



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 20TH JULY 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 22nd June 2022 (Pages 1 - 18)**

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**

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. **Changes to Committee Membership**

Members are asked to note the appointments of named substitutes to the following Committees

- Audit, Standards and Governance Committee – Councillors S. Baxter, A. English and C. Hotham.
- Licensing Committee (not including the Licensing Sub-Committees) – Councillors C. Hotham and K. Van Der Plank
- Overview and Scrutiny Board - Councillors S. Douglas, A. English, R. Jenkins, S. Robinson and K. Van Der Plank.
- Planning Committee – Councillors S. Baxter and C. Hotham.

9. **To receive and consider a report from the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and Well Being (Pages 19 - 32)**

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.

10. **Recommendations from the Cabinet (Pages 33 - 34)**

To consider the recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th July 2022.

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

- (i) Bromsgrove and Redditch Duty to Co-operate (Pages 35 - 44)

12. **To note the minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 6th July 2022 (Pages 45 - 52)**

13. **Questions on Notice (Pages 53 - 54)**

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.

14. **Motions on Notice** (Pages 55 - 58)

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.

15. **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

12th July 2022

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
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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 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 ATTENDANCE

Members of the public will be able to access the meeting 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 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.

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.



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

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

22ND JUNE 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors R. J. Laight (Chairman), A. J. B. Beaumont (Vice-Chairman), R. J. Deeming, G. N. Denaro, S. P. Douglas, A. B. L. English, M. Glass, C.A. Hotham, R. J. Hunter, J. E. King, A. D. Kriss, L. C. R. Mallett (from Minute Item No. 26/22), K.J. May, M. Middleton, S. A. Robinson, H. D. N. Rone-Clarke, M. A. Sherrey, C. J. Spencer, P.L. Thomas, J. Till, K. J. Van Der Plank, S. A. Webb and P. J. Whittaker

Observers: Mr C. Cooke

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr J. Howse, Ms. C. Flanagan and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

16\22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors S. Baxter, S. Colella, S. Hession, R. Jenkins, H. Jones, A. Kent, P. McDonald and M. Thompson.

17\22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

18\22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 18TH MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on Wednesday 18th May 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

19\22 **TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE**

The Chairman advised that the Chief Executive had participated in a fundraising exercise recently that had been designed to support the Chairman's charity, the Primrose Hospice. The Chief Executive was thanked for participating in this exercise.

The Head of Paid Service confirmed that he had no announcements to make on this occasion.

20\22

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

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

21\22

TO RECEIVE COMMENTS, QUESTIONS OR PETITIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Mr C. Cooke asked the following question:

“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?”

The Chairman responded by thanking Mr Cooke for the information and ideas provided. It was clarified that the Council’s Leisure Team had been assessing the option of electronic noticeboards in parks only. The Bromsgrove Centres Manager would work with the Leisure team to assess the potential of also introducing these on the High Street.

22\22

URGENT DECISIONS

Members were informed that no urgent decisions had been taken since the previous meeting of Council.

23\22

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board in the 2021/22 municipal year, Councillor C. Hotham, presented the Board’s Annual Report for Members’ consideration.

Council was informed that the Board had investigated a range of matters during the year, as detailed in the report. In addition, there had been

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three Task Group exercises, focusing on Equalities, Flooding and Libraries. Recommendations had been made by each of these groups, which had received a mixed response from Cabinet. Members were asked to note that Task Groups were cross party teams of Councillors investigating subjects in detail over a period of time and their findings needed to be considered carefully when presented for the consideration of Cabinet, which ultimately determined whether recommendations made through the scrutiny process should be agreed.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the impact of the Flooding Task Group, with Members noting that the group's recommendations had not been endorsed. Instead, there had been a separate review of flooding undertaken by officers at the same time as the Task Group exercise which had recently concluded. Whilst the group's recommendation to employ two extra members of staff had not been agreed by Cabinet due to concerns about the financial costs and the amount of work available for them, Members were advised that external contractors were undertaking work on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council. The Overview and Scrutiny Board would receive an update on the impact of this work in due course and alternative options to working with contractors could be explored further by the Board, including the potential to recommend that new staff be employed in this field in future who could be commissioned to also provide this work to other Councils.

Reference was made to the attendance by Officers at meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board during the year. Whilst Members had been required by law to attend meetings of the Board in person in order to participate in the debate and vote on items, it was noted that Officers had been permitted to participate in meetings remotely. The suggestion was made that it would be helpful for more officers to attend meetings in person in future. However, Members also commented that remote attendance by Officers at meetings had been one of several mitigating measures put in place to help prevent the spread of Covid-19. Whilst nationally Covid-19 mitigation measures were no longer a legal requirement, the illness remained endemic and remote attendance by Officers helped to reduce the risks of transmission.

Members were asked to note that Cabinet recognised the important role of Overview and Scrutiny in the local democratic process. Cabinet always dedicated time to considering the findings of scrutiny Task Groups and, where considered appropriate, endorsed scrutiny recommendations. However, there were also times where Cabinet would conclude that it was not appropriate to agree to some or all of the recommendations that were proposed by a scrutiny Task Group.

Councillor Hotham concluded by thanking other members of the Board for their hard work during the year, particularly the Vice Chairman of the Board Councillor J. Till. Portfolio Holders were thanked for attending Board, Task Group and Working Group meetings to provide evidence to Overview and Scrutiny Members and answer questions. Officers were

also thanked for the support that they had provided to both the Board and to the scrutiny Working Groups and Task Groups. Particular reference was made to the support that had been provided by the Senior Democratic Services Officer and she was thanked for all of her hard work. Members also thanked Councillor Hotham for his hard work as Chairman of the Board.

RESOLVED that the Overview and Scrutiny Board's Annual Report 2021/22 be noted.

24\22

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety presented a report outlining work during the year that had been undertaken in respect of Community Safety. In presenting the report, Members were reminded that a separate report on the subject of Environmental Services had been presented in January 2022.

Officers were thanked for their hard work continuing to deliver services despite the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Members were asked to note the important role of CCTV cameras in relation to community safety and that three redeployable CCTV cameras were being used to help tackle crime. The Council's CCTV team worked closely with the police, although use of CCTV camera footage was subject to the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

During consideration of this item, the following specific points were subsequently discussed by Members in detail:

- The CCTV cameras used by the Council that were linked to a central control room and the extent to which any cameras were owned by the authority that were not connected to this central point. Members were advised that the CCTV cameras used by the Environmental Services team based at the depots was maintained on a separate system and not connected to the central control room.
- The multi-agency risk assessments in respect of domestic abuse cases and the extent to which Council Officers worked with police to address these cases. Council was advised that funding was available to help address domestic abuse cases.
- The work that had been undertaken to provide support to young people at risk of becoming victims of crime. The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety clarified that funding had been made available by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) to help provide support to young people at risk of becoming victims of crime.
- The recent reports of a bicycle having been stolen from School Drive in Bromsgrove which had not been picked up on CCTV due to overhanging trees. Members were informed that the Portfolio

Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety would raise this with relevant officers for further investigation.

- The number of burglaries that were solved across the District and the proportion of these burglaries that were attended by the police. The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety agreed to request further information from officers on this subject. However, Members were asked to note that crime statistics of this nature were available on a ward basis on the Police website.
- The work that was being undertaken to address Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the District.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

25\22

SECTION 151 OFFICER APPOINTMENT

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance explained that the Executive Director of Resources, who was also the Council's Section 151 Officer, had resigned and would be leaving the Council's employment soon. There was a legal requirement for the authority to have a Section 151 Officer and it was proposed that the Council's Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer should be appointed to the position of Interim Section 151 Officer for a period of 12 months as a replacement.

There was a new Head of Financial and Customer Services due to commence employment with the Council in June 2022. However, it was not considered to be appropriate to appoint this officer as the Council's Section 151 Officer at this early stage. By contrast, the Interim Deputy Section 151 Officer had gained experience over a number of months working for the authority and would help to ensure service continuity.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about whether further recruitment would be required to fill the position of Deputy Section 151 Officer, should these proposals be agreed. Members were informed that no further recruitment would be required at this time.

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

RESOLVED 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).

26\22

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETINGS HELD ON 3RD MAY AND 1ST JUNE 2022

The Chairman explained that recommendations had been made at meetings of Cabinet held on 3rd May and 1st June 2022 which had been highlighted for Members' consideration at the meeting.

Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented the Treasury Management and associated Investment, Capital and Minimum Revenue Provision Strategies. Council was advised that these strategies detailed how the authority would deal with its debt and investments in the following financial year. This included the Council's prudential indicators, which local authorities had been required since 2003 to review, setting out the limits on borrowing and investing within which the Council needed to operate.

There was a statutory requirement for the Council to set these strategies on an annual basis, to report on progress on a half yearly basis and to produce a financial outturn report at the end of the year. All of these reports needed to be considered at a meeting of Council. Should the authority breach any of the prudential indicators, there was a requirement for Council to approve any subsequent changes.

