



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 7TH DECEMBER 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 17th October 2022 (Pages 1 - 24)**

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. **To receive and consider a report from the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services** (Pages 25 - 36)

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.

9. **Recommendations from the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting held on 9th November 2022** (Pages 37 - 38)

10. **Background Information on the recommendations from the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee**

(i) Section 24 Notice (Pages 39 - 48)

(ii) Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21 (Pages 49 - 94)

11. **Recommendations from the Cabinet** (Pages 95 - 98)

To consider the recommendations from the meetings of the Cabinet held on 26th October and 23rd November 2022.

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

(i) Fees and Charges 2023/24 (Pages 99 - 132)

(ii) Sherwood Road Footbridge, Aston Fields - Permanent Closure of the Footbridge, Removal of Bridge Deck and Transfer of Ownership to Severn Trent Water Ltd (Pages 133 - 142)

(iii) Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26 - Update Report (Pages 143 - 180)

(iv) Fees and Charges Update (Pages 181 - 182)

The covering report for the Fees and Charges update is available to view under this item as the content of the covering report is in the public domain. Appendix 1 to the report, detailing a number of proposed fees and charges, contains exempt information and therefore has been attached at Agenda Item No. 18.

13. **To note the minutes of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 26th October and 23rd November 2022** (Pages 183 - 206)

14. **Questions on Notice** (Pages 207 - 208)

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 30 minutes is allocated for the asking and answering of questions at this meeting. This may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman with the agreement of the majority of those present.

15. **Motions on Notice** (Pages 209 - 210)

A period of an hour and a half is allocated to consider the motions on notice at this meeting. This may only be extended with the agreement of the Council.

16. **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**

17. **To consider, and if considered appropriate, to pass the following resolution to exclude the public from the meeting during the consideration of item(s) of business containing exempt information:-**

"RESOLVED: that under Section 100 I of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, the public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item(s) of business on the grounds that it/they involve(s) the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act, as amended, the relevant paragraph of that part, in each case, being as set out below, and that it is in the public interest to do so:-

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Paragraph(s)</u>	
18	3	"

18. **Recommendations from the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd November 2022 - Fees and Charges Update - Exempt Information** (Pages 211 - 212)

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

29th November 2022

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Jess Bayley-Hill / Jo Gresham

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joanne.gresham@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

GUIDANCE ON FACE-TO-FACE MEETINGS

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

Please note that this is a public meeting.

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

GUIDANCE FOR ELECTED MEMBERS ATTENDING MEETINGS IN PERSON

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

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

PUBLIC ATTENDANCE

Members of the public will be able to access the meeting in person to observe proceedings 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.



INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC

Access to Information

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

- You can inspect agenda and public reports at least five days before the date of the meeting.
- You can inspect minutes of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards for up to six years following a meeting.
- You can have access, upon request, to the background papers on which reports are based for a period of up to six years from the date of the meeting. These are listed at the end of each report.
- An electronic register stating the names and addresses and electoral areas of all Councillors with details of the membership of all Committees etc. is available on our website.
- A reasonable number of copies of agendas and reports relating to items to be considered in public will be made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet and its Committees/Boards.
- You have access to a list specifying those powers which the Council has delegated to its Officers indicating also the titles of the Officers concerned, as detailed in the Council's Constitution, Scheme of Delegation.

You can access the following documents:

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

at www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

17TH OCTOBER 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr P. Carpenter, Mrs. C. Felton, Mr. M. Dunphy and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

44\22

TRIBUTES TO HER ROYAL MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II, INCLUDING OBSERVING A PERIOD OF SILENCE IN HER MEMORY

The Chairman opened the meeting by leading Members in observing two minutes' silence as a mark of respect following the death of Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

The Chairman subsequently paid tribute on behalf of the Council by commenting that the sudden death of Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II had been a great loss to the country and to the Commonwealth. Queen Elizabeth II had lived a life of extraordinary service, driven by duty and sustained by her faith. It had been the Chairman's civic duty to send sincere condolences to the Royal Family on behalf of Bromsgrove District Council and the residents of Bromsgrove District. The Chairman commented that many people had mourned Queen Elizabeth II's death and he expressed the hope that she would rest in peace.

Following the Chairman's comments, Members paid tribute to Her Royal Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, noting that she had served as monarch for 70 years and was the only Head of State that many citizens had ever known. Members commented that Queen Elizabeth II had set a positive example, through her values of openness, tolerance, listening to others and working together. The discussions concluded with Members thanking Queen Elizabeth II for her service.

45\22

TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors G. Denaro, A. English, M. Glass, S. Hession, L. Mallett, P. McDonald, M. Middleton and C. Spencer.

46\22

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A. Kent declared a pecuniary interest in Minute Item No. 57/22 – Motions on Notice – due to his role as the lead Portfolio Holder at Worcestershire County Council with responsibility for the Ryland Centre, which was the subject of one of the Motions. As he had left the meeting by the time that Members considered the item, he took no part in the debate nor vote thereon.

