



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 22ND JUNE 2022

AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

MEMBERS: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, S. G. Hession, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Jenkins, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, L. C. R. Mallett, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, S. A. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

AGENDA

WELCOME

1. **To receive apologies for absence**

2. **Declarations of Interest**

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 Council held on 18th May 2022 (Pages 1 - 14)**

4. **To receive any announcements from the Chairman and/or Head of Paid Service**

5. **To receive any announcements from the Leader**

6. **To receive comments, questions or petitions from members of the public** (Pages 15 - 16)

A period of up to 15 minutes is allowed for members of the public to make a comment, ask questions or present petitions. Each member of the public has up to 3 minutes to do this. A councillor may also present a petition on behalf of a member of the public.

7. **Urgent Decisions**

8. **Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report 2021/22** (Pages 17 - 36)

9. **Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report 2021/22** (Pages 37 - 62)

10. **To receive and consider a report from the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety** (Pages 63 - 74)

Members are asked to note that this report focuses on community safety only. Environmental Services were the subject of a separate report from the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety considered in January 2022.

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item; no longer than 10 minutes for presentation of the report and then up to 3 minutes for each question to be put and answered.

11. **Section 151 Officer Appointment** (Pages 75 - 80)

12. **Recommendations from the Cabinet meetings held on 3rd May and 1st June 2022** (Pages 81 - 84)

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 3rd May and 1st June 2022.

13. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Cabinet**

(i) Treasury Management and Investment Strategy (Pages 85 - 118)

(ii) Council Plan (Including Restoration and Recovery Plan) (Pages 119 - 188)

14. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 3rd May and 1st June 2022** (Pages 189 - 200)

15. **Questions on Notice** (Pages 201 - 204)

To deal with any questions on notice from Members of the Council, in the order in which they have been received.

A period of up to 15 minutes is allocated for the asking and answering of questions. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman with the agreement of the majority of those present.

16. **Motions on Notice** (Pages 205 - 206)

A period of up to one hour is allocated to consider the motions on notice. This may only be extended with the agreement of the Council.

17. **To consider any urgent business, details of which have been notified to the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services prior to the commencement of the meeting and which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, considers to be of so urgent a nature that it cannot wait until the next meeting**

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

14th June 2022

**If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jess Bayley-Hill**

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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.

Please note that this is a public meeting.

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

Members and Officers who still have access to lateral flow tests (LFTs) are encouraged to take a test on the day of the meeting. Meeting attendees who do not have access to LFTs are encouraged not to attend the meeting if they have common cold symptoms or any of the following common symptoms of Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

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 SPEAKING

The usual process for public speaking at Committee meetings will continue to be followed subject to some adjustments which allow written statements to be read out on behalf of residents and the virtual participation of residents at meetings of Council and Planning Committee. Members of the public are encouraged to log in virtually, either to speak or observe meetings wherever possible.

Members of the public will also be able to access the meeting in person if they wish to do so. Seating will be placed in such a way as to achieve as much space as possible for social distancing to help protect meeting participants. 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 who still have access to lateral flow tests (LFTs) are encouraged to take a test on the day of the meeting. Meeting attendees who do not have access to LFTs are encouraged not to attend a meeting if they have common cold symptoms or any of the following common symptoms of Covid-19 on the day of the meeting; a high temperature, a new and continuous cough or a loss of smell and / or taste.

Notes:

Although this is a public meeting, there are circumstances when Council might have to move into closed session to consider exempt or confidential information. For agenda items that are exempt, the public are excluded.



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Access to Information

The Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 widened the rights of press and public to attend Local Authority meetings and to see certain documents. Recently the Freedom of Information Act 2000 has further broadened these rights, and limited exemptions under the 1985 Act.

- You can inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- 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.
- You have access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned, as detailed in the Council's Constitution, Scheme of Delegation.

You can access the following documents:

- Meeting Agendas
- Meeting Minutes
- The Council's Constitution

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 18TH MAY 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, R. E. Jenkins, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, K.J. May, M. Middleton, P. M. McDonald, S. A. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. C. Felton, Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill and Mrs J. Gresham

1\22

ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN 2022/23

It was proposed by Councillor K. J. May and seconded by Councillor S. A. Webb and

RESOLVED that

Councillor R. J. Laight be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Laight signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Council for electing him to the Office of Chairman.

2\22

ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN 2022/23

It was proposed by Councillor K. J. May and seconded by Councillor G. N. Denaro and

RESOLVED that

Councillor A. J. B. Beaumont be elected Vice Chairman of the Council for the ensuing year.

Councillor Beaumont signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Members of the Council for electing him to the office of Vice Chairman.

3\22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, S. G. Hession, H. J. Jones, A. D. Kent, L. C. R. Mallett and C. J. Spencer.

4\22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

During consideration of this item Councillor H. Rone-Clarke commented that he worked at the Artrix Vaccination Centre. In addition to this, Councillor P. J. Whittaker stated that he was a member of the Artrix Holding Trust. The Monitoring Officer confirmed that, as there was no decision to be made in respect of the Artrix at this meeting, Members who had previously been appointed to the Artrix Holding Trust or those who worked there in its capacity as a vaccination centre did not need to declare an interest.

5\22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 20TH APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th April 2022 were submitted.

Councillor P. M. McDonald queried when the additional information requested at the previous meeting would be made available to Members in respect of Equality Annual Report 2021 regarding the Household Support Fund and the Starting Well Partnership's Family Hubs as detailed in Minute Number 107/21. Councillor G. N. Denaro confirmed that this information had already been sent out by Officers for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that

the minutes of the Council meeting held on Wednesday 20th April 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

6\22 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chairman announced that, since the previous meeting of the Council, a Civic Dinner had taken place for the Chairman's charity, Primrose Hospice. All those who attended the dinner were thanked and Members were informed that £1,850 had been raised at this event.

During consideration of this item, the Chairman also informed Members of the Council that his charity for the ensuing year would continue as the Primrose Hospice.

The Chief Executive confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

7\22 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER**

The Leader confirmed that she had no announcements to make on this occasion.

8\22 **TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman advised that no comments, questions or petitions had been received from members of the public for consideration at the meeting.

9\22 **URGENT DECISIONS**

There were no urgent decisions for consideration on this occasion.

10\22 **APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES 2022/23**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented a report detailing the political balance for the 2022/23 municipal year. Members were informed that the recent reorganisation of the political groups within the Council had resulted in a change to the political balance.

The recommendations in respect of the political balance and appointments to Committees for 2022/23 were proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

- 1) for the ensuing Municipal Year, the Committees as set out in the table in Appendix 1 of the report be appointed and that the representation of the different political groups on the Council on those Committees be as set out in that table until the next Annual Meeting of the Council, or until the next review of political representation under Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, whichever is the earlier; and

- 2) Members be appointed to the Committees and as substitute Members in accordance with the nominations to be made by Group Leaders; and
- 3) the terms of reference for the Boards and Committees be confirmed.

11\22

SCHEME OF DELEGATIONS

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented the Officer Scheme of Delegations for Members' consideration. Members were advised that the Council was required to review the content of the Scheme of Delegations on an annual basis, and this occurred at the Annual Council meeting.

A typographical error was highlighted for Members' attention in respect of the S106 Monies to the Value of £15k, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Scheme of Delegations report. It was confirmed that the figure of £50k had been incorrectly included and that the details should have read as follows:

"Authority to spend S106 monies up to a value of £15k to spend in line with the S106 agreement which caused the receipt of the receipt of the S106 monies."

During consideration of this item Councillor P.M McDonald drew Members' attention to areas in the Scheme of Delegations that he wished to be clarified. These were as follows:

- Appointment of Heads of Service delegated to Executive Directors – it was clarified that although the Appointments of Heads of Service had been delegated to the Executive Directors, an appointment would still be considered by the Appointments Committee on behalf of the Council.
- Early Retirement Payments – It was confirmed that the Chief Executive Officer had a legislative duty to inform Members of the numbers of staff within the Council. It was clarified that any early retirement payments that were made would not include any enhancements.
- Housing Association Nominations – Members were informed that the Council had a statutory duty to provide homelessness support. However, the Strategic Housing Manager would be able to provide further clarification in this area.

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- Civil Injunctions – Further clarification was provided to Members, where it was explained that Ward Members would only be informed ‘where appropriate’ as detailed in the delegation, as any civil injunction might be part of a criminal investigation. In these circumstances it would not be appropriate to share information with the Ward Member due to its sensitive nature.
- Varying Charges for the Business Waste Collection and Recycling Service - It was confirmed that the Business Waste Collection and Recycling Service was a very competitive area, and that the potential 25% variance was necessary in order to compete with private companies.
- Police and Crime Panel Budget – Members were provided with information on the budget prior to its approval.
- Alteration of Polling Places – It was reported that this would be considered by the Electoral Matters Committee when necessary. It was noted that it was already included in the Constitution that the Committee could exercise powers and undertake functions relating to electoral matters and elections.
- Minor Amendments to a planning application and advertisements on roundabouts within the District – currently these were delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services. However, it was suggested that it would be more appropriate that these issues were referred back to the Planning Committee.
- Use of the Parkside Suite by charities – It was suggested that this would be an area that Members should make decisions on rather than it be delegated to officers.

In considering this matter, it was suggested by some Members that this was not the most appropriate setting to discuss the Scheme of Delegations in such detail. It was noted that it would be more appropriate being discussed at the Constitution Review Working Group meetings and would be included on the agenda for consideration at a future meeting of the Working Group.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

the Scheme of Delegations be agreed.

12\22

**MEMBER CODE OF CONDUCT - RECOMMENDATION FROM THE
AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE**

In the absence of Councillor L. Mallett, Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, Councillor P. Whittaker, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report in respect of the recommendation regarding the Member Code of Conduct, which was agreed at the meeting of the Committee held on 12th April 2022. Council was informed that the Committee had previously considered a number of reports and had expressed the preference of a Worcestershire wide Model Code of Conduct based on the new Local Government Association (LGA) new Model Code of Conduct. Councillor Whittaker reported that the Committee had been happy with the contents of the new Model Code of Conduct and had recommended at their last meeting that it be adopted by the Council.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor P. Whittaker and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

RESOLVED that

the Worcestershire-wide draft Model Code of Conduct be adopted by the Council.

13\22

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES 2022/23

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented the Council's nominations to Outside Bodies for 2022/23.

During consideration of this matter, Members noted there had been very few changes from the previous Outside Bodies Appointments in 2021/22.

The recommendation in respect of the Outside Body nominations 2022/23 was proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED that

Council approve the nominations to the Outside Bodies for 2022/23.

14\22

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman opened the item by explaining that 5 questions had been submitted for consideration at the meeting. There would be no subsidiary questions.

Question submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke

“Could the leader or relevant portfolio holder update Council on the progress of the strategic transport assessment promised at last April’s full council meeting, following the debate surrounding the Whitford Road development?”

With the proposed development along Whitford Road, and the cut to the 144, this is now more important than ever.”

The Leader responded that the Strategic Transport Assessment (STA) was an important piece of evidence supporting the preparation of the emerging Bromsgrove District Plan Review. Consultants were commissioned in May 2021 and had been working on the following stages since this time:

- **Stage 1:** preparation of a Transport Evidence Base (TEB) which drew together available evidence on existing transport provision and movements within the District, the transport issues, and the potential infrastructure measures to mitigate impacts where they arise.
- **Stage 2:** definition of assessment criterion to assess six spatial option areas with regard to current and future transport connectivity.
- **Stage 3(a):** application of the assessment criterion to six spatial option areas to provide a high-level assessment of transport connectivity.
- **Stage 3(b):** refinement of the assessment criterion and application to more focused spatial option areas (‘clusters’ of potential development sites) with recommendations for infrastructure opportunities.

The earlier stages of this work were complete, with work currently ongoing between the consultants and Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council officers to finalise stage 3(b). The final project was planned to be presented to the Strategic Planning Steering Group (SPSG) during the summer, with the dates still to be confirmed, and all Members were encouraged to attend for further detail on the STA outcomes.

Question submitted by Councillor P. M. McDonald

"When will the Council purchase its first electric vehicle?"

In response to this question, the Leader explained that Bromsgrove District Council had requested the assistance of the Energy Savings Trust (EST) to assess the efficiency of its current vehicle fleets in terms of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, energy consumption and operating costs.

The report had provided a good overview of the fleet, but further work was being commissioned to look at each of the vehicles in detail in order to advise what the best vehicle solution was for the work undertaken and the distances travelled.

Procurement of the services of a specialist who could offer the Council the detailed advice needed to progress was currently underway. The areas where advice and support would be sought would be in relation to vehicle availability, suitability, emerging technology, the right time to invest, grant funding availability, fuel type, infrastructure systems and energy suppliers. Once the detailed information was available, a report would be produced that would provide a plan for the vehicle replacement for the following ten years and assist with the Council's aim to be carbon neutral.

The Leader informed Members that it was anticipated that the replacement of the fleet with ultra-low emission vehicles would commence in 2023/24.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson

"Do you agree that the latest proposal for the 144, which sees the route continue from Catshill to Longbridge but not onwards to Birmingham, is still inadequate and will you continue to lobby Worcestershire County Council to provide a full reinstatement of this vital service?"

The Leader commented that she would continue to lobby Worcestershire County Council to seek to provide full bus cover, to include Sundays and further evening services, for this route.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

“How many households in Bromsgrove that are eligible for the council tax rebate had received their payment by the end of April and how many have received it to date?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance responded that the estimate of eligible households on 8th May 2022 was 27,454 and that the number paid by 30th April 2022 was 15,793 which amounted to 57.5% of eligible households. It was also reported that a further 4,042 payments had been made on 8th May 2022 and that to date 19,835 payments had been made which equated to 72% of households within Bromsgrove.

Question submitted by Councillor J. King

“Did Bromsgrove receive any payment from the NHS for the use of the Artrix as a vaccination centre and if so, can the funds be put towards securing a sustainable future for the Artrix building as a thriving centre for arts and cultural activities in Bromsgrove?”

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change commented that Bromsgrove District Council had been supporting the Holding Trust by providing facilities management support. This in turn enabled the NHS to use the building as a vaccination site. Council had been advised previously that the Artrix Holding Trust had the care and control of the building whilst work continued by the Holding Trust to determine the future of the venue. The Council had been advised by the Holding Trust that they were in receipt of funds from the NHS for the use of the building.

15\22

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman explained that 1 Motion on Notice had been received for consideration at the meeting.

Plaque of Remembrance.

"That this Council erects a plaque in remembrance of those who died from Covid and the tremendous work carried out by key workers throughout the pandemic."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor P. M. McDonald and seconded by Councillor H. Rone-Clark.

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In proposing the Motion, Councillor P. M. McDonald noted that all parties within the Chamber would agree that the sacrifices made by key workers, including those in retail and transport, along with NHS workers, throughout the Covid-19 pandemic had been significant. It was with this in mind that Councillor McDonald thought an appropriate tribute would be for a tree to be planted in honour of those key workers and those who had sadly died as a result of Covid-19. Councillor P. M McDonald explained that many people living with a disability had also been affected and continued to be affected by Covid-19 and that this tree would also provide a way to continue to reflect on the ongoing challenges that some members of the community faced. Councillor McDonald suggested that the decision as to where the tree be situated should be delegated to officers.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Rone-Clarke echoed Councillor McDonald's sentiments regarding the sacrifices that were made by key workers during the pandemic, particularly of those who had dealt with threats whilst carrying out their work. In addition to this, it was considered that this kind of memorial would be a fitting tribute to those who had lost their lives as a result of Covid-19. It was noted by Councillor Rone-Clarke that this kind of memorial had already been undertaken by some other local authorities and that Bromsgrove District Council should provide this public memorial to pay tribute to residents who had all experienced difficulties during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Councillor K. May responded to the Motion and agreed wholeheartedly that this was a fitting memorial and that potentially Sanders Park would be an appropriate place to locate the plaque and the tree of remembrance.

On being put to the vote the Motion was carried.

RESOLVED that

this Council erect a plaque in remembrance of those who died from Covid-19 and the tremendous work carried out by key workers throughout the pandemic.

The meeting closed at 7.02 p.m.

Chairman

APPENDIX 1: Bromsgrove District Council

Composition of Committees 2022 - 23

Committee	Cons	Lab	Lib Dem	Bgrove Indps	Comments
Overview and Scrutiny Board	<p style="text-align: center;">6 Cllrs Deeming Spencer Till Beaumont Kriss Jones</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Sub: Middleton, Whittaker, Glass)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 Cllr McDonald</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 Cllr Hunter Sub: Cllr King</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Cllrs Baxter Colella Hotham</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11 Members on Board</p>
Licensing Committee	<p style="text-align: center;">6 Cllrs Deeming Spencer Kriss Sherrey Thompson Whittaker</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Subs: Webb, Glass)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 Cllr Rone- Clarke Sub (for parent Committee) Cllr McDonald</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 Cllr Robinson</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 Cllrs Douglas English Hotham</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11 Members on Committee</p>
Planning Committee	<p style="text-align: center;">7 Cllrs Jones Glass Beaumont Sherrey Denaro Kriss Spencer</p> <p style="text-align: center;">(Subs:., Middleton, Webb Thompson)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 Cllr Rone- Clarke Sub: Cllr Rone- Clarke</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 Cllr King Sub: Cllr Hunter</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 Cllrs Douglas English</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">11 Members on Committee</p>

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Audit, Standards and Governance Committee	5 Cllrs Whittaker Middleton Spencer Beaumont Kriss	1 Cllr Mallett	1 Cllr King Sub: Cllr Hunter	2 Cllrs Van Der Plank Jenkins	9 Members on Committee
Electoral Matters Committee	4 Cllrs Hession Middleton Glass Deeming	1 Cllr Rone- Clarke	1 Cllr Hunter Sub: Cllr King	1 Cllr Colella	7 Members on Committee
Appeals Committee	3 Cllrs May Denaro Kent	1 Cllr Rone- Clarke	0	1 Cllr Hotham	5 Members on Committee
Appointments Committee (nominees as and when necessary)	3 TBA	0	1 Cllr Hunter Sub: Cllr King	1 Cllr Baxter	5 Members on Committee
Statutory Officers (nominees as and when necessary)	3 TBA	1 Cllr Rone- Clarke	0	1 Cllr Hotham	5 Members on Committee
TOTAL	37	7	6	14	64 Places

APPENDIX 2 Council Appointments to Outside Bodies May 2022

18th

(LAST UPDATED MAY 2022)

Organisation	No. of Appts & Length of Office	Appointed 2021/2022	Nominations 2022/2023
Amphlett Hall Management Committee	2 (previous years 4) 1 year	A. Beaumont S. Webb	A. Beaumont S. Webb
Citizens' Advice Bromsgrove and Redditch	2 1 year	J. Till S. Webb	J. Till S. Webb
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) – Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the Supervisory Board	1 and a substitute 1 year	P. Thomas Substitute: A. Kriss	P. Thomas Substitute: A. Kriss
Midlands Joint Council for Environmental Protection	2 1 year	M. Glass	M. Glass
West Mercia Police and Crime Panel <i>Rep and sub must be from majority political group on the Council</i>	1 rep and 1 substitute	A. Kent H. Jones (appointed April 2022) Substitute: A. Beaumont	H. Jones Substitute: A. Kriss
Worcestershire County Council Corporate Parenting Board	1 1 year	M. Sherrey	M. Sherrey
Worcestershire County Council Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee	1 1 year	Delegate to O&S Board (Cllr Baxter)	Delegate to O&S Board
Worcestershire Regulatory Services Board (previously Worcestershire Shared Services Joint Committee)	2 1 year To include relevant Portfolio holder and one other member of the controlling group and one substitute	A. Kent P. Thomas (appointed Feb 2022) H. Jones Substitute: M. Middleton	P. Thomas H. Jones Substitute: R. Deeming

Bromsgrove District Council – 22nd June 2022 Questions from the Public

1. **From Mr Christopher Cooke** **Question to the Chairman of the Council**

“In a recent on-line meeting the question of how to promote community Bromsgrove events and other things (including those run by the Council) came up and the benefit of public notice boards in prominent places such as the High Street. Currently there are a few shops and supermarkets with notice boards but these are subject to maintenance problems and abuse. There is a fabled public notice board in Sanders Park but it is not known whose responsibility it is to maintain that and keep it up to date. I am aware that the Council has a presence on Social Media but that only gets to a relatively small section of the population.

Physical notice boards are always a problem because they need regular updating. I have in mind an electronic notice board because the notices can be easily changed and controlled remotely by a Council employee. It is possible to buy robust stand-alone hardware that would need to be securely attached. It would also have to be positioned carefully in full view of security cameras as it would inevitably attract abuse. Alternatively you might consider working with a couple of shops to provide electronic notice boards inside their windows. There are elegant systems and the dedicated computer power is very low (one system uses a Raspberry Pi computer not much bigger than a debit card.)

Can the Council provide suitable public-accessible notice boards on the High Street to promote community events?”

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Bromsgrove District Council



Audit, Standards and
Governance Committee

ANNUAL REPORT

2021-2022



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

CHAIRMAN'S FOREWORD

I am pleased to introduce the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's 2021/22 Annual Report. The report sets out the full range work undertaken by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in providing an independent assessment of the wide range of controls and corporate governance.

The Committee and its members have a vital role in providing assurance both to the Council, and importantly to the public as to transparency, compliance and value for money from Bromsgrove District Council. Alongside this the Committee is responsible for ensuring that improvements to the governance of the Council are delivered and sustained.

Throughout the year the Committee has continued to meet in a hybrid format – with members present in the room, and officers and advisers generally joining by video conference. This is clearly not an ideal way to operate, and we do hope circumstances will permit a return to single format meetings soon. This impact is of course not limited simply to the function of the Committee, and Covid has continued to have an impact on the day to day operation of the Council and our audit functions.

There has been progress in the operation of the audit assurance responsibilities of the Committee. Members have sought to continue to take a proactive approach to concerns raised through our internal audit function, especially around limited assurance audits and to ensure follow through of overdue audit actions.

I would like to thank our 151 Officer, James Howse, our Monitoring Officer, Claire Felton our Internal and External audit partners, our Democratic Services team, the Vice-Chairman and all the members of the committee for their hard work over the last year and for the continued progress that is being made as a result. I commend this report to members of the Council and believe that it sets out the work the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee has carried out in assuring both the financial health and governance of Bromsgrove District Council.

Chairman
Councillor Luke Mallett

MEMBERSHIP



Luke Mallett (Chairman)



Peter Whittaker (Vice Chairman)



Andrew Beaumont



Rachel Jenkins



Janet King



Adrian Kriss



Maria Middleton



Caroline Spencer



Kate Van Der Plank

INTRODUCTION

Agenda Item 8

This report provides an overview of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's activities during the municipal year 2021/22.

The ultimate responsibility for Audit rests with the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Finance and the Section 151 Officer. The Portfolio Holder is expected to attend each meeting in line with the Constitution.

During the year the Committee has considered reports on the following subjects:

- Monitoring Officer's Report – which details complaints and training which has taken place during the period between meetings.
- New Model Code of Conduct.
- Updates from the external auditors, Grant Thornton in respect of their work.
- Updates on the work of the Internal Audit Team.
- Corporate Risk Register.
- Risk Management Strategy
- The Risk Champion's Update Report.
- Statement of Accounts
- Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) Report.

Further information about some of the key responsibilities of the Committee are detailed within this report.

Scope and Responsibility

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee provides independent assurance to the Council in respect of:

- The effectiveness of the Council’s governance arrangements
- The Annual Governance Statement
- The Review of the Annual Statement of Accounts
- Risk Management Framework and strategies
- The effectiveness of the Council’s financial and non-financial performance
- Anti-Fraud arrangements
- Whistle-blowing strategies
- Internal and external audit activity
- Democratic governance

The Committee is also responsible for the Council’s Standards Regime which covers both District and Parish Councils. Areas encompassed within the Standards Regime include:

- Promoting High Standards of Conduct by Councillors and co-opted members of Council bodies.
- Assisting Councillors and co-opted members to observe the Members’ Code of Conduct.
- Advising and training Members and co-opted members in respect of the Code of Conduct.
- Formulating advice to members and officers in declarations of gifts and hospitality.
- Granting dispensations to Councillors and co-opted members from requirements relating to interests as set out in the Code of Conduct.
- Considering reports from the Monitoring Officer following investigation into a complaint about elected Members.

Meetings of the Committee – 2021-2022

The Council’s constitution requires the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee to hold quarterly meetings.

During the municipal year 2021-2022 the Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on Council operations. The Government removed the temporary legislation that allowed local authorities to hold public meetings virtually in May 2021. This meant that Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meetings were once again held in person after May 7th, 2021. During consideration of the Monitoring Officer’s report at the Committee meeting held on 15th July 2021, Members were

Agenda Item 8

informed that a consultation had been undertaken by Central Government in order to better understand the success of virtual and hybrid meetings at a local level. In the meantime, the Council adopted a risk assessment-based approach, informed by health and safety considerations, which had been determined by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) following consultation with Group Leaders.

Standards Regime

There are two main areas which are considered regularly in terms of the Committee's responsibility for Standards.

Monitoring Officer's Report

This covers Member Training, Member Complaints and Parish Council matters.

Due to Covid-19, training was more challenging than in previous years. However, a comprehensive training programme had taken place in the 2019-2020 municipal year due to the 2019 Elections. Training did take place online during 2021-2022 and included Local Government Finance training and Planning Refresher Training.

Members continued to work on occasions remotely during 2021-2022 and in order to make this process efficient and effective a Member ICT Support Officer was made available to respond to Members' queries and IT issues.

The Member Development Steering Group met a number of times throughout the municipal year and items for consideration included:

- Regular Members ICT updates
- Local Authority Finance Training
- Carbon Literacy Training

In addition to those listed above Councillor K. Van Der Plank, in her role as Risk Champion for 2020-2021, had made a number of recommendations regarding Safeguarding at a meeting of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting held on 1st September 2022. These recommendations were considered by the Member Development Steering Group.

The Constitution Review Working Group continued to meet during 2021-2022. Recently the group has discussed the process for considering Notices of Motion at Council and their referral to other Committees and Membership Arrangements for Working Groups.

A number of Member complaints were received throughout the municipal year 2021-2022. In addition to this a number of general Parish Council queries of a procedural nature were received and were being dealt with at a local level. All queries and complaints were dealt with at a local level.

Dispensation Report

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At the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting held on 15th July 2021 the Dispensations Report was presented to the Committee. This report explained that under the Localism Act 2011 there was a requirement to consider the granting of Individual Member Dispensations. In addition to this, it is necessary to consider General Dispensations (including Budget and Council Tax discussions) and Outside Body Appointment Dispensations. The dispensations agreed at this meeting remain valid until the first meeting of the Audit, Governance and Standards Committee following the next District Council Elections in 2023.

Parish Council Involvement

The Parish Council representative is able to add any item on to the agenda as required and this is highlighted within the Monitoring Officer's Report. Whilst the Parish Councils have the opportunity to appoint two representatives on the Committee, as has happened in previous years, only one of these places was taken up and the Parish Council representative for the municipal year 2021-2022 is Mr B. McEldowney.

Investigations and Enquiries

There have been a number of complaints this year at both a Parish and District level. These continue to be investigated locally by the Monitoring Officer.

There have been no investigations about Members which required a Hearings Sub-Committee to be convened.

The appointed Independent Person has continued to support the Monitoring Officer where necessary.

INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

During the year the Committee has continued to receive updates on the work of the Internal Audit team including details of the following completed audit reports:

- Internal Audit Progress Monitoring Report 2020/21 and 2021/22
- Internal Audit - Annual Report 2019-2020
- Internal Audit – Audit Plan 2020-21
- Internal Audit Plan 2021 - 2022

EXTERNAL AUDITORS

During the year the Committee received reports from the current External Auditors, Grant Thornton on the following subjects:

- Grant Thornton - Progress and Sector Reports
- Grant Thornton Annual Audit Letter 2020-2021
- Grant Thornton External Audit - Audit Findings Report
- Grant Thornton - Housing Benefit Report 2020/2021
- Audit Opinion and VFM conclusion 2020/2021
- Audit Plan 2021/2022

The Progress Reports were considered at each meeting of the Committee and covered a range of issues including the following:

- Value for money
- Significant Risks
- Financial Statements
- Housing Benefits

15th July 2021

Internal Audit Annual Report 2020 - 2021

During consideration of this item technical issues were experienced. However, it was agreed that the Committee would consider the report and any questions for the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service would be included as part of the next Internal Audit Progress Report which was due for consideration by the Committee in October 2021.

Members were particularly interested in Allocated number of Audit days and service productivity.

Annual Audit Plan 2021/22

As detailed above the Head of Internal Audit Shared Service experienced technical issues during this item however the report was still considered. During this discussion it was noted that the Annual Audit Plan 2021-2022 was already being followed for this municipal year.

It was accepted by the Committee that the Audit Plan was being carried out during unprecedented times due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) would be measured at the end of the municipal year.

RIPA Report 2021-2022

The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) gives local authorities powers to conduct covert surveillance under certain circumstances. The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee review the Council's RIPA policy at least on an annual basis. This review of the policy also includes the Authority's use of the Act and any amendments made to the policy since it was last considered by the Committee. During this update the only amendment made to the RIPA policy since it was last considered by the Committee in July 2020 was the appointment of Mr. J. Howse, Executive Director of Resources and s151 Officer, as the Council's 'Senior Responsible Officer' for the RIPA regime.

During consideration of this report by the Committee, the Council's RIPA Policy as reviewed, was endorsed and the update on RIPA activity was noted.

Risk Register Update - Verbal Update

The Risk Register update is a regular item that is presented to the Committee. During this update Members were informed that projects looking at best practice and internal policies from a risk perspective were being undertaken with the Council's insurance

provider, Zurich. It was hoped that this would improve and ensure robust processes were in place in this area.

7th October 2021

Grant Thornton - Progress Report - Verbal Update

At this meeting of the Committee Members were informed that the 2019/2020 audit response had now been concluded as follows:

- Value For Money conclusion - Unqualified
- Financial Statements Audit - Unqualified

In addition to this the Committee was informed that the 2020/2021 draft accounts were being looked at along with the timetable to deliver their Audit Opinion 2020-2021 and Value For Money conclusion for that year.

Members are often interested in the potential increase in fees for audits and these regular updates provide an opportunity to inform Members of any changes to the ways that audit fees are administered. At this meeting the Committee was reminded that were there to be any additional fees included for the 2019-2020 audit these would be passed for consideration by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) and that these would be included in the Annual Audit Letter 2020/2021.

As was the case throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, challenges had been experienced throughout the sector in the preparation of the audit and associated working papers. It was hoped that going forward new changes within the Finance team alongside with the implementation of the Enterprise Resource Planning System that better quality working papers would be provided.

There had been a change to the timetable of accounts during the municipal year 2019-2020 and this inevitably had an impact of the delivery of the accounts for the following year. However, Officers were working closely with Grant Thornton to ensure an appropriate timeline for completion of any outstanding audits.

Internal Audit Progress Report

At the meeting held on 7th October 2021 six final full audit reports were provided for Members' consideration and it was noted that five reviews had commenced for future consideration of the Committee.