Council was informed that the most significant change for the year ahead was that Councils could not invest for yield and the Section 151 Officer needed to certify for this. Should the Council be found to be investing for yield, the authority would not be able to use debt financing from the Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) ever again. This debt was significantly cheaper than commercial debt and was a cornerstone of Council investment strategy across the country.

Bromsgrove District Council had not taken out new long-term debt for some years. However, new capital works were set out in the authority's Capital Financing Requirement. Even in cases where these works were financed from balances or working capital, there was a requirement for a Minimum Revenue Account (MRA) repayment.

The Capital Strategy provided further information about the Council's plans for borrowing to fund the authority's capital programme as well as the measures that would be taken to finance this work. This included the Burcot Lane and Levelling Up regeneration schemes. Information was included in respect of the Capital Financing Requirement, which was the figure on which Minimum Revenue Provision repayments were based. In addition, Council debt levels were highlighted in the strategy. The Council could not breach authorised limits and could only breach operational boundary limits for short periods of time.

The Treasury Management Strategy detailed the overall economic position. Since the strategy was drafted, there had been changes to the economy due to the impact of the war in Ukraine. Officers were anticipating that this would significantly impact on projected interest rates in the short and medium-term.

Further information was provided about how the Council invested surplus funds. Refinancing indicators had not been changed and were

set at 100 per cent to allow for the greatest level of flexibility due to the nature of the economy.

The Minimum Revenue Position (MRP) Policy had not changed. However, the Council would be engaging with Arlingclose over the summer to review the MRP Policy, debt and investment strategies.

The Council had to notify the Government in advance of the financial year if the authority planned to use capital receipts to fund transformation or redundancy costs. The Council was not planning to use this facility during the year and the Government had in fact reduced its application to just transformation since the start of the 2022/23 financial year.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor G. Denaro and seconded by Councillor K. May.

RESOLVED 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.

Council Plan (Including the Restoration and Recovery Plan)

The Leader presented the Council Plan, including the Restoration and Recovery Plan, for Members' consideration.

Council was informed that Bromsgrove District Council was committed to continuing to deliver services that meet the needs of residents. Since the emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Council had worked closely with partner organisations to help address the impact of the virus on the local community. The Restoration and Recovery Plan had provided a focus on the actions that were being taken by the Council in response to the pandemic. The majority of these actions had been completed or remained ongoing.

The Council had an approved Council Plan which had been in place prior to the Covid-19 pandemic. The addendum to the report detailed some small changes to the plan in light of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The Council had retained strategic purposes underpinned by priorities, although the green thread had become a standalone priority for the Council.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the content of the Council Plan in detail. Questions were raised about the reasons why the addendum applied for a period of 12 months. Council was informed that this was because Members' terms of office were due to come to an end in May 2023 and after this date the new administration would want to develop a Council Plan that reflected their priorities. The potential for Members to be consulted on the content of the next Council Plan was also raised. The Leader clarified that Members would have an opportunity to contribute their thoughts after the local elections had taken place in May 2023.

During consideration of this item, concerns were raised about the costs, in terms of officer time, of developing an addendum to the Council Plan that would only apply for a relatively short period of time. The suggestion was made that, in order to ensure the sustainability of Council services, there should be longer-term planning taking place. The Leader explained that, following the pandemic, this was the appropriate time to review the content of the Council Plan and to review the needs of the community in light of the impact of Covid-19. The addendum would help to support service sustainability whilst enabling the Council to work differently as the country learned to live with Covid.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor G. Denaro.

RESOLVED 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.

27\22

AUDIT, STANDARDS AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22

The Chairman of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in the 2021/22 municipal year, Councillor L. Mallett, presented the Committee's Annual Report for Members' consideration.

Council was advised that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee had a very important role. The Committee ensured the independence of controls on corporate governance and that appropriate mechanisms were in place at the Council to manage the authority's finances and monitor risk mitigation. There had been challenges during the year, mainly due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic had also impacted on the audit function at the Council.

Councillor Mallett thanked the other members of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee for their hard work during the year. Representatives of the external auditors, Grant Thornton, the Internal

Audit team, Democratic Services and the Financial Services team were also thanked for their hard work and support.

During consideration of this item, the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance thanked the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee for their work in 2021/22. Members were advised that the work of the Committee was vital and the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance highlighted his plans to improve the presentation of figures to the Committee in the 2022/23 municipal year.

RESOLVED that the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's Annual Report for 2021/22 be noted.

28\22

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 3RD MAY AND 1ST JUNE 2022

The minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 3rd May and Wednesday 1st June 2022 were noted.

29\22

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman explained that 8 Questions on Notice had been received for consideration at the meeting and would be considered in the order in which they had been submitted. A maximum of 15 minutes was allocated to consideration of these questions and the answers provided and there were no supplementary questions.

Question submitted by Councillor K. Van Der Plank

"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?"

The Leader responded by commenting that the forecast outturn position for 2021/22 was better than anticipated at the time of setting the 2022/23 budget. This would mean that the opening balance of the Council's General Fund would be healthier than anticipated, which would help the Council's challenging financial position.

The Leader stressed, however, that other areas within the budget were likely to perform worse than anticipated in the 2022/23 financial year. For example, the inflationary assumptions made when setting the budget with regard to pay inflation (of 2 per cent) and non-pay inflation (of circa 5 per cent) were likely to come under significant pressure during the period. These pressures would be closely monitored but were likely to lead to significant overspends in some areas.

Members were also asked to note that the Council still had an underlying gap between spend and income over the medium term. As previously

reported in the Budget, the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan forecasted the authority's General Fund position to decline significantly from a balance of over £4 million to £1.046 million at the end of 2024/25, a level which was below minimum adequate levels.

The Council would therefore need to continue to take steps to reduce expenditure and/or increase income to remain financially secure moving forward. This financial reality made any decision to spend additional monies very difficult as the Council continued to aim to balance the budget.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Douglas

"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?"

The Leader responded by advising that she shared Councillor Douglas's disappointment that Worcestershire County Council had been unsuccessful in their bid for major funding to invest in bus services. Whilst the Council wanted to support all residents with access, connectivity and public transport opportunities throughout the District, it was not possible to commit resources to a feasibility and business case study to consider the Council, as a District authority, running local bus services, particularly given the financial pressures and challenges.

The Council's priorities and commitments were clearly set out in the Council Plan, which was being considered at the Council meeting and which were detailed to:

- Participate in work with Worcestershire County Council and other partners to enable new, better, integrated and more sustainable modes of transport across the District; and
- Support Active travel.

Finally, Members were asked to note that Bromsgrove District Council already supported Community Transport in Bromsgrove (BURT) at a cost of £28,000 each year, which enabled approximately 350/400 journeys a month to be provided for registered users.

Question submitted by Councillor C. Hotham

"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?"

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance explained that the net annual running cost budget for Parkside was circa £240,000. The main costs were business rates, utilities and facilities management. The Council worked hard to try to reduce these costs by letting out space to external organisations and this work would continue.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Baxter

Councillor C. Hotham asked the following question on behalf of Councillor Baxter:

“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.”

The Leader responded by highlighting that the Council had engaged with a wide range of partners to develop the investment plan, including Worcestershire County Council, Parish Councils, neighbouring Councils, the Chamber of Commerce, Local Enterprise Partnerships, housing providers, training providers, the Police, NHS, Department of Work and Pensions and representatives of the voluntary and community sector (VCS). The call for projects was an important part of this engagement as it helped to identify challenges and opportunities that were unlikely to be picked up in conventional data and statistics.

The Government had set a very challenging timetable for submission of the Investment Plan. Whilst the prospectus was published on 13th April 2022, additional guidance had been issued in the intervening period and the Council had had to make a number of adjustments to the authority’s approach before meaningful engagement could be undertaken with partners. It was important to note that the call for projects was about identifying need and opportunity. The Council was not required to submit specific projects as part of the Investment Plan. Consequently, organisations might have an opportunity to access funding for projects

after the investment plan had been agreed. This was particularly likely for activities within the Communities and Place priority of the scheme.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

“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?”

The Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and Well Being responded by agreeing that there remained significant demand for social housing in Bromsgrove and anything which removed the availability of much needed social housing and homes, would be of detriment to local communities and future tenants.

At the request of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Health and Well Being, officers had spoken with colleagues at Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to seek their views, and provide the data, given the question related to the numbers sold by the organisation, as a Registered Provider. Since 2016, there had been 38 properties sold via the Preserved Right to Buy and there had been 5 properties sold via the Right to Acquire (by BDHT), so 43 properties under both categories had been sold in total since 2016.

With regard to any possible expansion of the ‘Right to Buy’ scheme to housing association tenants, which if proposals were to be enacted, would impact on BDHT’s stock, their overriding view continued to be that the most pressing concern was the number of social rent properties that were available, and taking any stock out of ‘the system’ would add more pressure to the waiting list and homelessness situation. Generally, Right to Buy encouraged the larger family homes to be sold and these properties were what Bromsgrove needed the most.