47\22

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COUNCIL HELD ON 20TH JULY 2022

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

Reference was made to Minute Item No.40/22 – Recommendations from the Cabinet – in which Members' debate in respect of the Memorandum of Understanding with Redditch Borough Council in relation to a duty to co-operate had been recorded. Members questioned whether the Memorandum of Understanding would be implemented as discussed at that Council meeting, given that work on the Council's Local Plan had been postponed. Council was advised that, as this did not relate to an issue with the accuracy of the minutes and matters arising were not discussed when considering the minutes, this issue could not be debated at this time and would need to be considered outside the meeting.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Council held on 20th July 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

48\22

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE CHAIRMAN AND/OR HEAD OF PAID SERVICE

There were no announcements from the Chairman or from the Deputy Chief Executive, who attended the meeting on behalf of the Head of Paid Service, on this occasion.

49\22

TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE LEADER

The Leader advised that Councillors M. Glass and J. Till were being appointed as named substitutes for the Conservative group on the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee.

50\22

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

The Chairman confirmed that no comments, questions or petitions had been received for consideration at the Council meeting on this occasion.

51\22

URGENT DECISIONS

Members were informed that there had been one urgent decision taken since the previous meeting of Council on the subject of appointments to Hunnington Parish Council.

52\22

TO RECEIVE AND CONSIDER A REPORT FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND GOVERNANCE

In the absence of the Portfolio Holder, the Leader presented the annual report for the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance.

Council was advised that the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance was the lead Cabinet Member for Finance, Customer Services, Business Transformation and Organisational Development, Democratic, Electoral and Legal Services.

The annual report was extremely detailed. The following key points were highlighted for Members' consideration:

- The financial issues that had led to the non-delivery of the 2020/21 accounts and Government returns. During 2021/22, the Council had lost a significant number of staff in the Finance Department and this, alongside development of the Tech1 finance system, had led to a deterioration in the financial reporting of the Council's position. There had been a recovery process in place since March 2022 and, aligned to this, there had been two phases of recruitment for the team which had resulted in a reconstituted finance team with a wider range of skills than had previously been the case. The Cabinet and Audit, Standards and Governance Committee had both been updated on the situation and had been informed that, although a lot of the short-term deficiencies had been rectified and solutions were being embedded, there was still a significant issue with the 2020/21 accounts having not yet been completed. The main problem remained with the Tech1 finance system and the cash receipting solution, which was holding up the completion of the accounts, although a solution was expected imminently.
- Revenue collection rates had returned to a level similar to that in place prior to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- In total £8 million of Covid-19 grants had been distributed to 1,895 recipients in the District.
- There were 27,460 households who had received payments under the Energy Rebate Scheme.
- The Council's ICT team had used robotics to extract 350,000 invoices and purchase orders from the Council's old finance system and to correct 40,000 records in the Uniform system.
- The Human Resources team had developed an Agile Working Policy and supported its implementation. The team had also conducted a full staff survey and implemented a corporate training

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programme, including delivery of training in HR and health and safety.

- A new Equalities Strategy 2022 – 2026 had been developed for the Council, which had set the direction for equalities work over the following four year period. In total, 12 local organisations had received financial support under the Bromsgrove Equality Small Grants scheme to support community activities.
- There had been increased participation in the Bromsgrove Community Panel's activities, comprising a list of Bromsgrove District residents who had agreed to participate in Council engagement and consultations. In 2021, an additional 159 people had joined the panel, meaning that there were 366 members in total by the date of the meeting.
- The MS Power BI dashboard was in the process of being introduced, which would provide a visual platform with a primary focus on business intelligence. The content of the dashboard would complement the Council's existing measures dashboard, the content of which was reported to the Cabinet on a quarterly basis.
- An updated Project Management Framework had been delivered and was providing training for 100 managers and team leaders in project planning and establishing a project monitoring process for the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to provide oversight of corporate projects.
- Over the preceding 18 months, the Democratic Services team had facilitated the Council's decision-making process throughout a period of significant change and disruption caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

There remained a number of key objectives over the following 12 months, in addition to addressing the financial challenges that had been outlined to Members, which included:

- Developing a Cyber Security Strategy.
- Assessing ways to reduce the carbon footprint of the server room in line with the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy.
- Introducing a customer portal onto the website to support self-service of Council functions, such as requests about Environmental Services tasks.
- Planning and conducting a new Community Panel Survey.
- Refreshing the Council's Performance Strategy.
- Preparing for the Member induction process for Councillors due to be elected in May 2023.

Members subsequently discussed the report in detail and in doing so raised questions on the following points:

- The difficulties that had been experienced within the Financial Services team and the proportion of posts that had been filled through the recruitment process by the date of the meeting. Members were informed that all posts, apart from four vacant

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positions, had been filled in the Financial Services team by the date of the meeting. Council was advised that recruitment to Financial Services within local government was challenging for the whole sector, not just Bromsgrove District Council.

