



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 15TH FEBRUARY 2021
AT 6.00 P.M.

MICROSOFT TEAMS - VIRTUAL

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

AGENDA

1. Election of Overview and Scrutiny Board Chairman
2. Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes
3. 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.

4. To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th January 2021 (Pages 1 - 12)
5. Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25 (including the Capital Programme) - Pre-Scrutiny

(Report to follow).

6. Council Tax Support Scheme

(Report to follow).

7. Equalities Task Group - Final Report (Pages 13 - 42)
8. Finance and Budget Working Group - Update
9. Task Group Updates
 - a) Impact of Review of Library Services Task Group – Chairman, Councillor S. Colella
 - b) Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group – Chairman, Councillor R. Hunter
10. Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update
11. Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 43 - 46)
12. Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 47 - 54)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
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B61 8DA

5th February 2021

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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GUIDANCE ON VIRTUAL MEETINGS

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

Please note that this is a public meeting conducted remotely by Skype conferencing between invited participants and live streamed for general access via the Council's YouTube channel.

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[Live Stream for Overview and Scrutiny Board Meeting - 15th February 2021](#)

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

Notes:

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- Meeting Minutes
- The Council’s Constitution

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

11TH JANUARY 2021, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors M. Thompson (Chairman), J. Till (Vice-Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont, R. J. Deeming, S. P. Douglas, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, A. D. Kriss and P. M. McDonald

Observers: Councillor P. L. Thomas as Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Community Safety
Councillor S. A. Webb as Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Ms J. Willis, Mr. M. Bough and Ms. A. Delahunty, Mrs J. Gresham and Ms. K. Somers

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APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor C. Spencer and Councillor S. Colella with Councillor S. Douglas as named substitute.

60/20

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

Councillor R. Hunter declared a non-pecuniary interest in respect of Item 5, Homelessness, Flexible Homelessness Support and Homelessness Reduction Grants 2020/2 due to his position within a not-for-profit housing organisation. It was decided that Councillor R. Hunter would not need to be exempt from the discussion (see item 5).

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

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TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 23RD NOVEMBER 2020

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 23rd November 2020 were submitted for Members' consideration.

Councillor C. Hotham requested an amendment be made at item 5 - Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services to respond to Questions from Members in Respect of the Process and Policy for Third Party Events. He suggested that 'with' replace between in the following sentence: 'There was concern from some Members that there seemed to be very little communication **between** Ward Members and Parish Councils prior to some particular events taking place.

The Democratic Services Officer present undertook to make the amendment.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 23rd November 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

62/20

SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP - PRESENTATION

The Chairman invited Councillor R. Hunter to introduce the item and explain to the Board the background behind his request for the West Mercia Police Road Safety Team being invited to the meeting. In doing so he explained that he felt it was an important area for the Board to consider as speeding was a frequent topic of concern from residents. He reported to Members that he would like to understand more fully the criteria for speed prevention equipment being installed in various sites around the district and the role that Members could play in communicating the process of tackling speeding to residents in the District.

The officers from West Mercia Police Road Safety Team introduced themselves and confirmed to Members that they were no longer part of the Safer Roads Partnership and although partnership working was still undertaken it was no longer as a member of the Safer Roads Partnership. Members were informed that the team was funded entirely through speed awareness courses.

During presentation of the item the following was highlighted to Members:

- In addition to covering enforcement the team dealt with various other areas of road safety including, campaigns, education, traffic management consultations. The work was carried out across various partnerships however most of the work was done on behalf of local authorities. It was clarified to Members that funding for the team was no longer received from local authorities but

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Overview and Scrutiny Board
11th January 2021

solely through speed awareness courses and that all funding from speeding fines was returned to the Treasury.

- A dedicated Collision Analyst and Business Data Analyst were responsible for looking at data and deciding on where the work by the team was carried out based on data collected. The number of fatalities and injuries were reported to Members and that there had been a slight decline in numbers over the last five years which was encouraging.
- Education, engineering and enforcement were the main approaches adopted by the team when dealing with road safety issues. Enforcement was the last resort of the three and a large part of the work was carried out in education. It was explained to Members that frequent campaigns were carried out with local communities, although it had been more difficult to undertake these in light of Covid-19 and that social media campaigns had played an important part in the education programmes. Engineering was the responsibility of the Traffic Management Advisors within the team and they provided a link between the team and the Local Authority. Members were informed that the vehicle activation signs, and speed limits were the sole responsibility of Worcestershire County Council as the Local Highways Authority. It was explained to Members that the enforcement approach was always data led, and the key priority was always to reduce the numbers injured or killed on the roads.
- Residents were encouraged to contact Parish Councils in the first instance if they had concerns about speeding in their area. This resulted in a more collective approach to tackling the issue. The team explained that The Road Safety: Community Toolkit was a guide that provided other options to communities rather than enforcement. It was agreed that this guide would be circulated to Members.

After the presentation Members were invited to ask questions of the West Mercia Police Road safety Team. In particular, there was interest from Members regarding the community programmes that were available and the process that needed to be undertaken by resident to embark on these projects. It was reiterated to Members that the preferred way for residents with concerns to contact the team was through the Parish Council or District Council, data would then be collected at the site that had been identified as an issue. If the data collected indicated the need for enforcement (or other methods) then action would be taken. The criteria for the Community Speed Watch programme was explained to Members and this included

numbers of required volunteers and necessary safety measures in place.

The Operation Snap initiative was explained in detail to Members in order for them to fully understand the procedure for residents to report incidents and upload dashcam footage. This had proved to be a successful initiative and had resulted in fines and driving points being issued.