The Council would continue to work closely in partnership with BDHT primarily, but also with other partners and providers, to ensure that the authority supported and maximised the availability of all types of housing and accommodation to meet the District’s housing needs.

Question submitted by Councillor J. King

“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?”

The Leader responded by commenting that she would write to the Artrix Holding Trust on Councillor King’s behalf on this occasion regarding this matter. However, Members were asked to note that all future questions about the Artrix needed to be addressed to the Artrix Holding Trust directly.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson

“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?”

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance responded by explaining that the Council had an agreed position for operating the sports facilities including the sports hall at North Bromsgrove High School outside of school hours.

The contractual mechanics were being worked through and although the new operating model was not yet in place, the facility, North Bromsgrove High School’s sports hall, had continued to be hired by BAM for community use.

The Council’s Leisure Strategy would be published in the Autumn and would include a build facilities strategy that had received input from Sport England, Governing Bodies, Clubs, Schools and the public. This would help to ensure the Council was able to support the availability of sports facilities in the District to match the current and future demand in line with recent activity trends.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Jenkins

In Councillor Jenkins’s absence, Members referred to the question as printed in the agenda.

"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?"

In response, the Leader advised that the Bromsgrove Centres Manager was investigating the matter and had liaised with internal Council officers regarding evidence to support any changes to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). An initial meeting had been held with Worcestershire County Council to establish the TRO process. Background work would be undertaken and Members would be updated accordingly.

30\22

MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman advised that 2 Motions on Notice had been received for consideration at the meeting.

Levelling Up Funding in Bromsgrove

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted 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."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor S. Robinson and seconded by Councillor R. Hunter.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Robinson commented that she welcomed the funding that had been received from the Government for High Street improvement works as well as the work that had already been undertaken by Bromsgrove District Council and Worcestershire County Council in respect of High Street improvements. The purpose of the Motion was to ensure that funding that had been received by Worcestershire County Council for the sale of the former library site, was reinvested in Bromsgrove town centre. The High Street was a significant hub in Bromsgrove town centre, where businesses were based and events took place. There was a need to ensure that the appearance of the High Street was presented well. Councillor Robinson expressed the view that unfortunately there were some issues with the appearance of the High Street, for example, the tarmac on the road was in a poor condition, following work by utilities companies and, although work was being undertaken to address this situation, more could be done to improve the urban environment.

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In seconding the Motion, Councillor Hunter commented that the Motion did not propose that the money from the sale of the former library site should be taken from Worcestershire County Council. Instead, the Motion was calling for Bromsgrove District Council to ask Worcestershire County Council to invest the income from the sale in Bromsgrove town centre. Councillor Hunter expressed the view that the urban environment, including street furniture, was in need of improvement and that there needed to be an increase in investment in the town centre. Concerns were also raised about the condition of bus shelters situated in the town centre and the need for these to be improved.

During consideration of this item, an amendment was proposed to the Motion. This amendment was proposed by Councillor L. Mallet and seconded by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke.

The wording of the amended Motion was proposed as detailed below:

“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 *and the Leader and relevant Portfolio Holder should come to the next Council meeting to speak on the schemes that are planned for the High Street.*”

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Mallett commented that in previous years funding had been allocated to works, although he expressed the view that this had not always achieved best value for money. There were opportunities available to use the funding from the sale of the former library site to invest in the town. To ensure transparency, it would be helpful for Council to be informed about the schemes that did receive investment from this funding. Lessons needed to be learned from previous regeneration works in Bromsgrove town centre to ensure that the condition of the urban environment and street furniture remained fit for purpose after this investment had occurred.

In seconding the amendment, Councillor Rone-Clarke noted that he represented a ward located in Bromsgrove. Members were advised that he was frequently contacted by local residents about the condition of the High Street and it was important to ensure that action was taken to address this and that that action was promoted and held to account. Councillor Rone-Clarke also commented on the potential for a broader package of support to be provided in the future, including the possibility of providing rate relief to small businesses.

Councillor Robinson, as the proposer of the original Motion on Notice, confirmed that she was happy to accept this amendment to the wording of the Motion.

In response to the Motion, the Leader agreed that it was important for Worcestershire County Council to invest in Bromsgrove High Street, town centre and District as a whole. However, the Leader commented that the proposal detailed in the Motion would be difficult to achieve. Money received from the land transactions would, in accordance with due process, need to be received by Worcestershire County Council. How this funding was subsequently spent would be determined by Worcestershire County Council. The receipt from the former library site was part of a bigger picture in terms of opportunities for the County Council to invest in the District. As part of this process, £14.5 million Levelling Up funding had already been secured for investment in the regeneration of Bromsgrove town centre.

Members were asked to note that 90 per cent of small business on the High Street in Bromsgrove were already in receipt of business rates relief. The new Town Centres Manager had been undertaking work in Bromsgrove town centre to try to improve the urban environment, including through investment in lighting. Members were also asked to note that any utilities company that undertook works that impacted on urban design had up to 6 months to address this through remediation works.

Bromsgrove District Council had already received alternative funding, which would be used to help with the regeneration of Bromsgrove town centre, including Levelling Up funding. There was also £2.6 million of funding that had been allocated to Bromsgrove in the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

Reference was made during the debate to the condition of the bus shelters situated in the town centre. Members were asked to notify the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety of any specific bus shelters that were in a poor condition. Council was also asked to note that there was already a programme in place for maintenance of bus shelters.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

An Annual Summer Celebration

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted 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.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor King and seconded by Councillor Hunter.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor King thanked all the residents, businesses and VCS organisations, particularly the Royal British Legion, for their hard work organising the recent Platinum Jubilee celebrations. There had been a number of events in the District which had brought the community together. The Bromsgrove Festival provided a useful opportunity to celebrate Bromsgrove but more could be done to build on this event. An annual event would help to attract more visitors to the District and would have a positive impact on community spirit. The Council could also work closely with partner organisations to deliver an annual event celebrating Bromsgrove.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Hunter commented that the action proposed in the Motion would support ongoing work in respect of the preparation of the Council’s new Leisure Strategy. The Motion requested that the Council should explore having an annual celebration, which would not necessarily commit the authority to taking this action.

During consideration of this Motion, an amendment was proposed to the Motion. The wording of this amended Motion was as follows:

“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, *within our town and outside town centres*, 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.”

The amendment was proposed by Councillor Rone-Clarke and seconded by Councillor Mallett.

In introducing the amendment, Councillor Rone-Clarke commented that, whilst there would not be a jubilee every year, an annual event celebrating Bromsgrove could take place. This would provide an opportunity to attract visitors to Bromsgrove High Street and for people to access services provided by local restaurants and craftspeople. As

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part of this process, it would be helpful to ensure that residents living in parts of the District located outside the town of Bromsgrove could be included in the festivities.

Councillor King, as the proposer of the original Motion on Notice, confirmed that she was happy to accept this amendment to the wording of the Motion.

Members discussed the Motion in detail and commented on the need for residents living in areas of the District outside Bromsgrove town centre, particularly in rural locations, to be provided with access to events in the town. Reference was made to the jubilee festivities and the benefits arising from these recent celebrations, including in the ways in which this had brought people together from different generations.

In responding to the Motion, the Leader thanked Councillor King and other Members for their comments of appreciation about all that had been done to celebrate the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. The Leader agreed that the Council should extend a particular thank you to the Bromsgrove Branch of the Royal British Legion and all other organisations involved in making the Jubilee celebrations a success.

Members were asked to note that the Leisure Strategy was in the process of being prepared and this would explore how events could be organised and managed across the District. In this context, it was considered inappropriate to pre-empt the outcomes of the work on this strategy, although it was likely that the strategy would bring forward proposals regarding events in the District. In the meantime, the Leader agreed that events were a great way of bringing communities together and this could be by inviting communities to organise events as well as by attendance only. Bromsgrove District was large, and it was worthwhile having events, be they large or small, in a range of venues so that the various and quality landscapes and historic buildings could be enjoyed by as many people as possible.

Reference was made to the progress that had been made with the development of the Leisure Strategy. Members were advised that the strategy was due to be presented for the Cabinet's consideration in autumn 2022. Prior to this date, Members would be consulted about the appropriate content.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

The meeting closed at 8.05 p.m.

Chairman



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Portfolio Holder Report

Housing, Health & Well-Being

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



Portfolio Holder Report

1. Update on Strategic Purposes

Relevant Strategic Purpose Title 1: Living Independent, Active, and Healthy Lives

NEW Lifeline

NEW Lifeline supports over 1200 vulnerable residents of Bromsgrove to remain living independently at home. NEW Lifeline Installation team provides equipment that they install into the home of the individual, or body worn devices, to aid the service user to call for assistance in an emergency and/or equipment that monitors their wellbeing and safety without infringing their privacy.

The Monitoring Centre is the heart of the operation, taking calls day and night from service users and their families to support, reassure, and enable; helping with matters (such as doctor appointments, health concerns, anxiety, access to care, housing repairs, equipment faults, and communication to name a few) and responding to emergencies (such as falls, medical emergencies, no response calls, smoke detection, door access, key safe access etc).