- The updates that had been provided on financial recovery at the Cabinet and Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the extent to which this represented a positive situation, due to the challenges that had been encountered.
- The extent to which the problems with the Council's new finance system had been resolved and whether the 2020/21 accounts were on track to be completed by the end of the 2022 calendar year. The Interim Section 151 Officer clarified that the Council was working closely with the software provider and it was anticipated that the problems with the cash receipting part of the system would be resolved soon, meaning that the accounts could subsequently be completed.
- The penalties that could be applied to the Council as a result of non-delivery of the 2020/21 accounts. The Leader explained that the Council would receive a warning but there would be no fines imposed by the Government.
- The outcomes that had been achieved during the year as a result of service delivery. The Leader suggested that it would take some time for the outcomes to be clear.
- The reasons why the Council did not already have a Cyber Security Policy and a Workforce Strategy in place. Council was informed that many local authorities did not have Cyber Security Policies in place and some authorities that did have such policies had been subject to cyber attacks. The Council continued to work hard to address cyber security.
- The reference in the report to a decrease in payments in person since the Covid-19 pandemic, the support that was being provided to customers who would previously have paid for services using that payment method and the number of residents who continued to make payments in person. The Leader advised that Officers would be asked to provide this data for Members' consideration after the meeting.
- The problems that had been experienced with the introduction of the new finance system and the extent to which Members had been provided with adequate information prior to the introduction of the scheme about the challenges this would entail.
- The problems with the cash receipting part of the new finance system and the fact that Bromsgrove District Council and Redditch Borough Council were the first authorities to be using this system in the country. The Leader acknowledged that, with the benefit of hindsight, it would have been preferable not to be the first authority to trial a new part of the system but lessons had been learned from this experience.
- The former staff who had left the Council's employment and the need for exit interviews to be held with them in order to ascertain the reasons for their departure so that the Council could learn

lessons for the future. Council was advised that many staff had left for career progression reasons, although a number of people had also assessed their work during the Covid-19 pandemic and decided to make changes in their lives. There were also significant challenges nationally in terms of recruiting experienced, qualified staff to work in Financial Services, including for external auditors.

- The 25 per cent of walk-in general queries from customers about the location of services within Parkside and the extent to which the signage in the building was adequate.
- The financial challenges facing the Council like other local authorities, and the extent to which Members should be giving consideration at this point to introducing a unitary authority in either the north of the county or for the whole of Worcestershire. The Leader commented that it was not the right time to review the potential to introduce a unitary authority. However, the Leader suggested that there might be more opportunities to extend shared service arrangements to involve other Councils alongside Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils, and this could lead to significant savings for both the Council and partner authorities.
- The work that had been undertaken to provide the Council Tax Energy Rebate and the extent to which all eligible households had received the support they were entitled to. Members were advised that all eligible customers had received their rebates.
- The need for transparency in relation to the Council's finances and the process for the introduction of new IT systems.
- The updates that had been provided to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and the Cabinet and the extent to which they had challenged and received assurances in relation to the information provided in respect of the new finance system. Members were advised that both Committees had received detailed reports on the subject of the Council's financial recovery, financial and performance monitoring data and risk management. This had included the provision of information about the problems that had been experienced with the new finance system and the action that was being taken to address these problems.
- The public consultation that had been undertaken with the Bromsgrove Community Survey Panel, which had informed policy development, and the potential for the outcomes of this survey to be reported to Council.

53\22

OUTSIDE BODIES

Council debated and agreed appointments to the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly and the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about the reasons for the timing of the appointments as well as the names of the Councillors who had previously been appointed to these outside bodies. The Leader clarified that the Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Integrated Care Partnership Assembly was a new group and the Council had been invited to make an appointment to the Assembly. In respect of the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board, previously the District Councils in north Worcestershire had been required to appoint one Councillor to represent the north of the county, which had mirrored arrangements for the south of the county. However, a decision had recently been taken to invite all the District Councils in Worcestershire to appoint a lead Member and named substitute to serve on the Board on behalf of their Councils.

The nominations were proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor M. Thompson.

RESOLVED that

- 1) Councillor S. Webb be appointed as the Council's representative on the Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrated Care Partnership Assembly;
- 2) Councillor S. Webb be appointed as the Council's lead representative on the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board; and
- 3) Councillor M. Sherrey be appointed as the Council's named substitute on the Worcestershire Health and Wellbeing Board.

54\22

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET

The Chairman explained that recommendations had been made at meetings of Cabinet held on 27th July and 12th October 2022 respectively.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund

The Leader presented the recommendation that had been made at the meeting of Cabinet held on 27th July 2022 on the subject of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Members were advised that Bromsgrove had been allocated £2.8 million under the scheme. The funding would be allocated to projects and the Council had agreed criteria against which bids for funding would be assessed. The criteria had been submitted for the Government's consideration in August 2022. Local organisations would be encouraged to submit bids, which would be assessed by the Bromsgrove Partnership.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor M. Thompson.

During consideration of this item, an amendment was proposed by Councillor C. Hotham.

The amendment read as follows:

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“This fund should be allocated by North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration (NWEDR) after consultation with a politically balanced UK Shared Prosperity Fund Board, who will determine how this funding should be allocated.”