Members were informed that all incidents where there had been a serious injury or fatality would be investigated by the Traffic Management Advisors and liaison would take place with Worcestershire County Council and appropriate measures taken. It was reported to Members that the level speeds were enforced within the National Police Chief's Council Guidelines at 10% plus 2 and the 85th percentile was considered.

There was concern from some Members that the low numbers of Police speed detector vans in the District and that the number of speeding tickets issued was low in comparison to the number of residents in the District.

Members were advised that if they needed further information, they could contact the team who would be happy to help.

The Chairman thanked the West Mercia Police Road Safety Team for their presentation.

RESOLVED that the presentation by the West Mercia Police Road Safety Team be noted.

63/20

HOMELESSNESS, FLEXIBLE HOMELESSNESS SUPPORT AND HOMELESSNESS REDUCTION GRANTS 2020/21

The Strategic Housing Officer was welcomed to the meeting in order to present the report for Homelessness, Flexible Homelessness Support and Homelessness Reduction Grants 2020/21. During the presentation the following was highlighted to Members:

- The allocation of Homelessness Prevention Grant report was brought before Members annually. In previous years, the Flexible Homelessness Support Grant and the Homelessness Reduction Act Grant had been awarded to the Council. It was clarified to Members that these had been uplifted and combined and were

now known as Homelessness Prevention Grant. Members were advised that this award was in addition to the Homelessness Prevention grant budget set by the Council.

- The report requested approval of the allocation of grants and outlined the services, organisations and initiatives to help prevent homelessness and assist those who had become homeless. In addition to this the report requested delegated authority to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing to use any unallocated Grant during the year or make further adjustments as necessary to ensure full utilisation of the Grants for 2021/22 in support of existing or new schemes be approved. The new Homelessness Prevention Grant was ring-fenced and funds were to be used to meet the three priorities set out by Government.
- The total allocation for funding was £285,794. The report proposed that £247,171 be allocated to a variety of projects and initiatives that included projects for young people, the funding of a Young Persons Pathway Worker, furniture provision for ex-offenders, Rapid Response Winter Weather Workers and the management of temporary accommodation costs for Bromsgrove District Housing. The Board were advised that the remainder of the funding of £38,623 had not been allocated, as this year's grant award had been uplifted on the 21st December 2020 and there had not been time to consider how it might be best utilised. It was planned that the Countywide Homelessness Strategy would be considered in order to identify any gaps in provision that would benefit from assistance.

The Chairman invited the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being to comment on the report and she explained that it was important to continue providing funding to these providers and thanked officers for all of their hard work in the prevention of Homelessness in the District.

Members questioned the figures that were presented in the report and it was agreed that there had been a miscalculation and that it would be amended to reflect the correct figures.

There was detailed discussion regarding the access to information in respect of rough sleeping and homelessness and it was requested that information be more readily available throughout the District for those who needed to access services, particularly outside of office hours. It was clarified to Members that information was available online, however

it was suggested by some Members that those who were in need of services might not have access to digital equipment.

Some Members queried, in respect of the CCP Rough Sleeper Outreach and Support Service who it was proposed would receive funding, how many Bromsgrove homeless or rough sleepers would benefit from this funding. It was clarified that approximately 10 people had been assisted over the previous year by this service in addition to responding Streetlink requests. Some Members requested the data in respect of the numbers of homeless and rough sleepers in Bromsgrove and the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being explained that Portfolio Holders across the County did meet to discuss this particular area and undertook to provide the Board with this information. It was suggested that Homelessness be added to the Board's Work Programme for future consideration.

RESOLVED that the Homelessness, Flexible Homelessness Support and Homelessness Reduction Grants 2020/21 be noted.

64/20

NOTICE OF MOTIONS - REQUEST TO INVESTIGATE

1) Notice of Motion - Encouraging responsible use of fireworks – Councillor R. Hunter

The Chairman invited Councillor R. Hunter to introduce the item in respect of the Notice of Motion which had been referred from Full Council.

During the presentation, the following was highlighted to Members:

- That the purpose of the motion was to highlight the distress that the use of fireworks could cause to vulnerable people and animals and practical measures, if any, could be taken by the Council.
- That this was a complex issue given the powers that were given to a Local Authority in this area.

There was detailed discussion with Members regarding the legislation that was already in place in respect of the use of fireworks and that it was important to understand what powers if any, could be taken by the Council to make changes in this area. Councillor R. Hunter confirmed that this Motion was not necessarily involved in seeing what could take place within the

legislation but more the practical steps that might be made by the Council to mitigate the impact on residents.

Councillor P. Thomas, as Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and Community Safety was invited to comment on the report and in doing so noted to Members that a balance view needed to be taken and that further information from officers might be useful for members in order to make an informed decision.

Councillor R. Hunter proposed recommendation 'that the request is included on the work programme and the Board undertakes the investigation, discuss broad terms of reference and sets a time scale for completion of the investigation' this was seconded by Councillor P. McDonald. On being put to the vote this recommendation was lost.

Councillor A. Kriss proposed the following 'recommendation that further information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation is required', this was seconded by Councillor S. Douglas. On being put to the vote this recommendation was carried.

Democratic Services Officers undertook to put the item on the Board's Work Programme for future consideration by the Board.

2) Notice of Motion - Encouraging responsible use of fireworks – Councillor P. McDonald

The Chairman invited Councillor P. McDonald to introduce the item in respect of the Notice of Motion which had been referred from Full Council. It was clarified to Members that investigation into the amount of mileage expenses that had been claimed during previous years and during (Covid-19).