The Monitoring Centre team monitor the equipment used by NEW Lifeline Service users 24 hours per day, 7 days a week. The team are a highly trained and multi-skilled. Not only monitoring the Lifeline equipment, but also providing out of office hours telephone answering services for the Council and several other corporate clients, and CCTV monitoring across North Worcestershire.

The NEW Lifeline service is a paid for service, with charges agreed at Council each year. However, we offer a 6 weeks free service, to those who are referred in by a health or care professional, where there is an opportunity to support someone coming out of hospital or indeed going into to hospital.

The Monitoring centre Operation is a shared service between Redditch and Bromsgrove Councils but also provides monitoring services to a number of other organisations, creating a significant revenue for the Council support the Council's priority for Financial Stability.

Social Prescribing

Social prescribing is part of a commitment to personalised care
Personalised care means all people have choice and control over the way their care is planned and delivered, based on 'what matters to me' and individual strengths and diverse needs. This happens within a system that makes the most of the expertise, capacity and potential of people, families, and communities in creating better health access, outcomes, and experiences. Personalised care takes a whole-system approach, integrating services around the person. It is an all-age model, from maternity and childhood through to end of life, encompassing both mental and physical health support. It can contribute to advancing equality and reducing inequalities in access and outcomes for all. Social prescribing can support a wide range of people, including (but not exclusively) people:



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- with one or more long term conditions
- who need support with their mental health
- who are lonely or isolated
- who have complex social needs which affect their wellbeing.

The service is commissioned by Bromsgrove Primary Care Network which is made up of nine GP surgeries across the Bromsgrove District. The contract between the PCN and Bromsgrove District Council is for five years and two social prescribing link workers are employed to support the nine surgeries.

Social prescribing link workers:

- assess how far a patient's health and wellbeing needs can be met by services and other opportunities available in the community;
- co-produce a simple personalised care and support plan to address the patient's health and wellbeing needs by introducing or reconnecting people to community groups and statutory services;
- evaluate how far the actions in the care and support plan are meeting the individual's health and wellbeing needs;
- provide personalised support to individuals, their families and carers to take control of their health and wellbeing, live independently and improve their health outcomes;
- develop trusting relationships by giving people time and focus on 'what matters to them'; and
- Take a holistic approach, based on the person's priorities, and the wider determinants of health.

The contract commenced in November 2020 however due to the pandemic the service did not start taking referrals until May 2021. Since then, there have been over 350 referrals made to the service. There are three referral pathways – patients can self-refer via the Councils' Monitoring Centre; surgeries can email the Social Prescribers requesting they contact a patient they believe would benefit from the service; agencies can refer using a referral form.

Relevant Strategic Purpose Title 2 - Affordable and sustainable homes

Housing Strategy

As the local housing authority, the Strategic Housing Services Team delivers those services relating to the affordable and sustainable homes priority.

Homelessness: The Council's statutory housing advice and homelessness service is contracted to BDHT to deliver on behalf of the Council. This contracted service is due to be re-tendered this financial year. Homelessness



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presentations remains stable in the district with an average of 250 assessments completed yearly. The main reasons for homelessness approaches remain as friends and family no longer willing to accommodate, end of assured shorthold tenancy and relationship breakdown. The introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has placed additional duties on the Council to provide temporary accommodation as 'safe accommodation' for victims of domestic abuse and changed the priority need definition with homelessness legislation. A new post has been implemented through Government funding to provide additional support to those applicants presenting due to domestic abuse.

We continue to receive and manage the Homelessness Prevention Fund from central government which is ringfenced to provide service that:

- Fully embed the Homelessness Reduction Act and contribute to ending rough sleeping by increasing activity to prevent single homelessness.
- Reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation by maximising family homelessness prevention.
- Reduce the use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families and eliminate family B&B placements beyond the statutory six-week limit.

Affordable Housing: The Housing Strategy Team work with developers and Registered Providers to deliver affordable housing in the district. Developer contributions through s.106 agreements provided 68 units of new affordable housing in 21/22 with a further 28 units being provided by Registered Providers through the Affordable Homes Programme. The definition of affordable housing in the National Planning Policy Framework has also been updated to include the requirement for developments to include 'First Homes' a discounted sale product for first time buyers. Officers are working with developers to deliver this new affordable housing product which is required to be a minimum of 25% of the affordable housing requirement on qualifying sites.

Private Sector Housing: The Private Sector Housing Team support both tenants and landlords of private rented accommodation and manage the licensing requirements of houses in multi occupation (HMO) and mobile home park sites. The primary role is to enforce standards of accommodation and management predominately through the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 undertaking Housing Health Safety Rating System (HHSRS) inspections. The team also manage the Home Repairs Assistance Grants to assist homeowners to keep their homes in a liveable standard and Disabled Facilities Grants to provide adaptations to properties to assist occupants to remain in their home. The team also play an active role in a controlling migration project working with the Police, Fire Service and Immigration Service focusing on migrant workers and substandard accommodation provision.

Energy Efficiency: The team are responsible to the management of the Sustainable Warmth Programme used to assist occupiers to increase the energy efficiency of their properties using retrofit technologies.

Housing Development: The team are leading the work on the construction of 61 homes being delivered on the Council's former offices at Burcot Lane.



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These energy efficient homes will provide 18 units of affordable housing to be delivered by BDHT and propose to have 37 homes for private rent and 6 homes to purchase on the open market.

Key activities since last report:

NEW Lifeline

Key activities for the Lifeline service have focussed upon resilience, business continuity and nationwide telephone digital upgrade.

Telephony digital upgrade has been spoken about in the Technology Enabled Care Industry for many years. The date by which all telephony infrastructure becomes digital is 2025. In order to meet this deadline the Lifeline team, in collaboration with IT, have upgraded the Monitoring Centre infrastructure to a hybrid call answering platform. This allows existing analogue Lifeline equipment and new digital equipment using the Social Care Alarm Internet Protocol (SCAIP) to activate emergency calls into the monitoring centre. This new system was installed January 2020. We were, as far as we can tell, the first digitally enabled local Authority alarm receiving centre in the country.

Following the installation of the new digital platform a number of improvements have been launched:

- The replacement of old analogue equipment for Digital equipment installed in service user homes has begun. Utilizing the latest mobile technology Lifeline units has enabled us to provide services where people have no landline. The GSM equipment provides a quicker connection to the monitoring centre, clearer speech contact, preventative maintenance opportunities where low batteries are flagged through a reporting system and many other reports that increase efficiency and resilience.
- Operators are able to work from home. This has enabled new levels of resilience within the team, for example when many members of the service had to isolate due to the pandemic, those who were not ill could still work.
- New Business Continuity plans Disaster Recovery centre set up at Parkside. This enables:
 - The latest IT security patches to be applied promptly on release increasing corporate resilience to cyber-attack.
 - Service continuity, should Town Hall Redditch be inaccessible we are able to divert all calls to Parkside and operate a normal service from there.
 - Additional operators to work from this location increasing our call handling capacity.

Other priority activities undertaken were to establish our position as a service supplier to other organisations and we have become a “Technology enabled Care” provider on a national framework. We aim to tender for contracts within this framework to increase revenue. We have renewed the Contract to provide services for Cannock Chase District Council through this avenue.



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Social Prescribing

Key activities for the Social Prescribing service have focussed upon promotion and partnership working. Initially when the service commenced, BDC employed two social prescribers and the PCN commissioned Onside to provide social prescribing as well as some other well-being services. The Social Prescribers for BDC and Onside shared the referrals across the nine surgeries. Since April 2022, the PCN have commissioned BDC to provide the social prescribing service for all nine surgeries.

Strategic Housing

Key activities for the Strategic Housing Team have continued to focus upon the provision of affordable housing, the reduction of homelessness, raising standards in the private rented sector and the retrofit of energy efficient technologies.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period

NEW Lifeline

The NEW Lifeline objectives going forwards:

- Grow group customer base and local service users increasing income. We aim to attract at least 1 new group customer through active promotion of digital upgrade. This will further increase financial stability.
- Program of work to replace analogue equipment to increase in scale.
- Robust review of fees and charges to ensure that the service is accessible to all in need.
- Review of Installation Service and staff resilience following increased staff turnover.
- Consider rebranding the service to reflect the recent modernisation of equipment.

Social Prescribing

The Social Prescribing objectives going forward:

1. Measuring impact as follows:
 - Impact on the person – six-month distance travelled and review of assessment and plan and case studies
 - Impact on the community groups – understanding any gaps in provision or over capacity of VCSE sector sessions/services
 - Impact on the health care system – information from GPs and other local health organisations



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2. Ongoing relationship building with the GP surgeries, community groups, and promotion of the service

Strategic Housing

The Strategic Housing Teams objectives going forwards:

- Homelessness reduction including rough sleepers.
- Re-tender of the Housing Advice & Homelessness contract.
- Completion of the Burcot Lane development
- Delivery of other housing development opportunities
- Management of the Homes for Ukraine scheme
- Implementation of First Homes
- Implementation of Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Strategy
- Delivery of the Sustainable Warmth Programme
- Delivery of the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding 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.