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Hotham expressed concerns about the process for determining whether to approve bids to fund projects under the scheme and he questioned the transparency of the process. Councillor Hotham commented that the Bromsgrove Partnership, which had been allocated this responsibility, had one elected Member representative: the Leader. The suggestion was made that there needed to be a greater level of elected Member oversight, particularly given the amount of money involved.

Consideration was given to this proposed amendment and as part of this process, advice was provided by the Monitoring Officer. Members were informed that the proposed amendment actually related to matters that had already been resolved by Cabinet. The role of the Council meeting was to consider whether to amend the authority’s Medium Term Financial Plan to incorporate the UK Shared Prosperity funding allocation. The Government’s intention for the UK Shared Prosperity Fund had been for there to be community involvement in the process. The governance arrangements required the Council’s Section 151 Officer to sign off any grants. For these reasons, the amendment was not accepted for debate.

Questions were subsequently raised about the membership of the Bromsgrove Partnership and the extent to which this information was available in the public domain. Members also commented on the need for members of the partnership to be transparent in respect of declaring interests, given the amount of money that would be distributed under the scheme. The Leader explained that the Bromsgrove Partnership Manager maintained a list of partner organisations that were represented on the Bromsgrove Partnership. Members of the partnership were required to declare interests at every meeting they attended and any declarations were recorded in the minutes of those meetings. The Bromsgrove Partnership was involved in engagement and enablement and focused on the needs of the local community. Council was advised that most Councils in the country in receipt of funding under the UK Shared Prosperity Fund scheme had adopted a similar approach, whereby either the local partnership or District Collaborative was taking a lead on determining funding allocation.

Consideration was given to the process that would be followed to advertise the funding allocated through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. Members questioned whether a list of approved projects could be reported for the consideration of Council in due course. The Leader suggested that this might be a more suitable topic for discussion at a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Members commented on the submission that had been made by the Council to the Government in August 2022, on the subject of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and questions were raised about whether the Council had received a response. The Leader confirmed that the Council had not yet received a response from the Government. However, the authority had been advised to proceed with the plans that were in place.

Following further questioning, the Leader read out an email that had been sent to all elected Members on 4th October 2022 updating Councillors on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. This email had the following wording:

“Dear Councillor

I am emailing you as I want to update you on the progress of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the next steps that we plan to take. As you are aware, Bromsgrove district has been allocated £2,805,712 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund covering the 3 years from 1 April 2022 to 31 March 2025. To unlock this funding, we were tasked with preparing an Investment Plan detailing the challenges and opportunities in the district and where we would spend the fund to address these. The Investment Plan was approved by the Cabinet in July and submitted to the Government for approval on 1 August 2022. The Government has stated that they will be issuing approvals from October onwards – we await a decision on our Investment Plan.

One of the first steps taken to prepare the Investment Plan was to put out a call for projects. The purpose of this was to identify the local challenges and opportunities at a more granular level than statistics can provide and also to understand what capacity there was within the community to deliver projects. However, the timescales were incredibly tight and several organisations have indicated that they were unable to engage in the process due to this. Consequently, whilst we have sufficient projects to spend all of the funding, the range of projects is not very balanced and I feel that a second opportunity to submit projects should be extended to our partners and stakeholders.

The Autumn call for projects will be launched this week with a deadline for submissions by 9:00am Monday 14 November 2022. This will give organisations a minimum 5 weeks to submit a project. Officers will be holding a webinar on 18 October, to provide further guidance to those wishing to submit a project and to answer questions. Organisations that submitted projects previously, do not need to re-submit. We will be sending the submission pack to c200 organisations, and promoting the opportunity widely, but I would encourage you to share this information with any groups that you think may have a suitable project. We hope to get a wide range of projects covering as much of the district as possible.

Following the submission deadline, all projects submitted in both calls will be assessed for strategic fit, deliverability and value for money.

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Bromsgrove Partnership, acting as the Local Partnership Board for the UK SPF, will oversee this process. We hope to be in a position to issue funding agreements by the end of the year, ready to start delivery in January 2023. However, this is dependent upon receiving approval for the Investment Plan from Government as we will be unable to contract with external organisations until this is in place. This will put particular pressure on those organisations looking to deliver projects in Year 1, i.e. before 31/3/23. The allocation is split over the 3 years with set expenditure levels for each year. Failure to spend each year's allocation could result in forfeiting the funding or delaying receipt of the following year's funding. As a result, Year 1 projects will be assessed with extra emphasis on deliverability. I would advise any organisations with limited capacity to deliver to consider projects for funding in years 2 or 3 only.

Thank you for your support with this programme. Our aim is to deliver a range of impactful projects that will meet the strategic objective of the fund – building pride in place and increasing life chances.

If you would like any further information about the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, please contact Georgina Harris at georgina.harris@nwedr.org.uk.

Following further discussion, on being put to the vote the recommendation from the Cabinet on the subject of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund was carried.

RESOLVED that the Medium Term Financial Strategy is amended to include the UK Shared Prosperity Fund Allocation when next reviewed.

Budget Framework Finance and Performance Quarter 1 Monitoring Report

The Leader presented a recommendation from Cabinet arising from the Budget Framework Finance and Performance Quarter 1 Monitoring Report. This recommendation proposed the need to increase the Council's operational bank limit to £2 million.