Councillor P. McDonald proposed recommendation that the request is included on the work programme and the Board undertakes the investigation, discuss broad terms of reference and sets a time scale for completion of the investigation' this was seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

Councillor A. Kriss proposed the following 'recommendation that further information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation is required', this was

seconded by Councillor S. Douglas. On being put to the vote this recommendation was carried.

In respect of Councillor R. Hunter's Motion:

RESOLVED that

- a) further information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation was required.

In respect of Councillor P. McDonald's Motion:

- b) further information be requested from a relevant source before deciding whether or not further investigation was required.

65/20

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman introduced the Finance and Budget Working Group update in his role as Chairman of the Group. He explained that the Working Group met on 16th December 2020 and had looked at the following areas in detail:

- Councillor Hunter's Notice of Motion
- Update on the impact of Covid-19
- Budget Setting Process and Timescales

The Chairman reported that Councillor R. Hunter had been invited to the meeting to discuss his notice of motion which had been referred to the group from the Full Council meeting held on 21st October 2020. The possibility of enforcing existing legislation to increase the collection of Council Tax rates for empty properties in the District was discussed in detail. However, a number of considerations were made in respect of this item particularly in light of the current pandemic and the time it would take to implement. It was agreed that this item be added to the Work Programme for future discussion. Councillor R. Hunter was also invited to be a part of the Finance and Budget Working Group and agreed to consider joining the group in the future.

Members were informed by the Chairman that the Senior Accounting Technician had provided a presentation outlining the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's finances and of grants received by the Council during lockdown. It was agreed that these areas would be monitored closely by the Group in the coming months.

It was reported to the Board that officers had carried out Budget Setting Workshops for Heads of Service and senior officers. The training had been arranged to try to improve the accuracy of budget setting in the future. This was welcomed by the group as there had been concerns raised by Members concerning the accuracy of budget setting in previous years.

The Work Programme was discussed by the Working Group and a clear programme of work was agreed for future consideration.

As the Working Group continues its scrutiny it will, as always, report back to the main Board and if necessary, suggest that reports are also brought forward for all of you to consider.

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

66/20

TASK GROUP UPDATES

a) Equalities Task Group – Chairman, Councillor P. McDonald

Councillor P. McDonald presented this update and informed Members that a report had been prepared for the investigation and would be presented at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting that was due to take place in February 2021.

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

The Democratic Services Officer presented the update in the absence of Councillor S. Colella. In doing so she reported to Members that there had been one meeting of the Task Group since the previous Board meeting. Councillor L. Hodgson Cabinet Member with responsibility for Communities at Worcestershire County Council (WCC) had been in attendance at this meeting to provide further context of the new countywide Library Strategy.

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

Councillor R. Hunter updated the Board regarding the Task Group and informed Members that he had given his apologies for the last Task Group meeting but that Councillor S. Colella taken the role of Chairman for the meeting. He reported to Members that

some draft recommendations had been presented to the group and would be discussed at the next meeting which was due to be held on 25th January 2021. Members were advised that there would be a number of officers in attendance for that meeting to discuss the potential recommendations.

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

67/20

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor J. Till presented the update from the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) and advised Members that there had been no meeting since the last Board meeting was held.

Councillor J. Till undertook to circulate to the Board any information or minutes received.

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

68/20

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Democratic Services Officer presented the Cabinet Work Programme and drew Members' attention to the following items which were already included on the Board's Work Programme:

- Final Council Tax Support Scheme

It was agreed that the following items would be included in the Board's Work Programme for consideration at future meetings:

- Green Homes Funding
- Notice of Motion - Encouraging responsible use of fireworks
- Notice of Motion - Travel Expenses
- Homelessness
- Recreation Road Car Parking

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

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Overview and Scrutiny Board
11th January 2021

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

This item was discussed as part of the previous item.

The meeting closed at 8.01 p.m.

Chairman

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Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

15th February

Equalities Task Group Final Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor G Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Transformation, Organisational Development & Digital Strategy
Report Author	Senior Democratic Services Officer a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881443
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
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:-

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

and **RECOMMEND** to Cabinet that

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

2. **BACKGROUND**

3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

4. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

5. **STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

Relevant Strategic Purpose

Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

15th February

-
- 5.1 This report would come under An Effective and Sustainable Council, which relates to all things corporate.

Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

15th February

Climate Change Implications

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

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 The Policy Team have been involved in the Task Group and are aware of the recommendations arising from the final report.

Operational Implications

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

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

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

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Equalities Task Group Report

(Background papers are listed within the main report.)

Overview & Scrutiny Board 2021

15th February

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling is aware of the report.	February 2021
Lead Director / Head of Service	Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy	January 2021
Financial Services	No direct financial implications	
Legal Services	Rachel Martin – Team Leader, Contracts & Commercial	January 2021
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	Rebecca Green – Policy Manager	January 2021
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
BOARD**

**EQUALITIES TASK
GROUP**

FINAL REPORT

January 2021



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



Councillor Peter McDonald (Chairman)



Councillor Andrew Beaumont



Councillor Malcolm Glass



Councillor Helen Jones



Councillor Adrian Kriss



Councillor Harrison Rone-Clarke



Councillor Caroline Spencer



Councillor Jo-Anne Till

SUPPORTING OFFICER DETAILS

Amanda Scarce – Senior Democratic Services Officer
a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Foreword from the Chairman

The aims of the Equalities Task Group were to ensure that every employee has access to the same opportunities and the same, fair treatment. That if you actively promote equality and diversity (and have a policy to match) then the Council will thrive, and people of all backgrounds can come together for the benefit of those they serve.