Partnership working examples:

NEW Lifeline

NEW Lifeline works with a number of partners to ensure knowledge of our service reaches those in need, taking referrals from the Hospital discharge teams, District Nurses, GP surgeries, Occupational therapists, Social Services, BDHT, Age UK, and other charities.

NEW Lifeline is working with the Falls Response service part of Platform Housing Group. For Service Users that fall but are uninjured we are able to facilitate a pickup from the Falls Response Team. They operate alongside us 24/7, reducing time spent on the floor considerably and decreasing some of the pressure on the ambulance service in Bromsgrove.

Social Prescribing

Social Prescribers work with several partners to ensure knowledge of the service reaches those in need, taking referrals from GP surgeries, Occupational Therapists, Social Services, BDHT, Age UK, Onside and a host of other organisations as well as from patients themselves. The Social Prescriber's role is to signpost patients to appropriate services, so partnership working is crucial.



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Bromsgrove Partnership

Partnership Groups

As the relevant Portfolio Holder, Councillor Shirley Webb is part of the Bromsgrove Partnership, namely Community Wellbeing Theme Group and the Ageing Well Group, as well as the Children and Youth Provider Group (which links to both the Community Wellbeing Theme Group and Community Safety Partnership too).

To improve health and wellbeing and enable residents to live active and healthy lives it is vital for the Council to work in partnership with other local agencies across the public and voluntary sectors in particular. In addition to meeting separately with representatives from other agencies, Councillor Shirley Webb has used the relevant Bromsgrove Partnership groups to create and develop good working relationships with a variety of agencies. It is through building those links with relevant local agencies that delivery opportunities can open up (e.g. opening a dementia meeting centre working with both BDHT and Age UK Herefordshire and Worcestershire).

Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

The ABCD approach, which was initially presented by Public Health to the Partnership back in 2020, has progressed, despite the significant impact of covid. Community builders are in place, recruited from the local community. Community builders are supported through a number of mechanisms, including the Bromsgrove and Redditch ABCD Learning Network, facilitated by Public Health which the Portfolio Holder attend. To ensure all understand the concept of ABCD, 1-day workshops are open to all and all are encouraged to attend one.

Health and Wellbeing Board & Health Improvement Group (HIG)

Councillor Shirley Webb is a member of both the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (on behalf of the Districts Councils in North Worcestershire) and HIG (representing Bromsgrove District Council). This helps ensure a link between District and County level. Councillor Shirley Webb inputted into the recent review of the purpose of the HIG going forward to ensure its effectiveness. This was part of a wider Governance Review of the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board (which HIG sits under). With lots of changes happening within the health arena, it is important that Bromsgrove District Council is represented at these county groups as well as the District Partnership Groups.

Strategic Housing

All elements of the Strategic Housing Service work with many partners in the delivery of its services. The reduction of homelessness requires the team to work with both statutory partners and partners from the voluntary and community sector for example through the Rough Sleeper Outreach Service



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and the provision emergency accommodation for Housing First and No Second Night Out.

Key activities since last report:

NEW Lifeline

NEW Lifeline has increased the promotion and circulation of the 6 weeks free offer. Where provision of the Lifeline Service may prevent someone from going into hospital or where we can facilitate someone coming out of hospital, we will provide the service free of charge for 6 weeks. In this case most referrals are received from Health and Care Professionals but we are open to referrals, that meet this criteria, from all partner organisations. Many of the service users opt to retain the service once the 6 weeks are over.

NEW Lifeline is now supporting the Bromsgrove Social Prescribing team by taking all self-referral calls. The Lifeline team, available to take calls 24/7, talk to the caller relaying the Social Prescribing services available and pass their details through to the SP Team.

NEW Lifeline are working in partnership with The Community Housing Group based in Wyre Forest, on a Pilot Technology enabled Care project. All people who are eligible for a domiciliary care package are given a telecare assessment to determine what equipment could support their independence. We are then installing the advised equipment, which is often complex.

NEW Lifeline is promoted on the Worcestershire [Here2Help](#) directory

Social Prescribing

Social Prescribing Grant Funds – we are currently undertaking a piece of work to influence the rest of the spend, by contacting small local community groups and asking them if they need any support with funding to enhance what they already offer.

The partnership between Onside (who have well-being contracts with the PCN) and BDC well-being teams continues to grow and develop with internal referral systems to ensure seamless services for patients. They are meeting regularly as a whole wellbeing team.

Clinical Supervision is provided by the PCN Clinical Leads to the Social Prescribers, and they are forging good relationships and understanding the needs of patients.

Attendance at a variety of partnership events including the Support Bromsgrove Outreach drop ins in a variety of locations across Bromsgrove, the Age UK Roadshows, and the Early Help in your Community Event at How College. These events enabled us to reach people we may not have usually come across and offered a great opportunity to network with other agencies and spread awareness about the service.



Portfolio Holder Report

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones and Priorities For Next Period

. NEW Lifeline

The NEW Lifeline partnership objectives going forwards:

- Promotion of the service locally through partnership working and increased social media presence to increase referrals.
- Business Continuity planning is a serious element of service delivery for the Lifeline service to be safe and protective of service users. We shall be looking to team up with a new reciprocal partner who can call handle on our behalf for a short period of time should we need to evacuate the Town Hall. We currently share this arrangement with The Community Housing Group but would like to move forwards with an organization using the same platform as NEW Lifeline.

Social Prescribing

The Social Prescribing partnership objectives going forward:

- Ongoing promotion of the service locally through partnership working and increased social media presence to increase referrals.
- To continue to build strong local relationships with VCSE sector organisations and community groups.

Bromsgrove Partnership

- Working with BDHT and Age UK H&W, opening a Dementia Meeting Centre
- Supporting the partnership work between BDHT and St Basils at the Pod to ensure the café facilities were re-opened recently
- Support the work of the Children and Youth Provider Group such as support and activities during school holidays that the group has co-ordinated
- Continuing to engage and join meetings of partnership groups
- Joining the newly established Bromsgrove and Redditch ABCD Learning Network and supporting the Community Builders hosted by the voluntary sector
- Providing input into the County Health and Wellbeing Governance Review and representing the Bromsgrove District and North Worcestershire Districts on the HIG and Health and Wellbeing Board, respectively.

Strategic Housing

The Strategic Housing Team partnership objectives going forwards will be to continue to build and create new opportunities for the service provision it delivers especially in the reduction of homelessness.



Portfolio Holder Report

3. Good News Stories and Awards (if applicable)

NEW Lifeline Quality Standards Framework – Audit Compliant

NEW Lifeline are externally audited every year to ensure compliance to the Industry Best Practice. In October 2021, the audit was conducted and the team found to be meeting all requirements, with no areas for improvement required.

Social Prescribing



**Bromsgrove
District Council**
www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

Press Release

Ref: KM B22014

Issued: 8 March 2022 for immediate release

Social Prescribing service celebrates one year of helping residents

This month Bromsgrove District Council and ONSIDE are marking one year since a successful wellbeing service was launched in the district.

The partners are celebrating almost twelve months since the opening of Bromsgrove Social Prescribing Service in line with national Social Prescribing Day which takes place on March 10.

In Bromsgrove, four link workers have helped **193** people to get back to some form of normality after the pressures, restrictions, and challenges of the past two years.

The service, which is run in partnership with ONSIDE, connects residents with Social Prescribing Link Workers through a self-referral process. The link worker then provides them with a face-to-face conversation during which they can learn about activities in their communities and design their own personalised solutions to life struggles.

Research suggests that 1 in 5 people go to their GP with non-medical issues which can be helped through schemes like Social Prescribing instead. Research also states that within 3 to 4 years, Social Prescribing schemes have reduced the pressures on GP appointments by up to 40%.

Here's what some of the Social Prescribing clients think about the service:

"I'm so grateful...it's nice to be able to talk to someone and get some perspective."

"Honestly, I can't thank you enough for your time, patience and advice. I have never felt pressured but feel I've made great progress."

"Social prescribing has pointed me in the right direction, rather than me floundering around not knowing what to do and what is available. I have all the information I need when I am ready to use it."

"You have helped me enormously over these past few weeks, knowing someone will listen to me without judgement. I know you'll call and that's like my routine if I am feeling down."

A 'social prescription' is provided so that people with social, emotional, or practical needs are empowered to find solutions which will improve their health and wellbeing, often using services provided by the voluntary and community sectors.



Portfolio Holder Report

Social Link Worker, Antonia Whitlock, said: “We are all really proud of what has been achieved over the past twelve months, but the real success is the people who have come through the service and turned their lives around.

“It’s been a terrible, anxiety filled, couple of years so helping people to reconnect with their community and feel more confident about the future has been extremely rewarding for us and really beneficial to our clients.

“We are here to help guide people back to happier life in the wake of the pandemic, so if you’re struggling and want help to develop a 1-2-1 plan of action for your future, please just give us a call.”