Risk was discussed in detail by Members as part of this update in particular how the Internal Audit Plan was formulated. The Head of Shared Service Internal Audit described how the Internal Audit Plan was formulated using risks across the Authority

and various intelligence in order to draw together a profile to formulate the internal audit programme. It was noted that risks changed, new risks emerged and that inevitably there had been some changes during the last 18 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic

Risk Register Verbal Update

Further to the discussions as part of the previous item, a Risk Register update was provided to members at this meeting. Work was still being undertaken with Zurich, the Council's insurance provider in order to identify Strategic and Operational risks.

A review has been undertaken of the current Risk Register and the next step to this project was to look at risk exposures and how delivering services could be done more effectively. Members were reassured that, once the work with Zurich had been finished a report would be provided to the Committee.

2nd February 2022

Standards Regime - Monitoring Officers' Report

The Monitoring Officer presented her report and along with the standard information that was provided to Members there was discussion regarding Member's safety particularly at public meetings. It was explained that there were some lone working trials taking place and that the Committee would be updated when further information was available. It was likely that this issue would be referred to the Member Development Steering Group for further consideration. However, a number of issues would certainly need to be taken into consideration before restricting public access to public meetings.

Grant Thornton - Sector Update

The external auditors, Grant Thornton presented Members with the Sector Report at the meeting held on February 2022. The report provided the Committee with a summary of emerging national issues and developments that may be relevant for local authorities.

A particular focus of this update was regarding the growing complexity of local authority accounts, with audit firms now being asked to carry out more work in each audit, to comply with new regulatory demands and to adapt to the new multifaceted landscape in which local authorities operated, whilst also struggling to hire and retain experienced auditors. The extra work had inevitably impacted on fees which was also discussed at this meeting.

The amount of work for external auditors to finalise local authority accounts has significantly increased, with added pressure on local authorities, as highlighted in the Redmond Report which Members had considered at a meeting earlier in the municipal year.

Grant Thornton - Annual Audit Letter 2019/20

The Annual Audit Letter 2019/20 provides Members with a high-level summary and overview of the key findings arising from the work carried out for the year end 31st March 2020.

An unqualified opinion was submitted on the group's financial statements on 5th October 2021. Although there had been some significant delays experienced, officers reported that work was being carried out to improve this for next year and to ensure that information was robust.

Internal Audit - Progress Report

The Internal Audit Update report presented at this meeting provided commentary on Internal Audit's performance for the period 1st April to 31st December 2021. All recommendations made from Internal Audit reviews undertaken during this time period have a clear management plan and implementation dates. At this meeting Members identified several implementation dates had not been reached. The relevant service areas would be revisited as necessary to ensure that the agreed implementation plan was being carried effectively.

Safeguarding was discussed in detail at this meeting particularly the number of 'follow up' reviews that were taking place. It was explained that Safeguarding was revisited on a number of occasions in order to satisfy auditors, who when revisiting an area, would check that all implementation dates had been addressed with the appropriate officers. The Committee agreed that this was an extremely important area and would continue to monitor this area closely and invite the relevant Head of Service to the next meeting of the Committee.

Decision to opt into The National Scheme For Auditor Appointments Managed By PSAA

Members considered a report on the 'Decision to opt into the National Scheme for Auditor Appointments managed by Public Sector Audit Appointments' (PSSA) as the 'Appointing Person' at the meeting held on 2nd February 2022.

The Council had previously opted into the 'appointing person' national auditor appointment arrangements established by Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA) for the period covering the accounts for 2018/19 to 2022/23. The report presented

at this meeting detailed the procurement process by the PSAA for the next appointing period, covering audits for 2023/24 to 2027/28.

A detailed discussion took place, and it was explained to Members that the Council has the option of arranging its own procurement and to make the appointment itself, or it has the option of running a joint procurement in conjunction with other bodies, or the Council can join and take advantage of the national collective scheme administered by PSAA.

Once all of the information was considered, Members were asked to vote on the following recommendation:

RECOMMENDED that

- a) Council accepts Public Sector Audit Appointments' invitation to opt into the sector-led option for the appointment of external auditors to principal local government and police bodies for a procurement period of five financial years from 1 April 2023 (that was to say from 2023/24 to 2027/28).

Members of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee voted in favour of the above recommendation. The report and the recommendation were presented at the Full Council meeting held on 23rd February 2022 where it was resolved.

12th April 2022

Standards Regime - Monitoring Officers' Report

The Monitoring Officer presented her brief report and in doing so, it was highlighted that there had been no further Member complaints received since the last meeting of the Committee.

New Model Code of Conduct

The Monitoring Officer presented an update in respect of the New Model Code of Conduct and explained that the new LGA model Code of Conduct had been used as a starting point for the pan-Worcestershire Code of Conduct presented for Members' attention.

RECOMMENDED that

the Worcestershire-wide draft Code of Conduct be adopted by the Council.

Members of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee voted in favour of the above recommendation. The report and the recommendation were presented by the Vice-Chairman of the Committee at the Council meeting held on 18th May 2022 where it was resolved that it be adopted.

Grant Thornton - Sector Update

This regular report was presented at the meeting held on 12th April 2022 and provided an overview of work that was currently being undertaken in the sector.

Grant Thornton - External Audit Plan 2020/2021

The External Audit Plan 2020/2021 was presented for consideration by the Committee at this meeting. Grant Thornton had tried to present a balanced plan for the year 2020-2021 recognising the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. It was reported that the Statement of Accounts for 2020-2021 would be available by the end of May or early June 2022 and that delays had been experienced due to levels of staffing.

Particularly noted within this report was the Value for Money arrangements which had been changed for the year ending 2020/21 as the National Audit Office had introduced a new code of Audit Practice. This meant that there would be a wider scope and more in-depth reporting which would most likely result in an increase in audit fees, for future audits.

An update on the levels of staffing was provided as part of this item and it was explained that there had been a recruitment drive in this team, but it was recognised that the current recruitment market was difficult and competitive.

Grant Thornton - Informing The Audit Risk Assessment 2020/21

The Informing the Audit Risk Assessment 2020/21 report provided information regarding understanding of management processes through a series of questions and responses received from Bromsgrove District Council's management and that Grant Thornton were comfortable with the management responses and the related policies.

Overall Risk and Corporate Governance Report including Risk Register

The Executive Director of Resources presented the Overall Risk and Corporate Governance Report which also included the Risk Register

report. It was acknowledged that there had been resource challenges experienced over the financial year 2020-21.

A report regarding risk had recently been presented to the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and actions had been agreed on the way forward in respect of risk. During consideration of this item assurance was provided by Officers that it was a priority to approach risk in a more coordinated and consistent way in the future and that reporting would be provided to both Cabinet and CMT to ensure monitoring was taking place.

Internal Audit Progress Report

The Head of Internal Audit Shared Service provided Members with a progress report for Internal Audit. He confirmed that good progress was being made in respect of the 2021-2022 Audit Plan. Contained within the report was the outcome of the Risk Management report which had been given an opinion of 'no assurance'. However, it was important to recognise that this had been given, because as part of the Internal Audit Plan 2021-2022, there was a requirement to produce an action plan which would form the basis of this review when carried out. It was reported that at the time of the review this had not been produced. However, confirmation was given that, as stated in the previous item contained within this report, that work had begun on the Risk Management plan and actions had already started to be completed.

Internal Audit - Safeguarding Verbal Update

The Head of Community and Housing Services provided a Safeguarding verbal update to Members. The update had been requested as a result of a report presented to the Committee at its last meeting in order to fully understand and ensure that the Safeguarding actions highlighted as part of the internal audit were being managed appropriately.

It was explained during this update that Safeguarding training was rolled out to all members of staff and that the training was compulsory and refresher training had to be undertaken every three years using an online application. Currently mandatory training records were being monitored by Directorate Support until the Human Resources Training system was live.

Members felt that it was incredibly important for all Members to receive Safeguarding training, particularly because they were often in a position of meeting residents in their homes and communities. The level of training and whether it should be mandatory was discussed in detail at this meeting with Members in agreement that it should be delivered

somewhere between the introductory training and level 1 training that was available.

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee - Draft Annual Report 2021-2022

The Chairman introduced the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee - Draft Annual Report 2021-2022 for the Committee's consideration and thanked officers for their support over the municipal year. In addition to this, the Vice-Chairman, Councillor P. Whittaker, was thanked by the Chairman for his support.

Members were informed that this was a draft report and the items that had been discussed at this meeting would be included in the report and considered at the Council meeting scheduled for 22nd June 2022.

Risk Champion - Verbal Update Report (Councillor A. Beaumont)

At this meeting and in his role of Risk Champion, Councillor Beaumont informed Members that he would be meeting with the Executive Director for Resources within the next few weeks in order to look at how risk was managed at the Authority and the actions that needed to be undertaken going forward.

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Annual Appointment of Risk Management Champion for the Committee

Each municipal year a Risk Management Champion is appointed to the Committee to look at risk across the Council. For the municipal year 2021-2022 Councillor A. Beaumont was elected as Risk Champion. As part of this role a verbal or written update is provided to the Committee at each of its meetings.

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council

Parkside

Bromsgrove

Worcestershire B61 8DA

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Overview and Scrutiny **Annual Report**

2021-2022



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

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FOREWORD FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Welcome to Bromsgrove District Councils Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2021/22.

The Board's role is to act as a critical friend to the council, providing check and balance to the decision making process with a view of maximising service provision to residents.

The Board is cross party and functions in an impartial, independent and non-political manner.

Since the easing of Covid restrictions in May 2021 the Board has met in person which has been a welcome return to normality.

It has been a busy year for the Board and many areas of the Council's work have been scrutinised, the details of which are included in the bulk of this report.

A particular concern of the Board has been the financial position the Council finds itself in. The continued use of reserves to prop up the day to day running of the Council is not sustainable. A longer term funding solution must be found if the Council is to continue in its present form.

Three task have had their recommendations considered by Cabinet and Council with varying degrees of success in influencing policy change:

- Equalities task group
- Flooding task group
- Libraries task group

A new task group has recently been formed focussing on fuel poverty.

The Finance and Budget working group continues to meet regularly. However, the Corporate Performance task group has ceased, and its role is now within the remit of the main board.

I would like to thank all those members who Chaired and contributed to these task and working groups over the last year. I would also like to thank all Board members for their hard work throughout the year and our Vice Chairman, Councillor Jo Till. My appreciation also goes to the members of the Council and Cabinet for their regular attendance.

The Board couldn't function without the many reports and presentations provided by Officers of the Council and I would like to express my gratitude to all of them and in particular Jo Gresham the Boards excellent Democratic Services Officer.

Councillor Charles Hotham
Chairman

INTRODUCTION

We are pleased to present the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report which outlines our work during 2021-2022 (this covers the municipal year from May 2021 to April 2022) and provides general information on the overview and scrutiny processes at Bromsgrove District Council.

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the democratic decision-making process in local Councils, where elected Councillors outside of the Cabinet can contribute to shaping Council policy, community well-being and accountability. This is done by reviewing Council services and policies, community issues and key decisions and making recommendations for improvement.

The four key principles of Overview and Scrutiny, as defined by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS) the lead organisation supporting Overview and Scrutiny in the country, are:

- provide constructive “critical friend” challenge;
- amplify the voice and concerns of the public
- be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role
- drive improvement in public services.

The Members of the Board consider these principles when selecting topics to investigate whether it is holding the Cabinet to account, reviewing policies, policy development or scrutiny of external bodies.

Agenda Item 9

MEMBERSHIP (The Board is made up of 11 Members)



Councillor Charles Hotham
Chairman



Councillor Jo-Anne Till
Vice-Chairman



Councillor Sue Baxter



Councillor Andrew
Beaumont



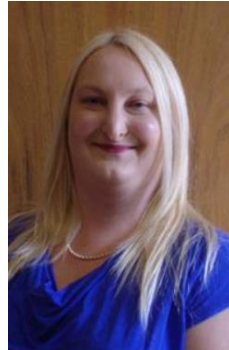
Councillor Steve
Colella



Councillor Richard
Deeming



Councillor Rob Hunter



Councillor Helen Jones
from November 2021



Councillor Adrian Kriss



Councillor Peter McDonald



Councillor Caroline Spencer



Councillor Michael Thompson
until July 2021

THE ROLE OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

Overview and Scrutiny is a key part of the Council's political structure, and it plays a vital role in improving the services that people of the District use, whether as a resident, employed here or just visiting. It does not just look at the way the Council carries out its services, it can look at anything which affects the lives of people within the District, and it allows citizens to have a greater say in Council matters.

Overview and Scrutiny allows Councillors to review and scrutinise decisions, look at existing practices and make recommendations to help ensure the residents of Bromsgrove District receive excellent services. The aim is to ensure Overview and Scrutiny adds value to the Council's decision-making process and makes a positive contribution towards policy development.

The detailed terms of reference and procedure rules for the Overview and Scrutiny Board can be found at Part 5 and Part 12 of the Council's Constitution. The Council's Constitution can be accessed by using the following link.

[Link to the Constitution of Bromsgrove District Council](#)

(Please click on the latest date to access the most recent version of the Council's constitution).

Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic continued to have a significant impact on Council operations. In May 2021 the Government removed the temporary legislation that allowed local authorities to hold public meetings virtually. This meant that Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings were once again held in person after May 7th, 2021. Meetings are live streamed if there is significant local interest in the items being considered at Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings. Meetings of scrutiny Task Groups and Working Groups continue to be held remotely, since these meetings are private and are not live streamed.

REPORTS CONSIDERED BY THE BOARD

The Board continues to receive updates in order to monitor the progress of recommendations it has made, through the Recommendation Tracker. This contains both recommendations put forward by Task Groups and accepted by the Cabinet, together with recommendations put forward by the Board itself. In respect of Task Groups, the Board does, where necessary, receive an update report 12 months following acceptance of its recommendations.

During the course of the year the Board received a number of reports and made a number of recommendations. There has been continued support from the relevant Portfolio Holders this year, with regular attendance from a number of them when a report which relates to their portfolio has been presented to the Board. This has given them an opportunity to hear first-hand the debate and ideas that the Board has put forward. On a number of occasions, whilst the Board has not made any recommendations in respect of an item, it has endorsed and supported recommendations which would be considered by Cabinet at its meeting.

6th July 2021

Air Quality Report – Worcestershire Regulatory Services

Members of the Board requested an update of Air Quality in the District for their meeting held on the 6th July 2022. During this update Members were informed that there were currently three Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) identified within Bromsgrove District, however it was confirmed that during monitoring over the last municipal year no exceedances of the national average of elevated levels of nitrogen dioxide was identified in any of these AQMAs.

During a detailed presentation Members were informed that the responsibility of active travel plans lay with Worcestershire County Council (WCC). In addition to this it was confirmed that currently there was an improving picture emerging in respect of air-quality across the District.

At this meeting the Board agreed that an item in respect of Air Quality would be added to the Board's work programme for consideration on an annual basis.

Staff Mileage

This update in respect of Staff Mileage had been requested by the Board in order to provide clarification on the amount of staff mileage claimed over the previous municipal year. It was confirmed that there had been a decrease in the amount of mileage claimed during the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdown and that this had continued a trend which had been seen over the previous municipal years.

Members were keen to further understand whether the data had been bench-marked against other similar sized Councils within Worcestershire. It was confirmed that a bench-marking exercise would be undertaken, and the results reported back to Members later in the municipal year (see 15th February 2022).

Waseley Hill – Notice of Motion

Councillor P. McDonald submitted a Motion regarding Waseley Hills Car Parking to full Council at the meeting held on 21st April 2021.

After a detailed discussion regarding concerns in car parking charges at Waseley Hills Country Park and the potential of schemes being implemented it was agreed that it seemed more equitable if all visitors, no matter where they had travelled from, were permitted to use the car parking for free.

As the charges for car parking at Waseley Hills Country Park were administered by Worcestershire County Council (WCC) it was agreed by the Board that a letter be written on behalf of the Overview and Scrutiny Board to the relevant Portfolio Holder at WCC expressing the Board's concerns. At the time of writing this report no response had been received from WCC however the Board will look to include a discussion on this as part of their Work Programme in the new municipal year.

13th September 2021

Adoption of land by Bromsgrove District Council and the management of Commuted Sums for off-site provision

It was requested that this report be pre-scrutinised by the Board prior to its consideration at Cabinet on 15th September 2022. The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services presented the report and Members were informed that when a new development was planned which included open space provision, that open space would need to be managed appropriately by a developer or other management bodies in perpetuity.

There was a detailed discussion by Members on complex issues that could potentially impact residents across the District.

Bromsgrove Town Centre Management Strategy - 2021 Action Plan

During consideration of this report Councillor K. May, who was present in her role as Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, the Town Centre and Strategic Partnerships explained, that an events management company had been engaged to provide a full events programme in the District over the forthcoming months. It was also reported that the recruitment of a Business Support Advisor was currently underway in order to help businesses reopen after the Covid-19 pandemic in a safe and resilient way.

Some Members queried the consultation that had taken place outside of the main town centre and it was felt that going back out to local centres was an important part of the Action Plan and needed to be carried out as soon as possible. As a result of this the following recommendation was agreed by the Board:

‘that the Cabinet resolves to adopt the Bromsgrove Town Management Strategy – 2021 Action Plan and at the earliest opportunity that the relevant officers revisit the Town Centres to update the plan and offer support’.

This recommendation was agreed as presented at the Cabinet meeting held on 15th September 2021.

Equalities Task Group - Cabinet Response

The Cabinet response in respect of the Equalities Task Group was discussed at Cabinet and Council meetings held in July 2021. Consideration of the Cabinet response by the Board is mainly procedural and for completeness.

The Board were informed that Cabinet had made some amendments to the recommendations during consideration at their meeting held on 7th July 2021. These were as follows:

Amendment to Recommendation 1

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

Amendment to Recommendation 2

The Contractors’ Questionnaire should be updated to be as robust as possible in respect of equalities issues.

Amendment to Recommendation 4

- a) Clear guidelines are put in place in respect of the secondment process and made available to all staff; and*
- b) Guidance on the benefits of staff development and progression be put in place and accessible to all staff.*

These recommendations would be tracked and updated as part of the Recommendation Tracker item that was due to be considered at the end of the municipal year.

Flooding Task Group - Cabinet Response

The Cabinet response in respect of the Flooding Task Group was also discussed at this meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and it was confirmed that this report had been discussed at both Cabinet and Council meetings held in July 2021.

At the Cabinet meeting it was clarified that a maintenance plan was currently being undertaken by North Worcestershire Water Management (NWWM) regarding Council owned assets and partners' assets. This report was due to be considered by Cabinet later in the municipal year.

As this report would be of particular interest to the Flooding Task Group there was the potential for the task group to reconvene and scrutinise the plan prior to its consideration at Cabinet.

This final report was pre-scrutinised at the main Board meeting held on 28th March 2022 (see details below).

Councillor R. Hunter, as Chairman of the task group expressed his disappointment that none of the recommendations made as part of this investigation were agreed by the Cabinet and he hoped that the NWWM report would be helpful in mitigating future flood events in the District.

18th October 2021

Staff Survey

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy and the Human Resources & Development Manager provided information to the Board in respect of the Staff Survey during the Covid-19 pandemic. During the update there was detailed discussion regarding the following:

- Some delays had been experienced for the full Staff Survey however a number of smaller surveys had been carried out over the course of 2021.
- The Staff Survey would be administered and analysed by an external provider through the Local Government Association (LGA).

During the consideration of this item Members were interested in the cost of the Staff Survey. As a result of this the following recommendation was made to the Cabinet by the Board

'the Cabinet are fully informed of the higher and lower cost of the Staff Survey.'

On being put to the vote the recommendation was agreed.

This recommendation was resolved by the Cabinet at their meeting held on 24th November 2021.

Budget Framework

As part of the update in respect of the Budget Framework it was noted that the Budget for 2022 was complex. In order to mitigate any issues workshops would be offered to all Members in order to help them further understand Local Government finance and

any potential changes to funding in the future. These workshops took place online on 10th November 2021 with all Members invited to attend.

Libraires Task Group - Cabinet Response

Councillor S. Colella presented this report and expressed that he and other task group members were disappointed with the response from the Cabinet in respect of the findings and recommendations of the task group. It was with this in mind that the task group was reconvened, and the relevant Portfolio Holders invited to attend the meeting in order to discuss the Cabinet response in more detail.

22nd November 2021

CCTV Update – Environmental Services

Members were keen to be provided with an update in respect of the use of CCTV. At this meeting the Head of Environmental Services and the Environmental Services Manager presented the CCTV Update.

During a detailed presentation, a number of areas were discussed including incidents of fly-tipping and deterrents utilised including Regulatory Investigation Powers Act (RIPA) powers. It was clear from the report that the number of incidences of fly-tipping were significantly down compared to previous years which Members felt was a positive outcome for the residents of Bromsgrove.

Financial Update Regarding Leisure Services

During the Covid-19 pandemic and associated lockdowns Leisure Services nationally had been dramatically affected. As part of this item Members were updated on the impact of Covid-19 on the Council's contracted leisure service and the steps taken to mitigate the financial risks presented by Covid-19 in 2020/21 and 2021/22. In addition to this, the options available to the Council moving forward were also discussed.

17th January 2022

Bromsgrove District Council Car Parks - Adoption of Cashless Payments and Operational Procedures for Recreation Road South Car Park and Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park - Pre-Scrutiny

This report was presented to Cabinet at their meeting on 19th January 2022 and the Board were keen to pre-scrutinise prior to its consideration at that meeting. The report recommended that all Pay and Display car parks within the Town Centre should adopt a cashless payment system. Members were informed that although cashless machines would be adopted, all car parks, with the exception of Churchfields Multi-storey Car Park would still retain one cash payment machine.

During consideration of the report a numbers of areas were highlighted by officers including the introduction of the Mi Permit app within the Town's car parks in 2021, the

Equality Impact Assessment that had been undertaken by the Council and the benefit of the introduction of cashless payments for Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) within the District to undertake more of their normal enforcement duties.

Some concerns were expressed by the Board regarding the Churchfields Multi-Storey Car Park and the potential of keeping a cash payment option at this site. However, Officers confirmed that this proposal would increase costs at the Churchfields site. In addition to this, any resulting costs of the installation of two machines would be higher due to the ongoing maintenance or if one or both machines were subject to vandalism.

During the debate heritage street lighting within the Town Centre was discussed and it was decided that this subject would be discussed at a Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group meeting later in the municipal year.

Levelling Up Fund - former Market Hall and Windsor St sites - pre-scrutiny

In December 2021 it was announced that £14.5m had been awarded from the Government's Levelling Up fund. At this meeting of the Board Members were informed that some of the funding was to be utilised to develop a cultural and creative hub in Bromsgrove town centre on the Market Hall site. In respect of the Windsor Street site, it was proposed that the project at this site would be pre-development i.e., preparing the site in readiness for development and that a feasibility study was currently underway regarding the clearance of the Windsor Street site.

The delivery timescales of the projects were reported as March 2025 and a detailed risk register was in place to ensure that the projects were monitored closely.

It was widely acknowledged that this was an exciting great opportunity for the District and might help to alleviate revenue pressures on the Council.

At this meeting the Board agreed that an item in respect of the Levelling Up Funding be added to the Board's work programme for consideration every six months.

15th February 2022

Mileage Benchmarking Update

This item was provided as a follow up as requested by the Board at their meeting held on 6th July 2021. Once again, the Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy and the Human Resources and Organisational Development Manager attended the meeting and the report provided data for similar local authorities to Bromsgrove District Council, primarily Malvern Hills District Council and Wychavon District Council.

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 Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in respect of the use of different types of technology and of officers working remotely.

Sustainable Warmth Funding - Pre-Scrutiny

The Head of Community and Housing Services presented a report on the subject of the Council's receipt of a £429,000 Sustainable Warmth Funding grant. The grant is 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.

This was a detailed report that outlined the components to the funding of up to £25,000 in Home Upgrade Grant (HUG) grants for eligible households and the average Local Authority Delivery (LAD) Phase 3 grants of £10,000.

It was explained that the deadlines for expenditure of the grant funding was 31st March 2023, and that the Council was aiming to target low-income households as funding recipients.

The Council's 2022/23 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25 Draft - Pre-scrutiny

At this meeting 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. This report had also been pre-scrutinised at a meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group. The budget and Medium Term Financial Plan had been developed in challenging financial circumstances for local government. It was reported that savings and income opportunities had been identified in some areas and these had been incorporated into the budget.

As part of consideration of this report Members were advised that there were actions that could be taken, including making efficiency savings and introducing additional income to help alleviate budget pressures. However, it was clear that some difficult decisions might also need to be made by Members.

The format of the report, which was different to the style that had been adopted in previous years, saw Members commenting that the content was clearer than it had been in previous years and Members thanked officers for making these changes.

28th March 2022

Land Drainage Watercourse Maintenance Operations - Pre-Scrutiny

The Board were keen to pre-scrutinise this report as it was hoped that it would provide some clarification on discussions that had taken place as a result of the Impact of Flooding in the District Task Group earlier on in the municipal year. During consideration of this item a detailed presentation was delivered to Members. This provided information on what measures were to be taken in order to mitigate future flooding events in the district.

It was hoped that the schedule of maintenance works, which, it was proposed, would be carried out by an external contractor, would ensure that works were carried out on a more regular basis.

The first year of the contract was to be considered as a pilot scheme and could be reviewed after the first year had been completed. An update on the scheme was added to the Board's work programme for consideration after the first year of works had been carried out.

Equality Annual Report 2021-2022

The Head of Transformation & Organisational Development presented the Equality Annual Report 2021-2022 and highlighted that it was the first report of its kind and was as a result of a recommendation made by the Equalities Task Group investigation.

This report was very well received by Members who were pleased to see the large amount of work undertaken by officers in this area.

Planning Determination Timescales - Verbal Update

During this verbal update Members were informed that there were no particular concerns in respect of planning application determination timelines and that 100% of the applications received within the last quarter had been considered within the agreed timeframe which was set by central government or in certain instances in agreement with the applicant.

Planning Officers worked proactively with developers and if necessary, an extension of time agreement was put in place.

There were discussions at this meeting regarding the data that was presented to the Board and how timescales were measured.

Task Group Updates

At this meeting Councillor S. Colella presented an update on the Impact of the Review of Library Services Task Group. Members were informed that the task group was reconvened late in 2021 and that Councillors K. May and P. Thomas had been invited to discuss potential amendments. Although no amendments to the recommendations were made it was noted that the investigation had been worthwhile and had resulted in a good report that confirmed that libraries would continue to receive the funding they deserved.

Topic Proposal - Fuel Poverty

Councillor R. Hunter presented the Topic Proposal form to establish a Fuel Poverty Task Group. As residents were facing an unprecedented rising level in the cost of living, he explained that it was important that the Council provided as much support as possible to those residents identified as in need.

During a very detailed and robust debate some Members discussed the potential of inviting an officer to present further detailed information on what services were available to residents. This approach, it was felt, would mean that residents would be quickly signposted to any initiatives or grants available to them. However, on being put to the vote it was agreed to establish a Fuel Poverty Task Group and Councillor R. Hunter be appointed as Chairman of the task group.

25th April 2022

Scrutiny of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership

The Overview and Scrutiny Board has a statutory duty to scrutinise the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) on an annual basis.

Included in the report and presentation was detailed information on the following:

- The background to the NWCSP, the Partnership Plan and the annual strategic assessment which picked up key crime and community safety priorities
- The allocation of funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Capital Fund for CCTV and fly-tipping.
- The work of the Bromsgrove Community Safety Project Officers on behalf of the Council and the CSP.
- The use of communications and social media campaigns to promote key safety messages and the work of the NWCSP including the Nominated Neighbour Scheme, the Respect Programme and Hate Crime Awareness Week.
- The Key Priorities agreed by partners for 2021-22:
 - Violence and Abuse
 - Theft and Acquisitive Crime
 - ASB, Damage and Nuisance
 - Protecting Vulnerable Communities
- Community Safety Project Updates for 2021-22 including information on the Respect Programme, the Empowering Young People Programme, the Youth Hub, the Asda Car Park Project, the Friday Night Diversionary Sessions, Bromsgrove Listening Service, Young Citizen's Challenge and the Virtual Decisions Knife Crime Project.

This was a very detailed update from the Community Safety Manager and Members expressed their thanks and appreciation to the team and stated it was humbling to see all of the work that had taken place in this area.

CCTV Update

This was the second CCTV update that Members considered during this municipal year; the first being the CCTV update from an Environmental Services perspective. The Head of Community and Housing Services presented the update to Members and explained that the CCTV Monitoring Centre had dual roles of monitoring Lifeline and CCTV and covered North Worcestershire which included Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest.

It was highlighted that CCTV cameras were a tool to reduce the fear of crime, as well as detect crime. The impact of this had been particularly seen in the decrease of incidents at Sanders Park since the installation of a camera. Redeployable cameras had been implemented in hotspot areas throughout the District.

It was queried whether all of the recommendations from the CCTV Task group investigation had been implemented. Officers explained that the majority of the recommendations had been undertaken however delays had been experienced due to the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, some of the cameras remained as analogue rather than being upgraded to the higher definition cameras. The Head of Community and Housing Services stated that plans were underway to make the change from analogue to digital cameras in all areas of the District however there was a cost to making these changes. Officers undertook to look at the cost implications and agreed to report back to the Board later in the municipal year.

Fireworks Motion

As the proposer of the question at Full Council on 26th January 2022, Councillor S. Douglas was invited to address the Board and explained that the use of fireworks was particularly distressing to animals and vulnerable residents within the District and that the use of fireworks, particularly in a private setting, were problematic.

The Cultural Services and Parks Manager explained that a decision had been made that a fireworks display would not take place this year in Sanders Park. Instead, a light show would be organised as it had been for the previous year.

Following the discussion, the following recommendation was made:

‘that Bromsgrove District Council encourages residents to attend professionally organised firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.’

On being put to the vote the recommendation was carried by the Board.

Agenda Item 9

This recommendation was presented to the Cabinet by the Chairman of the Board at their meeting on 3rd May 2022. A slight amendment was proposed by Councillor Thompson as follows:

‘that Bromsgrove District Council, through its social media and other channels, encourages its residents to attend professionally organised firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.’

The amended recommendation as outlined above was agreed by the Cabinet.

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (HOSC)

The Council's representative on this Committee must be a Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and is required to provide the Board with regular updates on the work being carried out.

The Board's representative for the start of the municipal year was Councillor J. Till, however at the Board meeting held on 6th July 2021, Councillor Till indicated that she wished to step down from her role as HOSC representative. At this same meeting a nomination was received for Councillor S. Baxter and on being put to the vote it was agreed that Councillor S. Baxter be elected as HOSC representative for the remainder of the municipal year.

During the year Councillor Baxter highlighted the following areas and responded to questions from Members:

- Mental Health provision in Worcestershire
- Maternity Services in the Worcestershire
- Community ambulances and Primary Care (GP) Access within Worcestershire
- Integrated Care Systems (ICS)
- Winter Plan 2021-2022.