We feel the recommendations the Task Group are putting forward will enhance an inclusive culture to ensure that employees are valued and have the same access to all opportunities whatever their differences.

**Councillor Peter McDonald
Chairman, Equalities Task Group**

Summary of Recommendations

After consideration of the evidence available and interviewing witnesses the Task Group have proposed the following recommendations, supporting evidence can be found under the relevant chapters within the main body of this report.

Chapter 1 – The Council’s Equalities Strategy

Recommendation 1
That an annual Equalities Report be prepared for 2021 and annually thereafter.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time in preparing the report.

Recommendation 2
That a question in respect of IOS certification (or equivalent) is included in the Contractors’ Questionnaire in respect of Equalities.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time in checking the response.

Chapter 2 – Human Resources

Recommendation 3
That when the new ERP system is in use, the data collated by it in respect of HR issues be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.
Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time.

Recommendation 4
a) That clear guidelines are put in place in respect of the secondment process (which would include some sort of appeals process) and made accessible to all staff; and b) That a formal progression policy be put in place and made accessible to all staff.
Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time.

Chapter 3 – Community and Engagement Strategy

Recommendation 5
<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) That a specific section on Equalities be included within the annual Community Survey; andb) That the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or Members of the Equalities Task Group) are involved in the preparation of the questions to be included.
Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time.

Background Information

Councillor H. Rone-Clarke, together with a representative from within the local community, presented a topic proposal form containing proposed terms of reference for a Task Group entitled Identifying and Addressing Racial Disparities within Bromsgrove District Council's operations. Councillor Rone-Clarke highlighted the importance of the authority, constantly looking within itself and identifying issues with regards to race and striving to make improvements. It was highlighted that this was not a political venture, but one of constant self-improvement.

Following consideration of the topic proposal at its meeting on 7th July 2020, the Board agreed that a Task Group should be set up and appointed Councillor P. McDonald as its Chairman at that meeting and requested that the Group report back with its findings within 6 months.

At the August meeting of the Board, the membership of the Task Group was confirmed. Due to the interest shown in the Task Group and recognising that it was sometimes difficult to organising ad hoc meetings that were convenient for everyone, it was agreed that there would be a quorum set to ensure that those who had put their names forward were committed to the work of the Task Group.

Following its initial meeting on 10th August, the Task Group also agreed to amend the Terms of Reference to include all those protected characteristics covered by the Equalities Act 2010. The changes were reported back to the main Board at its meeting in September, when it was agreed that the name of the Task Group would be updated to simply "the Equalities Task Group". At its initial meeting the Task Group also recognised that the scope of the Task Group was wide reaching and therefore it was agreed that it would concentrate on three particular areas within the Council and these are reflected in the chapters within this report.

The Task Group has held 8 meetings in total since that date and held discussions with a number of key witnesses. The Task Group has reviewed a number of the Council's policies and largely concentrated its investigation on issues which impacted on its staff. This was to ensure that everyone was treated fairly from an equalities perspective and that those policies were readily available for staff and reviewed on a regular basis. The Task Group also briefly looked at community engagement and how this could be improved to ensure that all residents had the opportunity to feel comfortable and be treated fairly, when dealing with the Council and when giving their views.

Chapter 1

The Council's Equalities Strategy

One of the first documents the Task Group reviewed was the Council's Equalities Strategy, as it was keen to ensure that this was both regularly reviewed and updated and easily accessible to everyone.

Following the review of that document the Task Group prepared a number of questions for the Policy Manager to respond to at its next meeting. Those questions covered a number of areas and are detailed below for information.

- a) You have provided data for those with protected characteristics and ethnicities working at the Council. Please advise how often this was updated and whether historic data was available for comparison purposes.
- b) How the Council gave due regard to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation in order to advance equal opportunities and foster good relations within the Council.
- c) How the Council ensures that any contractors it uses adhere to the Equalities Act.
- d) Whether the Council produced an Annual Equalities Report and if so when was this last produced and where can a copy be located.
- e) How the Equalities Policy was monitored to ensure that it was being adhered to.

The Policy Manager responded to each point that had been raised in detail and explained that employee data was collated annually but could be done more frequently if needed. Staff were encouraged to share this data; however, it was highlighted that there was no legal obligation for them to do so. It was also explained that it was important for staff to understand why the data was being collected and that it was not used to identify an individual. The Policy Manager explained that there was a new system being brought in to use in the Spring of 2021, which would allow for more useful data to be collated, unfortunately historic data would not be migrated to this system.

Details of the new system were provided – it was an Enterprise Resource System, which was initially for the Finance Team, but it was explained that there was an integrated suite of software which could be added on which covered Human Resources and Payroll systems. The system was used globally and for a variety of organisations.

Members were pleased to learn that the provision of this data was something which had been discussed at Corporate Management Team and that it was hoped to carry out a “drive” on collecting the data through attending team meetings and explaining why it was important and how the data was used, whilst still giving people the option not to provide it. It was further confirmed that, in respect of the recruitment of staff a form went out with all application forms, but again, there was no obligation for it to be completed and returned.

The Policy Manager confirmed that the collection of this type of data was something which lots of authorities struggled to gather, as it was something which came up regularly at area group meetings that she attended. Members agreed that it was useful to know that it was not just this Council that struggled to gather the data and that it was something which was taken seriously, and every effort was made to collect it where possible. The importance of having robust data was also discussed and again it was hoped that the new system would help to provide this going forward. Members were mindful of the need for the data to be sufficient to be used meaningfully and that some people were often cautious about sharing this information for a variety of reasons.