During consideration of this item, reference was made to the performance data that had been provided in the report in respect of housing growth. Members commented that this information appeared to indicate that 118 new houses had been built during the period but that none of these properties had constituted affordable housing. In this context, Members requested an update on progress with the development of affordable homes during the year. The Leader explained that an update would be requested in respect of this matter from the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services.

Reference was also made to the information provided in the report in respect of the financial performance of the Council, particularly the £477,890 of cross cutting savings and efficiency targets recorded for the 2022/23 financial year. Questions were raised about the extent to which savings from vacant posts would be taken into account when

determining whether the Council was meeting this target. The Leader explained that for the first quarter savings from vacant posts had been taken into account where it had been identified that those posts were no longer necessary. Further information would be available on this subject in the Quarter 2 monitoring report.

Consideration was given to the data that had been provided in respect of the length of time that customers waited to get through by phone to the Council and were then subsequently on the phone to staff for revenue calls. Concerns were raised that the length of time appeared to be increasing. However, Members were advised that this data related to the period in which the Council had been managing calls relating to the Energy Payment Scheme.

The recommendation was proposed by Councillor K. May and seconded by Councillor M. Thompson.

RESOLVED that the Operational Bank Account limit is raised to £2m.

55\22

TO NOTE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF THE CABINET HELD ON 27TH JULY AND 12TH OCTOBER 2022

Reference was made to the Cabinet's debate in respect of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and questions were asked about the potential risk that the funding in this scheme might be withdrawn or reduced, following changes at the national Government level since the scheme was introduced. The Leader explained that no information had been received suggesting that this funding would be removed.

The minutes of the Cabinet meetings held on 27th July and 12th October 2022 were noted.

56\22

QUESTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman explained that nine Questions on Notice had been received in advance of the meeting. Due to recent changes to Council meeting arrangements, group leaders and the Chairman had agreed that the time dedicated to consideration of Questions on Notice at this meeting should be extended from the usual time of 15 minutes to 30 minutes.

Question submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke

"Many residents will already be aware that our MP holds an annual jobs fair in Bromsgrove. However, there are many young people seeking part-time employment in our town, in order to support themselves and their families. For these young people, it can be difficult to find part time roles that suit their school or college timetable.

In order to overcome this difficulty, will the leader support either a jobs fair tailored more towards younger people, or perhaps consider devoting

a section of BDC's website/social media to advertising part time jobs that are better suited to this section of the population?"

The Leader responded by commenting that the Jobs Fair held by the local MP was always welcomed and important for those seeking employment opportunities. The last successful jobs fair took place in April 2022, and if the next was to be held in 2023, the Council would fully support the event, alongside the many businesses and agencies who could showcase and provide the opportunity and offer for people in the community, including young people, who were seeking both full time and part time employment.

Having been in contact with the MP's office, the Leader explained that they had confirmed they always welcomed suggestions for the job fair and were aware of this matter being raised as a question at the Council meeting.

With regards to the use of the Council's website and social media, whilst the authority advertised Council jobs, through West Midlands Employers, it would be unable to act as a 'jobs hub' as it would be difficult to both source 'suitable jobs' and thereafter promote links to individual employers or agencies in equitable terms without due regard to their suitability.

However, the Council's website and social media would be used to fully promote the jobs fair in future, in line with practice in previous years.

Question submitted by Councillor R. Hunter

"Have all eligible households in Bromsgrove now received their April council tax rebate?"

The Leader explained that the Government's Council Tax Energy Rebate scheme provided a £150 payment to households that, on 1st April 2022, occupied properties in Council Tax valuation bands A to D or valuation band E if the Council taxpayer was eligible for the Council Tax reduction for disabilities. If a home was unoccupied, classed as a second home, or the owner was liable for Council Tax but was not the occupier – for example houses in multiple occupation – then the property was not eligible for the payment.

The Council had identified 27,458 eligible households and had written to, emailed, or sent SMS messages to the households advising how to claim the payment. In total, 25,409 households had received a direct payment into their nominated bank account, a further 2,049 households did not submit a claim for the rebate and the payment was credited to their Council Tax account. This Council Tax account credit would reduce future instalments of Council Tax. The Leader concluded the response to this question by confirming that the Council had paid the £150 to everyone identified.

Question submitted by Councillor J. King

“Could you confirm when the Churchfields car park will be reopening please and what measures you will be putting in place to keep users and the wider community safe from criminal and antisocial behaviour?”

The Leader informed Members that Officers were reviewing the operation and safety of the Churchfields car park. Following the completion of the 2040 report, which would include a strategic view of parking in general within the town, a subsequent report would be produced for Cabinet on the future of the multistorey car park as soon as possible.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Robinson

“Could you explain the cause of the recent disruption to household bin collection services please and what measures you have put in place to address this?”

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety responded by commenting that the Waste Collection Service relied on a fleet of vehicles to function, and although these received regular maintenance, they did experience damage and breakdowns that impacted on the available fleet as a routine part of operating the service, and there were appropriate resources available to support this most of the time.