WORKING GROUPS – UPDATE

Background to Working Groups

Following the review of the work of the Board at the April 2016 meeting, a number of areas of improvement were discussed. One of these was its role in scrutinising the budget and the other was the role of performance monitoring. It was agreed that for 2016/17 the Board would set up a Finance and Budget Working Group and a Measures Dashboard Working Group. This would enable a dedicated group of Members to consider these areas in both more detail and in a timelier manner. This would enable Members to feed through any recommendations to Cabinet more promptly. In the first year of its implementation the Measures Dashboard Working Group was re-named the Corporate Performance Working Group.

The terms of reference for each Working Group were agreed by the Board and were regularly reviewed to ensure that the work being carried out remained relevant. Historically this review has formed part of the April meeting of the Board when it considers the annual report and looks back over the work carried out and discusses any improvements that could be made in the coming year to ensure the Board runs effectively and efficiently.

The Terms of Reference for the Working Groups were updated during the municipal year 2021-2022. The updates were as follows:

Finance and Budget Scrutiny Working Group

- *Named substitute Members may be invited to join the Working Group, however it should be chaired by a permanent Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board*

Corporate Performance Working Group

- *Named substitute Members may be invited to join the Working Group, however it should be chaired by a permanent Member of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, and:*
- *The Working Group will meet on a quarterly basis throughout the municipal year.*

Finance & Budget Working Group

Membership: Councillors C. A. Hotham (Chairman June 2021 – April 2022), Councillors S. R. Colella, R. Hunter, A. D. Kriss and J. Till

This Group met on six occasions this year and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling has attended the majority of meetings, together with the Executive Director of Resources and the Head of Finance and Customer Services.

Heads of Service were also invited on a number of occasions in order to provide further information on their service areas, particularly in respect of Fees and Charges.

Agenda Item 9

The list below contains some of the reports which the Working Group has considered and gives an insight into the work that has been carried out:

- 2022/23 Budget
- Medium Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2024/25
- Enterprise Resource System
- The Aged Debtors Summary
- The Financial Outturn Report
- Covid-19 Grants
- Blue Badge Motion which had been submitted by Councillor S. Robinson at the Full Council meeting held on 3rd November 2021
- Council Tax Empty Homes Discounts and Premiums report
- Fees and Charges

Once again, by being able to consider a number of reports in more detail and prior to their consideration at Cabinet, this has allowed Members of the Board via the Working Group to play an increased part in the budget setting process.

Corporate Performance Working Group

During the municipal year 2021-2022 nominations were received for the election of the Chairman of this working group. Councillor Till was nominated at the Board meeting held on 18th October 2021, and efforts were made by the Democratic Services team to arrange for volunteer Members as per the new Terms of Reference. Only two Councillors volunteered to be members of this group for the next municipal year however the Terms of Reference state that the group should consist of a maximum of 5 Members with a quorum of 3.

It was with this in mind, given the lack of membership of the group, that the most appropriate way forward when scrutinising the Performance of the Council would be to consider an item at the main Board meetings every 6 months.

This first item in the municipal year 2022-2023 will be the Performance Dashboard Update and would be included on the Board's work programme for consideration on 30th May 2022.

TASK GROUP INVESTIGATIONS & SHORT, SHARP REVIEWS CARRIED OUT

The detailed final reports of all these investigations can be found on the Council's website within the Overview and Scrutiny section.

Equalities Task Group

Membership: Councillors P. McDonald, A.B Beaumont, M. Glass, H. Jones, A. Kriss, H. Rone-Clarke, C. Spencer and J. Till

The outcome on the Equalities Task Group investigation can be found earlier in this report.

Impact of Review of Libraries in the District Task Group

Membership: Councillors S. R. Colella, S. Douglas, J. King, A. Kriss, M. Middleton and C. Spencer

The outcome on the Impact of Review of Libraries in the District investigation can be found earlier in this report.

Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group

Membership: Councillors R. Hunter, A.B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, H. Rone-Clarke and C. Spencer

The outcome on the Review of Services to Prevent Flooding Task Group investigation can be found earlier in this report.

Conclusion

The return to in-person meetings at the beginning of this municipal year has meant that once again Members can consider reports in person. A significant amount of pre-scrutiny work has been carried out by the Board throughout the year. In addition to this, the work of the the Budget Scrutiny Working Group has been useful in providing Members with an opportunity to look at complex finance reports in some considerable detail. The conclusion of three task groups meant that 2021-2022 was a very busy and constructive year in scrutiny, whereby matters that were really important to the residents of Bromsgrove have been considered.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Overview and Scrutiny Board Meetings

Overview and Scrutiny Board meetings are open to the public. To find out more visit our website at <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny.aspx> or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Public Involvement

If you would like to have your say on issues being considered by Overview and Scrutiny or to suggest a topic for consideration you can email scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk or complete the form on the Council's website at <http://www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/the-council/overview-and-scrutiny/public-participation.aspx>

Giving Evidence

Members of the public or organisations with a special interest or knowledge about a particular topic being considered by Overview and Scrutiny can put forward evidence to a Committee or appear as a witness to give evidence for an investigation. If you think you or your organisation might be able to participate in an issue currently under review, please contact us.

If you have a personal issue with a Council service you may find it more useful to contact your local ward Councillor who can help you decide the best way to take it forward.

Contact Overview and Scrutiny

If you would like to find out more about any aspect of the Overview and Scrutiny Board then you can email scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk or telephone 01527 881288 and ask to speak to the Democratic Services Officer.

Overview and Scrutiny

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council

Parkside, Market Street, Bromsgrove B61 8DA

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Portfolio Holder Report

Portfolio Holder Report - (CCTV and Community Safety)

Introduction and Overview:

At Bromsgrove District Council Portfolio Holders provide an annual update to Council on services within their portfolio remit. These services are delivered in accordance with the Council's Strategic Purposes, as detailed in the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019 – 2023.

This report provides an outline of services and activities within the remit of this particular Portfolio Holder. Information is included in relation to the Council's Strategic Purposes, relevant key activities, partnership working, projects and programmes and news stories.

A version of this report, focusing on each Portfolio Holder's remit in turn, will be considered at each meeting of Council (except for the Annual Council meeting).

Whilst services will be contributing information into this report it is worth noting that not all sections of the report will be relevant to all service areas. In this circumstance, some sections may not be completed by all services.

The report will be structured as follows:

- 1) Update on Strategic Purposes
- 2) Partnership working
- 3) Key activities and priorities
- 4) Good news stories and awards (if applicable)
- 5) Other

The Council has the following Strategic Purposes and Priorities:

Strategic Purposes	Council Priorities
Run and grow a successful business	Economic development and regeneration
Work and financial independence	Skills for the future
Living independent, active and healthy lives	Improving health & well being
Affordable and sustainable homes	A balanced housing market
Communities which are safe, well maintained and green	Reducing crime & disorder
The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan	Internal priorities
	Financial stability
	High quality services
	Sustainability



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Report

1. Update on Strategic Purposes – Community Safety

Relevant Strategic Purpose.

Community Safety supports the strategic purpose “**Communities which are safe, well maintained and green**”, and Council Priorities of *Reducing Crime and Disorder*.

This report focuses on the services of CCTV and the Community Safety Team.

CCTV

Purpose: To inspire public confidence by ensuring that all public area Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) systems which are linked to the CCTV control room are operated in a manner that will secure their consistent effectiveness and preserve the civil liberty of law-abiding citizens at all times.

The CCTV operation aims to:

- Reduce the fear of crime.
- Help detect crime by providing evidence in criminal proceedings.
- Prevent and reduce crime, public disorder and anti-social behaviour.
- Help the police track and capture people suspected of committing crime
- Help identify witnesses
- Assist the Local Authority in its enforcement and regulatory functions
- Work in Partnership to achieve objectives set by the NWCSF

To promote public confidence by developing a safe and secure environment for the benefit of those living, working, visiting or using the area. The BDC CCTV Scheme is accredited to the Surveillance Commissioners Code of Practice, assessed through external annual audit. It is monitored by formally trained staff who have achieved the accredited standard required by the Private Security Industry Act 2001 and DBS checked. The system is operated and managed in accordance with current legislation and detailed CCTV Codes of Practice and Operational Procedures Manual.

Community Safety

The Community Safety Team works with partners, other service areas and local communities to fulfil the councils’ statutory duties under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 and all subsequent community safety legislation. The team provides information and guidance about crime prevention and delivers projects and interventions to reduce crime and disorder, ASB and the fear of crime in local neighbourhoods. Reducing Crime & Disorder is a corporate priority and the team uses its considerable expertise and experience to help other council services embed crime and ASB prevention into mainstream corporate service delivery.



Portfolio Holder Report

Relevant Strategic Purpose 2: Living independent, active and healthy lives

Another area the Community Safety Team co-ordinates is support for residents and communities who are victims of crime or more susceptible to crime and disorder to help them to move toward a better quality of life, free from the fear of crime. The team works with partners and voluntary sector services to provide support to those who have experienced crime and disorder, for example providing security assessments for Domestic Abuse survivors, encouraging and supporting victims of hate incidents to make reports and seek help and co-ordinating a problem solving approach those experiencing anti-social behaviour. The team also co-ordinates activity and interventions to help protect young people who are at more risk of becoming victims of crime and providing interventions for young people at risk of falling into criminality and anti-social behaviour.

Key activities since last report:

CCTV

Following a short sharp review of the CCTV scheme by members, a review of the aging analogue system and funding for CCTV becoming available from the Police Crime Commissioner work has been undertaken to upgrade the system. This has included:

- Digital upgrade to the core monitoring centre system and recording facility. Resulting in:
 - Increased capacity for additional cameras.
 - Future proof for advancing technology i.e. Biometrics, remote access, Artificial Intelligence
 - Ability to integrate other camera systems.
 - Faster playback and faster evidence production.
 - More accurate and easier to apply privacy zones.
 - Configurable monitor wall allowing hot spot areas to be high lighted. Showing up to 96 images where previously only 54 at a time.

- Relacing some analogue BT Redcare circuits with a wireless network where locations are suitable. Upgrading some analogue circuits to digital. Resulting in:
 - Revenue cost savings on BT costs
 - Clearer images
 - More reliable connectivity

- A fourth CCTV work station was added into the Monitoring Centre to ensure that when the operation is fully staffed with four operators Monday – Saturday 10am to 4pm, every operator has full access to the CCTV system. This increases proactive monitoring and response times.



Portfolio Holder Report

- Replaced old obsolete analogue cameras with digital cameras where transmission has been upgraded to digital and hybrid cameras where transmission is still analogue. Resulting in:
 - Superior camera control
 - Enhanced zoom capability
 - Excellent image clarity
 - Reduced faults and down time

- Additional camera at Sanders Park covering the skate park.

- Internally developed incident logging system to ensure:
 - Every operator has access to the system at their workplace
 - Easier access to data for reports and statistics.

Other activities include:

- Ongoing work to improve communications with West Mercia Police:
 - Briefing paper
 - Streamlined telephony access
 - Monitoring Centre visits for officers

- Pilot scheme to trial phone access for local shops and business in a CCTV locality.
 - Pilot area Wythall.

- Comprehensive CCTV training package delivered to all staff new and existing employees.

Community Safety

In March 2021, North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership (NWCSP) agreed its 3 year action plan for 2021-2024 identifying the Partnership’s priorities based on data and information about crime & disorder and ASB as detailed in the Community Safety Strategic Assessment. The Partnership Plan outlines NWCSP’s aim to reduce: -

	Key Priorities
Violence and Abuse	Public Place Violence
	Domestic Abuse
Theft & Acquisitive Crime	Burglary
	Doorstep Crime & Scams
ASB, Damage & Nuisance	Neighbourhood Nuisance
	Criminal Damage & Environmental Problems

The Partnership also agreed two cross-cutting themes of reducing the harm caused by drugs & alcohol and reducing re-offending which both impact across all priority areas.





Portfolio Holder Report

The Community Safety Team has a dedicated Community Safety Project Officer for Bromsgrove District. The Officer works with local residents, partners and other services to address community safety and crime prevention issues across Bromsgrove. The Officer also chairs the North Worcestershire ASB forum, pulling together housing association representatives, police colleagues and other partners to discuss and develop solutions to complex ASB cases that require a multi-agency approach.

The team has qualified Designing out Crime Officers (DOCO) and they regularly examine and comment on applications for Planning making detailed recommendations based on the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED). Officers made recommendations on 11 medium to large scale development applications covering 364 residential units and 9 commercial units.

The team promote and implement the CSP's Nominated Neighbour Scheme in Bromsgrove which aims to provide protection for vulnerable and elderly residents against doorstep crimes and rogue traders. Despite promotion of the scheme being reduced due to a lack of community events as a result of covid regulations, the project continues and is promoted via partners and social media. The Community Safety Team also monitor and circulate information from partners and colleagues about current scams targeting residents, the most recent being a home insulation scam highlighted by the Private Sector Housing Team.

The team has an Officer with a dedicated remit around Youth Intervention and supporting Vulnerable Communities. The Officer manages and coordinates the Respect Schools programme which provides 1-2-1 mentoring support, group work and school assemblies on a variety of community safety and crime prevention subjects. The Officer also co-ordinated outreach and detached youth work in partnership with the Bromsgrove Youth Hub, deploying a team of outreach youth workers to neighbourhood areas that are experiencing ASB concerns. In the summer, the team implemented a successful youth diversion project using multi sports activities to address complaints of ASB at ASDA Multi-story carpark. After the Summer sessions ended, the youth team has continued to engage with a cohort of approx. 50 young people that were identified, creating a programme of Friday night diversionary sessions during the winter months.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period

CCTV

Work with Bromsgrove Town Centre Manager to improve Shop/Pub watch radio system.

Review CCTV maintenance contract.

Adopt strong Carbon reduction policy.



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Report

Establish base line monitoring data on new system:

- Incident by camera
- Incident by area
- Number of proactive incidents
- Number of reviews
- Number of seizures

Signage survey and replacement to ensure appropriate signage is in place.

Community Safety

The Community Safety Team were successful in recruiting a dedicated Enhanced Youth Support Worker using Contain Outbreak Covid funding from Public Health. The role has been funded for 3yrs and has been implemented to provide support and activities to young people adversely affected by the pandemic. Research has shown that young people, particularly those with difficult and chaotic home lives, have experienced significant negative effects of the coronavirus restrictions.

The Community Safety Team works closely with various youth & community groups in Bromsgrove and assisted in obtaining significant amounts of external grant funding to deliver youth interventions and activities for disadvantaged and disaffected young people. For example: -

£24,000	Funding from Youth Music over two years to support Reach Out Bromsgrove's outreach music project with the hardest to reach young people
£8,000	For Outreach youth work in Bromsgrove district from the Grantham York Trust
£10,000	From the Big Lottery to support ongoing work at Bromsgrove Youth Hub
£7,200	2 nd grant from Active Hereford and Worcestershire for the Friday night diversion project. This follows the success of the ASDA Car Park Multi Sports scheme which benefited from an initial grant of £4,755 awarded in early 2021
£17,640	Funding from the Postcode Lottery for the Hub to continue delivery of the Community Safety Empowering Young People programme

2. Partnership Working:

The Council works with a range of partner organisations to meet the needs of residents and businesses in the District. The following section details work delivered within the remit of this Portfolio Holder.

The CCTV operation is a shared service covering the towns of North Worcestershire, including Bromsgrove District Council, Redditch Borough Council and Wyre Forest District Council.



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Report

Partnership working is key to CCTV service delivery for intelligence gathering and successful outcomes.

Partnership working examples:

CCTV

Members of the CCTV Team regularly attend Partnership meetings:

- Safer Bromsgrove
- Bromsgrove Town Centre Management
- Pubwatch
- North Worcestershire Serious Organised Crime Focus Group.
- Mates – Multi Agency Tasking (Operational level)

These interactions have allowed us to form strong links with West Mercia Police, WCC, BDHT, WRS, Probation Services, Street Pastors, and Wyre Forest District Council.

The team also work closely with other Council departments, such as Environmental Services, Community Safety, and Housing.

Community Safety

Alongside the Council's statutory duty to work in partnership to address crime and disorder via North Worcestershire CSP, the council is represented on a number of sub-groups and multi-agency forums to address specific community issues. For example: -

Safer Bromsgrove, Town Centre Management Group and Pub Watch all work together to address a number of local issues affecting Bromsgrove residents such as ASB, Crime and Disorder in Town centres and crime and disorder affecting the night-time economy.

North Worcestershire Hate Crime Partnership was the first of its kind in the West Mercia Region and brings together partners, community groups and support agencies to discuss hate incidents and crimes in the area. The group shares best practice and promotes reporting mechanisms to encourage victims and witnesses to come forward and seek help and support.

North Worcestershire Serious Organised Crime Focus Group is a multi-agency forum that discusses and identifies areas at risk of being targeted by Organised Criminals. This restricted group share data and intelligence to allow operational officers to look out for suspicious activity and signs of concern and feed this back to enforcement agencies.

Key activities since last report:

CCTV

The Project Team for the CCTV digital upgrade included key members of the Community Safety Partnership and West Mercia Police Officers. The



Portfolio Holder Report

team met on a regular basis, agreeing plans, targets and actions to ensure the project remained on track and the best use of resources was agreed.

We have been part of the multi-agency response to issues identified on Worcester Road Bromsgrove, Tibberton Court Charford and Shawfields Wythall.

A new initiative developed with the Community Safety partnership purchased three re-deployable cameras that can be used at locations across the district, for up to 12 weeks, in line with the “Re-deployable Camera Procedure”. We have worked in Partnership with WMP, BDHT, WCC Highways, at these sites to ensure deployment is proportionate, appropriate, and safe. Deployments in Bromsgrove include:

- Morris Walk / Rock hill
- King George Recreation Car Park, Sidemoor
- Tibberton Court, Charford.
- Collis Close, Charford.
- Shawfield Wythall

Community Safety

Community Safety Partnership Funding 2021-22 provided by the West Mercia PCC was allocated as follows and end of year monitoring and evaluation reports are being prepared to detail the outcomes achieved with the funding: -

NWCSP Project	Allocation
Contribution to West Mercia CSP Analyst Team	£20,000.00
Contribution West Mercia Integrated Offender Mgt.	£5,000.00
Empowering Young People Programme – Bromsgrove & Redditch	£30,000.00
Outreach/Detached Youth Work – Bromsgrove & Redditch	£20,000.00
Safer Bromsgrove - Town Centre Issues	£4,084.00
Safer Redditch – Town Centre Issues	£6,083.00
Virtual Decisions – North Worcs. Knife Crime Project	£5,500.00
Safer Wyre Forest Projects	£48,583.00
Total Grant	£139,250.00

Responding to Government consultations - North Worcestershire CSP responded to government consultations about the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, new Protect Duty being developed, linked to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 and discussions around a new duty to address Serious Violence which is being developed as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2021. Discussions and Countywide delivery forums have been established or are being discussed as statutory guidance and development information emerges.



Portfolio Holder Report

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones and Priorities For Next Period

Continue to improve working relations with the Police

- Explore access to airwave radio.
- Explore appetite for police to collect data electronically.
- Continue encouraging Officers to visit Monitoring Centre at peak periods to support the operation and Officers on the ground.

3. Good News Stories and Awards (if applicable)

CCTV

Title of news story / award: Surveillance Camera Code Compliance

Surveillance Camera Code of Practice Certificate of Compliance was awarded following an onsite, third party, audit carried out by accreditation body IQ Verify.



Valid Until
October 2026

This demonstrates that the Council CCTV system is fully compliant with the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 and the Code. So, the Council and more importantly the public, may be reassured that surveillance camera systems which intrude upon their privacy are being demonstrably operated ethically and legitimately to an appropriate standard. □

Title of news story / award: Secondary monitoring facility at Parkside for business continuity.

Following a review of business continuity within the Lifeline Service a secondary location was set up at Parkside for any such incident that could leave the Town Hall, Redditch inaccessible. As part of the digitization of the CCTV system, remote monitoring became an option. We have now set up a CCTV workstation with access to all camera location in our mini-Monitoring Centre at Parkside. This is utilized regularly.

Title of news story / award: SIA training licence compliance

2019/2020 saw an unusually high turnover of staff, of 50%. This resulted in the appointment of 10 new members of the team. New Monitoring Centre Operators have brought new ideas and eagerness to the team. Training and induction has been steady due to the difficulties of training whilst maintaining social distance and other new Covid secure requirements. However, never a team to be halted, we are proud to say that all Operators have passed their CCTV level 2 examinations and are licenced to the Security Industry Authority.

Community Safety

Title of news story / award: Local Area Improvement funded by Community Safety Partners



Portfolio Holder Report

Following a site visit with the Ward Member for Charford, the Community Safety Team has pulled together a multi-agency partnership to initiate an estate improvement project in a confined neighbourhood area which has experienced significant anti-social behaviour which has negatively impacted on community cohesion. Drawing together council resources from Community Safety, Environmental and Community Services and working with the Police, BDHT and the local church initiatives the project team has identified a number of actions to address environmental factors contributing to the community safety issues in the area.

Despite delays caused by Covid restrictions the project proceeded through 2021, with substantial changes being made to the built environment using the principles of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) directed by the two Community Safety Team DOCOs. The project will continue through the first half of 2022, entering a phase of community engagement utilising the experience within the project team supporting Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and working with the Ward Member on the provision of positive youth diversion and engagement opportunities in the wider area. It is envisaged that the experience of this project will provide a model that can be transferred to other similar locations.

NWCSP Funding for 2022-23 from the West Mercia PCC has been allocated at similar amounts as previous years and partners are currently working on community safety project proposals for the forthcoming year.

4. Other (including risks, opportunities, issues not raised elsewhere). **Title**

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**Council
2022**

22nd June

Appointment of Interim Section 151 Officer

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks
Report Author	Chief Executive k.dicks@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk 01527 881484
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Council RESOLVE to:-

Approve the arrangements for an Interim Chief Finance Officer and Section 151 Officer for Bromsgrove District Council for a period of 12 months (with any extension subject to review).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council is required to nominate an officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972 to be responsible for the proper administration of its financial affairs, a role designated as part of the Director of Resources position.
- 2.2 At a meeting of Full Council on 2nd December 2020 Mr James Howse was appointed as the Council's Director of Resources and the Council's Section 151 officer (Chief Financial Officer).
- 2.3 Mr Howse has given notice that he has secured a new role elsewhere and therefore wishes to terminate his contract of employment with the Council. As the post of Section 151 Officer is a statutory post the Council is obliged to appoint an officer to act in that capacity on its behalf.

**Council
2022**

22nd June

- 2.4 The role of Chief Finance and Section 151 Officer was attached to the post of Director of Resources. However, as members will be aware, appointing a new Director of Resources would require a comprehensive recruitment and selection process nationally which will take more time than available to the Council. It could take up to 6 months before a new person is in post. Therefore, until such time as permanent recruitment is considered, there is an immediate need to ensure the appointment of a S151 Officer and ensure capacity and continuity remain within Finance team. It is proposed that Peter Carpenter is appointed interim S151 and Chief Finance Officer for a term of 12 months.
- 2.5 Members are advised that Peter Carpenter has over 30 years of experience of Local Government Finance, during which time he has been Section 151 Officer, Deputy Section 151 Officer and Head of Service.
- 2.6 Members will be aware that the Council has been experiencing some significant challenges in recruiting into vacancies within the Finance Team and that this is a challenge that Councils are facing generally across the local government sector.
- 2.7 Members will also be aware that a recent recruitment and selection process resulted in the successful appointment of a permanent Head of Financial Services. Whilst this role has been vacant the duties have been carried out by an interim officer, Peter Carpenter, since February 2022. Members are advised that Mr Carpenter has also been assuming the role of Deputy 151 Officer during this time. In addition to this role, six other (less senior but important) roles in the Team have also been successfully recruited to – including the Financial Services Manager in recent weeks as part of plans to strengthen the team.
- 2.8 Whilst it is noted that the incoming (permanent) Head of Financial Services will commence employment with the Council at the end of June it will still be incumbent on this Council to appoint an officer to the Statutory Role of S151 officer to ensure legislative compliance in this area.
- 2.9 Members are advised that Peter Carpenter, the current interim deputy Section 151 officer, has been working closely with the Council's internal finance team and the Council's external auditor and is heavily involved in the Council's delivery of the recently awarded Levelling Up Funding.

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22nd June

- 2.10 It is imperative that the Council seek to enable continuity in this area. It is also important that the incoming permanent Head of Financial Services (alongside the newly strengthened Finance Team) has sufficient coaching, support and leadership over the coming period.
- 2.11 For the reasons detailed above, the Council is being asked to consider to appoint an 'Interim' Chief Finance Officer through West Midlands Employers (WME) for 12 months, whilst the Council takes an appropriate recruitment approach to secure a permanent replacement for the Director / S151 role. In the interests of mitigating the risks that are being presented by the loss of knowledge and experience required for the delivery of the statutory 151 functions, Peter Carpenter would undertake this placement via WME to ensure the continuity required by the Council is maintained in the short term.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The total budgeted cost for the Director of Resources post in 2022/23 is £139,400. This is split equally between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council. The cost to BDC is £69,700.
- 3.2 Whilst the exact cost of the interim role through WME will be determined by the number of days actually worked, the estimated cost for 12 months is £155,000. This would be split equally between Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils. The cost to BDC would be £77,300. The additional £7,600 to BDC would be met from the Financial Services earmarked reserve.
- 3.3 If the Council were to determine that it wanted to recruit immediately to the post of Director of Resources, it would probably be at least 6 months before the successful candidate were to be in post. This is assuming that the recruitment campaign was successful and as stated above it is an extremely challenging market at present. The post would therefore have to be covered, for the reasons outlined above, by an interim. The normal day rate for an experienced person is approximately £900 per day. For 6 months this would equate to £103,500. Compared to the 6 months cost for the substantive post this would be an additional cost of £33,800 (split equally between the 2 Councils). This demonstrates that the solution offered through WME provides a cost effective solution and mitigates risk for the authority

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4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Under Section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, it is stated: “Without prejudice to section 111 above, every local authority shall make arrangements for the proper administration of their financial affairs and shall secure that one of their officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs.”
- 4.2 Section 6 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, further states: “(1) On and after the commencement day the Common Council shall – (a) make arrangements for the proper administration of such of its financial affairs as relate to it in its capacity as a local authority, police authority or port health authority, and (b) secure that one of its officers has responsibility for the administration of those affairs.”
- 4.3 Part 1, Introduction to the Constitution – Section 9 Officers - Functions Reserved to the Council, paragraph 9.1.1 of the Council’s Constitution states that it is the Council’s responsibility to appoint ‘statutory officers’. The role of Section 151 Officer is a statutory Chief Officer of the Council.
- 4.4 Section 113 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 requires that the officer appointed as the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) must be a member of a specified accountancy body.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 Effective financial management underpins all the Council’s operations and achievement of strategic purposes.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 None.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 None.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 This proposal is in order to secure continuity of operations in a critical function.

**Council
2022**

22nd June

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 As set out above, this proposal aims to mitigate the risks associated with a lack of continuity and senior capacity. This includes ensuring Council maximises the benefit from the recently strengthened Finance Team, and that that Team is appropriately supported.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Karen May Leader	13/6/22
Lead Director / Head of Service	N/A Report author	N/A
Financial Services	James Howse Director of Resources	13/6/22
Legal Services	Claire Felton Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services	13/6/22
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	N/A
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	N/A

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CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Cabinet meeting 3rd May 2022

Treasury Management Strategy

RECOMMENDED that

- (i) the Capital Strategy as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be approved;
- (ii) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 and the associated MRP policy be approved;
- (iii) the policy for Flexible use of Capital Receipts be approved;
- (iv) the Investment Strategy be approved.

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CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Cabinet meeting 1st June 2022

Council Plan (Including Restoration and Recovery Plan)

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council Plan Addendum 2022/23 be approved and included alongside the current BDC Council Plan 2019/23; and
- 2) the Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020/21 be agreed and closed.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet 3rd May 2022

Capital Strategy 2022/23 incorporating the Treasury Management Strategy

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Peter Carpenter
Wards Affected	All Wards
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY

This report for 2022/23 presents the Capital strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, a policy for use of flexible Capital receipts and the Investment Strategy for 2022/23 to be considered for recommendation to Council.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL that

- i) **the Capital Strategy (Appendix A) as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be approved**
- ii) **the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 (Appendix B) and the associated MRP policy (Appendix C) be approved**
- iii) **the policy for Flexible use of Capital Receipts as per Appendix D be approved**
- iv) **the Investment Strategy (Appendix E) be approved**

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The report for 2022/23 is required following changes in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Department of Levelling UP Housing, and Communities (DLUHC) guidance. It combines an overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing, treasury and other investment activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. The strategies set limits and indicators that embody the risk management approach that the Council believes to be prudent. The strategies are set against the mid-term financial strategy, the context of the UK economy and projected interest rates.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet 3rd May 2022

The Council are required to set a balanced operating budget. The role of the treasury function is to manage cash flow within the authority so that the demands of expenditure can be met. The policies included in this report set out the criteria in which the Council can manage its Treasury management function.

The CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Public services (the CIPFA TM Code) and the Prudential Code require local authorities to set the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) and Prudential Indicators each financial year. The TMSS also incorporates the Investment Strategy as required under the CLG's Investment Guidance. In addition the Council has to receive a report on treasury management and this is reported on a quarterly basis which is included within the Quarterly Monitoring Report.

3.2 CIPFA has defined Treasury Management as:

“the management of the organisation’s investments, cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.”

3.3 The Council regards the successful identification, monitoring and control of risk to be the prime criteria by which the effectiveness of its treasury management activities will be measured. Treasury management risks are identified in the Council's approved Treasury Management Practices and include:

- Liquidity Risk (Adequate cash resources)
- Market or Interest Rate Risk (Fluctuations in the value of investments)
- Inflation Risks (Exposure to inflation)
- Credit and Counterparty Risk (Security of Investments)
- Refinancing Risks (Impact of debt maturing in future years)
- Legal & Regulatory Risk (Compliance with statutory and regulatory requirements)

3.4 The guidance requires investment strategies to comment on the use of treasury management consultants and on the investment of money borrowed in advance of spending needs.

3.5 In formulating the Treasury Management Strategy and the setting of the Prudential Indicators, the Council adopts the Treasury Management Framework and Policy recommended by CIPFA.

3.6 The Council's 2020/21 accounts have not been formally approved and audited at the time of writing. Entries marked as “actual 2020/21” are therefore pre audited estimates. Following accounts closedown and audit, the Strategies will be updated if required, although this is not anticipated.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Cabinet 3rd May 2022

Legal Implications

3.7 This is a statutory report under the Local Government Act 2003.

Service/Operational Implications

3.8 None as a direct result of this report, although the approves capital Programme is a significant input.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

3.9 None as a direct result of this report.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Failure to manage the Treasury Management function effectively to ensure the delivery of maximum return within a secure environment.

Controls in place to mitigate these risks are as follows:

- Regular monitoring of the status of the organisations we invest with
- Daily monitoring by internal officers of banking arrangements and cash flow implications.