Members questioned whether there was any data in respect of the percentage of people who had or had not completed the information. The Policy Manager explained that this was different for each of the characteristics, so would be hard to extract the data. Again, if limited numbers had provided it, the data would also not necessarily be meaningful. However, it was confirmed that for gender and age it was nearly 100% but for the other protected characteristics (as detailed in the terms of reference for the Task Group) it was not so many. It was acknowledged that it was difficult to know how much of the data collected was accurate. The Policy Manager confirmed that this was very much the case in respect of disabilities, as it was often clear that people had a disability but chose, for whatever reason, not to disclose it. It was acknowledged by everyone that work needed to be done to get the message across that by collecting the data the Council was able to better support its staff.

The Policy Manager provided details of the dignity at work training which had been undertaken throughout the Council. This had been a bespoke session which had been interactive and designed specifically for the Council by an external company. It had been well received and work was being carried out to ensure this reached everyone, as due to sickness etc some people had not been able to attend. It was acknowledged that the planned “mop up” sessions had not yet taken place and a further delay in rectifying this had been caused by the pandemic. People also received updates via net consent, which was a format where a presentation or policy was delivered through staff IT and they were then unable to log in to other Council systems until they had read and agreed the policy, sometimes this was also followed up with a short test. It was however acknowledged that there was a need to find a balance in respect of things such as these being sent out without staff feeling as if they had been bombarded with information and the importance of their responsibilities.

Support was provided to staff in various ways and the Policy Manager gave an example where she had herself provided support to a member of staff. Her team also managed the translation and interpretation policy for the Council and Equality impact assessments were also carried out where needed, again with her team supported officers with these. It was also noted that a large piece of work was currently being undertaken in respect of accessibility following new legislation. This referred to all documents provided by the Council in all formats.

The Task Group was also keen to ensure that any contractors used by the organisation had the appropriate policies in place and met all statutory requirements. The Policy Manager explained that whilst contractors were asked whether they adhered to the Equalities Legislation, this was not monitored, and the onus was on the Contractor to ensure that it did so. Members raised concerns around this lack of monitoring and wanted to ensure that everyone, wherever possible was treated equally if they were working at or on behalf of the Council. In respect of the Equalities Questionnaire completed by Contractors the Task Group were aware that this was in the process of being reviewed and suggested that it may be more appropriate for it to include some reference to ISO or equivalent certification. The thinking behind this was that in order to achieve certification the contractor would need to ensure that it not only met the requirements of the certification but adhered to them also. The provision of such certification would remove the onus from the Council in having to check to ensure that the Contractor adhered to the relevant policies.

The Policy Manager explained that she was currently working on an Annual Report. Unfortunately, due to a number of reasons this had not been prepared in recent years. It was hoped that going forward this would be used as a template for future reports and updated and added to each year. It was however highlighted that, it was not a requirement within the Council's Equalities Strategy to prepare an annual report and there was no legal requirement to produce one, although it was acknowledged that the production of one was beneficial. The Equalities Strategy was regularly reviewed, and the next review would take place in March 2021. Again, in some areas there was still not sufficient data to make it meaningful and this was something which it was hoped would improve in the future. Members were keen for an annual report to be produced as it was felt that it sent a clear message to both staff and residents that the Council took the matter seriously and was also an opportunity to not only highlight areas where improvement was needed but to monitor improvements in the future and showcase the areas of achievement and the work the Council was undertaking to ensure it met the requirements of the Equalities Act.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

That an annual Equalities Report be prepared for 2021 and annually thereafter.
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Recommendation 2

That a question in respect of IOS certification (or equivalent) is included in the Contractors' Questionnaire in respect of Equalities.

Chapter 2

Human Resources

The Task Group considered three areas, when looking at the Human Resources processes and policies that were currently in place at the Council. It was felt that these areas were the most important in order to ensure that all staff (and prospective employees) were being treated equally and fairly and given the same opportunities by the organisation, whilst also recognising that the needs of each member of staff were very different. The Task Group's recommendations therefore reflect those areas which it investigated in detail.

The Task Group interviewed the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager together with a Union Representative to ensure it had a balanced view of the position. Consideration was given to either inviting staff into a meeting or asking them to complete a short questionnaire, but after giving this matter due consideration it was decided that, due to the ongoing pandemic, it would not be practicable. A number of questions were prepared for discussion with the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager and these are included below for information purposes, as these highlight the particular areas that the Task Group concentrated on. These areas also formed the basis of the discussions with the Union Representative. As there were a number of responses from the Union Representative which Members felt needed further clarification from the officers, the officers were invited back to a further meeting of the Task Group in order to have the opportunity to respond to the comments which had been made. Whilst it was clear from the discussions held with both the officers and the Union Representative that there was a good working relationship between the two, Members acknowledged that there was always room for improvement, and it was important that all concerned continued to work together to ensure a positive outcome for both the organisation and its staff.

The information provided below is a summary of that provided by all those people that were interviewed. The areas discussed were:

Staff Recruitment

The Task Group concentrated on the following areas when considering the Council's Recruitment and Selection Policy.

- a) Recruitment – the process for external vacancies and where these were advertised.
- b) All applicants with a disability who met the minimum criteria for the vacancy would be interviewed and considered on their abilities - clarification as to whether this was classed as positive discrimination.
- c) Whether the Council had short term contracts for staff and how these were managed and monitored.

