group be postponed to the following meeting of the Board so that he could present the report for Members' consideration.

70/21

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

Councillor S. Baxter, the Council's representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC), confirmed that there had been no meetings of the Committee since the previous meeting of the Board.

71/21

## **CABINET WORK PROGRAMME**

The content of the Cabinet Work Programme for the period 1<sup>st</sup> March to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2022 was considered. During consideration of this item, Members commented that there were very few items listed on the Cabinet Work Programme, with a gap in terms of items scheduled for the consideration of the Cabinet, between March 2022 and January 2023.

72/21

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

Officers confirmed that the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Board's work programme would be updated to include any items that had been added during the course of the meeting.

Members were informed that updates in respect of work on the Levelling Up project had been scheduled for the Board's consideration every 6 months. This overview would focus at a strategic level, rather than on specific details for each of the projects that were due to receive funding.

The Chairman advised that the Board would be asked to consider a proposal to launch a Task Group at the following meeting. Questions were subsequently raised about how a Member could propose a Task Group investigation. Clarification was provided that a Topic Proposal form needed to be completed outlining the aims of an investigation for the consideration of the Board, which would determine whether to launch a proposed review.

The meeting closed at 7.04 p.m.

Chairman

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## Overview & Scrutiny Board

17<sup>th</sup> March 2022

### Briefing Note – Motion in respect of Fireworks

1. *Ensure our annual Bonfire Night event and all other public firework displays within the district are advertised well in advance, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people.*

- The Events Team has reviewed the option for providing a quieter firework display at Sanders Park through its procurement process. The tender responses from the Pyrotechnic companies highlighted the complexity for a quieter display and provided the following information:

#### **Noise Levels**

*The accepted maximum noise level for fireworks is 120dB at a viewing distance of 50 metres. The majority of professional display fireworks are designed to perform at this level.*

*It is possible to determine the variation of sound level with distance, using the formula:  $L(2) = L(1) - 20 \cdot \log(R1/R2)$*

*Where  $L(1)$  = Loudness at radial distance  $R1$  from Source  
 $L(2)$  = Loudness at radial distance  $R2$  from Source*

*The following table shows the variation in sound level with distance, assuming that fireworks emit 120dB at 50 metres.*

<i>Distance (m)</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>150</i>	<i>200</i>	<i>250</i>
<i>Sound Level (dB)</i>	<i>120</i>	<i>114</i>	<i>111</i>	<i>108</i>	<i>106</i>

*A sound level analysis is provided in a supplementary document, as part of the show design.*

*The perceived impact is presented as follows:*

<b><i>dB Range</i></b>	<b><i>Noise Level Perception</i></b>
<i>&lt; = 115</i>	<i>LOW</i>
<i>&gt; 115 &lt; 120</i>	<i>MEDIUM</i>
<i>&gt; = 120</i>	<i>HIGH</i>

*The firework content of each display has been selected so that 45% lies within the 'Low Level' noise range. **Experience has shown that a display based entirely on low-noise effects lacks drama and***

**impact and is not recommended for seasonal events where a large audience is expected.**

- The Events team has also investigated concerns raised with regard to climate change and CO2 emissions and has received the following estimated calculations:

## **Fireworks**

- Typically, a **15 minute** firework show would have a net explosive content of 150 kg.
- The CO2 + CO emissions are approximately 40kg
- This is equivalent to an average car travelling for 320km
- It is also equivalent to a 60kVA generator running for 63 minutes. (It is worth remembering that generators running the lighting towers and funfair for several hours would contribute far more to carbon emissions than a short fireworks display).
- To offset the carbon emission for the **display**, you would need to plant 0.2 trees.
- Pro-rata for a **12 minute** display the CO2 + CO emissions are approximately 33kg (the difference between 12 minutes and 15 minutes is not really significant in the overall scheme of things).

## **Spectator / parking contribution etc.**

- This is more difficult to estimate as precise information is not available. I have **estimated** that 3000 people travel an average distance of 3km to the park, by car. This generates a CO2 + CO emission of around **400kg**.

**The estimate for the total CO2/CO emission produced by the event is approximately 440kg.** This includes the fireworks display and the spectator 'contribution'. It excludes contribution from the bonfire (wood burning) and other aspects - particularly generator running for funfair, lights etc. One 60kVA generator running for 4 hours will exceed the emissions produced by the fireworks and spectators!