5. APPENDENCES

Appendix A – Capital Strategy 2022/23

Appendix B – Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23

Appendix C – Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23

Appendix D – Policy for the Flexible Use of Capital receipts

Appendix E – Investment Strategy 2022/23

AUTHOR OF REPORT

Name: Pete Carpenter– Interim Financial Services Manager (Deputy S151)
E Mail: Peter.Carpenter@bromsgroveandredditchbc.gov.uk

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Appendix A - Bromsgrove Capital Strategy Report 2022/23

Introduction

This capital strategy report gives a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of local public services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability. It has been written in an accessible style to enhance members' understanding of these sometimes technical areas.

Decisions made this year on capital and treasury management will have financial consequences for the Authority for many years into the future. They are therefore subject to both a national regulatory framework and to local policy framework, summarised in this report.

Capital Expenditure and Financing

Capital expenditure is where the Authority spends money on assets, such as property or vehicles, that will be used for more than one year. In local government this includes spending on assets owned by other bodies, and loans and grants to other bodies enabling them to buy assets. The Authority has some limited discretion on what counts as capital expenditure, for example assets costing below £10k are not capitalised and are charged to revenue in year.

In 2022/23, the Authority is planning capital expenditure of £2.4m as summarised below:

Table 1: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Expenditure in £ millions

	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
General Fund services	3.4	7.5	2.4	1.4	1.9
Regeneration Schemes	0	11.6	10.3	8.4	0
TOTAL	3.4	19.1	12.7	9.8	1.9

The main General Fund capital projects being delivered over the 3 year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) period include the fleet replacement programme which totals £1.0m and funding for DFG's £4.4m. The Authority also plans to incur £30.3m of capital expenditure on regeneration schemes, which are detailed later in this report but consist of the Burcot Housing Development started in 2021/22 and the "Levelling Up" Fund work which the Council successfully bid for in 2021.

The Council does not hold any Capital investments, include loans and shares made for service purposes, and property held primarily for financial return in line with the definition in the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

Governance: Service managers bid annually in November to include projects in the Authority's capital programme. Bids are collated by finance who calculate the financing cost (which can be nil if the project is fully externally financed). The final capital programme is then presented to Cabinet and Council in February each year.

All capital expenditure must be financed, either from external sources (government grants and other contributions), the Authority's own resources (revenue, reserves and capital receipts) or debt (borrowing, leasing and Private Finance Initiative). The planned financing of the above expenditure is as follows:

Table 2: Capital financing in £ millions

	2020/21 budget	2021/22 budget	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
External sources	1.8	1.4	10.1	7.6	0
Own resources	1.6	4.7	0	0	0
Debt	0	0	2.6	2.2	1.9
TOTAL	3.4	6.1	12.7	9.8	3.7

Debt is only a temporary source of finance, since loans and leases must be repaid, and this is therefore replaced over time by other financing, usually from revenue which is known as minimum revenue provision (MRP) or by taking out new borrowing. Alternatively, proceeds from selling capital assets (known as capital receipts) may be used to replace debt finance. Planned MRP and use of capital receipts are as follows:

Table 3: Replacement of debt finance in £ millions

	2020/21 actual	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/25 budget
Own resources	0.8	1	0	0	0

The Authority's cumulative outstanding amount of debt finance is measured by the capital financing requirement (CFR). This increases with new debt-financed capital expenditure and reduces with MRP and capital receipts used to replace debt. The CFR is expected to increase by £1.2m during 2022/23. Based on the above figures for expenditure and financing, the Authority's estimated CFR is as follows:

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Estimates of Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2020 actual	31.3.2021 forecast	31.3.2022 budget	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget
General Fund services	22.3	25.5	26.8	27.1	27.9
Regeneration Schemes	3.2	13.2	13.1	13.6	13.3
TOTAL CFR	25.5	38.7	39.9	40.7	41.2

Asset disposals: When a capital asset is no longer needed, it may be sold so that the proceeds, known as capital receipts, can be spent on new assets or to repay debt. The Authority is currently also permitted to spend capital receipts on service transformation projects until 2022/23. Appendix D sets out that capital receipts are not required for this purpose in 2022/23. Repayments of capital grants, loans and investments also generate capital receipts. The Authority is expecting to receive capital receipts in late 2022/23 for part of the Burcot development.

Treasury Management

Treasury management is concerned with keeping sufficient but not excessive cash available to meet the Authority's spending needs, while managing the risks involved. Surplus cash is invested until required, while a shortage of cash will be met by borrowing, to avoid excessive credit balances or overdrafts in the bank current account. The Authority at the moment is cash rich in the short-term as revenue income is received before it is spent, and in the long-term as capital expenditure incurred has been financed internally and not through debt financing. The revenue cash surpluses are offset against capital cash shortfalls to reduce overall borrowing to zero as at 31st March 2022.

Due to decisions taken in the past, the Authority has an underlying need to borrow for capital purposes, which has in recent years been met through short dated borrowing. As of 15 March 2022 the authority borrowing of £16.3m was internally financed and £7m of treasury investments are delivering an average rate of 0.13%.

Borrowing strategy: The Authority's main objectives when borrowing are to achieve a low but certain cost of finance while retaining flexibility should plans change in future. These objectives are often conflicting, and the Authority therefore seeks to strike a balance between cheap short-term loans (currently available at around 0.10%), long-term fixed rate loans where the future cost is known but higher (currently 1.5 to 2.5%), and the use of internal resources.

Projected levels of the Authority's total outstanding debt (which comprises borrowing, PFI liabilities, leases and transferred debt) are shown below, compared with the capital financing requirement (see above).

Table 4: Prudential Indicator: Gross Debt and the Capital Financing Requirement in £ millions

	31.3.2021 actual	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget
Debt (incl. PFI & leases)	18.2	19.6	22.2	24.4	26.3
Capital Financing Requirement	25.5	38.7	39.9	40.7	41.2

Statutory guidance is that debt should remain below the capital financing requirement, except in the short-term. As can be seen from Table 6, the Authority expects to comply with this in the medium term.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Authority's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £0.2m at each year-end. This benchmark is currently £33.2m and is forecast to rise to £37.3m over the next three years.

Table 5: Borrowing and the Liability Benchmark in £ millions

	31.3.2021 actual	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 forecast	31.3.2024 forecast	31.3.2025 forecast
Forecast external borrowing	18.2	19.6	22.2	24.4	26.3
Liability benchmark	14.0	27.7	33.2	35.5	37.3

The table shows that the Authority expects to remain borrowed below its liability benchmark. This is because cash outflows to date have been below the assumptions made when the loans were borrowed.

Affordable borrowing limit: The Authority is legally obliged to set an affordable borrowing limit (also termed the authorised limit for external debt) each year. In line with statutory guidance, a lower “operational boundary” is also set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.

Table 6: Prudential Indicators: Authorised limit and operational boundary for external debt in £000

	2021/22 limit	2020/23 limit	2023/24 limit	2024/25 limit
Authorised limit - borrowing	40,000	50,000	55,000	60,000
Authorised limit - PFI and leases	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Authorised limit - total external debt	40,500	51,000	56,000	61,000
Operational boundary - borrowing	30,000	45,000	50,000	55,000
Operational boundary - PFI and leases	500	1,000	1,000	1,000
Operational boundary - total external debt	30,500	46,000	51,000	56,000

The Authorised Limit must not be breached with a combination of long and short term financing - if they are Full Council needs to be informed. The Operational Boundary can be breached but only for short periods. Councils must set these boundaries taking into account long term financing requirements, leasing and short term borrowing requirements due to cash flow requirements.

Treasury investment strategy: Treasury investments arise from receiving cash before it is paid out again. Investments made for service reasons or for pure financial gain are not generally considered to be part of treasury management.

The Authority’s policy on treasury investments is to prioritise security and liquidity over yield, that is to focus on minimising risk rather than maximising returns. Cash that is likely to be spent in the near term is invested securely, for example with the government, other local authorities or selected high-quality banks, to minimise the risk of loss. Money that will be held for longer terms is invested more widely, including in bonds, shares and property, to balance the risk of loss against the risk of receiving returns below inflation, although no long term investing is planned at present. Both near-term and longer-term investments may be held in pooled funds, where an external fund manager makes decisions on which particular investments to buy and the Authority may request its money back at short notice.

Table 9: Treasury management investments in £millions

	31.3.2021 actual	31.3.2022 forecast	31.3.2023 budget	31.3.2024 budget	31.3.2025 budget
Near-term investments	0	7	3	3	3
Longer-term investments	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	7	3	3	3

- Further details on treasury investments are in the Treasury Management Strategy which is Appendix B.

Risk management: The effective management and control of risk are prime objectives of the Authority’s treasury management activities. The treasury management strategy therefore sets out various indicators and limits to constrain the risk of unexpected losses and details the extent to which financial derivatives may be used to manage treasury risks.

- The treasury management *prudential* indicators are in the Treasury Management Strategy which is Appendix B.

Governance: Decisions on treasury management investment and borrowing are made daily and are therefore delegated to the Executive Director of Finance and staff, who must act in line with the treasury management strategy approved by council. Three Reports on Treasury Management activity will be made to Council the initial strategy, a half yearly update and an outturn report on treasury management activity. The Audit Committee is responsible for scrutinising treasury management decisions.

Investments for Service Purposes

The Authority may make investments to assist local public services, including potentially making loans to the Authority's subsidiaries that provide services. In light of the public service objective, the Authority is willing to take more risk than with treasury investments, however it still plans for such investments to at least break even after all costs.

Total investments for service purposes are currently valued at £2.4m for 22/23 and are set out in the Capital Programme.

Governance: Decisions on service investments are made by the relevant service manager in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance and must meet the criteria and limits laid down in the investment strategy. Most loans and shares are capital expenditure and purchases will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

- Further details on service investments are in Capital Programme in the MTFs reported in February 2022.

Commercial Activities

With central government financial support for local public services declining, and changes to the Capital Financing rules in 2021 in relation to the use of using debt to finance investment for return, Councils must ensure that commercial activities do not make investment primarily for yield. If this was the case it would mean that the Authority could not Public Works Loan Board debt instruments in the future, which are much more advantageous than private sector debt financing.

The Authority will invest in regeneration schemes such as at Burcot and the "Levelling Up" programme but not for purely commercial reasons.

Governance: Decisions on commercial investments, including for Regeneration reasons, are made in line with the criteria and limits approved by council in the investment strategy. Property and most other commercial investments are also capital expenditure and decisions will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

Liabilities

The Authority is committed to making future payments to cover its pension fund deficit, which it does on a 3 yearly basis. The next payment will be in 2024 and will be circa £10m. It has also set aside £2.4m to cover risks of business rates appeals against rateable value, and £183k to cover the potential cost of employee benefits.

Governance: Decisions on incurring new discretionary liabilities are taken by service managers in consultation with the Executive Director of Finance. The risk of liabilities crystallising and requiring payment is monitored by finance and reported as required.

- Further details on liabilities and guarantees are set out in the Statement of Accounts.

Revenue Budget Implications

Although capital expenditure is not charged directly to the revenue budget, interest payable on loans and MRP are charged to revenue, offset by any investment income receivable. The net annual charge is known as financing costs; this is compared to the net revenue stream i.e. the amount funded from Council Tax, business rates and general government grants.

Table 7: Prudential Indicator: Proportion of financing costs to net revenue stream

	2021/22 forecast	2022/23 budget	2023/24 budget	2024/24 budget
Financing costs (£m)	1.3	1.0	1.0	1.0
Proportion of net revenue stream	10.7%	11.3%	11.6%	11.3%

- Further details on the revenue implications of capital expenditure are in the MTFs Reported in February 2022.

Sustainability: Due to the very long-term nature of capital expenditure and financing, the revenue budget implications of expenditure incurred in the next few years will extend for up to 50 years into the future. The Executive Director of Finance is satisfied that the proposed capital programme is prudent, affordable and sustainable because of the current MTFP forecasts which show that the council is financially sustainable and taking it into account.

Knowledge and Skills

The Authority employs professionally qualified and experienced staff in senior positions with responsibility for making capital expenditure, borrowing and investment decisions. For example, the Executive Director of Finance is a qualified accountant with more than 30 years' experience. The Authority pays for junior staff to study towards relevant professional qualifications including CIPFA and AAT.

Where Authority staff do not have the knowledge and skills required, use is made of external advisers and consultants that are specialists in their field. The Authority currently employs Arlingclose Limited as treasury management advisers, Briton & Knowles as property consultants and other as needed. This approach is more cost effective than employing such staff directly, and ensures that the Authority has access to knowledge and skills commensurate with its risk appetite.

Appendix B - Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2022/23

Introduction

Treasury management is the management of the Authority's cash flows, borrowing and investments, and the associated risks. The Authority has borrowed and invested substantial sums of money and is therefore exposed to financial risks including the loss of invested funds and the revenue effect of changing interest rates. The successful identification, monitoring and control of financial risk are therefore central to the Authority's prudent financial management.

Treasury risk management at the Authority is conducted within the framework of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's *Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice 2017 Edition* (the CIPFA Code) which requires the Authority to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year. This report fulfils the Authority's legal obligation under the *Local Government Act 2003* to have regard to the CIPFA Code.

Investments held for service purposes or for commercial profit are considered in a different report, the Investment Strategy.

External Context

Economic background: The ongoing impact on the UK from coronavirus, together with higher inflation, higher interest rates, and the country's trade position post-Brexit, will be major influences on the Authority's treasury management strategy for 2022/23.

The Bank of England's (BoE) increased Bank Rate to 0.25% in December 2021 and again in February 2022 to 0.5% and also announced a tailing down of its erstwhile Quantitative Easing programme. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 5-4 to raise rates by 0.25% at the February meeting, the four dissenters had voted for an 0.5% rise at this meeting which means a very high likelihood of further rate rises in 2022.

At the time of the MPC meeting in November 2021, the economic uncertainty surrounding the Omicron variant of coronavirus was much more prevalent and the forecast for growth was depressed as a result. Since then, the uncertainty surrounding this variant had declined and the negative effects that it might have had on the global economy were shown to be less damaging and more short lived than previously expected. On the other hand, exceptionally strong demand for goods combined with supply chain disruptions and rising energy prices have weighed on activity throughout the early parts of Q1 2022.

In its February 2022 Monetary Policy Report the Bank of England noted 12-month CPI inflation for December was 5.4% which is 1% above the expectations set out in its previous Report in November 2021. Rising energy prices and core goods prices are the leading drivers of this inflation.

The MPC projects CPI inflation will continue its upward trajectory in the coming months to around 6% in February and March before peaking at 7.25% in April. The most recent labour market data for the three months to October 2021 showed the unemployment rate fell to 4.2% while the employment rate rose to 75.5%.

The most recent Labour Force Data for the period to November 2021 shows that the labour market continues to recover. The number of job vacancies in Q4 2021 rose to a new record of 1,247,000, and the unemployment rate fell to 4.1%.

Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by 1.3% in the third calendar quarter of 2021 according to the initial estimate, compared to a gain of 5.5% q/q in the previous quarter, with the annual rate slowing to 6.6% from 23.6%. Looking ahead, Q4 growth (data for which will be released in February) is expected to be soft.

According to a first estimation of annual growth for 2021, GDP increased by 5.2% in both the euro area and the EU. Core CPI inflation was 5.1% y/y in December. At these levels, inflation is above the European Central Bank's target of 'below, but close to 2%', putting some pressure on its long-term stance of holding its main interest rate of 0%.

The US economy expanded at an annualised rate of 6.9% in Q4 2021. CPI rose 7% in 2021, the largest 12-month increase since June 1982. In its December 2021 interest rate announcement, the Federal Reserve continue to maintain the Fed Funds rate at between 0% and 0.25% but outlined its plan to reduce its asset purchase programme earlier than previously stated and signalled they are in favour of tightening interest rates at a faster pace in 2022, with three 0.25% movements now expected.

Credit outlook: Since the start of 2021, relatively benign credit conditions have led to credit default swap (CDS) prices for the larger UK banks to remain low and had steadily edged down throughout the year up until mid-November when the emergence of Omicron has caused them to rise modestly. However, the generally improved economic outlook during 2021 helped bank profitability and reduced the level of impairments many had made as provisions for bad loans. However, the relatively recent removal of coronavirus-related business support measures by the government means the full impact on bank balance sheets may not be known for some time.

The improved economic picture during 2021 led the credit rating agencies to reflect this in their assessment of the outlook for the UK sovereign as well as several financial institutions, revising them from negative to stable and even making a handful of rating upgrades.

Looking ahead, while there is still the chance of bank losses from bad loans as government and central bank support is removed, the institutions on the Authority's counterparty list are well-capitalised and general credit conditions across the sector are expected to remain benign. Duration limits for counterparties on the Authority's lending list are under regular review and will continue to reflect economic conditions and the credit outlook.

Interest rate forecast: The Authority's treasury management adviser Arlingclose is forecasting that Bank Rate will continue to rise in 2022 to subdue inflationary pressures and the perceived desire by the BoE to move away from emergency levels of interest rates.

Investors continue to price in multiple rises in Bank Rate over the next forecast horizon, and Arlingclose believes that although interest rates will rise again, the increases will not be to the extent predicted by financial markets. In the near-term, the risks around Arlingclose's central case are to the upside while over the medium-term the risks become more balanced.

Yields are expected to remain broadly at current levels over the medium-term, with the 5, 10 and 20 year gilt yields expected to average around 1.20%, 1.35%, and 1.55% respectively. The risks around for short and medium-term yields are initially to the upside but shifts lower later, while for long-term yields the risk is to the upside. However, as ever there will almost certainly be short-term volatility due to economic and political uncertainty and events.

A more detailed economic and interest rate forecast provided by Arlingclose is attached at Appendix A.

For the purpose of setting the budget, it has been assumed that new treasury investments will be made at an average rate of 0.15%, and that new long-term loans will be borrowed at an average rate of 2.7%.

Local Context

On 15 January 2022, the Authority held £0m of borrowing and £5m of treasury investments. This is set out in further detail at **Appendix B**. Forecast changes in these sums are shown in the balance sheet analysis in table 1 below.

Table 1: Balance sheet summary and forecast

	31.3.21 Actual £m	31.3.22 Estimate £m	31.3.23 Forecast £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m
General Fund CFR	22.3	25.5	26.8	27.1	27.9
Regeneration CFR	3.2	13.2	13.1	13.6	13.3
Total CFR	25.5	38.7	39.9	40.7	41.2
Less: External borrowing **	4.5	0	0	0	0
Internal (over) borrowing	7.4	19.1	17.7	16.3	15.0
Less: Usable reserves	-8.6	-8.1	-3.8	-2.3	-1
Less: Working capital	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1
Treasury investments (or New borrowing)	4.3	-7.9	-10.8	-10.9	-10.9

** shows only loans to which the Authority is currently committed and excludes optional refinancing

The underlying need to borrow for capital purposes is measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), while usable reserves and working capital are the underlying resources available for investment. The Authority's current strategy is to maintain borrowing and investments below their underlying levels, sometimes known as internal borrowing.

The Authority has an increasing CFR due to the capital programme, but minimal investments and will therefore be required to borrow or use internal resources over the forecast period.

CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local *Authorities* recommends that the Authority's total debt should be lower than its highest forecast CFR over the next three years. Table 1 shows that the Authority expects to comply with this recommendation during 2022/23.

Liability benchmark: To compare the Council's actual borrowing against an alternative strategy, a liability benchmark has been calculated showing the lowest risk level of borrowing. This assumes the same forecasts as table 1 above, but that cash and investment balances are kept to a minimum level of £0.2m at each year-end to maintain sufficient liquidity but minimise credit risk.

Table 2: Liability benchmark

	31.3.21 Actual £m	31.3.22 Estimate £m	31.3.23 Forecast £m	31.3.24 Forecast £m	31.3.25 Forecast £m
CFR	25.5	38.7	39.9	40.7	41.2
Less: Usable reserves	-8.6	-8.1	-3.8	-2.3	-1
Less: Working capital	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1	-3.1
Plus: Minimum investments	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Liability Benchmark	14.0	27.7	33.2	35.5	37.3

Following on from the medium-term forecasts in table 2 above, the long-term liability benchmark assumes capital expenditure funded by borrowing each year, minimum revenue provision on new capital expenditure based on a 50 year asset life and income, expenditure and reserves all increasing in line with the MTFP.

Borrowing Strategy

The Authority currently holds £0 million of long term loans, as part of its strategy for funding previous years' capital programmes. The balance sheet forecast in table 1 shows that the Authority does not expect to need to borrow/expects to borrow in 2022/23. The Authority may however borrow to pre-fund future years' requirements, providing this does not exceed the authorised limit for borrowing.

Objectives: The Authority's chief objective when borrowing money is to strike an appropriately low risk balance between securing low interest costs and achieving certainty of those costs over the period for which funds are required. The flexibility to renegotiate loans should the Authority's long-term plans change is a secondary objective.

Strategy: Given the significant cuts to public expenditure and in particular to local government funding, the Authority's borrowing strategy continues to address the key issue of affordability without compromising the longer-term stability of the debt portfolio. With short-term interest rates currently much lower than long-term rates, it is likely to be more cost effective in the short-term to either use internal resources, or to borrow short-term loans instead.

By doing so, the Authority is able to reduce net borrowing costs (despite foregone investment income) and reduce overall treasury risk. The benefits of internal and short-term borrowing will be monitored regularly against the potential for incurring additional costs by deferring borrowing into future years when long-term borrowing rates are forecast to rise modestly. Arlingclose will assist the Authority with this 'cost of carry' and breakeven analysis. Its output may determine whether the Authority borrows additional sums at long-term fixed rates in 2022/23 with a view to keeping future interest costs low, even if this causes additional cost in the short-term.

The Authority has previously raised little of its long-term borrowing from the PWLB but will consider long-term loans from other sources including banks, pensions and local authorities, and will investigate the possibility of issuing bonds and similar instruments, in order to lower interest costs and reduce over-reliance on one source of funding in line with the CIPFA Code. PWLB loans are no longer available to local authorities planning to buy investment assets primarily for yield; the Authority intends to avoid this activity in order to retain its access to PWLB loans. Alternatively, the Authority may arrange forward starting loans, where the interest rate is fixed in advance, but the cash is received in later years. This would enable certainty of cost to be achieved without suffering a cost of carry in the intervening period.

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In addition, the Authority may borrow short-term loans to cover unplanned cash flow shortages.

Sources of borrowing: The approved sources of long-term and short-term borrowing are:

- HM Treasury's PWLB lending facility (formerly the Public Works Loan Board)
- any institution approved for investments (see below)
- any other bank or building society authorised to operate in the UK
- any other UK public sector body
- UK public and private sector pension funds (except Worcestershire Pension Fund)
- capital market bond investors
- UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc and other special purpose companies created to enable local authority bond issues

Other sources of debt finance: In addition, capital finance may be raised by the following methods that are not borrowing, but may be classed as other debt liabilities:

- leasing
- hire purchase
- Private Finance Initiative
- sale and leaseback

Municipal Bonds Agency: UK Municipal Bonds Agency plc was established in 2014 by the Local Government Association as an alternative to the PWLB. It issues bonds on the capital markets and lends the proceeds to local authorities. This is a more complicated source of finance than the PWLB for two reasons: borrowing authorities will be required to provide bond investors with a guarantee to refund their investment in the event that the agency is unable to for any reason; and there will be a lead time of several months between committing to borrow and knowing the interest rate payable. Any decision to borrow from the Agency will therefore be the subject of a separate report to full Council.

Short-term and variable rate loans: These loans leave the Authority exposed to the risk of short-term interest rate rises and are therefore subject to the interest rate exposure limits in the treasury management indicators below. Financial derivatives may be used to manage this interest rate risk (see section below).

Debt rescheduling: The PWLB allows authorities to repay loans before maturity and either pay a premium or receive a discount according to a set formula based on current interest rates. Other lenders may also be prepared to negotiate premature redemption terms. The Authority may take advantage of this and replace some loans with new loans, or repay loans without replacement, where this is expected to lead to an overall cost saving or a reduction in risk.

Treasury Investment Strategy

The Authority holds significant invested funds, representing income received in advance of expenditure plus balances and reserves held. In the past 12 months, the Authority's treasury investment balance has ranged between £3 and £25 million, and similar levels are expected to be maintained in the forthcoming year

Objectives: The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to invest its treasury funds prudently, and to have regard to the security and liquidity of its investments before seeking the highest rate of return, or yield. The Authority's objective when investing money is to strike an appropriate balance between risk and return, minimising the risk of incurring losses from defaults and the risk of receiving unsuitably low investment income. Where balances are expected to be invested for more than one year, the Authority will aim to achieve a total return that is equal or higher than the prevailing rate of inflation, in order to maintain the spending power of the sum invested.

Strategy: Given the increasing risk and very low returns from short-term unsecured bank investments, the Authority aims to diversify into more secure and/or higher yielding asset classes during 2022/23. This is especially the case for the estimated £7m that is available for longer-term investment. The majority of the Authority's surplus cash is currently invested in short-term unsecured bank deposits or with the central bank. This diversification will represent a continuation of the approved strategy.

Business models: Under the new IFRS 9 standard, the accounting for certain investments depends on the Authority's "business model" for managing them. The Authority aims to achieve value from its internally managed treasury investments by a business model of collecting the contractual cash flows and therefore, where other criteria are also met, these investments will continue to be accounted for at amortised cost.

Approved counterparties: The Authority may invest its surplus funds with any of the counterparty types in table 3 below, subject to the cash limits (per counterparty) and the time limits shown.

Table 3: Approved investment counterparties and limits

Credit rating	Banks unsecured	Banks secured	Government	Corporates	Registered Providers
UK Govt	n/a	n/a	£ Unlimited 50 years	n/a	n/a
AAA	£3 m 5 years	£3m 20 years	£3m 50 years	£3m 20 years	£1m 20 years
AA+	£3m 5 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 25 years	£3m 10 years	£1m 10 years
AA	£3m 4 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 15 years	£3m 5 years	£1m 10 years
AA-	£3m 3 years	£3m 4 years	£3m 10 years	£3m 4 years	£1m 10 years
A+	£3m 2 years	£3m 3 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 3 years	£1m 5 years
A	£3m 13 months	£3m 2 years	£3m 5 years	£3m 2 years	£1m 5 years
A-	£3m 6 months	£3m 13 months	£3m 5 years	£3m 13 months	£1m 5 years
None	£1.5m 6 months	n/a	£3m 25 years	£1m 5 years	£500k 5 years
Pooled funds and real estate investment trusts		£2.5m per fund or trust			

This table must be read in conjunction with the notes below

*** Minimum credit rating:** Treasury investments in the sectors marked with an asterisk will only be made with entities whose lowest published long-term credit rating is no lower than [A-]. Where available, the credit rating relevant to the specific investment or class of investment is used, otherwise the counterparty credit rating is used. However, investment decisions are never made solely based on credit ratings, and all other relevant factors including external advice will be taken into account.

For entities without published credit ratings, investments may be made either (a) where external advice indicates the entity to be of similar credit quality; or (b) to a maximum of £0.5m per counterparty as part of a diversified pool e.g. via a peer-to-peer platform.

Government: Loans to, and bonds and bills issued or guaranteed by, national governments, regional and local authorities and multilateral development banks. These investments are not subject to bail-in, and there is generally a lower risk of insolvency, although they are not zero risk. Investments with the UK Government are deemed to be zero credit risk due to its ability to create additional currency and therefore may be made in unlimited amounts for up to 50 years.

Secured investments: Investments secured on the borrower's assets, which limits the potential losses in the event of insolvency. The amount and quality of the security will be a key factor in the investment decision. Covered bonds and reverse repurchase agreements with banks and building societies are exempt from bail-in. Where there is no investment specific credit rating, but the collateral upon which the investment is secured has a credit rating, the higher of the collateral credit rating and the counterparty credit rating will be used. The combined secured and unsecured investments with any one counterparty will not exceed the cash limit for secured investments.

Banks and building societies (unsecured): Accounts, deposits, certificates of deposit and senior unsecured bonds with banks and building societies, other than multilateral development banks. These investments are subject to the risk of credit loss via a bail-in should the regulator determine that the bank is failing or likely to fail. See below for arrangements relating to operational bank accounts.

Registered providers (unsecured): Loans to, and bonds issued or guaranteed by, registered providers of social housing or registered social landlords, formerly known as housing associations. These bodies are regulated by the Regulator of Social Housing (in England), the Scottish Housing Regulator, the Welsh Government and the Department for Communities (in Northern Ireland). As providers of public services, they retain the likelihood of receiving government support if needed.

Money market funds: Pooled funds that offer same-day or short notice liquidity and very low or no price volatility by investing in short-term money markets. They have the advantage over bank accounts of providing wide diversification of investment risks, coupled with the services of a professional fund manager in return for a small fee. Although no sector limit applies to money market funds, the Authority will take care to diversify its liquid investments over a variety of providers to ensure access to cash at all times.

Strategic pooled funds: Bond, equity and property funds that offer enhanced returns over the longer term but are more volatile in the short term. These allow the Authority to diversify into asset classes other than cash without the need to own and manage the underlying investments. Because these funds have no defined maturity date, but are available for withdrawal after a notice period, their performance and continued suitability in meeting the Authority's investment objectives will be monitored regularly.

Real estate investment trusts: Shares in companies that invest mainly in real estate and pay the majority of their rental income to investors in a similar manner to pooled property funds. As with property funds, REITs offer enhanced returns over the longer term, but are more volatile especially as the share price reflects changing demand for the shares as well as changes in the value of the underlying properties.

Other investments: This category covers treasury investments not listed above, for example unsecured corporate bonds and company loans. Non-bank companies cannot be bailed-in but can become insolvent placing the Authority's investment at risk.

Operational bank accounts: The Authority may incur operational exposures, for example through current accounts, collection accounts and merchant acquiring services, to any UK bank with credit ratings no lower than BBB- and with assets greater than £25 billion. These are not classed as investments but are still subject to the risk of a bank bail-in, and balances will therefore be kept below £500,000 per bank. The Bank of England has stated that in the event of failure, banks with assets greater than £25 billion are more likely to be bailed-in than made insolvent, increasing the chance of the Authority maintaining operational continuity.

Risk assessment and credit ratings: Credit ratings are obtained and monitored by the Authority's treasury advisers, who will notify changes in ratings as they occur. The credit rating agencies in current use are listed in the Treasury Management Practices document. Where an entity has its credit rating downgraded so that it fails to meet the approved investment criteria then:

- no new investments will be made,
- any existing investments that can be recalled or sold at no cost will be, and
- full consideration will be given to the recall or sale of all other existing investments with the affected counterparty.

Where a credit rating agency announces that a credit rating is on review for possible downgrade (also known as "negative watch") so that it may fall below the approved rating criteria, then only investments that can be withdrawn on the next working day will be made with that organisation until the outcome of the review is announced. This policy will not apply to negative outlooks, which indicate a long-term direction of travel rather than an imminent change of rating.

Other information on the security of investments: The Authority understands that credit ratings are good, but not perfect, predictors of investment default. Full regard will therefore be given to other available information on the credit quality of the organisations in which it invests, including credit default swap prices, financial statements, information on potential government support,

reports in the quality financial press and analysis and advice from the Authority’s treasury management adviser. No investments will be made with an organisation if there are substantive doubts about its credit quality, even though it may otherwise meet the above criteria.