The process for filling a vacancy was explained – starting with the initial discussion at Corporate Management Team, when the relevant Head of Service would put forward a case for the need for the new or vacant post to be filled, to the position being advertised usually on the West Midlands Jobs Portal, which was also used for internal vacancies as well as external. This was a platform used by all local authorities in the West Midlands. The link on the Portal would then take any prospective candidate through to the Council's specific pages and the job specification, description, and application form would be available at that stage. If it was a specialist role, perhaps an IT one for example, then it may also be advertised in a specific publication.

Members discussed how the ethnic make-up of the Council influenced the recruitment process and whether or if there was an in balance and how this could be addressed. Officers acknowledged that currently there were some gaps in the data available and therefore it would not be appropriate to use this for such purposes. Reference was again made to the introduction of the new ERP System and a specific area of that system which would cover HR matters (highlighted in the previous chapter of this report) which it was hoped would provide more accurate data that could be used to shape future recruitment as part of the wider strategy. Officers were urged to be more forward thinking within the recruitment process to ensure that the Council was able to recruit people from a wider range of communities. It needed to promote the availability of flexible working hours, the ability to work from home and childcare support, as these were areas which were now, more than ever, important to employees, following the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Members were provided with information in respect of fixed term contracts and it was noted that currently there were 41 in place, which were managed by the relevant service area. Such posts were arranged by the relevant area for a number of reasons, with the introduction of the new system it was hoped that these would be better managed and more detailed information made available. It was confirmed that if any of these fixed term contracts were replaced with a permanent post, the person currently in the role would still need to apply for it through the usual route and would not automatically be awarded the position. There was a clear recruitment process which should be followed throughout to ensure the process was open and transparent.

The importance of data being available in respect of all aspects of recruitment was discussed by the Task Group and it was keen to ensure that this data (which would hopefully be provided through the new ERP System) was monitored on a regular basis to ensure improvements were made and achievements highlighted.

Secondment to Other Departments

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager provided information as to what secondment meant and how this was handled at the Council. As it was apparent that there was not a set policy in respect of this the main area for discussion by the Task Group was the need for a clear

explanation of the process and how it was managed in order to ensure that there was a fair process in place for all staff.

It was explained to the Task Group that a secondment was a temporary transfer to another area, whilst the person's substantive role remained open to them to return to at the end of the set period of the secondment. The post would be advertised internally and if a person was interested in that secondment post then, after going through the recruitment process and with their current manager's agreement, they could be moved to that post, whilst retaining the ability to return to their main post in the future. It was seen as an opportunity for both the employee and the employer as it allowed someone from another team who may have transferrable skills to use those skills and expand their knowledge within the Council environment.

Whilst it was understood that secondment opportunities were advertised through the recruitment process, concerns were raised that some staff may not have easy access to this and were unaware or did not fully understand the meaning of secondment and the opportunities available to them. Concerns were also raised in respect of it being at the manager's discretion to allow a member of staff to be released for a secondment post. It was suggested that there should be a more formal process put in place with the opportunity for a member of staff to appeal against a manager's decision, or at least for a full and open discussion to take place in order for all those concerned to understand why a request for secondment had been turned down. It was felt that this would ensure that all staff members were treated equally and provided an open and transparent process for everyone concerned. There was also discussion around the length of time a secondment should and did actually last, as it was felt that if these went on for any length of time, it was not beneficial to the member of staff or the team that they had been seconded from, as it would leave a level of uncertainty for all concerned. If a secondment went on for any length of time, it was thought that a permanent post should be considered and not a secondment.

Staff Progression within the Organisation

Task Group Members were keen to ensure that all staff were given the opportunity to progress if they so wished within the Council. It was felt important to retain staff and encourage them to aim to continually improve their skills if they wished too. Concerns were raised that this was not always the case and that it often was dependant on the area that a member of staff worked in as to what support and training was available, which if this was the case, was not acceptable. The following three areas in respect of progression were those which the Task Group mainly concentrated on for the purposes of this investigation.

- a) Provide a clear definition of "progression".
- b) Progression Policy – as the Council did not have a specific policy what steps were in place to help staff progress. For example, what training opportunities were available.

- c) Whether a record of the number of staff who had progressed within the Council was kept.

The Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager explained that it was difficult to define progression, as each person had a different view on it, for example some people would be happy in the same job but want to get the most out of it and others would want to use a job to develop skills and move forward in a more career-based way. It was also noted that in the current fast-moving climate of employment, many roles that people were in had by the nature of them changed significantly from when they first started, so it could be said that they had technically “progressed”, albeit indirectly and not in the formal sense. It was also highlighted that people were much more flexible these days, so again roles would have developed in some particular areas, whilst in others those roles would be much more defined.

It was explained that these areas, together with others, would be discussed at the regular 1-2-1 meetings which managers carried out with each member of their team and again at an annual Personal Development Review (PDR) in more detail. There was a standard format for these meetings, but they could also be flexible to meet the needs of an individual and/or the requirements of the line manager. The format that was followed for each individual staff member would be discussed and agreed with them at the outset of these meetings. There would be an opportunity at those meetings to talk about transferrable skills and training opportunities, either at the request of the staff member or the line manager if an area where this was needed was identified. It was explained that the current HR system was not able to provide detailed data around cases where people had “progressed”, but it was anticipated that the new system would be able to do so. It was confirmed that the PDR would be held annually and reviewed six monthly with 1-2-1s taking place regularly, but again this was down to the staff member and line manager to agree an appropriate timescale.