The service had a soft launch in March 2021 before officially opening on May 13 in line with Mental Health Awareness Week.

Social Prescribing is an innovative and growing movement, with the potential to reduce the financial burden on the NHS and particularly on primary care.

ONSIDE is a local charity working across Worcestershire and Herefordshire, providing a wide range of support services to ensure fairness and equality for all members of the community who may be vulnerable, disadvantaged or discriminated against.

For more about Social Prescribing Day on March 10, check out the council’s social media feeds or go to <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/social-prescribing-day-2022/>



Portfolio Holder Report

Risk

NEW Lifeline from the Telephony Infrastructure Upgrade

National changes to the telephony network, upgrading it from analogue to digital are having a big impact on the service. The call handling platform has been upgraded and we are set for the equipment out in the district to also be upgraded to the latest tech. However, our service users being older, vulnerable people, do not understand the need for the upgrade or the benefits. The current digital equipment prices are considerably more than analogue, and as Lifeline is not a free service the increase in cost is passed to the service user. (The cost difference is largely due to the requirement of an ongoing SIM card subscription required by the digital units.) Therefore, uptake of the new equipment is much slower.

Other organisations locally, are not pushing the digital agenda so appear to offer a similar service for much less.

BDC Current weekly costs for a standard alarm and pendent are £4.45 for analogue service and £5.50 for digital.

By 2026 it should be noted that all phone lines will cease to exist as we know them today and all telephone calls will be over digital networks. The phone handset may look the same but the network you don't see is starting to look very different.

Social Prescribing

When services are commissioned, there is always a risk the contract will end early due to lack of funding or underperformance. The risk is managed by quarterly contract meetings with the PCN where we can discuss any concerns, they may have regarding KPI's, outcomes and service delivery.

Strategic Housing

- The proposed implementation of 'Right to Buy' for housing association tenants may result in reduction of affordable housing.
- Move on accommodation for Homes for Ukraine guests will impact on the availability on private rented properties for the prevention of homelessness duties and possible increased numbers requesting homelessness services.
- Asylum Dispersal Policy may also affect the availability of private rented properties in the District dependant on numbers required

Opportunity

Social Prescribing

Due to the positive feedback from the PCN there is an opportunity to consider expanding the social prescribing service – we continue to have discussions about this and if referrals continue to increase and we can measure positive impact there may be the opportunity to employ more social prescribers.

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CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Cabinet meeting 6th July 2022

Bromsgrove and Redditch Duty to Co-operate

RECOMMENDED that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council be agreed.

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Duty to Co-Operate with Redditch Borough Council

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Philip Thomas
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Report Author Mike Dunphy	Job Title: Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Contact email: m.dunphy@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	Yes SPSG
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**

Cabinet RECOMMEND to the Council that

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at Appendix 1 between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council is agreed.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) was adopted in January 2017, within days the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No4 (BORLP4) was also adopted. These plans were prepared in tandem in order to allow for the planning inspectorate to jointly examine the Redditch Cross Boundary Development policy, which will deliver housing growth on the edge of Redditch in Bromsgrove District.
- 2.2 The BDP review has been underway for a number of years, this was always the intention as the BDP did not fully allocate all of the housing needs identified in the 2017 version of the plan. In order to inform the plan review a Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) has been commissioned and completed. One of the key roles of this work is to fully understand the likely amount of housing and employment development the plan review needs to deliver.
- 2.3 As members will be aware the housing needs of Redditch Borough Council (RBC) is also of significance to Bromsgrove as it has been likely for some time that the RBC housing needs are likely to reduce. In

order to inform this position, separately RBC have also commissioned a (HEDNA) to help determined what the development needs of a Redditch plan review are likely to be. The table below summarises the current position in relation to both authorities.

		2022 – 2040 (18 years)
Redditch:	Need	165dpa / 2970
	Supply	5211
	Surplus	+2241
Bromsgrove:	Need	383dpa / 6894
	Supply	2511 (approx.)
	Deficit	4383

As can be seen above whilst the housing needs of Bromsgrove at 383 per annum are relatively consistent with the previous requirement of 363, the housing need of Redditch has dropped considerably to 165 per annum as opposed to 337 in the current BORLP4. When considered alongside the supply figures, which are the number of dwellings with planning permission attributed to each authority, it is clear that RBC currently has significantly more housing supply (circa 2241) than it requires. As articulated in the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) at appendix 1, RBC have committed that any oversupply in housing needs will be 'handed back' to BDC.

- 2.4 In order to ensure that the new Local Plans for both RBC and BDC can reflect the housing issues above, a similar process of aligning plan making is now being suggested. This allows for a coordinated approach to setting out how the housing needs across both districts will be met taking into account the current allocations. Further to this in some instances the alignment of plans could allow for time and financial savings to be realised as some additional plan making activities could be undertaken jointly.
- 2.5 It must be stressed that BDC will still have a plan that considers the planning issues that Bromsgrove District faces in detail, the process being suggested is not one of a shared plan which covers both authorities. There will remain two predominantly separate plans which are only joined by the reallocation of housing numbers from the current plans.
- 2.6 The Bromsgrove plan is progressing significantly with a preferred option consultation scheduled for publication and consultation in September this year. This consultation will identify the draft

development strategy for the period up to 2040, of which a coherent approach to the housing issues above needs to be factored in.

- 2.7 In addition to the shared understanding on housing issues as demonstrated above, an issue which both local authorities will be addressing in the new local plans is the possibility of accommodating some of the housing needs of the wider Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Areas (GBBCHMA). As yet the details of what, if anything, is going to be required are unclear.
- 2.8 Should requests be made of RBC to accommodate housing needs of the GBBCHMA, it is highly likely that RBC would then look to BDC for assistance due to the constrained nature of Redditch Borough and the lack of deliverable land.
- 2.9 The MOU addresses this issue, and it is proposed that BDC and RBC, where relevant, coordinate their responses to ensure that a comprehensive approach is being presented to all the other authorities in the GBBCHMA.
- 2.10 The full MOU can be viewed at appendix 1, but in summary it is proposed that the areas where the Councils work together at this stage are limited to:
- A shared understanding and approach to RBC's housing needs,
 - Agreement to work on plans which are aligned to address the RBC housing needs issue
 - Joint consideration of any requests from the GBBCHMA to meet additional growth needs.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 A budget exists for the production of the new Bromsgrove Plan Review, working in conjunction with RBC on some plan making activities should introduce savings. As the plan progresses members will be notified as these savings occur. It is expected that elements of the Plans' Examination in Public will be held jointly which will reduce the cost to BDC as opposed to holding separate examination hearing sessions.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Duty to Cooperate remains a legal duty under the current planning system. The MOU shows the current understanding between the Councils at this present time, although it is non binding. In due course as plan making progresses a Statement of Common Ground will be

prepared to formally set out the agreed positions of both Councils with regards to the respective plans.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**Relevant Strategic Purpose**

- 5.1 The agreement of the MOU provides clarity on the housing needs of BDC and RBC. The preferred option local plan is likely to impact on all of the strategic purposes either directly or indirectly, this will be considered and reported on in the officer report supporting the preferred option.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 The development of Bromsgrove Plan review will have significant Climate Change implications, this will be considered in detail as the plan progresses and will be reported on fully in due course.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**Equalities and Diversity Implications**

- 6.1 There are no Equalities or diversity implications directly connected with the MOU, as the plan progress an Equalities Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 There are no specific operational implications, the Strategic Planning team is resourced to develop plans for both BDC and RBC concurrently.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 BDC is required to review its local plan. As part of the review the requirements of the Duty to Cooperate will need to be met. Whilst entering into the MOU with RBC does not ensure that this will be the case, as there will be other DTC considerations to consider as the plan progresses, early engagement in this manner demonstrates positive plan making and allows for BDC to clearly set out the draft development strategy in the preferred option.
- 7.2 It is acknowledged that there are reforms to the planning system which may impact on the development of the Bromsgrove Plan Review. At this

stage until more is known about the detail and the timescales for these reforms plan making should continue under the current regime.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 Appendix 1 – RBC/BDC Memorandum of Understanding, Duty to Cooperate on housing need, plan making, and the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area

Cabinet
2022

20th July

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Philip Thomas	15 th June
Lead Director / Head of Service	Sue Hanley / Ruth Bamford	15 th June
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter	15 th June
Legal Services	Claire Felton	15 th June
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council

Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

Duty to Cooperate on housing need, plan making, and the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area

May 2022

1 This MOU confirms the understanding and agreement between Bromsgrove District Council (BDC) and Redditch Borough Council (RBC) (the Councils), with regard to Duty to Cooperate issues on housing need, plan making and the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area .

Local Housing Need and Plan Making

2 In January 2017 both Councils adopted new development plans, following Examination in Public proceedings and receipt of the Planning Inspector’s reports, namely the Bromsgrove District Plan (BDP) and the Borough of Redditch Local Plan No.4 (BORLP4).