When deteriorating financial market conditions affect the creditworthiness of all organisations, as happened in 2008 and 2020, this is not generally reflected in credit ratings, but can be seen in other market measures. In these circumstances, the Authority will restrict its investments to those organisations of higher credit quality and reduce the maximum duration of its investments to maintain the required level of security. The extent of these restrictions will be in line with prevailing financial market conditions. If these restrictions mean that insufficient commercial organisations of high credit quality are available to invest the Authority’s cash balances, then the surplus will be deposited with the UK Government, or with other local authorities. This will cause investment returns to fall but will protect the principal sum invested.

Investment limits: The Authority’s revenue reserves available to cover investment losses are forecast to be £11.9 million on 31st March 2022. In order that no more than 42% of available reserves will be put at risk in the case of a single default, the maximum that will be lent to any one organisation (other than the UK Government) will be £5 million. A group of banks under the same ownership will be treated as a single organisation for limit purposes.

Credit risk exposures arising from non-treasury investments, financial derivatives and balances greater than £500,000 in operational bank accounts count against the relevant investment limits

Limits will also be placed on fund managers, investments in brokers’ nominee accounts, foreign countries and industry sectors as below. Investments in pooled funds and multilateral development banks do not count against the limit for any single foreign country, since the risk is diversified over many countries.

Table 4: Investment limits

	Cash limit
Any single organisation, except the UK Central Government	£5m each
UK Central Government	unlimited
Any group of organisations under the same ownership	£5m per group
Any group of pooled funds under the same management	£5m per manager
Negotiable instruments held in a broker’s nominee account	£5m per broker
Foreign countries	£5m per country
Registered providers and registered social landlords	£2.5m in total
Unsecured investments with building societies	£2.5m in total
Loans to unrated corporates	£1m in total
Money market funds	£20m in total
Real estate investment trusts	£2.5m in total

Liquidity management: The Authority uses detailed spreadsheets to determine the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The forecast is compiled on a prudent basis to minimise the risk of the Authority being forced to borrow on unfavourable terms to meet its financial commitments. Limits on long-term investments are set by reference to the Authority’s medium-term financial plan and cash flow forecast.

The Authority will spread its liquid cash over at least four providers (e.g. bank accounts and money market funds) to ensure that access to cash is maintained in the event of operational difficulties at any one provider.

Treasury Management Indicators

The Authority measures and manages its exposures to treasury management risks using the following indicators.

Security: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to credit risk by monitoring the value-weighted average credit rating of its investment portfolio. This is calculated by applying a score to each investment (AAA=1, AA+=2, etc.) and taking the arithmetic average, weighted by the size of each investment. Unrated investments are assigned a score based on their perceived risk.

Credit risk indicator	Target
Portfolio average credit rating	A

Liquidity: The Authority has adopted a voluntary measure of its exposure to liquidity risk by monitoring the amount of cash available to meet unexpected payments within a rolling three month period, without additional borrowing.

Liquidity risk indicator	Target
Total cash available within 3 months	£2.5m

Interest rate exposures: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to interest rate risk. The upper limits on the one-year revenue impact of a 1% rise or fall in interest rates will be:

Interest rate risk indicator	Limit
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>rise</u> in interest rates	£500,000
Upper limit on one-year revenue impact of a 1% <u>fall</u> in interest rates	£500,000

The impact of a change in interest rates is calculated on the assumption that maturing loans and investments will be replaced at new market rates.

Maturity structure of borrowing: This indicator is set to control the Authority's exposure to refinancing risk. The upper and lower limits on the maturity structure of borrowing will be:

Refinancing rate risk indicator	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	100%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	100%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	100%	0%
10 years and above	100%	0%

As the Council holds no external debt, this maturity structure allows the Council this highest level of flexibility for future debt.

Time periods start on the first day of each financial year. The maturity date of borrowing is the earliest date on which the lender can demand repayment.

Principal sums invested for periods longer than a year: The purpose of this indicator is to control the Authority's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The limits on the long-term principal sum invested to final maturities beyond the period end will be:

Price risk indicator	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23

Limit on principal invested beyond year end	£1.5m	£1.0m	£0.5m
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Related Matters

The CIPFA Code requires the Authority to include the following in its treasury management strategy.

Financial Derivatives: Local authorities have previously made use of financial derivatives embedded into loans and investments both to reduce interest rate risk (e.g. interest rate collars and forward deals) and to reduce costs or increase income at the expense of greater risk (e.g. LOBO loans and callable deposits). The general power of competence in Section 1 of the *Localism Act 2011* removes much of the uncertainty over local authorities' use of standalone financial derivatives (i.e. those that are not embedded into a loan or investment).

The Authority will only use standalone financial derivatives (such as swaps, forwards, futures and options) where they can be clearly demonstrated to reduce the overall level of the financial risks that the Authority is exposed to. Additional risks presented, such as credit exposure to derivative counterparties, will be taken into account when determining the overall level of risk. Embedded derivatives, including those present in pooled funds and forward starting transactions, will not be subject to this policy, although the risks they present will be managed in line with the overall treasury risk management strategy.

Financial derivative transactions may be arranged with any organisation that meets the approved investment criteria. The current value of any amount due from a derivative counterparty will count against the counterparty credit limit and the relevant foreign country limit.

In line with the CIPFA Code, the Authority will seek external advice and will consider that advice before entering into financial derivatives to ensure that it fully understands the implications.

Markets in Financial Instruments Directive: The Authority has retained retail client status with its providers of financial services, including advisers, banks, brokers and fund managers, allowing it access to a smaller range of services but with the greater regulatory protections afforded to individuals and small companies. Given the size and range of the Authority's treasury management activities, the Executive Director of Finance believes this to be the most appropriate status.

Financial Implications

The budget for investment income in 2022/23 is £0.1m given the low level of interest rates, based on an average investment portfolio of £4.4 million. The budget for debt interest paid in 2020/21 is £0.3 million, based on an average debt portfolio of circa £40 million at an average interest rate of 1.5%. If actual levels of investments and borrowing, or actual interest rates, differ from those forecast, performance against budget will be correspondingly different.

Where investment income exceeds budget, e.g. from higher risk investments including pooled funds, or debt interest paid falls below budget, e.g. from cheap short-term borrowing, then 50% of the revenue savings will be transferred to a treasury management reserve to cover the risk of capital losses or higher interest rates payable in future years.

Other Options Considered

The CIPFA Code does not prescribe any particular treasury management strategy for local authorities to adopt. The Executive Director of Finance, having consulted the Portfolio Holder for Finance, believes that the above strategy represents an appropriate balance between risk management and cost effectiveness. Some alternative strategies, with their financial and risk management implications, are listed below.

Alternative	Impact on income and expenditure	Impact on risk management
Invest in a narrower range of counterparties and/or for shorter times	Interest income will be lower	Lower chance of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be greater
Invest in a wider range of counterparties and/or for longer times	Interest income will be higher	Increased risk of losses from credit related defaults, but any such losses may be smaller
Borrow additional sums at long-term fixed interest rates	Debt interest costs will rise; this is unlikely to be offset by higher investment income	Higher investment balance leading to a higher impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be more certain
Borrow short-term or variable loans instead of long-term fixed rates	Debt interest costs will initially be lower	Increases in debt interest costs will be broadly offset by rising investment income in the medium term, but long-term costs may be less certain
Reduce level of borrowing	Saving on debt interest is likely to exceed lost investment income	Reduced investment balance leading to a lower impact in the event of a default; however long-term interest costs may be less certain

Appendix A - Arlingclose Economic & Interest Rate Forecast - February 2022

Underlying assumptions:

- The post COVID global economy has entered a higher inflationary phase, driven by a combination of resurgent demand and supply bottlenecks in goods and energy markets. Geopolitics are also playing a role, driving energy prices upwards which are being passed onto consumers. Tighter labour markets due to reduced participation rates have prompted concerns about wage-driven inflation, leading central banks to tighten policy to ensure inflation expectations remain anchored.
- Global inflation is riding high. While some indicators suggest supply bottlenecks in goods markets are easing, oil and gas prices have risen significantly and threaten a more sustained level of uncomfortably high inflation than previously expected. In the UK, Ofgem has confirmed a significant rise in retail energy prices, which will maintain relatively high CPI rates throughout 2022.
- Supply constraints are also evident in the labour market. Underlying wage growth is running above pre-COVID levels despite employment being lower now than in early 2020. Evidence suggests that labour pools have diminished. Higher wage growth will be a contributory factor to sustained above-target inflation this year.
- The lower severity of Omicron means that the economic impact should be limited. The UK economy had a weak Q4 2021 due to the virus, but growth is likely to bounce back in Q1 2022.
- However, higher inflation will dampen demand. In the UK, households face a difficult outlook. Fiscal and monetary headwinds alongside a sharp reduction in real income growth will weigh on disposable income, ultimately leading to slower growth.
- The Bank of England will tighten policy further over the next few months to ensure that aggregate demand slows to reduce business pricing power and labour wage bargaining power. Markets have priced in a significant rise in Bank Rate, but we believe the MPC will be more cautious given the medium term outlook, assessing the impact of the first round of rises rather than following the market higher.
- Bond yields have risen sharply to accommodate tighter monetary policy, including the run off of central bank bond portfolios. The interplay between slowing growth and falling inflation, and tightening policy, will likely keep yields relatively flat.

Forecast:

- The MPC will raise Bank rate further to dampen aggregate demand and reduce the risk of sustained higher inflation.
- Arlingclose therefore expects Bank Rate to rise to 0.75% in March and 1.0% in May. Despite this expectation, risks to the forecast remain weighted to the upside for 2022, becoming more balanced over time. The Arlingclose central forecast remains below the market forward curve.
- Gilt yields will remain broadly flat from current levels, which have risen sharply since mid-December 2021. Significant volatility is, however, likely which should offer tactical opportunities for borrowing and investment.
- The risks around the gilt yield forecasts are broadly balanced. While gilt yields may face downward pressure as Bank Rate expectations ease from current levels, the run off of the Bank's corporate bond portfolio, and later the gilt portfolio, as it reverses QE, could impact some upward pressure on yields.

Agenda Item 13a

	Feb-22	Mar-22	Jun-22	Sep-22	Dec-22	Mar-23	Jun-23	Sep-23	Dec-23	Mar-24	Jun-24	Sep-24	Dec-24
Official Bank Rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.00	0.25	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.75	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.25	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
3-month money market rate													
Upside risk	0.00	0.05	0.20	0.35	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50
Arlingclose Central Case	0.50	0.85	1.20	1.25	1.15	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10	1.10
Downside risk	0.00	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.30	-0.30	-0.35	-0.45	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
5yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.35	0.45	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55	0.55
Arlingclose Central Case	1.22	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15	1.15
Downside risk	0.00	-0.20	-0.25	-0.25	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
10yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.55	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70	0.70
Arlingclose Central Case	1.37	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35	1.35
Downside risk	0.00	-0.20	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.45	-0.50	-0.55	-0.55	-0.55	-0.60	-0.60	-0.60
20yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
Arlingclose Central Case	1.54	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55	1.55
Downside risk	0.00	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.45	-0.45	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50
50yr gilt yield													
Upside risk	0.00	0.40	0.45	0.50	0.55	0.60	0.60	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65	0.65
Arlingclose Central Case	1.22	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20	1.20
Downside risk	0.00	-0.30	-0.35	-0.40	-0.40	-0.45	-0.45	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50

PWLB Standard Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 1.00%

PWLB Certainty Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.80%

UKIB Rate (Maturity Loans) = Gilt yield + 0.60%

Appendix B - Existing Investment & Debt Portfolio Position

	31/03/2022 Actual Portfolio £m	31/03/2022 Average Rate %
External borrowing:		
Total external borrowing	0	0
Treasury investments:		
Banks & building societies (unsecured)		
Government (incl. local authorities)	7	0.13
Total treasury investments	7	0.13
Net investments	7	0.13

Appendix C - Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23

Annual Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23

Where the Authority finances capital expenditure by debt, it must put aside resources to repay that debt in later years. The amount charged to the revenue budget for the repayment of debt is known as Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP), although there has been no statutory minimum since 2008. The Local Government Act 2003 requires the Authority to have regard to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's *Guidance on Minimum Revenue Provision* (the MHCLG Guidance) most recently issued in 2018.

The broad aim of the MHCLG Guidance is to ensure that capital expenditure is financed over a period that is either reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits, or, in the case of borrowing supported by Government Revenue Support Grant, reasonably commensurate with the period implicit in the determination of that grant.

The MHCLG Guidance requires the Authority to approve an Annual MRP Statement each year and recommends a number of options for calculating a prudent amount of MRP. The following statement incorporates options recommended in the Guidance and a locally determined approach to loans to third parties and asset backed capital expenditure where there are detailed plans in place to demonstrate that all expenditure will be recovered from income streams generated by the expenditure in an appropriate timeline.

- For unsupported capital expenditure incurred after 31st March 2008, MRP will be determined by charging the expenditure over the expected useful life of the relevant asset as the principal repayment on an annuity with an annual interest rate of 4%, starting in the year after the asset becomes operational. MRP on purchases of freehold land will be charged over 50 years. MRP on expenditure not related to fixed assets but which has been capitalised by regulation or direction will be charged over 20 years.
- For assets acquired by leases, MRP will be determined as being equal to the element of the rent or charge that goes to write down the balance sheet liability.
- There is no requirement to charge MRP where the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is nil or negative at the end of the preceding financial year
- For capital expenditure loans to third parties that are repaid in annual or more frequent instalments of principal, the Council will make nil MRP, but will instead apply the capital receipts arising from principal repayments to reduce the capital financing requirement instead. In years where there is no principal repayment, MRP will be charged in accordance with the MRP policy for the assets funded by the loan, including where appropriate, delaying MRP until the year after the assets become operational. While this is not one of the options in the MHCLG Guidance, it is thought to be a prudent approach since it ensures that the capital expenditure incurred on the loan is fully funded over the life of the assets.
- Where the council makes a capital contribution or loan to another entity or where responsibility for a council asset with borrowing attached is transferred to a third party, then no MRP will be set aside if:
 - the payments are appropriately covered by assets
 - there are detailed plans demonstrating that all the expenditure will be recovered in an appropriately short time frame

To ensure that this remains a prudent approach the Council will review the expenditure and income regularly to determine if the income or asset values have decreased to the point that MRP needs to be provided for. Should evidence emerge which suggests the expenditure will no longer be recovered MRP will be provided for.

- Where the council uses internal borrowing and receipts of rental income are greater than the MRP calculated then as there are sufficient revenues to repay the capital cost no MRP will be set aside.

Capital expenditure incurred during 2022/23 will not be subject to a MRP charge until 2023/24.

Based on the Authority's latest estimate of its capital financing requirement (CFR) on 31st March 2022, the budget for MRP has been set as follows:

	31.03.2022 Estimated CFR £m	2022/23 Estimated MRP £
Unsupported capital expenditure after 31.03.2008	38.7	1,081,000
Leases		
Total	38.7	1,081,000

Appendix D - Policy for Flexible use of Capital Receipts Purpose

1. This report reviews the statutory guidance on the flexible use of Capital Receipts and its application within this authority.

Background

2. Capital receipts can only be used for specific purposes and these are set out in Regulation 23 of the Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2003 made under Section 11 of the Local Government Act 2003. The main permitted purpose is to fund capital expenditure and the use of capital receipts to support revenue expenditure is not permitted by the regulations.

3. The Secretary of State is empowered to issue Directions allowing expenditure incurred by local authorities to be treated as capital expenditure. Where such a direction is made, the specified expenditure can then be funded from capital receipts under the Regulations.

4. The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has issued guidance in March 2016, giving local authorities greater freedoms with how capital receipts can be used to finance expenditure. This Direction allows for the following expenditure to be treated as capital,

“expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners.”

5. In order to comply with this Direction, the Council must consider the Statutory Guidance issued by the Secretary of State. This Guidance requires authorities to prepare, publish and maintain a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy with the initial strategy being effective from 1st April 2016 with future Strategies included within future Annual Budget documents.

6. There is no prescribed format for the strategy, the underlying principle is to support local authorities to deliver more efficient and sustainable services by extending the use of capital receipts to support the revenue costs of reform projects

7. The Statutory Guidance for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy states that the Strategy should include a list of each project which plans to make use of the capital receipts flexibility, together with the expected savings that the project will realise. The Strategy should also include the impact of this flexibility on the affordability of borrowing by including updated Prudential Indicators.

Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy

8. The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy is set out below

9. Government has provided a definition of expenditure which qualifies to be funded from capital receipts. This is: “Qualifying expenditure is expenditure on any project that is designed to generate ongoing revenue savings in the delivery of public services and/or transform service delivery to reduce costs and/or transform service delivery in a way that reduces costs or demand for services in future years for any of the public sector delivery partners. Within this definition, it is for individual local authorities to decide whether or not a project qualifies for the flexibility.”

10. The Council's does not intend to apply the flexible use of capital receipts in 2022/23.

Impact on Prudential Indicators

11. The guidance requires that the impact on the Council's Prudential Indicators should be considered when preparing a Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy.

12. The indicators that will be impacted by this strategy are none. The scheme is currently funded from capital receipts and the new planned use of capital receipts will be funded from capital receipts which are currently unallocated.

13. The Prudential Indicators show that this Strategy is affordable and will not impact on the Council's operational and authorised borrowing limits.

Appendix E - Investment Strategy Report 2022/23

Introduction

The Authority invests its money for three broad purposes:

- because it has surplus cash as a result of its day-to-day activities, for example when income is received in advance of expenditure (known as **treasury management investments**),
- to support local public services by lending to or buying shares in other organisations (**service investments**), and
- to earn investment income (known as **commercial investments** where this is the main purpose).

This investment strategy meets the requirements of statutory guidance issued by the government in January 2018, and focuses on the second and third of these categories. This is likely to be updated in 2022/23 by DLUHC.

Investment Strategy also need to take account of HM Treasury Guidance in relation to the use of the PWLB to fund debt.

Treasury Management Investments

The Authority typically receives its income in cash (e.g. from taxes and grants) before it pays for its expenditure in cash (e.g. through payroll and invoices). It also holds reserves for future expenditure and collects local taxes on behalf of other local authorities and central government. These activities, plus the timing of borrowing decisions, lead to a cash surplus which is invested in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. The balance of treasury management investments is expected to fluctuate between £3m and £25m during the 2022/23 financial year.

Contribution: The contribution that these investments make to the objectives of the Authority is to support effective treasury management activities.

Further details: Full details of the Authority's policies and its plan for 2022/23 for treasury management investments are covered in a separate document, the treasury management strategy.

Service Investments: Loans

Contribution: The Council may in future lend money to its subsidiaries and local businesses to support local public services and stimulate local economic growth.

Security: The main risk when making service loans is that the borrower will be unable to repay the principal lent and/or the interest due. In order to limit this risk, and ensure that total exposure to service loans remains proportionate to the size of the Authority, upper limits on the outstanding loans to each category of borrower have been set as follows:

Table 1: Loans for service purposes in £ millions

Category of borrower	31.3.2021 actual			2022/23
	Balance owing	Loss allowance	Net figure in accounts	Approved Limit
Subsidiaries	0	0	0	5

Local businesses	0	0	0	0.5
TOTAL	0	0	0	5.5

Accounting standards require the Authority to set aside loss allowance for loans, reflecting the likelihood of non-payment. The figures for loans in the Authority’s statement of accounts are shown net of this loss allowance. However, the Authority makes every reasonable effort to collect the full sum lent and has appropriate credit control arrangements in place to recover overdue repayments.

Risk assessment: The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding service loans by using specialist advice to understand the market and the potential future demands of the market and the customers in it. It will also use benchmarking data from the market to determine future potential risks which need to be planned for. External advice is only sought from credible sources eg acknowledged experts in their fields, and officers ensure that they fully understand any information given to them before decision or advice is taken.

Commercial Investments: Property

Contribution: The Authority will invest in regeneration schemes such as Burcot and the Levelling up programme but not for purely commercial reasons. Decisions on commercial investments, including for Regeneration reasons, are made in line with the criteria and limits approved by council in the investment strategy. Property investments are also capital expenditure and decisions will therefore also be approved as part of the capital programme.

Table 2: Property held for investment purposes in £ millions

Property	Actual	31.3.2021 actual		31.3.2022 expected	
	Purchase cost	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts	Gains or (losses)	Value in accounts
No Present Investments	0	0	0	-	-
TOTAL	0	0	0	-	-

Security: In accordance with government guidance, the Authority considers a property investment to be secure if its accounting valuation is at or higher than its purchase cost including taxes and transaction costs.

Risk assessment: The Authority assesses the risk of loss before entering into and whilst holding property investments by involving specialist advisors with expertise in the type of property being purchased, looking at historic data and speaking to other councils undertaking similar activities.

Liquidity: Compared with other investment types, property is relatively difficult to sell and convert to cash at short notice, and can take a considerable period to sell in certain market conditions. To ensure that the invested funds can be accessed when they are needed, for example to repay capital borrowed, the Authority ensures that properties purchased are in an active market where there is demonstrable demand to ensure that the authority does not purchase assets which it will not be able to sell on at a later date.

Proportionality

The Authority does not plan to become dependent on profit generating investment activity to achieve a balanced revenue budget.

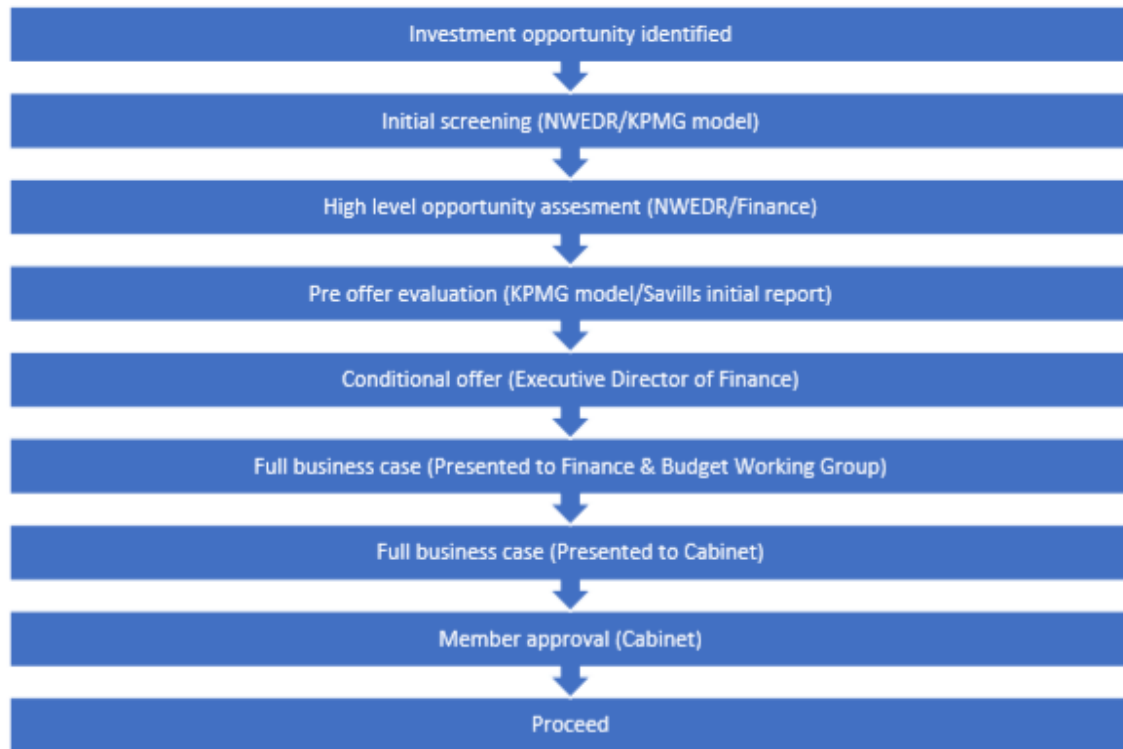
Capacity, Skills and Culture

Elected members and statutory officers: Member training will take place annually as part of the induction process. External advisors will provide reports to support investment decisions with officers ensuring that they fully understand them and can relate them to the strategic objectives and risk profile of the authority.

Commercial deals: Significant work has been undertaken using external advisors and relevant training courses have been attended to ensure that officers are fully aware of the code and statutory requirements of a local authority which is investing.

KPMG have developed a modelling tool for the authority to use when assessing potential purchases as a precursor to engaging with external consultants to ensure that potential purchases are likely to make sense from the perspective of the authority before incurring advisor costs. However, following an internal review of policy, it has been decided that the council may wish to make purchases which do not make a financial return or may indeed make a loss in the short term. On these occasions a business case will be developed which specifies the non-financial benefits of the investment. These are likely to be regenerative schemes for the greater good of the area with an intended long term impact. The regenerative and redevelopment benefits which will flow from the investment will be taken into account in the development of the business case, so if the net investment yield falls below 0.75% it can still proceed if these benefits are deemed to outweigh the lower than target yield.

Corporate governance: when investment decisions are to be made, they are to be led by the Council's Executive Director of Finance in consultation with the Corporate Management Team. They will assess the potential investment opportunity, consulting North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) and using the KPMG finance appraisal model, and should they decide it presents a strong opportunity for the authority and complies with the relevant criteria a conditional offer can be made. A business case will then be developed and presented ensuring that once greater detail is included, it makes a satisfactory income yield and/or economic redevelopment and regeneration impact. When the business case is completed, if it is still compliant with the council criteria, it will be presented to Cabinet for approval before purchase is completed.



Once a purchase has been made the Executive Director of Finance will provide quarterly updates, in line with budget monitoring reports, on the status of the investment.

Investment Indicators

The Authority has set the following quantitative indicators to allow elected members and the public to assess the Authority's total risk exposure as a result of its investment decisions.

Total risk exposure: The first indicator shows the Authority's total exposure to potential investment losses. This includes amounts the Authority is contractually committed to lend but have yet to be drawn down and guarantees the Authority has issued over third party loans.

Table 3: Total investment exposure in £millions

Total investment exposure	31.03.2021 Actual	31.03.2022 Forecast	31.03.2023 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0	7	3
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0
TOTAL INVESTMENTS	0	7	3
TOTAL EXPOSURE	0	0	0

How investments are funded: Government guidance is that these indicators should include how investments are funded. Since the Authority does not normally associate particular assets with particular liabilities, this guidance is difficult to comply with. However, the following investments could be described as being funded by borrowing. The remainder of the Authority's investments are funded by usable reserves and income received in advance of expenditure.

Table 4: Investments funded by borrowing in £millions

Investments funded by borrowing	31.03.2019 Actual	31.03.2020 Forecast	31.03.2021 Forecast
Treasury management investments	0	0	0
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0
TOTAL FUNDED BY BORROWING	0	0	0

Rate of return received: This indicator shows the investment income received less the associated costs, including the cost of borrowing where appropriate, as a proportion of the sum initially invested. Note that due to the complex local government accounting framework, not all recorded gains and losses affect the revenue account in the year they are incurred.

Table 5: Investment rate of return (net of all costs) %

Investments net rate of return	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Forecast	Minimum return
Treasury management investments	0.13	0.13	0.2	0.1
Service investments: Loans	0	0	0	0
Commercial investments: Property	0	0	0	0
ALL INVESTMENTS	0.13	0.13	0.2	0.1

Table 8: Other investment indicators

Indicator	2020/21 Actual	2021/22 Forecast	2022/23 Forecast
Debt to net service expenditure ratio	154%	164%	183%
Commercial income to net service expenditure ratio	0	0	0

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**Council Plan Addendum 2022/23
Recovery & Restoration Plan 2020/21**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Karen May
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Kevin Dicks – Chief Executive Officer Deb Poole – Head of Transformation, OD & Digital Services
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Transformation, OD & Digital Services Contact email: d.poole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 881256
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Cabinet RECOMMEND that:-

- 1.1 The Council Plan Addendum 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1, be approved and included alongside the current BDC Council Plan 2019/23 at Appendix 3;
- 1.2 The Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 2, be agreed and closed.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Covid-19 pandemic has required an unprecedented response from the Council. Even though the requirement to respond to the pandemic is reducing in 2022, the impact of Covid will likely be felt for many years. As a consequence of this ongoing impact, a review of the Council Plan 2019/23, attached at Appendix 3, was undertaken in 2021. A workshop was held with the Corporate Management Team and the Cabinet to ensure the Council's strategic purposes and priorities remained relevant in a post Covid world and to consider any new areas of focus brought about by the pandemic.

The findings from the review have been used to form a Council Plan Addendum for the period 2022/23. The attached Council Plan Addendum, at Appendix 1, takes the impact of changes brought about by the pandemic into consideration and is designed to work alongside the already approved BDC Council Plan 2019/23. This report asks Members to approve the Addendum document and to agree to it being included alongside the existing Council Plan.

- 2.2 The current Council Plan 2019/23 was built around five long term strategic purposes which are underpinned by a set of key priorities. These strategic purposes have not changed as a result of the addition of the Addendum document. The strategic purposes in the Council Plan 2019/23 are:

- Run and Grow a Successful Business
- Affordable & Sustainable Homes
- Work & Financial Independence
- Living Independent, Active & Healthy Lives
- Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained & Green

The priorities set out in the Council Plan 2019/23 are:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Skills for the Future
- Improving Health and Wellbeing
- A Balanced Housing Market
- Reducing Crime and Disorder
- Financial Stability
- High Quality Services
- Sustainability

2.3 As the Council Plan 2019/23 was developed prior to the Covid pandemic it is appropriate to have reviewed the previous priorities to determine if any have changed as a result of the crisis. By considering what matters to our residents and the impacts of the pandemic, it became clear that the existing priorities underpinned by a set of revised focal points and milestones would continue to be fit for purpose. It is envisaged that the Addendum document will sit alongside the approved Council Plan to provide an enhanced framework for delivery. The Council Plan Addendum priorities are:

- Economic Development and Regeneration
- Housing Growth
- Work and Financial Independence
- Improved Health and Wellbeing
- Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
- Green Thread
- Financial Stability
- Organisational Sustainability
- High Quality Services

Whilst the majority of these priorities can already be found, in a similar form, in the current Council Plan, there is one noticeable change around the Green Thread. Whilst the Green Thread is present throughout the current Council Plan it is now more prominent with its own set of focal points.

The Community Survey, conducted during October 2021, has also provided some more current insight into the things our residents regard as a priority. The data from this survey indicates that residents top five priorities are:

- Waste and Recycling
- Community Safety
- Transport, Travel and Congestion
- Healthy Lifestyles and Wellbeing, inc Mental Health
- Maintenance of the Landscape and Environment

The Council Plan Addendum is designed to provide an intermediary position ahead of a full review of the Councils long term priorities in 2023.

- 2.4 The Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020/21, attached at Appendix 2, was put in place as a response to the pandemic when it began in early 2020. Over the course of the last two years the actions in the plan have been delivered and completed. The details of the completed actions undertaken to deliver the Recovery and Restoration Plan have been included in the attached document. However, it should be noted that the updates to the actions were completed in late 2021 and have not been updated again since. The plan, therefore, provides details of activity up to that point in time.