Unfortunately, the Council had recently experienced a series of mechanical issues in close succession that resulted in the authority not having enough functioning vehicles to carry out the service as efficiently as normal. These were:

- 1) The vehicle being serviced and submitted for an MOT.
- 2) Suspension components being worn and replaced with new parts.
- 3) The vehicle having an accident on a narrow rural road and slipping into a ditch resulting in recovery and repairs.
- 4) Replacement Brake Discs and Pads – There was a delay on receiving replacement parts.
- 5) Damage to the lifting mechanism due to an accident whilst reversing. Replacement parts were required from Germany.
- 6) Damage to the wing mirror and passenger side door due to an accident on a rural lane with a tree branch.
- 7) Hydraulic ram failure in a narrow access vehicle, resulting in staff being unable to eject the load and requiring manual extraction prior to repair.
- 8) A split in the waste hopper requiring welding.
- 9) ABS brake system faults, which needed to be diagnosed and repaired.
- 10) An investigation into noises from the steering system.
- 11) Wrong replacement parts being supplied during the engine service, resulting in delays.

12) A fault with the health and safety camera system.

The service required 15 refuse vehicles every day, and during the disrupted period, there had been several days where the authority was between two and three vehicles short. Each vehicle serviced between 900 and 1,300 properties depending on how many rural and urban properties were in an area.

Although some of this work was added to the workload of the vehicles that were functioning, and staffing was secured to support this, there were limits on how much extra work could be accommodated without causing further issues. Where this happened, work was planned in alongside other scheduled work for the following day as much as possible to minimise the delay.

To offset this, the team arranged for some staff to work overtime to minimise the volume of work being missed on scheduled days, and in combination with the workshop returning vehicles to operation, the disruption was largely limited to a single week. Details of these issues were publicised on social media and the Council's website to inform residents of the problems.

The workshop would continue to carry out maintenance as efficiently as possible to ensure the fleet was available to service the needs of residents, and the Waste Collection team would work to ensure that resources continued to be managed to minimise disruption to services, as they had done previously throughout the last few years whilst battling the impact of Covid on staffing levels.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Baxter

"Please could the cabinet member for planning give an estimate of the likely additional costs associated with the 11th hour U-turn to abandon the current strategic plan review until after the next set of district council elections?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services advised that the plan had not been abandoned. Work was still progressing on further establishing key infrastructure provision. There were no costs in delaying the plan. All the work that had been done to date was still relevant to the ongoing review work.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Douglas

"BDC was awarded £14.5 levelling up funding in November 2021. According to ONS statistics since November 2021 construction cost inflation is between 11.6% and 17% to the end of June 2022. This represents minimal additional costs of £1.7m, the higher end being £2.47m of cost pressure. Please could the Cabinet member for finance assure Council that sufficient contingency has been built into the bid budget to cover this?"

The Leader responded by commenting that the scheme had a total cost of £16.1 million (£14.5 million of which was grant funded and £1.6 million Council funded). For the two levelling up schemes, there was 10% contingency (a combined £1.58 million) and 4.5% inflation (a combined £725,000) to give an overall total of £2.31 million, which was to the higher end of the range suggested in the question.

Given the economic conditions, the Council would continue to review the situation, but it was felt that there were adequate contingency plans included in the project.

Question submitted by Councillor S. Colella

“This Council asks for reassurance that the transport assessment work which has been lacking to date will be completed to the satisfaction of BDC for the Issues and Options consultation along with a stated time plan that can be adhered to?”

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded by explaining that additional transport assessment work was being progressed with Worcestershire County Council. This work would support the preferred option of the District Plan Review. In due course, a new timetable for the plan production would be published which would fully take into account the time it would take to complete the additional transport assessment work.

Question submitted by Councillor C. Hotham

“It appears that BDC raised £150920 from parking fines in the 2021/22 year. Out of this total some £10791 was raised in Hagley/Client, £3431 from Barnt Green and £1771 from Aston Fields. Does the cabinet member for Finance agree with me that it would only be fair and just if this money was directly reinvested in the communities where it is generated?”

The Leader commented in response that the Council did not have an investment policy for parking fines but did have a policy for capital receipts where they were used for the benefit of overall Council priorities. In the absence of a policy, parking fines needed to be treated like capital receipts and pooled for the prioritised benefit of the Council overall. Parking and parking surpluses needed to be linked to prioritised parking and transportation schemes across the Council.

Question submitted by Councillor A. English

Councillor Colella asked the following question on behalf of Councillor English:

“Please could the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services explain how it is acceptable for Officers to instigate a review of the

procedures and effectiveness of the working of the District Planning Committee without reference to said committee and whether a similar review of the whole of the Planning Department has been arranged?"

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded by advising Members that part of the role of officers was to always look at how things could be improved and to take advantage of any external support to achieve this. One of the examples of external support was the Planning Advisory Service (PAS), which offered to undertake an independent review of the procedures and the effectiveness of Bromsgrove District Council's Planning Committee. PAS was part of the Local Government Association (LGA) and provided high quality help, advice, support and training on planning and service delivery to Councils, primarily in England. Its work followed a 'sector led' improvement approach, whereby local authorities helped each other to continuously improve. The benefit of testing this assertion through independent scrutiny was invaluable.