Members generally agreed that progression had a different meaning for each individual, and it was also commented that in some cases people did not wish to progress but were happy within their role and it would be wrong to make them feel pressured into moving on if they did not wish to do so. Officers confirmed that it would be down to personal choice and a member of staff would not be put under any unnecessary pressure. It was therefore noted that whilst the Council’s policy of progression was embedded within the appraisal process, Members were keen to ensure that the appraisals were carried out and the appropriate opportunities made available to everyone. It was agreed therefore that a more formal approach should be taken in respect of progression, which provided staff with clear guidelines set out in a policy of how this worked, what they might expect from it and how they would be supported through the process.

Conflicting information was provided in respect of those staff members who regularly received 1-2-1s and PDRs and Members highlighted the importance of these taking place across the board to ensure all staff were given the same opportunities to progress if they so wished or to take part in any relevant training

to either support their current roles or to help them progress. It was acknowledged that there was always some room for improvement and that this was something which was reviewed on a regular basis. If a member of staff was not happy with the manner in which they were being supported by a manager there was always the opportunity for them to speak to a more senior manager or for them to speak to an HR Advisor – each service area had a designated HR Advisor who was available for anyone to speak to about concerns that they may have.

Concerns were also raised in respect of training that was provided and made available to staff, Members were keen to ensure that any training provided was appropriate for those receiving it and cost effective. They saw little benefit in providing sessions which people did not attend for whatever reason, particularly if an external training provider was being used as it was important for the Council to get value for money from any sessions it organised. They were also keen to ensure that staff were given the opportunity to attend training sessions where appropriate, as they were mindful that in some cases, for example refuse collectors, the release of them for say half a day, could impact on service delivery, so may deter them from attending such sessions.

It was suggested that progression added value to the Council and that currently there was no evidence to say how many staff had progressed and whether the policy was therefore inclusive of everyone. It was explained that whilst a member of staff could say they had progressed there was currently nothing on the current HR system used to support this, so any data would be anecdotal. Whilst this hard evidence was not present, Officers were satisfied through talking to people and from internal intelligence that this did happen in particular areas. However, it was accepted that there was not the definitive data available to support this. Again, it was hoped that with the new ERP System this would improve and allow a better monitoring process to be in place and it would be an area which was reviewed on a regular basis going forward.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 3

That when the new ERP system is in use, the data collated by it in respect of HR issues be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Recommendation 4

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) That clear guidelines are put in place in respect of the secondment process (which would include some sort of appeals process) and made accessible to all staff; andb) That a formal progression policy be put in place and made accessible to all staff. |
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Chapter 3

Community and Engagement Strategy

During the interview with the Policy Manager Members asked about how community engagement influenced the Council's policies. The Policy Manager explained to the Task Group how community engagement was used to influence the Council Plan through the annual community survey. The results of these surveys were shared with the Corporate Management Team and also through Cabinet. They were used by Managers within reports and questions or smaller surveys could be used for a particular piece of work for a specific area. An example of this was when it was used within Leisure Services and helped to shape what services were provided to meet the needs of the residents. There had been a good return rate of nearly 1k for this particular survey.

The Task Group was provided with a brief overview of the results of the most recent Community Survey and, the three questions which had been included in respect of equalities. Members were pleased to see that there had also been a section provided for free text to allow residents to respond on a more general basis. It was noted that the majority of responses had been positive, with the Council being fair and inclusive.

Information was also provided in respect of a recent staff survey which was based around working from home. The Council had felt, that due to the current situation arising from the impact of the pandemic, it was important to ensure that all staff, who were working from home were being supported appropriately and given the opportunity to share any concerns or specific issues they faced. The Council was also mindful of the impact of working from home on staff's mental health and wellbeing and was keen to ensure that wherever possible this was addressed, and suitable mechanisms put in place for staff to be able to access any support that was needed. Members were provided with a number of outcomes which had been put in place following this survey.

The Task Group discussed the importance of hearing from residents about their experiences and how they felt the Council were meeting the needs of those from the protected characteristics groups and it was therefore suggested that more detailed questions around equalities could be included in the next community survey. Members of the Task Group would be happy to work with the Policy Manager in formulating these questions to ensure that they focused on the right areas and covered any specific areas which were highlighted to Members whilst working in their local communities.

It was also discussed as to how best the Community Survey could be promoted to ensure as many residents as possible completed it as it was acknowledged that robust data was needed in order for it to be used in a meaningful way. Members were keen to add their support to any campaign that was put in place to promote the survey and were happy to work with officers to get the best results for all concerned. It was vitally important that community groups

engaged with the Council to help make any necessary improvements in the future.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 5

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) That a specific section on Equalities be included within the annual Community Survey; andb) That the Overview and Scrutiny Board (or Members of the Equalities Task Group) are involved in the preparation of the questions to be included. |
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Areas to Note

There was one particular area which the Task Group considered briefly at its final meeting and whilst they did not feel it appropriate to make any recommendation on this matter, they would like this to be looked at in more detail and action taken if felt appropriate. This was in respect of compliments and complaints received by the Council and there were two specific areas which the Task Group discussed and wished to be highlighted:

- Compliments and Complaints page and the Customer Care Pledge on the Council's website – it was suggested that these be in a more prominent position (in order to make them easier for residents to locate) and promoted through the Council's social media on a more regular basis.
- Members also discussed that it would be useful for them to receive regular updates on the number and type of compliments and complaints that were received. It was acknowledged that this was available through the Corporate Dashboard, but it was felt that this should be something which was received at a committee, such as the Overview and Scrutiny Board. It was noted that in previous years, this was a report which had been received by the Board on a quarterly basis, as part of its role of managing the Council's performance.