3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The Council Plan and Council Plan Addendum define the councils strategic purposes and key priorities for the years ahead. It impacts on all aspects of the business of the council and the services provided to our residents.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 The green thread has been highlighted as a priority in the Council Plan Addendum and is included throughout the entire Council Plan 2019/23.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 None

Operational Implications

- 6.2 Whilst the continuation of services to our community remains the focus of the councils activities, it is anticipated that service areas will begin to implement the focal points outlined in the attached Council Plan Addendum 2022/23.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 None

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Council Plan Addendum 2022-2023

Appendix 2 – Completed Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020-2021

Appendix 3 – BDC Council Plan 2019-2023

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr K. May, Leader of the Council Cllr G. Denaro	April 2022
Lead Director / Head of Service	Kevin Dicks – Chief Executive Officer	May 2022
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	N/A	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

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Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

Introduction

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to providing residents with effective and efficient services that meet their needs. Since March 2020 and the onset of the Covid19 pandemic, Bromsgrove District Council has worked closely with a wide network of partner agencies to help limit the impact of the virus and to support our residents in all of our communities.

The development of our Covid-19 Recovery and Restoration Plan, approved in 2020, provided a focus on actions to improve for the future beyond Covid19. This plan outlined the major initiatives that the Council would deliver both during the crisis and after it, as our communities begin to recover.

The Covid-19 pandemic has required an unprecedented response from the Council. Even though the requirement to respond to the pandemic may well be ongoing for some time, it is important to look towards recovery and to the long term return to business as usual. Whilst the Council has an approved Council Plan in place it is worth noting that this was completed before the Covid-19 outbreak. This Council Plan addendum takes the potential shift in priorities brought about by the pandemic into consideration and sits alongside the current Council Plan.

By considering what really matters to our residents and the impacts of the pandemic, we have developed nine priorities underpinned by a set of key milestones. This document outlines the Council's plan for the next twelve months. It is designed to provide an intermediary position ahead of a full review of the Council's long term priorities in 2023. This document sits alongside the Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019 – 2023. The key priorities are:

1. Economic Development and Regeneration
2. Housing Growth
3. Work and Financial Independence
4. Improved Health and Wellbeing
5. Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour
6. Green Thread
7. Financial Stability
8. Organisational Sustainability
9. High Quality Services

This high level strategic document recognises that Bromsgrove District Council cannot deliver all of these priorities on its own. It will need considerable support and input from partner organisations if these priorities are to be successfully achieved. It is for this reason that the Council has determined its role in some of these far reaching projects to be categorised as either:

- **Lead** – to be the lead organisation in the delivery of the activity/project that delivers the priority.
- **Participate** – to be involved with partner agencies who will be leading the activity/project that delivers the priority.
- **Influence** – to work collaboratively with other partner agencies to persuade them to take a particular course of action/undertake a particular project.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

1. Economic Development and Regeneration

We see the opportunities in digital technology and green industries as key to the future of Bromsgrove. We will use this year to build the basis for future support for, and innovation in, these sectors, and for strengthening our town and digital infrastructure.

1.1 Supporting businesses to start and grow

Progress and learning:

Our businesses have demonstrated resilience and flexibility in Covid-19. We will support businesses started during the pandemic and existing businesses that have identified growth opportunities. We will do this via existing business support packages and including sectoral support and helping business access new business grants where available.

Focal point:

- Start-up of creative and digital businesses

Key milestones:

- Continue with grant programme for start-up businesses
- Deliver the recovery through creativity grants programme (April 22-July 22)

Success measures:

- Take-up of start-up business grants and creativity grants programme

1.2 Regenerating our Town and Local Centres

Progress and learning:

The past two years have emphasised the economic and wellbeing importance of **local** centres. Funding has been secured to support the development of sites in Bromsgrove Town Centre and a strategy will be prepared to ensure all of centres in Bromsgrove District will be vibrant and viable.

Focal point:

Progression towards the redevelopment of the former Market Hall site, Windsor Street site and former Dolphin Centre site. Preparation of a Bromsgrove Centres Strategy.

Key milestones:

- Submit a planning application for the former market hall site (Lead)
- Procure a contractor for the former market hall site redevelopment (Lead)
- Investigate the possibility of remediation and demolition works at Windsor Street (Lead)
- Start the remediation works on Windsor Street (Lead)
- Working with partners in all centres to agree future improvements (Lead)

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

Success measures:

- Planning application submitted for market hall site by March 2023
- Contractor procured for the former market hall site
- Commencement of remediation works on the Windsor Street site.
- Bromsgrove Centres Strategy agreed by March 2023

1.3 Improved Integrated Transport (Bromsgrove)

Progress and learning:

We know that new innovations can help provide new and more sustainable methods of getting around, helping to provide better satisfaction and efficiency whilst helping to reduce our impact on the environment

Focal point:

Working with Worcestershire County Council and other partners on enabling new, better integrated and more sustainable modes of transport across the district

Key milestones:

- Work with Worcestershire County Council in developing and agreeing a specification for an improved integrated transport network (participate)

Success measures:

- Increased number of sustainable transport projects being progressed or implemented across the district.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

2. Housing Growth

During 2022/23 we will accelerate the pace of affordable housing development, where ever possible. We will work to enable the building of market value housing and the creation of additional income for the Council.

Progress and learning:

The Covid-19 experience has shown that the Council is an important player in the local housing sector, but best results happen when we partner with others. It has also shown us that there are solutions for homelessness.

Focal point:

We will develop a clear partnership structure and delivery plan for creative land use and affordable housing. We will find win-win solutions to the tension between housing demand and green belt concerns.

Key milestones:

- Agree a financial and partnership model for housing development (lead)
- Release land for residential development, in line with the Local Plan (lead)
- Produce new draft housing policies as part of the Bromsgrove Plan Review (lead)

Success measures:

- Number of new homes built - total and affordable.
- Increases in Council Tax income.
- Local housing affordability rate.
- Number of homeless approaches.
- Number of threatened with homelessness preventions.
- Number of homeless applicants housed.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

3. Work and Financial Independence

In 2022/23, we will find ways to further support, engage and empower our residents to maintain / achieve financial independence.

Progress and learning:

Our Financial Independence Team will continue to help residents to gain financial independence both through short and long-term solutions. This includes advising our residents on how to manage fuel and utility costs, maximise their income, manage their personal finances, and access other specialist agency support.

The Financial Independence Team also provides access to a range of support measures for our residents (including Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support, Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Hardship Payments, the Council's Essential Living Fund and Council Tax Support Scheme).

The Council will procure an energy advice service providing residents with information and advice to support them in managing and reducing their energy costs.

Our Starting Well Service will provide parents and prospective parents with comprehensive information about childcare and early years education and support eligible parents in accessing free childcare to support school readiness and to enable parents to work or return to work.

We also work with our partners to support and increase the financial independence of our residents. We will work with Citizens Advice, ensuring that our residents are advised on how to deal with their financial and other related problems. We will work with Community Safety Partners in the provision of youth support interventions, focusing on the impact of Covid, building confidence, raising aspirations, and improving the life chances of young people at risk from crime and anti-social behaviour.

Focal point:

We will provide quality services that help to empower residents through good financial advice, the effective coordination and signposting of services, and partnership working.

Success measures:

- Number of Financial Independence Team client contacts.
- Number of clients accessing Starting Well service.
- Number of young people with positive outcomes as a result of Enhanced Youth Support intervention.
- Number of eligible children accessing nursery funding across the district.
- Number of households provided with energy advice.
- Number of energy rebate payments.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

4. Improved Health and Wellbeing

In 2022/23 we will work with communities to help them identify and develop their strengths. We will look at ways to encourage physical movement into part of people's normal routines. We will look to catalyse an integrated approach to care.

Progress and learning:

Covid-19 helped us see the health and wellbeing importance of community, of activity, and of the health and care system.

Focal points:

- **Community Development:** we will embed an Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) model that builds on the assets that are found in local communities and mobilises individuals, associations, and institutions to come together to realise and develop their strengths. Through grant funding, Community Builders within the voluntary sector will be working with local residents and existing organisations to uncover the key community assets and skills of local residents. They will assess how to build a more cohesive community that will ultimately lead to a less isolated, healthier, and more connected community, particularly as we move towards Covid recovery.
A 'Small Sparks' fund is available to facilitate the recruitment of two Community Connectors, employed through New Starts, to build capacity within the initial areas of Catshill and Rubery, to support local delivery in line with the project aims and objectives.
- **Active travel:** we will work with local people and experts to explore how we might establish a local transport infrastructure that encourages physical movement.
- **Integrated care:** we will work with local public service partners to establish an integrated care model, using a blend of professional and community led support to ensure those who most need support are properly cared for.
- **Leisure Strategy:** we will develop a Leisure Strategy for the district.

Key milestones:

- Work with Worcestershire County Council to explore possible initiatives and funding streams for active travel (participate)
- Progress the district collaborative work around community assets and skills alongside other themes which emerge for Bromsgrove (participate)
- Implement new technology opportunities within the Lifeline service (lead)

Success measures:

- Deliver improved outcomes from the actions in the Leisure Strategy (lead)
- Number of Community Builders in post.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

5. Community Safety and Anti-Social Behaviour

Working with Community Safety partners we will implement crime prevention projects and promote community safety services to reduce the hazards and threats that result from the crime, violence and anti-social behaviour. We will also promote and support victim services that are in place to help and encourage recovery from the effects of crime.

Progress and learning:

We know that prevention is better than cure; that the stronger the bonds within and across communities, the lower the crime and nuisance. We also know that the more perspectives that can be brought to a difficult issue like safety the better will be the solutions.

In 2022/23 the outcomes of the trials of CCTV redeployable cameras and the investment from the PCC office to upgrade other cameras should begin to be seen. The redeployable cameras will be embedded into the service with the ability to respond to hot spots of concern and be a tool in reducing crime and disorder across the District.

Covid impacted disproportionately on adolescents. Grant funding was secured to support this cohort in the aftermath of the pandemic through the provision of youth work across the District.

Focal point:

- **Relationships:** we will work to enable stronger networks of relationships within and across communities.
- **Young People:** we will strengthen our youth offer, to prioritise outreach and mentoring approaches, targeting provision directly to young people at risk of perpetrating or becoming a victim of crime alongside supporting mental well-being and personal resilience.

Key milestones:

- Develop a clear and agreed ABCD model (participate)
- Fully deployed youth support model (lead)

Success measures:

- Number of young people engaged through Detached/Outreach youth work
- Levels of crime
- Number of crime risk surveys carried out

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

6. Green Thread

There will be a renewed focus on innovation as we play our part in the response to climate change and biodiversity challenges. Working with partners across the region, including the LEPs and the Waste Partnership, we will explore the possibilities of new technologies to our fleet but also how new technology can help us deliver greener and more efficient systems internally. We also need to maintain work around waste minimisation and maximising recycling, particularly around recycling quality and the implications of the new Environment Bill.

Progress and learning:

We were able to achieve radical change in response to a pandemic; we can do the same in response to global warming and biodiversity collapse.

Focal point:

- Innovation (lower carbon solutions)
- Travel (less and more sustainable)
- Reducing waste and increasing recycling.

Key milestones:

- To identify alternative fuel requirements for fleet and revise the capital replacement programme for the Council's fleet subject to any budget constraints (lead)
- Respond to Government consultation on secondary legislation on changes for Resources and Waste services (participate)
- Work with the Strategic Waste Partnership to develop a plan to respond to the new requirements of the national Resources and Waste Strategy and Environment Act (participate)
- Development of a Bromsgrove Plan review with revised environmental protection policies (lead)
- Commit to the development of a Climate Change Strategy (lead)

Success measures:

- Have an agreed and funded plan and capital replacement programme for the Council's fleet subject to any budget constraints.
- Have an agreed plan in place to deliver new requirements of national Resources and Waste Strategy and Environment Act
- Introduce vegetable derived diesel into the councils vehicles to reduce carbon emissions subject to any budget constraints.
- Households supported by the Council's energy advice service.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

7. Financial Stability

Council resources will continue to be constrained. We will continue to work on ensuring our people, assets and financial resources are focused on the priorities and activities that most effectively deliver wellbeing and progress for our population.

Progress and learning:

When Covid-19 hit, we moved quickly and successfully to reprioritise and redeploy in support of the crisis. We learned that we could change how we do things, and that priorities do change. We also learned that we can be better at understanding how we, and our partners, currently manage and exploit our assets.

Focal point:

We will work to ensure closer alignment between what we should be doing and the resources made available to do it. We will have a better sense of the assets we have and that we need, and how we can best contain unnecessary costs so that resources can be deployed where needed.

Key milestones:

- Robust Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (lead)
- Asset Management Strategy and Plan (lead)
- Maintained levels of General Fund Balances over medium term.

Success measures:

- Financial performance – actuals consistent with budget.
- Levelling Up Fund Project delivered within budget.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

8. Organisational Sustainability

The Council will work to maximise the use of digital infrastructures, including cloud technologies, to enhance its support for customers. We will encourage residents and businesses to access high speed fibre and wireless technologies to deliver growth in the local economy. Ensuring the Council's infrastructure can securely process the increased demand placed on it by the expanding use of Internet of Things devices will be key to its digital success. Any new delivery models, utilising technology, must deliver improved customer service at a lower cost.

Progress and learning:

Covid-19 helped us to see that new delivery models are possible, delivering better customer service at lower cost.

Focal point:

- **Digital First:** we will ensure that all Council services are designed to exploit digital access and delivery
- **Evidence-based design:** we will ensure all service improvement will be driven by good quality customer insight and data
- **Hybrid working:** we will adopt a hybrid working model, to include agile working and bookable office spaces

Key milestones:

- Development of corporate information management system e.g. performance dashboard (lead)
- Corporate wide use of data and information to design improved services (lead)
- Repurpose unnecessary office space (lead)
- Increase remote/mobile working in services through utilisation of new IT (lead)

Success measures:

- Number of customer transactions processed online.
- Number of corporate measures accessible through the dashboard.
- % of staff able to work in an agile way.

Bromsgrove District Council Council Plan Addendum – Priorities 2022/23

9. High Quality Services

Council people are key to its success. We need to recruit, retain and motivate the right employees, with the right knowledge, skills and attitude to deliver excellent services and customer care.

Progress and learning:

During Covid-19, we saw how good quality, flexible and responsive people make all the difference in work and society.

We also saw how personal and community resilience, or the lack of it, can lead to an escalation of public issues.

Focal point:

- **Recruitment:** ensure that our recruitment processes enable us to attract, engage and retain a talented and motivated workforce that is responsive to change.
- **Development:** support our employees to fulfil their potential and ensure that they possess the right skills to meet future needs through access to effective learning and development.
- **Progression:** Undertake succession and workforce planning to predict potential skills gaps, develop and improve the way we work and identify the right people, at the right cost with the right skills both for now and the future.
- **Prevention:** develop a proactive approach to the prevention of vulnerability in the population through improved service delivery.

Key milestones:

- Agree talent and performance plan (lead)
- Achieve minimum level of core management skills in all managers (lead)

Success measures:

- % of Personal Development Reviews undertaken each year.
- % of employees who undertake management training.
- Staff turnover rates in relation to national rates.
- Customer satisfaction with service delivery, measured through the Community Survey.

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**Bromsgrove District Council COVID-19 Recovery & Restoration
Plan**

2020 – 2021

Version 1.5

Run and Grow a Successful Business

Original Council Plan Commitments	Recovery & Restoration Issues and Actions	New or Modified Actions (what we will do...who with/partners)	By When	Owner	Update
<p>Supporting businesses to start and grow within the District</p>	<p>Consult businesses to understand current needs, recovery, and growth plans, working with partners to support business recovery and growth</p> <p>For many strategic purposes, the planning system can play a key role in contributing to recovery and restoration. For all strategic purposes, where relevant, there will be support through the timely determination of planning applications and the implementation, evidence gathering and review of the Local Plan</p>	<p>Arrange discussions with businesses via BEIS to understand position and future needs</p> <p>Further schemes available and due to be launched which will be promoted alongside partners</p>	Ongoing	NWEDR	<p>Demand for support from businesses has mainly been for Covid Business Support Grants (administered by the Business Rates Team). Businesses are beginning to focus on recovery with increasing demand for funding for skills and capital investment.</p>
	<p>Ensure businesses access Government Coronavirus Support Grants</p>	<p>Ensure all appeals are responded to robustly</p>	Completed	DR	<p>Both completed, comms has been consistently sent out</p>
	<p>Provide businesses entering Recovery Cycle for Non-Domestic Rates with information relating to support mechanisms</p>	<p>Advise businesses of support available via comms</p>	Ongoing	DR	<p>each time the scheme has changed and eligibility has changed to support and provide guidance. All appeals are responded to robustly and recorded</p>
	<p>Provide businesses with information on recovery support available internally and nationally.</p>	<p>Advise businesses of support available via comms</p>	Weekly/Ongoing	NWEDR	<p>Weekly newsletter sent from NWEDR to local businesses informing of support available throughout the pandemic</p>

	Revisions made to letters that are going out to businesses to explain debt recovery processes.	Work with recovery teams to ensure all businesses are provided with support and advice on debt management.	Aug – Dec 2020	DR	Completed with advice and support provided as appropriate.
	Liaise with internal partners to provide information in relation to business in arrears and delaying payments of liabilities.	Work with other recovery officers across the councils to ensure debt is managed holistically to provide the customer with the correct level of support.	Ongoing	CFor	Implementation of the Tech1 system is ongoing with bedding in. Once it is in place intend to work with Civica housing and Revs and Bens to pull together into dashboard
	Look to provide incubator units or the like through the investment programme to give businesses spaces to open and operate.	Continue to circulate the weekly Business Bulletin and provide further updates from partners as appropriate.	Nov 2020	NWEDR	Weekly newsletter sent from NWedR to local businesses informing of support available throughout the pandemic
		Prepare Master planning / feasibility study for key sites	Aug – March 2021	NWEDR	Design and feasibility work completed for the former Dolphin Centre Site and the former Market Hall Site. The latter forms part of the Councils bid to the Levelling Up Fund
Regenerating our Town Centre	Continue with the regeneration of the Town Centre	Utilise Bird Box as additional space to support local businesses	Ongoing	NWEDR	The Birdbox site continues to be offered as an events/ promotional space for local businesses coordinated through the BDC events team and BDC Centres Manager.

	Provide low cost loans to businesses to encourage growth and attract them to the area	Develop loan policy to enable this option to be available for Businesses	Dec 2020	CFor	<p>A successful Welcome Back event was undertaken on 22nd May</p> <p>Following consideration by the Exec Director of Resources, the risk profile of this policy is not considered to be acceptable for the Council currently.</p>
<p>Economic development & regeneration</p> <p>Page 140</p>	Engage with businesses to understand current needs, recovery & growth plans, working with partners to support business growth.	North Worcestershire Business Advisor appointed by GBSLEP to engage with businesses in North Worcestershire	Ongoing	NWEDR	<p>Demand for support from businesses has mainly been for Covid Business Support Grants (administered by the Business Rates Team). Businesses are beginning to focus on recovery with increasing demand for funding for skills and capital investment. At the end of May 2021 a new Bromsgrove Business Advisor was appointed whose role includes business engagement.</p>
<p>Undertake a comprehensive review of all Council owned assets and assess all opportunities for investment privately</p>	Investigate alternate sources of funding to PWLB to ensure best value borrowing can be achieved to maximise the range of investment opportunities and returns to the council	Ensure that the council is compliant with guidance when accessing these funds.	Ongoing	CFor	<p>Preliminary investigations confirmed that (improved) PWLB terms remain best option currently.</p>

<p>in land and premises within the District with a particular focus on business centre and industrial estates</p>	Identify partners to invest with	Revise the treasury management policy to enable all options to be made available to the council	Mar 2021	CFor	Treasury Management Strategy due an update in 2022/23.
	Review of the councils asset base	Review the property structure to enable an asset review to be undertaken	Mar 2021	CFe	Work is progressing with external advisors and the Director of Resources to develop a clear understanding of the resources required. Work to identify all properties on a comprehensive asset list continues.
	Identify opportunities for strategic investments	Develop an asset management strategy	Mar 2021	CFe	All departments to review and sent over assets list. External advisor assisting with cross matching exercise in readiness for the final accounts.
		Review the property structure to ensure there is the resource to enable strategic investment opportunities to be identified and pursued	Mar 2021	CFe	
<p>Develop an economic development strategy, to include stimulating the growth of low carbon industries</p>	Develop a Local Economic Recovery Framework	Work with the Worcestershire Economic Recovery Group to ensure Bromsgrove's economic recovery needs are addressed in the county wide economic recovery plan.	Nov 2020	NWEDR	Work completed and County Wide Plan produced in September 2020
		Develop and deliver a Bromsgrove Economic Recovery Plan	Nov 2020 and ongoing	NWEDR	Plan produced and agreed at Cabinet in November 2020
	Work up an approach for the council to make investments in the locality to contribute towards economic recovery/implement its Economic Recovery Framework	There are a number of disparate programmes of support to help businesses diversify into the low carbon sector. Propose to work with colleagues to pull these together and promote as a cohesive whole	Oct 2020	NWEDR KM	The ERDF funded programmes are being managed by WCC and are promoted as a suite of support

		Consider holding a local jobs fair, focusing on reskilling, including carbon friendly skills	Dec 2020	NWEDR	<p>There is an annual jobs fair event organised by the local MP Sajid Javid. In 2019, more than 1,000 people and over 70 local, national and international employers attended the event.</p> <p>The newly appointed Bromsgrove Employment and Skills Advisor and the Bromsgrove Business Advisor will work with the local MP's office and key public and private partners to support the next event in spring 2022.</p>
Work with partners to improve digital & physical connectivity (to include broadband, 5G & transport infrastructure)	Ensure that adequate digital infrastructure is in place to support the accelerated adoption of digital technologies by local businesses as a result of Covid-19	<p>Work with the West Midlands 5G Company and the GBSLEP and WLEP on exploring the potential of a 5G testbed in Bromsgrove</p> <p>Work with Superfast Worcestershire on delivering superfast broadband to Bromsgrove homes and businesses</p>	Summer 2021	NWEDR	The national rollout of 5G is underway with large cities being completed first.
Support local businesses to embrace new technologies in order to maximise business growth, particularly in the knowledge & creative industries	Identify local businesses that plan an accelerated adoption of digital technologies	Work with Betaden Tech Accelerator to promote opportunities to learn about innovative technologies being developed in the county	Ongoing	NWEDR	<p>Opportunities are promoted through NWedR's business newsletter, the Growth Hubs advisors and Bromsgrove Business Advisor through direct engagement with local businesses.</p>

		<p>Promote the new Business Recovery Grant, being administered by the Growth Hubs, which is designed to support businesses affected by Covid-19 to access new technology. Grants from £1k-£5k, available for a limited time</p> <p>Promote learning and training opportunities for businesses - courses and workshops delivered by GBSLEP Growth Hub and Worcestershire Business Central</p>	<p>Due to be launched late Sept</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>NWEDR</p> <p>NWEDR</p>	<p>An email / telephone campaign was undertaken to raise awareness and encourage the local businesses to apply for the grant. The fund was significantly oversubscribed.</p> <p>On-going – the Growth Hubs have been delivering peer 2 peer training clubs which NWEDR have promoted through usual channels and when engaging with businesses</p>
<p>Look to stimulate adequate supply of land & premises to enable existing & new businesses to grow</p>	<p>Identify brownfield sites and long term empty premises that could be redeveloped</p>	<p>Continue to work with the Worcestershire LEP Land supply group and private landowners and landlords to identify development opportunities in the district</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>A feasibility study has been commissioned for the redevelopment of Windsor Street site (town centre brownfield site). The work is funded by the One Public Estate (OPE) programme.</p>
<p>Strengthen the vibrancy & viability of our towns & district centres</p>	<p>Make the town centre a more attractive place/space to do business</p>	<p>Prepare Master planning and Feasibility Study for key town centre sites</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>Design and feasibility work completed for the former Dolphin Centre Site and the former Market Hall Site.</p> <p>Work on Bromsgrove 2040 Vision underway which includes the preparation of a</p>

<p>Make the town centre a more attractive place to spend free time (leisure, arts & culture, well-being)</p>	<p>Develop a programming strategy for the Birdbox within the restrictions of Covid-19 regulations and guidance</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>masterplan for key town centre sites.</p> <p>Continued restrictions meant this was delayed but will now form part of the Welcome Back Fund</p>
	<p>Prepare the Bromsgrove Town Centre 2040 vision</p>	<p>Feb 2021</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>Work underway on the Bromsgrove 2040 vision. led by consultants Burrell Foley Fisher with final report to be completed Nov 21. Initial work utilised to support a submission to the Levelling Up Fund bid to MHCLG</p>
	<p>Undertake a refresh of the Centres Strategy, covering the identified town and local Centres in Bromsgrove</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>A 1-year strategy has been produced and a further full review of the strategy will be undertaken by the replacement Centres Manager, once in post</p>
	<p>Commission a further car parking review of the Town Centre, linked to work on the vision and Local Plan development</p>	<p>Mar 2021</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>This is being undertaken by consultants commissioned by NWEDR</p>
	<p>Implement the 5 year Car Park capital infrastructure programme as detailed in the Business Case</p>	<p>From Dec 2020</p>	<p>GR/KH</p>	<p>Agreed by Council Nov 20 and the programme is ongoing</p>

Affordable & Sustainable Housing

Original Council Plan Commitments	Recovery & Restoration Issues and Actions	New or Modified Actions (what we will do...who with/partners)	By When	Owner	Update
<p>Rough Sleepers To continue the legacy of having no rough sleepers in the District</p> <p>Page 145</p>	To review and adapt work to the Housing First Model in partnership with the voluntary sector, the Police and mental health services.	To identify funding from MHCLG grants and complete claims for those helped.	Dec 2020	DA	Housing First model in place with St Pauls Hostel provided for through Rough Sleeper Initiative 3 funding.
	To work with WCC and other District colleagues on the County Next Accommodation Programme Bid.	To implement the programme of activities outlined in the bid	Ongoing	MB	Following discussions with BDHT it was established that there was insufficient need for this type of accommodation for Bromsgrove over and above what could be managed with BDHT and through our Ending Rough Sleeping plan 21/22
	To identify suitable accommodation from within BDHT's housing stock and ensure no-one helped in crisis returns to the streets	To identify funding from MHCLG grants.	Dec 2020	MB	
	Capacity around support of all providers – financial health check to ensure continued support available	To write to agencies concerned to contact the Council with any issues	Oct 2020	MB	Those applicants homeless and at risk of rough sleeping have been provided temp accommodation and Housing Options Officers continue to work with them to obtain suitable housing. Discussions held in partnership meetings.

A balanced housing market	Develop & implement a District Housing Strategy giving consideration to the impact of Covid 19 and how the impact of crisis on the economy will impact on housing supply and demand	<p>To work with new government guidance /legislation issued in response to Covid 19</p> <p>To include the impact of Covid in the strategy and associated actions over the next 12/18 months.</p> <p>Contribute to the countywide housing delivery strategy.</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p> <p>Dec 2020</p> <p>Mar 2021</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>DA</p> <p>DA</p>	<p>Included in the Strategy presented to Cabinet.</p> <p>As above</p> <p>Multi-disciplinary Officer input via workshops</p>
Work with developers to deliver more affordable homes	Continue work with developers on the impact from the crisis on the economy and consequently housing supply and demand	<p>Continuously monitor and review the impact of Covid 19 and provide influence and support to developers</p> <p>Review impacts of the new planning guidance Building Control will continue to support developers with consistent and timely advice</p>	<p>Sept 2020 & Ongoing</p> <p>Dec 2020 & ongoing Ongoing</p>	<p>MB</p> <p>MB AW</p>	<p>Monitoring is ongoing, however, no contacts or requests for support have been received from developers</p> <p>Timely advice has been provided by Building Control and the feedback from the Agents' Forum was very positive.</p>
Develop a plan for the Burcot Lane site	Include consideration of Covid 19 in Cabinet report	<p>Undertake a revision of financial remodelling.</p> <p>To continuously monitor the milestones that have been reviewed with Homes England.</p>	Ongoing	<p>MB SH CFor</p>	<p>Officers regularly meet with Baily Garner to review ongoing development. Increased costs have occurred due to a lack of materials and workforce. Regularly review development programme, costs and HE milestones. Officers have undertaken a value engineering exercise with Baily Garner and our contractors to reduce costs of the development.</p>

					<p>Officers have also discussed with HE possibility of further grant funding.</p> <p>Financial modelling completed. Review if variations require further remodelling. Delivery programme and milestones agreed with Homes England. Anticipated build by August 2022. Exercise to secure an RP for the affordable units in preparation.</p>
<p>Improve outcomes for tenants in the private rented sector</p> <p>Page 147</p>	<p>To continue to work with private landlords and tenants to support the impact of Covid 19 and work with any new government guidance/legislation.</p>	<p>Develop and implement an action plan for helping private renters avoid eviction, including maximising the use of Discretionary Housing Payments and other financial means available to incentivise landlords to refrain from evictions.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MB SS</p>	<p>A free county wide landlords and lettings agents event was held in June offering expert advice on the latest changes to legislation and explain all the options open to landlords to get the best outcomes for them and their tenants The PSHT continuing to encourage landlords to retain tenancies.</p>
<p>Support people to live & remain in appropriate homes</p>	<p>Work with Worcestershire Partnership Groups, County pathways and other bids to support this priority</p>	<p>Work with the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership to develop and implement actions.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MB</p>	<p>Ongoing via County Wide partnerships</p>
<p>Engage with leaseholders, such as park home residents, to</p>	<p>To pause progression of this in light of other service priorities following Covid 19</p>	<p>Monitor and review capacity to undertake this commitment in future years</p>	<p>April 2021</p>	<p>SS</p>	<p>Work has recommenced with Park Homes including supporting the</p>

understand their needs					grant funding for energy efficiency.
Work with developers to deliver more energy efficient homes	To continue to work with developers to promote upfront investment for long term savings and acknowledging that developers may focus on must-haves and reduce spend on energy efficiency	Monitor post Covid 19 development proposals for new build and influence to achieve this priority	Ongoing	MB	Meeting to be arranged with local developers to understand issues they have with increasing energy efficiency measures.
	Government guidance on improved green credentials	Implement a £610k funding bid submitted to the Getting Building Fund programme for low carbon housing at the Burcot Lane site.	Dec 2020	MB	Grant agreement signed with WLEP
		Consider and bid for new energy grant schemes as they are announced including the Green Homes Grant	Sept 2020 & ongoing	MB	LADS1a currently progressing well but there are issues regarding lack of materials to labour to undertake works increasing costs and making it difficult to reach projections. Regular update provided to BEIS Application for LADS 2 funding has been submitted to carry on with this work.
		Implemented by Building Control and advised upon wherever possible	Ongoing	AW	Building Regulations are subject to change nationally and all changes have been implemented at the local level.