- The Events Team is currently reviewing the events programme, based on the evidence above, to provide a light/illumination event, with music choreography to replicate the firework display event but without the emissions, noise and climate impact.  
With the uncertainty around COVID-19 and to ensure the management of crowds the lights show will be held over two evenings.

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- The Events team will continue to ensure communication is clear with the residents of Bromsgrove District and work with the Council's communications team.
- The Events Team will continue to work with the SAG (Safety Advisory Group) which includes the emergency services, to work together on a public awareness campaigns of the lights/illumination event.

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## Overview & Scrutiny Board 2022

28<sup>th</sup> March

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

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor K. May – Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships  Councillor P. Thomas - Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services
Portfolio Holder Consulted		No
Relevant Head of Service		N/A
Report Author Jo Gresham	Job Title: Senior Democratic Services Officer Contact 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 are 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

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28<sup>th</sup> March

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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.

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**9. REPORT SIGN OFF**

<b>Department</b>	<b>Name and Job Title</b>	<b>Date</b>
Portfolio Holder	This document was published as part of the previous Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda – however the item was deferred.	
Lead Director / Head of Service	This document was published as part of the previous Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda – however the item was deferred.	
Financial Services	This document was published as part of the previous Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda – however the item was deferred.	
Legal Services	This document was published as part of the previous Overview and Scrutiny Board agenda – however the item was deferred.	





## OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY TOPIC PROPOSAL

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

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

<b>Name of Proposer: Rob Hunter</b>	
Tel No: 01527 578 337	Email: r.hunter@bromsgrove.gov.uk
Date: February 2022	

<b>Title of Proposed Topic</b>  (including specific subject areas to be investigate)	<b>Tackling the energy crisis in Bromsgrove</b>
<b>Background to the Proposal</b>  (Including reasons why this topic should be investigated and evidence to support the need for the investigation.)	<p>Local residents face crippling energy costs as a result of the lifting of the energy cap at the start of February. Average bills are set to increase by £693 a year whilst those on pre-payment metres will face an average rise of £708 per year. Families are facing increases of more than 50% in their annual energy costs at a time when other essential costs including petrol and food are also increasing rapidly.</p> <p><a href="#">Recent research</a> from the ONS shows that a third of households are already cutting back on gas and electricity spending, with the impact disproportionately affecting those on the lowest incomes. This energy crisis presents a real threat to the health and wellbeing of our residents.</p> <p>The purpose of this group is to examine what support BDC can offer to residents who are most adversely affected by the energy crisis and ensure we are doing as much as we can to prevent fuel poverty in our community.</p>

# Agenda Item 9

<p><b>Links to national, regional and local priorities</b></p> <p>(including the Council's strategic purposes)</p>	<p>This links to BDC's objectives as set out in the 2019-2023 BDC Plan. One of our Strategic objectives is to promote work and financial independence, with an action to support residents to manage their finances. The energy crisis represents an unprecedented challenge to these objectives, which merits further investigation.</p>			
<p><b>Possible Key Objectives</b></p> <p>(these should be SMART – specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explore what insight BDC has into the likely impact of the energy crisis on local residents, such as EPC ratings data, volume of support referrals.</li> <li>- Explore what support is available locally, who provides it, how residents can access it and how success is measured</li> <li>- Explore what measures are being taken to retrofit our social housing stock in order to make it as energy efficient as possible</li> <li>- Explore what opportunities are available for residents in private rented housing to improve the energy efficiency of their homes</li> <li>- Consider whether there are any gaps in support for those facing fuel poverty in Bromsgrove and explore how these could be filled</li> <li>- Investigate whether there are any areas of good practice at other councils that we could learn from</li> <li>- Investigate whether there are any new national or regional policies or funding schemes that we could take advantage of to support local residents</li> </ul>			
<p>Anticipated Timescale for completion of the work.</p>	<p>A permanent body, reporting to council regularly (at least once a year).</p>			
<p>Would it be appropriate to hold a Short Sharp Inquiry or a Task Group? (please tick relevant box)</p>	<p>Task Group</p>	<p>X</p>	<p>Short Sharp Inquiry</p>	

## Appendix 1 – Witnesses

It is anticipated that the following teams would be invited to give evidence (not exhaustive):

- Partnerships
- Finance
- Financial Independence Team
- Starting Well Team
- Housing Team
- BDHT
- Bromsgrove and Redditch CAB