All Members of Bromsgrove Planning Committee were emailed on 19th August 2022 setting out the purpose of the review. The review was focused on the operation of the Planning Committee. It was not a review of the operation of the Council's Planning Department. The review would include an assessment of the effectiveness of the whole Committee process and recommendations for improvement based upon best practice from around the country. The review would also include an element of observing Planning Committee meetings to understand the appropriate size of the Planning Committee, the public speaking process, and the recording of decisions. The review would take into account the content of reports, the length of the agenda and how Officers presented and managed during Committee meetings.

The PAS representative interviewed a selection of Committee Members and Officers involved in the Planning Committee process on 6th September 2022, together with observing the subsequent Planning Committee meeting held on that date. Other stakeholders who regularly attended the Committee (planning agents and Parish Council representatives) had also been contacted (or would be contacted) and interviewed. A further Planning Committee meeting would be observed by the PAS representative.

Any findings and/or recommendations arising from the review would be shared with the District Council prior to being included in a report. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services commented that he fully supported this approach.

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MOTIONS ON NOTICE

The Chairman explained that four Motions on Notice had been received for consideration at this meeting. For the first of these, submitted by Councillor R. Hunter, the wording of the Motion had been amended after the main agenda had been published and this had therefore been reissued in a supplementary pack. As agreed by group leaders prior to the meeting, following changes to Council meetings, an extended time of

one and a half hours had been allocated to the consideration of Motions on Notice at the meeting.

The Local Plan

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted by Councillor R. Hunter:

“This council believes that the local plan preferred options paper should have been published this autumn as previously planned and should be published as soon practicably possible with or without further infrastructure assessment to avoid any further unnecessary delays to the completion of our next local plan.”

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Hunter commented that the Motion focused on the decision that had been taken to delay publication of the preferred options paper for the Council, which would have identified potential sites for development. It was suggested that this delay would cause anxiety for many residents, due to uncertainty about whether particular land might be identified as suitable for development. In addition, Members were asked to note that the deferral would delay the provision of affordable housing in the District. Members were asked to note that the original wording of the Motion had been amended at the suggestion of Officers.

Reference was made to the Strategic Transport Assessment for the District, which had been postponed, however, Councillor Hunter suggested that the delay of this document did not justify deferring the preferred options paper. Other Councils in Worcestershire were proceeding with their work on their Local Plans and Councillor Hunter suggested that it would be more transparent and appropriate to proceed at a similar pace in Bromsgrove.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Robinson stated that, whilst Members might have different views about the reasons for the deferral, it had been unfortunate that there had been limited notice provided to Councillors of the delay. Members had been working to a particular deadline and Councillor Robinson suggested that any concerns about meeting this deadline should have been raised at an earlier stage in the process with Members. Should the preferred options plan be deferred, it was suggested that clarification would need to be provided as soon as possible about the new deadline.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services responded to the Motion by explaining that, as advised and explained at a meeting of the Strategic Planning Steering Group, the plan had been delayed for further infrastructure work to be undertaken. The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services expressed the view that providing

residents and businesses with more certainty over the infrastructure required to support the plan was key, which was why a decision had been taken to delay the plan. A new timetable would be published in due course which would set out when the Council would consult on its new plan. The future of the District and residents needed to be considered and the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services expressed the view that it would be reckless to continue without this infrastructure work in place.

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

“This council believes that the local plan preferred options paper should have been published this autumn as previously planned and should be published as soon practicably possible with a further infrastructure assessment to avoid any further unnecessary delays to the completion of our next local plan.”

In proposing this amendment, Councillor Colella expressed concerns about the support that had been received from Worcestershire County Council in relation to the infrastructure required for large developments at Whitford Road and Perryfields as well as in relation to Active Travel. Councillor Colella suggested that the Council required reassurance that Worcestershire County Council would undertake infrastructure assessments in relation to the Bromsgrove Local Plan and would offer support to Bromsgrove District Council where needed. In this context, Councillor Colella suggested that an infrastructure assessment was needed for the local plan preferred options paper.

Consideration was given to the amendment proposed by Councillor Colella and the Monitoring Officer was called upon to provide advice. In responding to the proposed amendment, the Monitoring Officer highlighted that the amendment, and the rationale provided for the amendment, could be regarded as criticisms of the competence of Worcestershire County Council. This would be unprofessional wording for a Motion. Therefore, for this reason, the amendment was rejected.

The infrastructure assessments needed, particularly in relation to larger housing developments, were subsequently debated. Members noted that the strategic transport assessment for Bromsgrove District had been discussed at a number of Council meetings with reference also having been made in the past to the potential to introduce a Western Bypass and the need for a feasibility study in respect of this. Concerns were raised that the delays in relation to the strategic transport assessment would mean that work would have already commenced on housing development in locations where a Western Bypass could have been situated. Reference was also made to the availability of bus services and support for walking and cycling in the county and Members questioned whether additional support in relation to this would be made available to the District moving forward.