It should also be noted that as part of the investigation it carried out, the Task Group did also discuss and consider whether it was appropriate to "invite" in members of the public to one of its meeting or to set up a survey of its own to get the views of residents. However, after discussion it was agreed that in light of the current position and the impact of Covid-19 that logistically this would not be practicable and that in the current difficult times there may not be sufficient responses in order to provide meaningful data. Hence, the suggestion that future Community Surveys included more questions around equalities as detailed in the previous chapter of this report. There were a number of Members of the Task Group who had contacts with a number of community groups in their Wards and it was agreed that they would support the Policy Manager in making contact with those groups to encourage further community engagement. It was suggested that other Members may also have a number of contacts which could prove helpful to the Policy Manager and this should be explored further as the Covid-19 restrictions were reduced.

It was felt important that all Members played a part in improving and supporting community engagement in any way that they could.

Appendix 1

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Equalities Task Group

Terms of Reference as at August 2020

The Identifying and Addressing Racial Disparities within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations Task Group has been set up by the Overview and Scrutiny Board to carry out detailed scrutiny/pre-scrutiny of the above topic.

1. The Task Group be made up of 9 Members with a quorum of 5. The Task Group will meet throughout the next six months at intervals to be decided by the Group.
2. Meetings will be restricted to 1.5 hours in order for the Group to remain focused (with the option to extend should it be deemed necessary).
3. The Task Group agreed that if Members missed more than 2 meetings then they would no longer be on the Task Group.
4. The Task Group will be a standing item on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and either a verbal or written report will be provided at each of the Board's meetings.
5. 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.
6. 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.
7. Should the Task Group not complete its work within that timescale, then an interim report will be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board with a request for further time to complete the investigations.

Aims and Objectives of the Task Group

The Task Group will undertake a scrutiny investigation into Identifying and Addressing Disparities of those who come under the protected characteristics communities (as detailed within the Equalities Act 2010) within Bromsgrove District Council's Operations and will cover the following areas, although this list is not exclusive:

Agenda Item 7

- Identify if any disparities exist within the Council's operations.
- How easy is it for Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic (BAME), together with those groups included within the protected characteristics communities of the Equalities Act 2010, residents to access council support?
- Identify ways that these disparities, if any, can be addressed

For information, the protected characteristics communities within the Equalities Act 2010 are as follows:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

Appendix 2

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council Documents

Equalities Strategy

Engagement Strategy

Recruitment and Selection Policy

Contractors Equalities Questionnaire

External Documents

Equalities Act 2010

Appendix 3

WITNESSES

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

Internal Witnesses:

Deb Poole – Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy

Rebecca Green – Policy Manger

Becky Talbot – Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager

Laney Walsh – Unison Representative

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside Offices, Market Street

Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8DA

Telephone: (01527) 881443

Email: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk

CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 MARCH 2021 TO 30 JUNE 2021
(published as at 1 February 2021)

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

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

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

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

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 881443) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.

CABINET MEMBERSHIP

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

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Finance Monitoring 2020/21 - Quarter 3 Report Key: No	Cabinet Not before 31st Mar 2021		Report of the Executive Director of Finance and Resources	Chris Forrester, Head of Financial and Customer Services Tel: 01527 881673 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Solihull Local Plan Draft Submission Version Key: No	Cabinet Not before 31st Mar 2021 Council Not before 21st Apr 2021		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325 Councillor A. D. Kent
Green Homes Funding Key: No	Cabinet 31 Mar 2021		Report of the Head of Community Services	Kath Manning, Climate Change and Energy support Officer Tel: 01527 587094 Councillor M. A. Sherrey

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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
Treasury Management and Investment Strategy Key: No	Cabinet 31 Mar 2021 Council 21 Apr 2021		Report of the Head of Finance and Customer Services	Chris Forrester, Head of Financial and Customer Services Tel: 01527 881673 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Qualities Task Group Key: No	Cabinet 31 Mar 2021		Report of the Head of Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Services	Amanda Scarce, Senior Democratic Services Officer (Bromsgrove) Tel: 01527 881443 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group Key: No	Cabinet 31 Mar 2021		Report of the Head of Environmental and Property Services	Joanne Gresham, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor M. A. Sherrey
Impact of Library Service Changes Task Group Key: No	Cabinet 31 Mar 2021		Report of the Chief Executive Officer	Joanne Gresham, Democratic Services Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor K. J. May

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Agenda Item 11

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

WORK PROGRAMME

2020/21

RECOMMENDATION:

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

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Additional Information
Monday 15 th February 2021	Medium Term Financial Plan 2021/22 to 2024/25 (including the Capital Programme) - Pre-Scrutiny	
	Council Tax Support Scheme	
	Equalities Task Group Final Report	
	Working Group Updates	
	Finance and Budget Working Group	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	
Monday 29 th March 2021	Staff Survey	Following presentation at the February 2020 meeting it was agreed that a further update would be received work programme in September 2020
	Mileage – Notice of Motion	
	Impact of Libraries Review Task Group	
	Impact of Flooding Task Group	
	Working Group Updates	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	
26 th April 2021	Annual Report 2020-2021 – review and Lessons Learnt	
	Recommendation Tracker	
	Fireworks – Notice of Motion	
	Working Group Updates	
	Finance and Budget Working Group	
	Equalities Task Group – Cabinet Response	
	Any Task Group Updates	

	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
	Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme	

2021-22 Meeting Dates

1st June 2020

6th July 2021

13th September 2021

18th October 2021

22nd November 2021

11th January 2022

14th February 2022

28th March 2022

25th April 2022

Items for consideration in 2021-22

- Green Homes Funding – consideration of this by the Board will be dependent on consideration of the report by Cabinet.
- 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 5th 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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