Work & Financial Independence

Original Council Plan Commitments	Recovery & Restoration Issues and Actions	New or Modified Actions (what we will do...who with/partners)	By When	Owner	Update
Page 149	Undertake a skills audit with partners & work together with them to address any gaps	<p>Work with partners to see what the needs are in terms of skills</p> <p>Work with WCC who are leading on the “Creating our Future Workforce” campaign including the skills show and Careers & Enterprise Company</p>	<p>Nov 2020</p> <p>Nov 2020</p>	<p>NWEDR</p> <p>NWEDR</p>	<p>Worcestershire LEP Local Skills report published in April 2021 Link: Worcestershire Local Skills Report - Worcestershire LEP (wleplep.co.uk)</p> <p>In addition, WCC are in the process of commissioning a digital skills strategy for Worcestershire</p> <p>Proposal to undertake a county wide skills audit to assess employers’ needs post-pandemic (short-term and longer term) discussed with WLEP and WCC. Decision on whether to undertake the audit on a county wide basis or North Worcestershire basis to be made in November.</p>
<p>Support schools & HOW College to link students to local employers</p>	<p>A number of schemes have been launched to help address the effect of the economic downturn on Young People – apprenticeship grants, traineeship grants and kick-start (6 month placements)</p>	<p>Work to promote the availability of schemes and, in addition, continue to deliver the ‘Opening Doors to Business’ initiative with partners.</p>	<p>Nov 2020</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>Kick-start will be delivered locally by Serco. NWedR have engaged with them and agreed a referral process.</p>

	Understand the partnerships that are already in place	Arrange meetings with high schools and HOW to establish their current links with schools	Nov 2020	NWEDR	<p>'Opening Doors to Business' programme stopped during the pandemic.</p> <p>A pilot project exploring how the programme could be delivered virtually is underway.</p> <p>Most of this activity was paused during the pandemic. The annual skills show was cancelled (March 2021) and whilst schemes such as Opening Doors to Business is still live, schools and businesses are not undertaking visits. 'Virtual visits' are being considered as an alternative approach</p>
Work with businesses to utilise the apprenticeship levy & increase the number of apprenticeships	Ensure that the council maximises the levy by taking on the full cohort of apprentices which can be funded through the levy the council pays. In addition, review if the council wants to utilise other organisations levy payments to further increase this number	<p>Fourth tier managers and HOS to undertake a session to identify how training can be funded from the levy in the future</p> <p>Work with GBSLEP apprenticeships triage service and Worcestershire Apprenticeships to promote apprenticeships opportunities and support available to businesses</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>BT PSmith</p> <p>NWEDR</p>	<p>The levy is now being used to support training to improve managerial skills across the organisation.</p> <p>Apprenticeships are being promoted through the Growth Hub Advisors, Bromsgrove Business Advisor and through NWedR business newsletter.</p>

Provide support to people to enable them to access employment opportunities in digital & low carbon industries	Promote the support available through the Worcestershire Jobs Match programme and GBSLEP Employment triage programme	Promote the GBSLEP skills hub when launched.	Ongoing	NWEDR	On-going – promotion of support via NWedR Newsletter and social media posts
Support residents to manage their finances, including working with schools on money management	<p>Promote the work that the FIT team do, as part of this create stronger partnership working with CAB/BDHT.</p> <p>Improve website to include budgeting tips and tools. Get greater awareness to residents.</p> <p>Provide Taxpayers in arrears and failing to maintain CT payments with information in relation to support available</p>	<p>Undertake full service review to ensure posts are in place to deliver support</p> <p>Utilise accessibility project to improve website and improve information available online.</p> <p>Liaise with partners (e.g. CAB) to identify the support and signposting that they can give</p> <p>Develop script of support advice to customer service teams</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>LD</p> <p>DR</p> <p>DR</p>	<p>Review completed restructure pending</p> <p>Updating documents to meet the accessibility standards is underway and due for completion at the end of 2021.</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
Ensure people get the benefits they need	<p>Ensure support for prison leavers / ex-offenders to access the benefits they need as one of the key drivers to reducing re-offending</p> <p>Work with DWP to identify support to jobseekers/ advice re benefits</p>	<p>Liaise with prison to ensure advice and support given to leavers and ex-offenders</p> <p>Arrange quarterly meetings with DWP to understand impact of Covid on benefit take up and unemployment</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Benefits Team / Comm. Safety Team</p> <p>LD</p>	<p>RBC officer attendance at multi-agency offender management meetings and regular liaison with Prison and Probation Services</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

	<p>Be prepared for potential spike with regards to furloughed workers – unemployment, UC claims, and HB/CTR claims.</p> <p>Optimise spending of DHP budgets to those in need.</p> <p>Liaise with foodbanks on their capacities and demand and investigate whether we can we assist through ELF and Food Vouchers</p> <p>Simplify CTR scheme for 2021/22</p>	<p>Restructure to be implemented to ensure staff resource is sufficient to meet demand</p> <p>Regular meetings with Housing Officers to monitor level of spend</p> <p>Work through County funding support model</p> <p>FIT team to continue to support and provide data of demand</p> <p>CTR scheme to be presented to Cabinet, O&S and Council. Consultation with the community to be undertaken</p>	<p>Oct 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 20201</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>LD</p> <p>LD</p> <p>LD</p>	<p>Review completed, restructure pending</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>Completed</p> <p>Completed</p>
<p>Supporting young people to gain the skills they need</p>	<p>Support schools & HOW College to link students to local employers</p>	<p>Liaise with high schools and HOW to understand what links are currently in place. Discuss with BEIS as to future link</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>Most of this activity was paused during the pandemic. The annual skills show was cancelled (March 2021) and whilst schemes such as Opening Doors to Business is still live, schools and businesses are not undertaking visits. However, 'virtual visits' are now being considered as an alternative approach</p>
<p>Working with businesses to develop skills for the future</p>	<p>Undertake a skills audit with partners & work together with them to address any gaps</p>	<p>Work with North Worcestershire Employment and Skills Board, Skills4Worcestershire, GBSLEP and Worcestershire LEP to commission a skills audit</p>	<p>Feb 2021</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>Worcestershire LEP Local Skills report published in April 2021 Link: Worcestershire Local Skills Report -</p>

				<p><u>Worcestershire LEP</u> (wlep.co.uk) In addition, WCC are in the process of commissioning a digital skills strategy for Worcestershire</p> <p>Proposal to undertake a county wide skills audit to assess employers' needs post-pandemic (short-term and longer term) with WLEP and WCC. Decision on whether the undertake the audit on a county wide basis or North Worcestershire basis to be made in November</p>
<p>Develop a single Bromsgrove Business Leaders Group that can focus on skills development within the broader context of other key issues of importance to local businesses.</p>	<p>Work with the various business groups in North Worcestershire e.g. Worcestershire ESB, North Worcestershire ESB etc to establish a Business Leaders Group that will focus on skills development in the district alongside other key business issues.</p>	<p>Oct 2021</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>On-going</p>
<p>Encourage the sharing and placement of staff in businesses for fixed durations to share and learn new skills</p>	<p>As previous column</p>	<p>Oct 2021</p>	<p>NWEDR</p>	<p>On-going. New Bromsgrove Business Advisor now in post to support</p>

Living Independent, Active & Healthy Lives

Original Council Plan Commitments	Recovery & Restoration Issues and Actions	New or Modified Actions (what we will do...who with/partners)	By When	Owner	Update
Page 154	Support targeted activities for healthy lifestyles	Discuss with Partnership officer the demand / need for activities. Liaise with Sports Development and Everyone Active to enable community activities to take place	End Sept 20 and ongoing	JC	
	To deliver on the Bromsgrove Social Prescribing contract	To consider new funding opportunities from the Govt's proposal to expand the army of social prescribing link workers to support mental wellbeing.	Oct 2020	TD	Social Prescribing referrals commenced May 2021. Work is being delivered in partnership with Onside who also deliver social prescribing within the District arising from funding from an Additional Roles Reimbursement Scheme
	To promote the Lifeline wellbeing checks	To work with communications to promote the benefits of the Lifeline Well Being Checks.	Nov 2020	RN	Social media promotion of the service in each area
	To support targeted virtual activity and creativity sessions for healthy lifestyles	1) long term health condition interventions (respiratory illness COPD, MS, postural stability), 2) disability sessions in partnership with Aztec Upton Warren & Sailing Club, BSLC, 3) Fit for Free guided sessions with outdoor fitness equipment in Bromsgrove, Clent & Alvechurch,	Aug & ongoing	Dev Service	Targeted sessions continue with an on-going switch away from virtual sessions. Active Kitchen holiday hunger projects have rolled out district wide and

		4) Active Kitchen holiday hunger projects			utilised external funds from DFE
Continue to support the Redditch & Bromsgrove Dementia Friendly Communities initiative	Continue to support this work		Ongoing	JW	Support continues via the Bromsgrove Partnership's Ageing Well Group, with the following initiatives taking place: specialised Tia Chi sessions, the development of a Dementia Toolkit by Act on Energy to prevent fuel debt, Age UK H&W Dementia Wellbeing Service and Chandler Court online Dementia Friends Sessions open to all.
Provide targeted activities for older people & support the emerging Bromsgrove Age Friendly Community	Working with Active Herefordshire and Worcestershire Virtual Strong and Steady classes have replaced the face to face delivery.	Funding from the Health Innovation Network has allowed an online Escape Pain class to start for people suffering with Osteoarthritis	Sept 2020	Dev Services	Strong and steady is now live face to face. Escape Pain was run online (two daytime sessions) run over 6 weeks. This ran in Autumn 2020. Walking for Health at Lickey Recreation ground has got started since April 2021
With partners, enable targeted activities & initiatives to support mental well-being	Work with WCC on the legacy of Here2Help to support vulnerable residents post Covid	To promote and support that local communities access the legacy of Here2 Help and link this with the work	Nov 2021	JW	Here2Help is to be retained and developed as an ongoing resource.

		<p>of the Bromsgrove Partnership around the 'Deal Approach'</p> <p>To support the work of Support Bromsgrove and BARN's volunteer Bureau to increase the number of volunteers working with VCS mental wellbeing services.</p>	Ongoing	JW	<p>The Bromsgrove Partnership will use an Asset Based Community Development Approach with funding secured from Public Health.</p> <p>Public Health COMF funding will support the provision of future wellbeing services for those residents affected by Covid</p>
<p>Support improved access to services that reduce social isolation (including Lifeline)</p>	<p>Promote the Lifeline Service locally and through partner agencies including self-installation during the pandemic.</p> <p>Develop and promote a new range of digital equipment and sensors to enhance the service user experience, including devices that will work outside of the home, encouraging independence and peace of mind when going out.</p> <p>Continue to work with WCC and Amica24 installing complex technology enabled care solutions on their behalf in Bromsgrove . Expand the 6 week free scheme to all health and care professionals.</p>	<p>To develop a communications/ marketing plan</p> <p>Monitor conversion rates to establish how many of those, that have the service for free, choose to retain the service and pay for it ongoing. Target is 50% conversion</p> <p>Review opportunities with County and Health colleagues new tele health technologies post Covid</p>	<p>Nov 2020</p> <p>Ongoing</p> <p>June 2021</p>	<p>RN</p> <p>RN</p> <p>RN</p>	<p>Self-installation video created and widely shared.</p> <p>Digital catalogue completed. 6 weeks free scheme conversion in year 20/21 there were 84 units fitted and 80 retained.</p> <p>Ongoing promotion with partner organisation by attending regular meetings i.e. social prescribers, frailty, etc and other regular communications.</p>

	<p>To continue with the Bromsgrove BURT bus and Shopmobility with new Covid safety measures</p> <p>Work with WCC on the legacy of Here2Help to support vulnerable residents post Covid</p>	<p>To review with Members both of these services and whether further funding is available or income generation through charging to invest and develop them as a Council priority Work with Support Bromsgrove to achieve a legacy for the VCS</p>	<p>Dec 2020</p> <p>Dec 2020</p>	<p>JW TD</p> <p>JW</p>	<p>which saw an initial increase in the take up this service, whilst some customers then withdrew from the service once lockdown eased.</p> <p>BARN secured the new BURT contract in May 2021 – both BURT and Shopmobility are still in recovery and plans to complete a Shopmobility survey are underway to review the need in Bromsgrove and whether further investment is required</p> <p>Here2Help is to be retained and developed as an ongoing resource.</p>
<p>Develop a Parks & Open Spaces Strategy (including increased physical activity & cycling)</p>	<p>Provide a clear brief on what the detail of the strategy will be</p>	<p>Develop a phased approach to the work to fine tune the technical documents that would feed into the overall strategy</p>	<p>Mar 2021 (Consultants commissioned)</p>	<p>RB IKF JC</p>	<p>The consultants are soon to meet with members for a consultation workshop The Strategy is progressing with key analysis of data. Consultation with various stakeholders</p>

					is currently taking place. Completion is anticipated March 2022
Enhance sport & cultural opportunities offered by the Council	Work with partners to ensure that provision is accessible and safe for all participants, particularly those from minority and marginalised communities.	Liaise with partnership group to understand what is needed within the District for minority and marginalised communities.	Ongoing	JC	
	Deliver the “Tell me what you want” action plan, the consequence of a 2 year £90,000 action research piece that identified projects designed to break down barriers to engagement with arts culture and heritage.	Working with all instructors and venues to provide COVID-19 Secure measures ready for a phased return to face to face delivery from mid Sept 2020 Work with Bromsgrove Arts and Culture Consortium partners to deliver the plan.	End of March 2021	Dev Services Dev Services	All classes are now held again in person and are appropriately COVID secure Two objectives of the Action Plan have been delivered. 1) a new CIO (Charitable incorporated Organisation) has been set up to formally constitute the organisation delivering the Action Plan. 2) External funds £15k secured from GBSLEP and Elmley Foundation to produce the Calling Card and Development Plan for a Heritage Corridor for North Worcestershire (a flag ship action within the TMWYW Plan

Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained & Green

Original Council Plan Commitments	Recovery & Restoration Issues and Actions	New or Modified Actions (what we will do...who with/partners)	By when	Owner	Update
Reducing crime & disorder	To consider the impact on society of Covid 19 and work with partners and service areas to ensure the Community Safety Partnership action plan reflects this.	To review and update the Community Safety Partnership action plan to contribute to the recovery of consequences from Covid 19	March 2021	BH	NW Community Safety Partnership Plan 2021-24 produced and agreed by partners on 9 th June 2021
Work with partners, schools & communities to reduce crime & the fear of crime	<p>Ensure effective Parking Enforcement, via the SLA with Wychavon, covering both on and off street contraventions.</p> <p>Through the Community Safety Respect Schools Programme, continue to work with partners and provide additional support for young people affected by the impact of Covid 19</p>	<p>Currently working with County Highways, Police & Schools. Recruit to post (additional hours) to assist with enforcement around schools.</p> <p>Identify funding opportunities to sustain and continue to deliver the Respect Programme</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	<p>KH</p> <p>NWCSP</p>	<p>Schools Enforcement Officer is in place, evening enforcement agreed with Wychavon DC. Regular meetings held to review requirements.</p> <p>£33k Additional Containment Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) allocation secured to expand Respect programme and other enhanced youth support projects in Bromsgrove</p>
Review services to understand how we can adapt to address the implications of climate change	Currently working with the Energy Savings Trust who are undertaking an initial high level fleet review followed by a more detailed vehicle specific review with Cenex to identify the best low carbon emission vehicles to purchase in the future.	Review the priorities for Climate Change across the district	12 months	GR KH PW	Final report from the E has now been received. Findings from this will be presented to the Climate change panel and we are now working with the other Worcestershire Councils to procure consultants who will do further piece of detailed

				<p>work regarding vehicle and fuel type for each replacement vehicle. Report to go to members later this financial year.</p> <p>Formal inclusion of aims and actions being built into the review of the Council Plan. Heads of Service working with Lead Members and Working Groups to develop priority action plans. Training and awareness raising sessions ongoing for officers and Members.</p>
<p>Review fleet usage for Waste Collection, Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance to consider opportunities to further reduce our carbon footprint through technology.</p>	<p>Review of technologies and innovation and funding</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MA KH PW</p>	<p>See above. In addition, we undertook a trial of an electric RCV in the early autumn this was not a great success due to breakdown issues. We are working with the other Worcestershire LAs to establish the best vehicle and fuel types moving forward and on the co-ordination of trials.</p>
<p>Service review of domestic waste service to support upcoming legislative changes to services aimed at reducing waste and increasing recycling as part of the circular economy.</p>	<p>As previous column</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MA GR</p>	<p>Environment Bill expected to gain Royal Assent in October 21 and Government Consultation response expected late 21/ early 22, and regulations to implement legislation by</p>

	<p>Campaign to increase recycling quality and quantities with residents (domestic waste service) and businesses via our Commercial Waste service.</p>	<p>As previous column</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>MA GR</p>	<p>autumn 22. Due to these significant changes the review of the service will be delayed until the outcome of the Environment Bill and Regs are known. In addition, we will also be looking closely at opportunities for partnership or shared working.</p> <p>Commercial Recycling growing through combination of PR and proactive selling. Domestic recycling campaign waiting on greater security of staffing as Covid still high risk to service delivery. There will be a Countywide campaign and joint approach to this starting later this financial year.</p>
<p>Improve targeted environmental enforcement</p>	<p>Define Council priorities regarding environmental enforcement, and then review existing arrangements and alternative models available either through partnership with adjacent LA's, or Private Sector as a commercial arrangement.</p> <p>Identify effective responses to environmental crime activity to identify perpetrators and take</p>	<p>Review of council enforcement arrangements, across priority areas.</p> <p>Review environmental enforcement with regard to increased commercial fly</p>	<p>April 2021</p> <p>Oct 2020</p>	<p>MA GR</p> <p>MA GR</p>	<p>Possible alternative for delivery of Env Enforcement is currently being explored with WR</p> <p>New Cameras purchased for policing,</p>

<p>appropriate enforcement action to reduce/prevent further offences, utilising available ASB tools and powers</p>	<p>tipping in the urban fringe of the district since lockdown was eased</p> <p>Review enforcement arrangements and impact of Covid 19, e.g. on fly tipping, and new resources/new model of working may be required</p>	<p>April 2021</p>	<p>SH GR JW RB</p>	<p>and increased use of signage and dummy cameras. Reduction in incidents seen March – July 2021 across locations covered. Bid for additional cameras to be submitted later this year.</p> <p>Further resource has been allocated to the Planning Services Enforcement function and WRS has been engaged to assist with monitoring as required. Although there is a heavy case load there are currently no environmental crime cases within Planning Services.</p> <p>Internal review undertaken. Ongoing dialogue with Worcestershire Regulatory Services. Support and expertise sourced from Wyre Forest Enforcement Team.</p> <p>Training, support and advice around the use of the 2014 ASB Tools & Powers is available via</p>
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					Community Safety and their membership of a national ASB consultancy network which is open to all service area with enforcement responsibilities. Through PCC funding new redeployable CCTV cameras have been purchased and will be a new tool to support the detection of crime.
Understand the different needs of our local areas in order to keep them clean & tidy	Review IT systems in place to help manage demand data and introduce mobile working more effectively to support maintenance operations.	To procure and implement new Environmental Services IT system	Sept 2021	GR KH MG	Procured ABAVUS system now in the process of implementation
Explore the options to reduce residual waste, increase recycling & maximise the efficiency of waste collection services	<p>Campaign to increase recycling quality and quantities with residents (domestic waste service) and businesses via our Commercial Waste service.</p> <p>Provide opportunities around better management of waste and introducing recycling projects including an introduction of recycling options within parks</p>	<p>Restart recycling quality project from Sept 2020 with direct mail to households in targeted areas</p> <p>Work with other Councils across Herefordshire and Worcestershire to develop a programme of work for the shared strategic waste officer and ensure that programme of work meets needs of the district</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>April 2021</p>	<p>MA AM AW</p> <p>GR</p>	<p>See above</p> <p>Work programme developed to respond to Environment Bill consultations, deliver changes required to Waste collection and improve the quality of recycling.</p>

Corporate Priorities

Original Council Plan Commitments	Recovery & Restoration Issues and Actions	New or Modified Actions (what we will do...who with/partners)	By when	Owner	Update
Page 164	Produce & deliver sustainable financial plans	Development of General Fund 4 year plan to ensure financial impact of Covid assessed.	Feb 2021	CFor	This was done in terms of the MTFP being set at both councils and will be updated as part of the 22/23 Budget setting. 'Project Finance and Resources' includes plans to strengthen the Finance Team and financial management arrangements. Restructure of team completed and first phase of recruitment completed (Dec 2021).
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify impact of Covid • Assess prior year underspends • Review Capital Programme • Identify savings plans • Review fees and charges 	Oct 2020		
		Recruit additional technical capacity	Oct 2020		
	Improved commerciality: maximising every opportunity to generate income, including review of fees & charges	Work with managers to better understand budget implications	Jan 2021	CFor	The new ERP system provides the opportunity to analyse financial data more effectively to improve financial management. Fees and charges reviewed each year Have been undertaken. Further training will be delivered in the new year
		Restructure of financial services team	Nov 2020		
			Dec 2020		
	Undertake effective contract management	Review of fees and charges	Sept 2020	JS	A skills audit of posts and people has been completed to develop a
		Workshops with budget holders	Dec 2020		
		Continue to work through corporate training and development programme.	Mar 2021		

		Work internally to maximise efficiency and economy of scale.	Mar 2021	CFe	<p>training programme for the teams.</p> <p>Work continues to align contracts with new tech one system and actual spend. Final plea to HOS to ensure all spend is identified within the context of a contract and that the contracts are logged and registered with Carmen. Slow progress to date.</p> <p>We have completed the first part of this process and work closely with local suppliers to ensure that they understand the way to engage with frameworks and tendering process. Carmen working on updating the website to provide clear enabling instructions to businesses. The longer term objective to support a social responsibility policy will require investment and resources.</p>
		Develop comprehensive contracts register and effective contacts management through new finance system	Mar 2021	CFe	
		Targeted and bespoke departmental training and development	Mar 2021	CFe	
		Social responsibility policy with focus on local suppliers			
	Manage our assets to get the best outcomes for our residents	Review use of buildings, facilities and assets	Mar 2021	CMT	Ongoing process to assess the use of assets
		Develop comprehensive assets management strategy in line with the Council Plan	Mar 2021	CFe	Asset register work continues. HoS are to supply a list of managed assets.

Page 166	Make financially viable strategic acquisitions & investments	Review the property structure to ensure there is the resource to enable strategic investment opportunities to be identified and pursued	Ongoing	CFor CFe	The 2022/23 Capital Programme has provisionally been updated to reflect the updated focus on delivering the Levelling Up Fund project (as opposed to progressing other acquisitions / projects in the short term).
	Undertake a self-assessment against CIPFA's new Financial Management Code (CPC)	Undertake the self-assessment online	Feb 2021	CFor	To be completed once new team in place.
	Encourage all levels of the organisation to articulate their role clearly and succinctly in delivering financial sustainability (CPC) Review services currently delivered to determine if they offer VFM, and if not and not legally required then consider discontinuing.	Workshops and training on the new ERP system Restructure in the financial services team Work with members to understand priority services and assess those that are not as a priority against benchmarking to fully understand value for money and associated costs	Sept 2020 Dec 2020 Nov 2020	CFor CFor CFor	Workshops completed, however identified that refreshers are needed. Currently planning content. Restructure completed. Undertaken as part of MTFP setting
Sustainability	Review alternative delivery models. The production of Service Business Plans will begin to outline what a Future Operating Model may look like.	Service Business Plans will be assessed in order to establish an overall council operating model	Nov 2020	SMT CMT	Completed. Business service plans considered and endorsed for all areas by CMT including FOM proposals. Programmed review and updates quarterly to CMT. Corporate FOM debated and endorsed.

	Exploit digital technologies, enabling more automation of services through the implementation of the Digital and Customer Strategy to ensure both technology and process change. (CPC)	Develop a delivery action plan for the Digital Strategy and digital developments outlined in the Service Business Plans Encourage customer use of website for payment and alternative methods of payment	Sept 2020 Ongoing	DP MH PS	This has been delayed due to the additional work needed to ensure the council could work remotely during the pandemic. The change to remote working fulfils part of the new way of working outlined in the strategy. The completion date will now be Jan 2022.
	Invest in leadership development to reinforce culture change and lay foundations for the future. (CPC)	Start the ILM programme later in 2020	Oct 2020	DP BT	Completed. Program is underway.
		Ensure the Apprenticeship Levy is used to cover training costs Ensure the first cohort focuses on 5 th tier level employees.	Ongoing Ongoing	 BT	Completed Completed
	Be consistent in internal communications and explore opportunities for two-way internal communications (CPC)	Implement the learnings from remote working and Covid 19 staff surveys	Oct 2020	DP BT	Surveys undertaken and findings being used to develop an Agile Working Policy.
	Strengthen financial forecasting to underpin the refreshed approach to financial management (CPC)	Workshops and training on the new ERP system Restructure in the financial services team	Dec 2020	CFor	Workshops completed, however identified that refreshers are needed. Currently planning content. Restructure completed.
	Utilise external commercial expertise to ensure delivery of agreed priorities (CPC)	Ongoing support via remote working/virtual meeting	Ongoing	GR DP	Completed
	Review key risks on the Corporate Risk Register	Regular review of the added Covid risk – financial and service	Oct 2020	CFor	Completed. Currently undertaking another review with support from Nicola parry and Zurich.
Review services to understand how we can adapt to climate change	To identify opportunities through departments service plans and develop an action plan	Jan 2021	CMT JW	All Service Plans included future plans to support the Council's green thread. A	

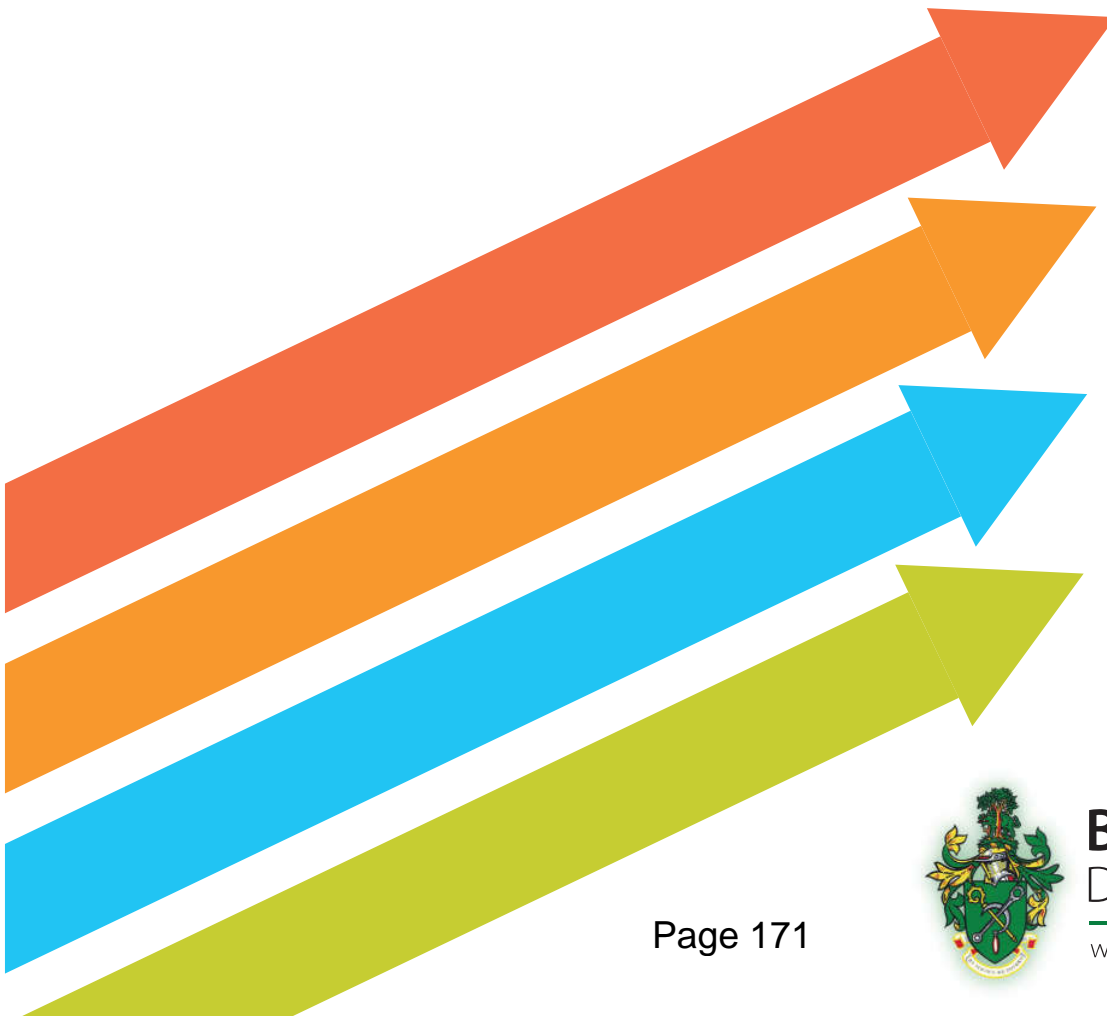
Review Resources and Services

					corporate action plan is in the process of being Developed
Prioritise clearly and resource accordingly (CPC)	Review priorities post Covid	Feb 2021	SMT CMT		Cabinet Session undertaken and review of Council Plan in progress.
Ensure that budget manager engagement and ownership is invested in to make self-service a success (CPC)	Workshops and training on the new ERP system Restructure in the financial services team	Oct 20 – Feb 21	CFor		Workshops completed, however identified that refreshers are needed. Currently planning content. Restructure completed.
Workforce planning – employee skills, gap analysis, workforce profile, succession planning etc	Create a workforce strategy in light of the ‘new normal’ after the Covid crisis. To consider the impact of remote/agile working on employee numbers/skills.	Dec 2020	DP BT		Data analysis for the current workforce profile has been completed. The skills matrix continues to be used across the organisation to identify employee skills and gaps.
	Develop improved management information for services through a renewed corporate dashboard.	Apr 2021	DP BG		Development is ongoing. Demo’s of the beta site have been carried out to CMT. A data gathering exercise has been completed with Heads of Service/SMT to establish data needs. The new date for completion is November 2022.
Support workforce recovery and transition to ‘new normal’	Determine what ‘new normal’ means and understand what policy changes will be needed to support new ways of working.	Dec 2020	DP BT		Working from home surveys have been carried out with employees and managers to determine how services can work more flexibly in future.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a remote working policy • Arrange management training to develop skills for remote working and performance management. • Review working arrangements of whole organisation. • Explore flexible work arrangement. 	May 2021	DP BT	A first draft Agile Working Policy has been developed.
	Capture lessons learned/details from surveys in order to assess impact of remote working.	Analyse data and pass this out to service areas.	Sept 2020	DP BT	Completed
	Review appetite for agile working post-crisis	Services to use the data to determine what their service reviews may look like. To include future operating model, agile working etc	Feb 2021	SMT CMT	Completed
	Review HR&OD Strategy to ensure recognition and reward are encompassed within it.	Link the strategy to business planning cycle, development of 'new normal' and workforce planning	Dec 2020	DP BT	The strategy will be reviewed after the Agile Working Policy is in place as this will impact on the organisations future HR needs. Jan 22
Review the Council Plan	Review the delivery of priorities in light of the impact of the pandemic.	Review during 2021 for the next 3 years to link in with the MTFP	Apr 2021	CMT	Review undertaken with Corporate Plan review in process incorporating Recovery & Restoration actions.
Community Leadership	Explore the development of "Deal" approaches (based on the concepts / principles of the Wigan Deal).	Consider the legacy of the Covid volunteers and how they and the VCS organisations can support the 'Deal' approach in terms of community assets.	Aug/Sept 2020	HoS 4th Tier Managers LSP Managers Policy Team	The Deal Approach has been replaced with Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) approach which will continue through the Bromsgrove Partnership help address growing health inequalities and ensure community leadership.
	Continue to work with the support networks (Support Bromsgrove) and partnerships to	Undertake / co-ordinate work across Council departments and with partner	Nov 2021		The ABCD approach has been strengthened by

	<p>underpin future economic and community recovery (CPC)</p>	<p>organisations to create a better understanding of our most vulnerable and in need residents.</p> <p>Bring together data and information the Council and partners hold about vulnerable residents which can be utilised to target future resources, support, and opportunities to those most in need in our communities. This data to also be used for future planning and response in emergencies e.g. any future waves of the Covid-19 pandemic</p>	<p>Review Nov 2021</p>	<p>4th Tier Managers LSP Managers Policy Team DS</p> <p>JW/DP</p>	<p>working with partners to: (a) appoint community builders who can in turn create and support a network of street connectors; and (b) embed the approach by supporting the delivery of ABCD training.</p> <p>Data relating to vulnerable people is being collated to better understand what services we offer to this group of people in our communities.</p>
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Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019 - 2023



Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019-2023

Introduction

Our vision is to enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help and support.