3 A significant element of both plans was the provision of housing in Bromsgrove District to meet the needs of Redditch Borough. To enable this to take place both plans had housing needs policies which clarified where the housing developed across both authorities was to be apportioned, (BDP- BDP3 and BORLP4 – Policy 4) and shared policy to allocate two housing sites on the edge of Redditch Borough in Bromsgrove District (BDP - RCBD1 and BORLP4 Appendix 1). These plans were developed as individual plans for each authority, prepared concurrently and where necessary examined in tandem to ensure the shared element was judged to be sound.

4 Both adopted plans now need to be reviewed in accordance with the Government’s requirement for a five year review period and in response to the requirements set out in BDP4.2 of the BDP, which is about to reach the Preferred Option stage. RBC is commencing the review of BORLP4 and will shortly begin the early stages of plan production. In order to inform the direction that both plans should be taking with regard to housing need, both Councils have independently commissioned Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments (HEDNA’s).

5 The outcomes of both HEDNA’s are recommendations that the Councils adopt the local housing need figure derived from the Government’s standard methodology for housing need.

This translates to the housing needs below for the period 2022 to 2040

		2022 – 2040 (18 years)
Redditch:	Need	165dpa / 2970
	Supply	5211
	Surplus	+2241
Bromsgrove:	Need	383dpa / 6894
	Supply	2511 (approx.)
	Deficit	4383

6 The table above confirms that the housing need for Redditch Borough is somewhat smaller using the standard method approach required by Government when compared to the local housing requirements set out in the adopted BORLP4 (6,400 homes for the period 2011-2030, averaging 337 dwellings per annum). This smaller local housing need for Redditch Borough results in an oversupply of approximately 2241 dwellings, when all the current housing commitments (allocations and sites with planning permission) apportioned to RBC are taken into account. All these figures are subject to change as the standard method calculation is updated each year, and as such this MOU will be amended to reflect the most recent local housing need figures as the local plans progress. Both new local plans being prepared will need to address this issue and respond to the latest local housing need figures in order to be found sound. BDC's early plan making stages considered this issue and specific questions were asked about the implications of potential oversupply in Redditch at the Issues and Options consultation stage¹.

7 The Duty to Cooperate is the mechanism which enabled the Councils to work together to deliver the adopted local plans with a shared cross boundary policy. The requirement to cooperate is still enshrined in the English planning system. The process by which the plans were prepared before ensured that both plans were found sound following the Examination in Public. As part of the plan review process and to help ensure the same outcome, the creation of two individual development plans which, where necessary, have shared policies or shared evidence is deemed to be the pragmatic approach to address the issues highlighted above.

8 Current agreed Duty to Cooperate position between BDC and RBC in relation to housing needs and plan making

It is agreed that:

- A. The Councils continue to prepare plan reviews which, where possible build on the current Local Plans.
- B. The surplus of housing currently allocated for the needs for Redditch Borough (currently approximately 2241 dwellings) is handed back to BDC for BDC to consider in its plan making, and this figure is kept under review based on revisions to the Office for National Statistics (ONS) household projections/ affordability ratio data, urban capacity in Redditch and any updated housing needs evidence.
- C. The individual local plans for each authority will be progressed in tandem by the shared Strategic Planning Team with the aim of both plans being examined concurrently.
- D. Development provided via the adopted policy RCBD1 at Brockhill and Foxlydiate and which does not form part of the surplus identified above will continue to count towards the local housing need for Redditch Borough.
- E. Both local plans retain relevant existing policies and include new policies to ensure the effective delivery of the RCBD1 sites to completion.

9 Duty to Cooperate with the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA)

¹ Bromsgrove District Plan Review – Issue and Options Consultation Document. Sept 2018

10 The agreements above show how the Councils will work together to develop new plans for both Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough. The unmet housing needs of the GBBCHMA have been an issue yet to be fully addressed across the West Midlands for a considerable number of years. A shortfall of housing exists due to the lack of capacity in Birmingham and the Black Country local authority areas. This issue was referenced in both the current BDP and BORLP4. The scale of the housing shortfall is not yet fully understood until Birmingham City Council publishes its suggested housing need figure, although when combined with the identified shortfall across the Black Country local authorities of circa 28,239 dwellings the challenge of meeting these needs in full is likely to be a significant one.

11 It is expected that in due course a formal request will be received by both Councils to accommodate a proportion of the specific housing need shortfall of both Birmingham and the Black Country. The evidence that justified the allocation of the current housing need of Redditch Borough to be met in Bromsgrove District is still thought to be relevant. This found that due to nature of the Borough's tightly drawn boundaries and the lack of capacity to accommodate large strategic housing and employment sites, consequentially any growth needs for RBC are most deliverable in the adjacent districts such as Bromsgrove.

12 This evidence will need to be reviewed as part of the Redditch Plan Review, and should that review conclude that any growth needs for RBC are most deliverable in adjacent districts such as Bromsgrove, then any request for RBC to meet the needs of the GBBCHMA could lead to a further request from RBC to BDC to assist with this. To prevent this happening a coordinated approach to responding to any such requests from the GBBCHMA will help to ensure that the individual plans for both Councils can progress concurrently as outlined above, and a coherent response can be provided to the GBBHMA authorities.

13 Current agreed Duty to Cooperate position between BDC and RBC in relation to the GBBCHMA

It is agreed that:

- F. That the Councils consider issues in relation to the GBBCHMA together and wherever possible, respond jointly to all requests to assist those authorities which have a shortfall in housing supply.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

6TH JULY 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter,
Mrs. R. Bamford, Ms. C. Flanagan, Mr. M. Dunphy, Mrs. H. Mole
and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

9/22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor S. Webb.

10/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors K. May and M. Sherrey declared other disclosable interests in Minute Item No. 14/22 – the Nomination of Romsley Methodist Church as an Asset of Community Value – in their capacity as ward Councillors for Belbroughton and Romsley. They both remained at the meeting for the discussions in respect of this item and voted thereon.

11/22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 1ST JUNE 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on Wednesday 1st June 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on Wednesday 1st June 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

12/22 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 30TH MAY 2022**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 30th May 2022 were submitted.

Officers confirmed that there were no outstanding recommendations detailed in these minutes requiring Members' consideration.

The Leader advised that the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had tendered his apologies for the Cabinet meeting in advance of the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on Monday 30th May 2022 be noted.

13/22

BROMSGROVE AND REDDITCH DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

The Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager presented a report on the subject of the Bromsgrove and Redditch Duty to Co-operate.

Cabinet was informed that both Councils had submitted their latest Local Plans in 2017. A significant part of the work on the Local Plans had been the Duty to Co-operate with Redditch Borough Council, including on cross-boundary housing allocations. At that time, Redditch Borough had been allocated 3,000 houses that would have been built in Bromsgrove District. However, since then, the anticipated housing needs in the Borough had decreased. In order to anticipate housing needs in the District and Borough moving forward both Councils had commissioned Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments (HEDNAs), which had concluded that, whilst demand for housing in the Borough was not likely to increase at the level previously anticipated, the level of demand in Bromsgrove District was likely to remain the same as had been predicted in 2017.

Redditch Borough Council had already reviewed their duty to co-operate and had concluded that the 3,000 houses allocated from Bromsgrove District should be returned to Bromsgrove District Council for allocation. The housing numbers required in the District would need to be enshrined in the Local Plan and a policy position would clarify future requirements. The Council would need to determine where to allocate the 3,000 houses for development, which could include provision of some of the houses to meet the development needs in the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Areas (GBBCHMA).

Officers were suggesting that, moving forward, Bromsgrove District Council needed to continue to work closely with Redditch Borough Council as part of the Duty to Co-operate. The two Councils could work together in responding to approaches from the GBBCHMA regarding housing development needs. In addition, close co-operation between the two Councils would help to ensure that the authorities' Local Plans were closely aligned, although Members were advised that there were no plans to produce a joint Local Plan.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the requirements from the GBBCHMA and the timescales in which clarification was likely to be provided about these needs. Officers clarified that the Black Country authorities were progressing with work on their Local Plan, which was likely to be published shortly. Every planning authority was supposed to issue a new Local Plan every five years but the Black Country areas had taken longer than this when working on their latest Local Plan. Birmingham City Council had submitted their previous Local Plan at a similar time to Bromsgrove District Council, although were at a different stage to Bromsgrove in development of the authority's new Local Plan.

RECOMMENDED that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council be agreed.

14/22

NOMINATION OF ROMSLEY METHODIST CHURCH - ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services presented a report setting out proposals for the nomination of Romsley Methodist Church as an asset of community value.

Cabinet was informed that Officers had delegated authority to determine whether a property should be listed as an asset of community value. Members were advised that this was a procedural matter and, if agreed, would result in the protection of the property for a period of up to six months should the owners decide to place it up for sale on the market. The report was seeking the Cabinet's support for Romsley Methodist Church to be listed as an asset of community value, which was an approach supported by Officers. Members were asked to note that the nomination met all of the requirements in relevant legislation.

Members subsequently discussed the report and in doing so noted that Romsley Methodist Church was frequently utilised by the local community for events and activities. The property was therefore highly valued by the local community.