### **OFFICE USE ONLY - TO BE COMPLETED WHEN THE TOPIC PROPOSAL IS ACCEPTED**

<b>Evidence</b>	
Key documents, data, reports	
Possible Site Visits	
Is a general press release required asking for general comments/suggestions from the public?	
Is a period of public consultation required?	
<b>Witnesses</b>	
Officers	
Councillors (including Portfolio Holder)	
Any External Witnesses	

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# CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

**1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 JULY 2022**  
**(published as at 1<sup>st</sup> March 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 Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
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Council Plan (Including Restoration and Recovery Plan) <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 1 Jun 2022 Council 22 Jun 2022		Report of the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy	Deb Poole, Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services Tel: 01527 881256 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Council Tax Support Scheme - Update <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 1 Jun 2022		Report of the Interim Head of Finance and Customer Services	Peter Carpenter, Interim Deputy S151 - Finance Councillor G. N. Denaro
Digital Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 1 Jun 2022 Council 22 Jun 2022		Report of the Head of Business Transformation and Organisational Development	Deb Poole, Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services Tel: 01527 881256 Councillor G. N. Denaro

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Staff Survey <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 1 Jun 2022		Report of the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy	Deb Poole, Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services Tel: 01527 881256  Councillor G. N. Denaro
Treasury Management and Investment Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 1 Jun 2022 Council 22 Jun 2022		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	James Howse, Executive Director Finance Tel: 01527 881205  Councillor G. N. Denaro
Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2040 <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 1 Jun 2022 Council 22 Jun 2022		Report of the Chief Executive	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284  Councillor S. A. Webb

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2021/22 <b>Key:</b> No	Council 22 Jun 2022		Report of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	Joanne Gresham, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252  Councillor L. C. R. Mallett
Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22 <b>Key:</b> No	Council 22 Jun 2022		Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee	Joanne Gresham, Senior Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252  Councillor C. A. Hotham
Climate Change Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 6 Jul 2022 Council 20 Jul 2022		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services and Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services, Guy Revans, Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284, Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3292  Councillor M. Thompson

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Asset Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 14th Sep 2022  Council Not before 21st Sep 2022		Report of the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	Claire Felton, Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services Tel: 01527 881429  Councillor G. N. Denaro
Promsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 14th Sep 2022  Council Not before 21st Sep 2022		Report of the Chief Executive	Kevin Dicks, Joint Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3250  Councillor K. J. May
HR and Organisational Development / People Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 14th Sep 2022		Report of the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy	Deb Poole, Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services Tel: 01527 881256  Councillor G. N. Denaro

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Leisure Strategy <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 14th Sep 2022  Council Not before 21st Sep 2022		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ruth Bamford, Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services Tel: 01527 64252  Councillor M. Thompson
<div style="position: absolute; left: -40px; top: 50%; transform: translateY(-50%); font-size: 10px;">       P C N C     </div> Levelling Up Fund Business Cases <b>Key:</b> Yes	Cabinet Not before 14th Sep 2022  Council Not before 21st Sep 2022		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration Tel: 01562 732192  Councillor K. J. May
Environment Act - Changes to Waste Services - Implications <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet Not before 26th Oct 2022  Council Not before 2nd Nov 2022		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Guy Revans, Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3292  Councillor M. A. Sherrey

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Homelessness Prevention Grant 2023/24 <b>Key:</b> Yes	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269  Councillor S. A. Webb
Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet <b>Key:</b> No	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023 Council 22 Feb 2023		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01527 881705  Councillor M. A. Sherrey

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## 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>
28th March 2022	Land Drainage Watercourse Maintenance Operation – pre-scrutiny	
	Equalities Annual report	
	Fireworks – Motion – Follow up on progress	
	Planning Determination Timescales – Verbal Update	
	Topic Proposal – Cllr Hunter	
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates – Libraires Task Group	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
25 <sup>th</sup> April 2022	Community Safety Partnership	Annual Scrutiny
	Overview and Scrutiny Board Annual Report 2021-22	
	Overview and Scrutiny Board – Recommendation Tracker	
	CCTV Update	
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
June 2022	Housing enforcement powers and how they are used	Requested at the meeting in November 2021
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
July 2022	Air Quality Update	Annual Update requested at the meeting on 6 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
	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**

### **September 2022**

Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre - pre-scrutiny

### **2022/2023**

- Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet – due for consideration not before April 2023
- 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)

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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