People are at the heart of everything we do; whether they live in our district, work here or choose to visit. Everyone deserves to receive the best possible service and support and we aim to put those in need at the forefront. We are dedicated to making a Bromsgrove a better place to live, work and visit; and intend to continue to play our part in developing and enhancing this unique district.

We are committed to being a **financially stable & sustainable council that provides high quality services**. There are challenges to be faced in order to deliver this, both financial and within our communities. We will face these challenges head on, prioritising the needs of residents and customers, whilst making decisions that look to the future. There is a 'green thread' throughout this Council Plan, demonstrating our determination to make sustainability key to how we work as a Council.



This plan is split into strategic purposes to guide us and includes priorities and actions for each of our strategic areas, providing us with a clear focus for addressing issues and allocating funding for the next four years.

**Cllr Karen May,
Leader of Bromsgrove District Council**

Our vision is to enrich the lives & aspirations of all our residents, businesses & visitors through the provision of high quality services, ensuring that all in need receive appropriate help & support.

Strategic Purposes, with our communities at their heart

Run & grow a successful business

Work & financial independence

Living independent, active & healthy lives

Affordable & sustainable homes

Communities which are safe, well-maintained & green

Priorities for 2019 - 2023, with a **greenthread** throughout

Economic development & regeneration

Skills for the future

Improving health & well being

A balanced housing market

Reducing crime & disorder

Financial stability

High quality services

Sustainability

Supported by:

People

Partnerships

Performance

How will we deliver this plan?

Our Purposes & Priorities

Bromsgrove District Council is committed to providing residents with effective & efficient services that not only meet their needs but understand them too. Through considering what really matters to our residents we have developed eight key priorities for the next four years, underpinned by five strategic purposes.

Purposes

Run & grow a successful business

Work & financial independence

Living independent, active & healthy lives

Affordable & sustainable homes

Communities which are safe, well-maintained & green

Working to these purposes will help us to understand the needs of the District & how, together with our partners, we can improve the lives of our residents & the prospects for Bromsgrove District as a whole.

Priorities

Economic development & regeneration

Skills for the future

Improving health & well being

A balanced housing market

Reducing crime & disorder

Financial stability

High quality services

Sustainability



Our Principles

People are the reason our organisation exists & so are at the centre of everything we do.

People refers to our residents, staff, council members & partners, all of whom have importance in shaping the direction & values of our organisation.

Our Finances

The actions in this plan will inform the annual budget setting agreed by full council, ensuring that available resources (both financial & staffing) are used to deliver the council's purposes & priorities. Progress reports on finance & performance will be provided quarterly to Cabinet.

A financial summary can be found at the end of this Council Plan.

Our Challenges

The challenges include:

- **The financial challenge – we need to make over £1m of savings by 2022 - this will mean some difficult decisions**
- **Potential further reduction in government funding**
- **Responding to national issues, such as the implications of Universal Credit or Brexit**
- **Continuing to safeguard those who are most vulnerable, & manage the increasing costs**
- **Managing risks associated with the uncertainties in Local Government funding, together with delivering savings to meet known financial pressures**
- **The affordability of the local housing market**
- **Keeping businesses in the District when they grow**
- **Understanding the different community needs across the district**
- **The need for enhanced digital & physical connectivity**

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

Run & grow a successful business

 = Green thread

We will	How we will measure progress?
<p>Develop an economic development strategy, to include stimulating the growth of low carbon industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of VAT/PAYE registered businesses with the District • Number of new business start-ups • Total number of enquiries from inward investors / expanding SMEs • Number of low carbon businesses in the district
<p>Work with partners to improve digital & physical connectivity (to include broadband, 5G & transport infrastructure).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • % Broadband coverage by type • % Full fibre coverage • Development of a local Planning & Transport Strategy (based on North Worcestershire Strategic Transport Assessment)
<p>Support local businesses to embrace new technologies in order to maximise business growth, particularly in the knowledge & creative industries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of digital based businesses in the district • Number of businesses that exploit digital technologies
<p>Look to stimulate adequate supply of land & premises to enable existing & new businesses to grow.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of land/premises becoming available each year • Number of vacancies on existing employment sites & length of vacancy/turn around (by location/size)
<p>Strengthen the vibrancy & viability of our towns & district centres.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of vehicles paying to park • Average time in car parks (dwell times) • % Occupancy of market spaces • Progression of key Town Centre development sites

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.

Work & financial independence

We will	How we will measure progress?
Support schools & HOW College to link students to local employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people who live & work in the district (% working age population) • Wage levels for those who live & work in the district
Work with businesses to utilise the apprenticeship levy & increase the number of apprenticeships.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of apprenticeships started in the district • Number of apprenticeships completed in the district • Number apprentices undertaking courses at HOW College
Provide support to people to enable them to access employment opportunities in digital & low carbon industries.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people supported by NWEDR
Support residents to manage their finances, including working with schools on money management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people supported by Financial Independence Team • Feedback on support from Financial Independence Team • Feedback from students in relation to money management • Reduction in Essential Living Fund payments • Number of people in fuel poverty supported by the Energy Advice Service • Number of Bromsgrove Energy Efficiency grants accessed
Ensure people get the benefits they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of benefits claims processed & accuracy • Number of people helped to access the right benefits by the Financial Independence Team • Number of emergency Essential Living Fund payments • Number of emergency Discretionary Housing payments

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

Live independent, active & healthy lives

■ = Green thread

We will	How we will measure progress?
Continue to support the Redditch & Bromsgrove Dementia Friendly Communities initiative.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of actions undertaken • Achievement of Dementia Friendly Community Status
Provide targeted activities for older people & support the emerging Bromsgrove Age Friendly Community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people accessing targeted activities such as balance & stability classes • Number of falls
With partners, enable targeted activities & initiatives to support mental well-being.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of schools engaging with the Bromsgrove Partnership project relating to young people’s mental health & services • Number of social prescriptions for mental well-being support • Number of staff engaging with ‘Time to Talk’ events
Support improved access to services that reduce social isolation (including Lifeline).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of Lifeline users • Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs): time taken to complete • Feedback on DFGs • Number of people using community transport
Develop a Parks & Open Spaces Strategy (including increased physical activity & cycling).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of activities using parks as a venue • Feedback from events held in parks & open spaces
Enhance sport & cultural opportunities offered by the Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with Bromsgrove Arts & Culture consortium, implement actions from the cultural inclusion & engagement plan • % of physically active adults • Number of children & young people accessing sports development sessions

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)

Affordable & sustainable homes

We will	How we will measure progress?
Work with developers to deliver more affordable homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of affordable homes (commitments & completions)
Develop a plan for the Burcot Lane site.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of a business case for the site
Improve outcomes for tenants in the private rented sector.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of people assisted by the Private Sector Housing Team
Support people to live & remain in appropriate homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs): time taken to complete • Feedback on DFGs
Engage with leaseholders, such as park home residents, to understand their needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimated number of leaseholders • Number of park home residents • Feedback from leaseholder engagement
Work with developers to deliver more energy efficient homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of energy efficient 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.

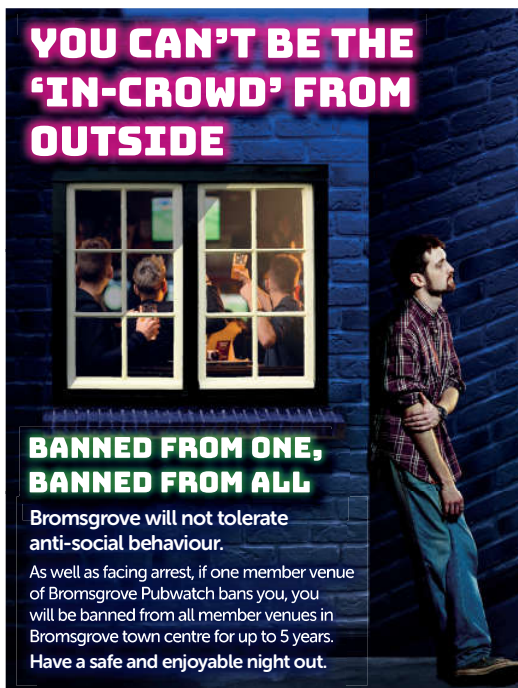
It's easier to recycle more & reduce waste going to landfill.

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

Communities which are safe, well-maintained & green

We will	How we will measure progress?
<p>Work with partners, schools & communities to reduce crime & the fear of crime.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of young people engaging in community safety sessions • Number of events attended by Community Safety team • Support for the Substance Misuse Multi-Agency Forum
<p>Review services to understand how we can adapt to address the implications of climate change.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of charging points in the district • Number of electric vehicles in fleet • Number of taxi licences issued for electric cars
<p>Improve targeted environmental enforcement.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of fly tipping incidents in hotspot areas
<p>Understand the different needs of our local areas in order to keep them clean & tidy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of demand for environmental services in each area • Level of community participation in environmental activities (e.g. adopt an area; litter picks)
<p>Explore the options to reduce residual waste, increase recycling & maximise the efficiency of waste collection services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total residual waste • Total amount recycled • Number of bulky waste collections

Priority	We will:
Financial stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce a sustainable financial plan • Ensure prudent borrowing • Undertake effective contract management • Review fees & charges • Manage our assets to get the best outcomes for our residents • Explore investment opportunities
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus more on commercialisation of services; maximising every opportunity to generate income, where appropriate • Review alternative delivery models • Exploit digital technologies, enabling more automation of services • Undertake a fleet review to consider options for electrification & alternative fuel options • Review services to understand how we can adapt to address the implications of climate change
High quality services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable greater digital access to our services; allowing customers to book, pay & do things online when they want to; 24/7 • Conduct regular engagement with our communities • Ensure that all in need get appropriate help & support

Supported by

People

- A dynamic workforce, which is supported to learn & develop
- Engaging our communities in service delivery & decision making

Partnerships

- Working with the public, private & voluntary sectors
- Utilising commercial opportunities, where appropriate

We will work closely with our partners in the public sector, such as Redditch Borough Council, Worcestershire County Council & the Clinical Commissioning Groups. The local Strategic Partnership, the Bromsgrove Partnership, has three priority themes, which complement the purposes in this plan; Economic Growth; Community Wellbeing; Better Environment

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/council/policy-and-strategy/bromsgrove-partnership

Performance

- Focus on the needs of our customers & delivering positive outcomes
- Embracing change to deliver responsive & efficient services

Bromsgrove Proposed Revenue Budget 2019/20-2022/23

	2019-20 £000	2020-21 £000	2021-22 £000	2022-23 £000
Departmental Base Budget	10,798	10,823	10,729	10,729
Incremental Progression/Inflation on Utilities	132	177	221	378
Unavoidable Pressures	366	240	243	245
Revenue Bids/Revenue Impact of Capital Bids	67	42	25	25
Savings and Additional Income	- 332	- 335	- 354	- 459
Reserve Release	- 159	- 200	- 150	0
Unavoidable Pressure funded from Reserves	150	0	0	0
Efficiency Savings Rolled Forwards	654	782	885	888
Net Revenue Budget Requirement	11,676	11,528	11,599	11,806
FINANCING				
Contribution to Worcestershire County Business Rate Pool	- 2,602	- 2,594	- 2,624	- 2,660
New Homes Bonus	- 1,589	- 1,185	- 610	- 295
Collection Fund Surplus (Council Tax)	- 62	0	0	0
Council Tax	- 8,187	- 8,506	- 8,884	- 9,274
Investment Income	- 38	- 329	- 726	- 1,050
Interest Payable	133	660	1,018	1,186
MRP (Principal)	816	1,142	1,388	1,600
Discount on Advanced Pension Payment	-147	- 40	- 40	- 40
Funding Total	- 11,676	- 10,851	- 10,479	- 10,534
General Balances				
Opening Balances	4,179	4,179	3,502	2,382
Contribution (from) / to General Balances	- 0	- 677	- 1,120	- 1,271
Agreed in Year Release of Balances				
Closing Balances	4,179	3,502	2,382	1,111

Accessibility statement

If you need this information in another language or format, please contact us to discuss how we can best meet your needs.

**Email: equalities@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
or phone: 01527 548284**

Version Control

Title	Bromsgrove District Council Plan 2019 - 2023			
Description				
Created by	Policy Manager			
Date created	October 2019			
Maintained by	Policy Manager			
Last review date				
Next review date	October 2023			
Version number	Modified by	Modifications made	Date modified	Status

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

TUESDAY 3RD MAY 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader), M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas, M. Thompson and S. A. Webb

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks (on Micorsoft Teams), Mrs. S. Hanley (on Micorsoft Teams), Mr J. Howse, Mrs. C. Felton (on Micorsoft Teams) and Mr P. Carpenter and Mrs. J. Gresham

71/21 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

72/21 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

73/21 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 30TH MARCH 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 30th March 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 30th March 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

74/21 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 28TH MARCH 2022**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, presented the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 28th March 2022, and in doing so the Cabinet was informed that since the meeting of the Board things had moved forward and that items had been discussed and agreed.

It was confirmed by the Chairman that the Land Drainage Maintenance report that was presented by officers at this meeting had been positively received by Members. In addition to this, it was reported that Members had been encouraged by the Equality Annual Update, which had

highlighted the huge amount of work being undertaken in this area. It was confirmed that during the Planning Determination Timescales item presented by the Head of Planning, Leisure and Regeneration, the Board were informed that determination timescales were on target.

The Chairman informed Cabinet that at the last meeting of the Board a Fuel Poverty Task Group had been initiated and the investigation would start in the new municipal year. Members queried the establishment of this task group, and it was confirmed by Councillor C. Hotham that it was hoped that the outcome of the investigation would provide information on provision and signposting for those residents in the District who were most in need of support in respect of fuel poverty.

During consideration of this item, it was also noted that there was one recommendation made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at its meeting held on 25th April 2022 in respect of the Fireworks Motion. The recommendation was as follows:

The Overview and Scrutiny Board

RECOMMENDED to CABINET

'that Bromsgrove District Council encourages residents to attend professionally organised firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.'

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board confirmed that this recommendation had been proposed in order to help mitigate the distressing and sometimes extreme effects of fireworks on animals and vulnerable people within the District. Although there was agreement that the effects on animals and vulnerable people were upsetting it was highlighted that there was already legislation in place to monitor the use of fireworks and to 'encourage' residents might prove difficult and further clarification was needed in order to understand what the Board's expectation would be in carrying out the recommendation.

Members discussed the possibility of running a social media campaign regarding the use of the fireworks and Cabinet were satisfied that this would be the best way forward. It was with this in mind that an amendment to the recommendation was proposed as follows:

'that Bromsgrove District Council, through its social media and other channels, encourages its residents to attend professionally organised

firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.'

On being put to the vote this was carried.

RESOLVED that

- (i) the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held 28th March 2022, be noted;
- (ii) Bromsgrove District Council, through its social media and other channels, encourage its residents to attend professionally organised firework displays and, in private settings, encourages the use of low noise or visual fireworks only.

75/21

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Interim Head of Finance and Customer Services (Deputy S151) presented the Treasury Management Strategy for Cabinet's consideration.

It was reported to Members that it was a statutory requirement to set the Treasury Management Strategy each financial year and have at least a half yearly update and outturn report. The Council reports progress on a quarterly basis as part of the Quarterly Monitoring Report.

The Interim Head of Finance and Customer Services (Deputy S151) took Members through the report, which included the Capital Strategy 2022/23, Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement 2022/23, Policy for the Flexible Use of Capital Receipts and the Investment Strategy and highlighted a number of areas in particular, including:

- Capital expenditure on regeneration schemes including Burcot Lane and the Levelling Up Funding which the Council successfully bid for in 2021.
- The Prudential Indicators in Table 6 of Appendix A which provided information on the projected levels of the Council's gross debt compared with the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR).
- The legal obligation to set an Authorised Limit for external debt each year in addition to an Operational Boundary which was set as a warning level should debt approach the limit.
- The Treasury Management Strategy at Appendix B which highlighted how the Authority would invest in the future.

- The Council's Treasury Management Advisor, Arlingclose, would assist in identifying the most cost effective way to manage borrowing and the Councils Minimum Revenue Provision going forward.

Following the presentation of the report it was noted that local authorities must follow a proper governance process in respect of investments and ensure that a robust risk strategy was in place to deliver investments that were affordable.

The Executive Director for Resources was invited to comment on the report and in doing so explained that this was a very technical and important report that would provide a framework on how the Council could manage their investments in the future.

RECOMMENDED that

- (i) the Capital Strategy as an appropriate overarching strategy for the Council be approved;
- (ii) the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23 and the associated MRP policy be approved;
- (iii) the policy for Flexible use of Capital Receipts be approved;
- (iv) the Investment Strategy be approved.

76/21

MONTH 11 FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Executive Director for Resources and the Interim Head of Finance and Customer Services (Deputy S151) presented the Month 11 Financial Monitoring report. Cabinet was informed that there had not been formal reporting over the previous municipal year as capacity within the Finance team had been diverted in order to process the business grants that had been distributed as part of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, it was stated that this report confirmed what officers had anticipated, that the Council was working within its budget. It was stated that the Final Outturn report would be submitted by the end of June 2022 in order to comply with the reporting timetable.

During consideration of this item the following was highlighted for Members' attention:

Agenda Item 14

Cabinet
3rd May 2022

- There was a projected revenue underspend of £367k based on the financial period April 2021 to February 2022.
- The Capital Budget programme for the financial year 21/22 was set at £15.6m. It was further explained that only £2.7m had been spent so far as part of the programme. Officers clarified that there were reasons for the variance including the work on the Burcot Lane project, which was due to be completed by the end of the calendar year and would result in the programmed £9.3m budget being spent as allocated. In addition to this, as reported to Cabinet and Council in the 2020/21 Outturn Report, due to a slippage of schemes in the capital Programme for 2020/21, £4.3m from that year had been approved to be transferred to the 2021/22 financial year.

Members were interested as to whether the £367k underspend was as a result of vacancies within the Council. Officers confirmed that although this was the case for some of the underspend there had been other associated factors including the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on how people worked and also lack of access to raw materials that were due to be purchased in order to carry out works, which had resulted in the programme not being undertaken as planned.

Further discussion followed regarding the distribution of the remaining Covid-19 pandemic grants and whether there had been any restrictions placed on them. Officers confirmed that although there were no specific restrictions when the scheme was launched in March 2020 there were preferred areas of expenditure.

RESOLVED that

- (i) The forecast 2021/22 outturn position in relation to revenue budgets based on the financial period April 2021 – February 2022 is a projected revenue underspend of £367k.
- (ii) Capital expenditure to date is £2.7m against a total an approved programme of £15.3m

The meeting closed at 6.35 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

1ST JUNE 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), G. N. Denaro (Deputy Leader), M. A. Sherrey, P.L. Thomas and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor C. A. Hotham

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr J. Howse, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. D. Poole, Mr O. Paparega and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

1/22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

2/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3/22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 3RD MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 3rd May 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Tuesday 3rd May 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

4/22 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 25TH APRIL 2022**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on Monday 25th April 2022 were submitted.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, advised that during the meeting, the Board had received an update on the work of the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership in Bromsgrove District. Members had appreciated the information that had been provided but had concluded that more action could be taken by the partnership in the district centres.

The Board had also received a presentation on the subject of CCTV in the District. Members had been informed that, whilst the cameras were digital, not all of the connections between the cameras used in the

District were digital, particularly in the district centres. There were significant financial costs attached to upgrading the system and this would therefore occur over time as and when appropriate.

Consideration had been given to the content of the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report for the 2021/22 municipal year. The final report was due to be presented for Members' consideration at the Council meeting in June 2022.

There had been a recommendation, on the subject of fireworks, which had been agreed by Members during the meeting of the Board held on 25th April 2022. This recommendation had been considered at the previous meeting of Cabinet where it had been approved.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on Monday 25th April 2022 be noted.

5/22

LEVELLING UP FUNDING PHASE 1

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented a report on the subject of the use of Levelling Up Funding in Phase 1 of the project. Members were advised that the report was designed to confer authority on officers to spend the funding available, which would be allocated to works at Windsor Street and at the former Market Hall site.

During consideration of this item, Members were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had pre-scrutinised the report at a meeting held on Monday 30th May 2022. At this meeting, Members had recommended an amendment to the second recommendation in the report, that this should propose expenditure "up to £2.266 million". Members had expressed the view that this would be more appropriate to propose from a procurement perspective, than expenditure of a set figure, to provide the Council with flexibility. The recommendation that had been made by the Board had been published in a supplementary pack and Members were asked to note that this contained a typographical error, as it should have recorded a figure of £2.266 million rather than £2.66 million.

RESOLVED that

- 1) progress made to date on the Levelling Up schemes be noted;
- 2) authority be delegated to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services and the Executive Director of Resources to proceed to spend the Levelling Up Fund allocation up to a total of £2.266m on the required demolition and remediation works at the Windsor Street site and to engage a design and build contractor on the Market Hall site; and

- 3) the timetable, where further approvals for the Market Hall project will be needed once options have been appraised and schemes designed via the invitation to tender, be noted.

6/22

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME - UPDATE

The Executive Director of Finance and Resources presented an update to Cabinet concerning the Council Tax Support Scheme and the process for consulting on changes to the scheme.

In considering the scheme, Members were asked to note that, whilst the Council collected Council Tax on behalf of precepting authorities, Bromsgrove District Council only received approximately 12 per cent of the Council Tax from Band D equivalent properties. The rest was distributed amongst precepting authorities, with the majority of funding allocated to Worcestershire County Council.

Cabinet was informed that the Council was required to consult with both the public and precepting authorities about any proposed changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme. Members questioned the extent to which there would be further consultation in respect of the Council Tax Support Scheme during the year and how frequently this would need to take place. Officers explained that there would be consultation during the autumn and any further proposed changes would also need to be subject to consultation.

During consideration of this item, Members commented that the report was relatively lengthy. The suggestion was made that, in future, the appendix to the report could be published in a restricted number of paper copies of a supplementary pack for meetings, whilst remaining available for everybody to view electronically, in order to reduce the amount of paper required for printing purposes.

RESOLVED that

- 4) the present scheme be noted; and
- 5) the proposed consultation process for the 2023/24 scheme be noted.

7/22

COUNCIL PLAN (INCLUDING RESTORATION AND RECOVERY PLAN)

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the Council Plan, including the Restoration and Recovery Plan, for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were reminded that the existing Council Plan had been approved prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. In recognition of the impact of the pandemic on local communities and public services, the content of the plan had subsequently been reviewed during a series of workshops, to assess whether the content remained appropriate. No changes to the

Council's strategic purposes or priorities had been proposed during these workshop sessions. However, it was proposed that the green thread which had previously been included in the Council Plan, relating to tackling climate change, should become a specific priority. This corresponded with feedback that had been received from the public who had completed the Community Survey panel, in which they had reported that recycling and waste collection as well as energy efficient homes were key priorities for local residents.

The Recovery and Restoration Plan had been drafted in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. This document detailed actions that had been taken by the Council to address the impact of the pandemic locally.

The content of the updated Council Plan was briefly discussed, and Members welcomed the proposal for the green thread to become a Council priority. Members commented that this was appropriate in a context in which a climate emergency had been declared by the Council and given the need to work towards a carbon neutral future.

Reference was made to the Overview and Scrutiny Board's pre-scrutiny of the report at a meeting of the Board held on Monday 30th May 2022. Members noted that the Board had highlighted the significant number of acronyms that had been used in the plan and that it would be helpful for a key to be provided in future to assist Members and the public when reviewing the content. There was general agreement that this was a helpful suggestion.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, commented that the Board had also identified areas where Members had considered that improvements could be made to the content. In respect of the green thread, concerns had been raised that the District Heat Network had not been referenced specifically within the report or plan. These concerns were noted by Cabinet, although it was also highlighted that the Council Plan as a strategic document and particular projects and activities would be referenced in more specific plans.

RECOMMENDED that

- 1) the Council Plan Addendum 2022/23 be approved and included alongside the current BDC Council Plan 2019/23; and
- 2) the Recovery and Restoration Plan 2020/21 be agreed and closed.

8/22

DIGITAL STRATEGY

The Head of Business Transformation, Organisational Development and Digital Strategy presented the Council's proposed Digital Strategy for Cabinet's consideration.

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Members were advised that in recent years, particularly during the Covid-19 pandemic, organisations had increasingly been using digital technology in service delivery. The Digital Strategy promoted a digital first approach to service delivery and there were four key themes to this approach:

- Digital access for the customer
- A digital workforce
- Digital leadership
- Digital infrastructure

The Council needed to be cautious when using digital technology. There were areas that needed to be managed carefully including: cyber security, data protection and use of the cloud to store data.

In considering the use of digital technology, Members were asked to note that there were people who were not comfortable using digital technology. When delivering services, the Council needed to continue to ensure that the needs of these people were met. Members commented that there were also barriers that prevented some residents from making use of digital technology, including poor broadband connectivity in rural areas.

RESOLVED that the Customer and Digital Strategy be agreed and adopted.

The meeting closed at 6.17 p.m.

Chairman

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Bromsgrove District Council – 22nd June 2022 Member Questions

**1. From Councillor K. Van Der Plank
Question for the Leader**

“It now seems probable that this council will end the financial year 2021/2022 with a surplus of around £370k. So is it now time to revisit the Independent groups budget suggestion of spending £70,000 on the reintroduction of the hugely popular and useful community grants fund which supported many local good and worthy causes?”

**2. From Councillor S. Douglas
Question for the Leader**

“It is disappointing news that WCC have been unsuccessful in their bid for £84m to invest in bus service. I recall that the expected success of this bid was the reasoning behind the refusal to move forward with the Independent budget proposal to fund a business case to investigate the feasibility of BDC running its own local bus services to connect the outlying centres with Bromsgrove. Will the controlling group now consider writing to the County Council to request that they review the services in Bromsgrove with the potential to provide free bus travel at the weekends?”

**3. From Councillor C. Hotham
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling**

“Please could the cabinet member for finance give a figure for the net annual running cost of the Parkside building to this council after all income and expenditure is accounted for?”

**4. From Councillor S. Baxter
Question for the Leader**

“On 13 April the Government announced the allocation of £2.8m to Bromsgrove District Council through the UK prosperity fund. This is a great opportunity for levelling up across the whole district and is dependent on an investment plan to be submitted by the Council by 1 August. The guidance, announced at the same time stated that ‘Local partners should support lead local authorities for each place to develop the investment plan’.

Please can the leader advise on who the Council considers are its partners and which local partners have been involved to date in the development of the investment plan?

Parish Councils in Bromsgrove we’re first notified of the fund nearly 2 months later, on 8 June when they were informed that, as stakeholders they ‘are being invited to submit proposals for projects that address a need or exploit an opportunity in the local area’.

The deadline for proposals is 20 June. Does the leader believe that it is realistic for any organisation to conceive, develop and sign off any project within 7 working days.”

**5. From Councillor R. Hunter
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and Well-Being**

“Right to Buy

The Prime Minister’s recent speech in Blackpool reignited fears over the possible expansion of the Right to Buy to housing association tenants. Whilst genuine efforts to support people to own their own home are to be lauded, the unfortunate consequence of Right to Buy is the loss of badly needed social housing that in reality will never be replaced. How many homes has BDHT sold through the Preserved Right to Buy and Right to Acquire since it was established and how will you protect Bromsgrove’s social housing from any further attempts to sell it off?”

**6. From Councillor J. King
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change**

“Artrix assets

As we get closer to the reopening of our local arts centre, The Artrix, what assurances can you give that assets such as fittings and technical equipment that were removed when the building became a vaccination centre will be fully reinstalled or replaced?”

**7. From Councillor S. Robinson
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change**

“Sports facilities

Following the loss of the sports hall and the failure to deliver a viable alternative at North Bromsgrove High School, what are you doing to improve the availability of sports facilities in Bromsgrove?”

**8. From Councillor R. Jenkins
Question for the Leader**

"For the safety of pedestrians and to protect shop and market stall frontages this Council urgently should make a case to WCC to update the ruling made in 1987 which allows delivery vehicles on the High Street until 10.30am. This was long before the changes were made to Bromsgrove's chartered market. This should now be for before 09.00am which is the time by which all market stall vehicles have to be off the High Street so the market can commence.

All of the High Street properties except one, no. 110, have rear functional doors. This change would prevent accidents occurring, any additional damage to property happening, and serve the convenience of pedestrians. This even on non-market days when the High Street can be surprisingly busy at that time. The time off the High Street for delivery vehicles should remain at the existing 4.00am timing.

Please could the Leader provide an update on the progress that is being made to address this matter?”

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NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor S. Robinson:

“Keep Bromsgrove’s levelling up funding in Bromsgrove

Council calls on the Leader of Bromsgrove District Council to lobby Worcestershire County Council to reinvest the proceeds from the sale of the Bromsgrove Library site into improvements for Bromsgrove High Street.”

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor J. King:

“An annual summer celebration

Council expresses its gratitude to everyone who contributed to the celebrations of HM The Queen’s Platinum Jubilee in communities right across the district. Council extends a particular thank you to the Bromsgrove branch of the Royal British Legion and all the organisations involved in the excellent town centre event on the Sunday of the Jubilee Weekend. Such events bring communities together and promote local businesses, providing considerable social and economic benefits. Council calls on officers to explore the potential for creating an annual outdoor town centre event of this scale to complement the fantastic programme of activity put on as part of the Bromsgrove Festival, thereby ensuring the benefits continue to be realised year after year.”