RESOLVED that the listing of Romsley Methodist Church, 88 Bromsgrove Road, Romsley, West Midlands B62 0LF as an asset of community value be supported.

(Prior to consideration of this item, Councillors K. May and M. Sherrey declared other disclosable interests in their capacity as ward Councillors for Belbroughton and Romsley. They both remained at the meeting for the discussions in respect of this item and voted thereon.)

15/22

FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented a Financial Monitoring Report for Members' consideration.

Cabinet was informed that the report detailed the Council's approach to monitoring financial performance in the 2022/23 municipal year. Monitoring would be undertaken using data obtained from the Council's financial management system.

The Council's revenue budget for the 2022/23 municipal year was £12.1 million. There was a capital budget of £2.4 million. In addition to this, there was Levelling Up funding that had been allocated to the budget for use on specific projects. There were financial challenges facing the Council moving forward and over the following three years the authority needed to bridge a gap of £1.4 million in order to achieve a balanced

budget. Base budgets were in the process of being reviewed and the Corporate Management Team (CMT) was also considering the financial position. A range of indicators had been added to the report to enable performance in respect of the budget to be monitored and more would be added once technical issues with the Council's finance system had been resolved.

Members subsequently discussed the content of the report and in doing so questioned why the figures provided in a table concerning payment of Council Tax did not appear to add up across consecutive columns. Officers explained that the figures highlighted residents who were eligible for support but not all households had taken up this support, which impacted on the bottom line for the figures provided. In future editions of the report Members agreed that an additional line should be added to the table clarifying the number of eligible people who had not received support.

Reference was also made to the number of customers who were not paying their Council Tax via direct debit and concerns were raised about the implications for the customer. Officers clarified that attempts had been made over many years to promote payment of bills using direct debit. However, approximately one third of customers did not pay via direct debit and the reasons for this varied, although included some customers who would struggle to make direct debit payments due to cash flow difficulties.

RESOLVED

- 1) To note that future monitoring returns will be in the "on system" format;
- 2) That the approach being taken by Officers to balance the 2022/23 budget and future years' budget deficit positions be approved; and
- 3) That the addition to the monitoring report of the additional financial health indicators be approved.

16/22

CABINET APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance presented a report detailing Cabinet appointments to outside bodies.

Members were informed that appointments by the Council to outside bodies had been confirmed at the Annual Council meeting held on 18th May 2022. There were also appointments made by Cabinet to outside bodies which needed to be approved at a meeting of the Cabinet.

Consideration was given to the list of Cabinet appointments to outside bodies and Members noted that some of these appointments were made in conjunction with other Councils in Worcestershire. Reference was also made to the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership's (WLEP) European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy Committee (ESIF)

Agenda Item 12

Cabinet
6th July 2022

and Members commented that no appointments were required to this body moving forward, following Brexit.

RESOLVED that Cabinet nominates Members to outside bodies as detailed in Appendix 1 to the minutes.

The meeting closed at 6.25 p.m.

Chairman

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Appendix 1: Outside Bodies By Office (Cabinet appointments) –

(LAST UPDATED MAY 2022)

Organisation	Number of representatives and length of term	Representatives Appointed 2021/2022	Nominations to be Appointed 2022/2023
Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)	One Leader and one Substitute nominated from 3 North Worcestershire Councils	Cllr Matt Dormer RBC Sub: Cllr Helen Dyke Wyre Forest DC	Cllr Matt Dormer RBC Sub: Cllr Helen Dyke Wyre Forest DC
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP Supervisory Board	Leader by office Substitute – Deputy Leader Check each year	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Kent)	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Geoff Denaro)
Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP European Structural and Investment Funds Strategy Committee (ESIF)	One representative and one substitute to represent the 3 North Worcestershire Districts	Cllr Matt Dormer RBC Sub: Cllr Tom Baker-Price RBC	Cllr Matt Dormer RBC Sub: Cllr Craig Warhurst RBC
Bromsgrove Partnership (Local Strategic Partnership)	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Kent)	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Geoff Denaro)
District Councils Network	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Kent)	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Geoff Denaro)
Local Government Association General Assembly	Leader Substitute – Deputy Leader	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Kent)	Cllr Karen May Sub: (Cllr Geoff Denaro)

Agenda Item 12

Cabinet 6th July 2022

North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership	Cabinet member	Cllr Philip Thomas	Cllr Margaret Sherrey
PATROL (Parking And Traffic Regulations Outside London) Adjudication Joint Committee	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services Substitute:	Cllr Margaret Sherrey Sub:	Cllr Margaret Sherrey
West Midlands Employers (previously West Midlands Councils)	Portfolio Holder for Human Resources	Cllr Geoff Denaro is already appointed as the Worcs Leaders Broad representative.	Cllr Geoff Denaro
Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board	1 rep for North Worcestershire and 1 substitute	Cllr Nyear Nazir RBC Sub: Cllr Shirley Webb	Cllr Shirley Webb Sub: Cllr Nyear Nazir RBC
Health Improvement Group (HIG – a sub group of the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board)	1 rep for each of the districts in North Worcestershire	Cllr Shirley Webb	Cllr Shirley Webb
Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)	One representative on behalf of the 3 North Worcestershire Councils – required by LEP constitution	Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Helen Dyke Wyre Forest DC	Cllr Karen May Sub: Cllr Helen Dyke Wyre Forest DC
Worcestershire Local Transport Body	Two representatives and one substitute from the North Worcestershire authorities	(Cllr Kent) Sub: Cllr TBC Wyre Forest DC	Cllr Matt Dormer Sub: Cllr Helen Dyke Wyre Forest DC

Bromsgrove District Council – 20th July 2022 Member Questions

**1. From Councillor A. English
Question for the Leader**

“Many millions of pounds have been spent on the new Bromsgrove railway station. However, there has been a significant reduction in service running south since its construction and now recent timetable changes mean delays for those wanting to travel from Worcester to Barnt Green, Alvechurch and Redditch. Does the Leader share my disappointment at the apparent downgrading of Bromsgrove station and what actions has the leader taken to improve services going south and to instigate a return of the timely Barnt Green and Alvechurch connection?”

**2. From Councillor H. Rone-Clarke
Question for the Leader**

“Many residents are concerned about the number of cases reported to the RSPCA each year of pets being given as prizes via fairgrounds, social media and other channels in England. This issue, we know, predominantly concerns goldfish. Further, many cases of pets being given as prizes may go unreported each year.

Will the leader commit to banning outright, the giving of live animals as prizes, in any form, on Bromsgrove District Council land and write to the UK Government, urging an outright ban on the giving of live animals as prizes on both public and private land?”

**3. From Councillor P. McDonald
Question for the Leader**

"Will this Council abide by the Equalities Act making sure the less able can gain access to Council Meetings? In light of the fact the entrance to the building have large steps."

**4. From Councillor R. Hunter
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Cultural Services and
Climate Change**

“As the local authority with responsibility for the provision of leisure services, will Bromsgrove District Council do everything in its power to ensure leisure facilities are maintained continuously at the Ryland Centre?”

**5. From Councillor J. King
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory
Services**

“Will you consider the feasibility of demanding Passivhaus or zero carbon homes on all major new developments?”

**6. From Councillor S. Robinson
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and
Community Safety**

“What steps is this council taking to phase out the use of harmful weedkillers containing Glyphosate?”

**7. From Councillor C. Hotham
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate
Change**

“Please could this council be updated on the progress being made on one of the most significant potential green projects; the district wide geothermal heating scheme?”

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke:

“Providing a Safe Space of mutual support for local women

Council believes that:

- Local women who have struggled with addiction, domestic abuse etc... deserve a space to seek advice and mutual aid on a regular basis
- Women within the community have identified an urgent need for a service to offer support for complex social issues including domestic abuse and addiction (though this list is not exhaustive)
- Women in our community are entitled to a safe, inclusive space to access support and advice tailored to the individual

Council Resolves to:

- Assist interested parties with setting up a group for women, including regular meetings at a venue obtained with officer support
- Until this group is established, to pay for the time (a few hours a month) of an expert in women’s issues to attend and provide advice and support to those present
- Proceed with the intention of supporting through the inception of this group, with a view to allow it to later become self-sufficient and operate independently.”

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

"Forking out £240,000 running costs for Parkside that rattles plus £138,000 to Redditch Council, to many is seen as financial incompetence and a cavalier approach to spending the hard-earned money of its residents at a time of a cost-of-living crisis.

We therefore call upon the Council to form a cross-party task group to carry out a full investigation into financial arrangements with Redditch Council: which it would seem to have left Bromsgrove Council with running costs of a £240,000; for what is a mainly an unused building while at the same time paying out £138,000 for use of Redditch Council's premises."

NOTICE OF MOTION

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 by Councillor S. Colella:

“This Council changes its grass verge grass cutting and mowing regime to allow wildflowers to remain in bloom during the height of the season when bees, butterflies and general small wildlife rely on the pollen from wildflowers to flourish.”

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