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Clarification was provided that the decision had been taken to defer the local preferred options to allow for a range of infrastructure issues, not just the strategic planning assessment, to be investigated further. This included giving consideration to the provision of schools in larger housing developments as well as to the outcomes of the ongoing review of Active Travel in the county. The deferral would provide extra time for the Council to consider data and other evidence that would help to inform the content of the plan moving forward.

The work that had already been undertaken by the Council's Strategic Planning team was subsequently debated. Members noted that Officers had already assessed a number of sites and questions were raised about the extent to which Officers were likely to change their assessments as a result of further information being provided about the infrastructure.

The need for transparency in the strategic planning process was also discussed. Members commented on the value of providing clarification as soon as possible on the numbers of houses that would be built in each ward during the period of the next Local Plan. This information would enable Members to assess the potential impact on their communities. However, it was also noted that, rather than raising expectations unnecessarily based on incomplete information, the deferral of the preferred options plan would ensure that the Council had time to gather more detail and to ensure that future proposals had an evidence basis.

In accordance with Procedure Rule 18.3 a recorded vote was taken on this Motion and the voting was as follows:

Members voting FOR the Motion:

Councillors S. Douglas, C. Hotham, R. Hunter, J. King, S. Robinson, H. Rone-Clarke and K. Van Der Plank (7).

Members voting AGAINST the Motion:

Councillors A. Beaumont, R. Deeming, H. Jones, A. Kriss, R. Laight, K. May, M. Sherrey, P. Thomas, M. Thompson, J. Till, S. Webb and P. Whittaker (12).

Members ABSTAINING in the vote on the Motion:

Councillor S. Colella (1).

The vote on the Motion was therefore lost.

The Ryland Centre

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted by Councillor S. Robinson:

“Cabinet is asked to work with Worcestershire County Council, which owns the Ryland Centre, to ensure that, wherever possible, services continue at the centre.”

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

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Robinson commented that the Ryland Centre was a unique and valued local leisure centre. Residents could access a sports hall in the Ryland Centre, which was a facility that was not available at other leisure centres in the town. There were good sports facilities available for residents to access in the Ryland Centre and it needed support to ensure that this could continue to be offered to Bromsgrove residents moving forward.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Hunter noted that the Ryland Centre provided a great facility for the use of local residents.

During consideration of this Motion, Councillor M. Thompson proposed an amendment to the wording of the Motion. This amended wording was as follows:

“Cabinet is asked to work with Worcestershire County Council, which owns the Ryland Centre, to ensure that, wherever possible, *with no financial burden to Bromsgrove District Council*, services continue at the centre.”

The amendment was proposed by Councillor Thompson and seconded by Councillor K. May.

In proposing the amendment, Councillor Thompson acknowledged that the Ryland Centre was a valued leisure facility. However, Members were asked to note that the Ryland Centre was owned by Worcestershire County Council, not Bromsgrove District Council. At a challenging time for local government finances, there was a need to ensure that Council budgets were utilised appropriately. In this context, any support that the Council provided to the Ryland Centre needed to be supplied without having budget implications for the authority.

In seconding the amendment, Councillor May commented that Members needed to be mindful of the difficult financial situation of the Council. Members were also asked to note that the Council had submitted a bid in the 2010s to Worcestershire County Council to run the Ryland Centre and this had been rejected in favour of a different supplier.

In considering the amendment, Members commented that the Motion, as originally worded, did provide flexibility over the type of support that Bromsgrove District Council could provide in relation to the Ryland Centre. It was further noted that reference to “wherever possible” could be interpreted as clarifying that Bromsgrove District Council could only

provide so much support within existing resources. However, concerns were also raised about the financial implications of the Council's existing responsibilities and Members commented on the need for the authority to manage public finances prudently. Therefore, it was suggested that the Council needed to be careful and to consider the risks to the authority when offering support to the Ryland Centre.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was carried in the amended form.

RESOLVED that

Cabinet is asked to work with Worcestershire County Council, which owns the Ryland Centre, to ensure that, wherever possible, with no financial burden to Bromsgrove District Council, services continue at the centre.

Street Theatre

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted by Councillor S. Colella:

“That BDC reinstates the Street Theatres from Summer 23 and monies that would have been spent on this year's street Theatres are made available to the communities that have this year missed out so that ward councillors can use this money in their wards for community events.”

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Colella and seconded by Councillor C. Hotham.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Colella explained that there had been street theatre in Bromsgrove District, organised by the Council, for at least ten years. The street theatre had become popular with residents and the quality of events had improved over time. Whilst the street theatre had been cancelled in 2020, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, events had returned in 2021. However, Councillor Colella expressed concerns that street theatre had not taken place in 2022 and that he had learned about this from the Parish Clerk at Hagley Parish Council rather than from Council Officers. After raising questions about this, Councillor Colella had been advised that the budget for street theatre had been replaced with support from the Welcome Back Fund. Councillor Colella questioned when the decision had been taken to make changes to the budget and whether Members had been involved in making this decision. In addition, Councillor Colella raised concerns that there might be expectations that Parish Councils should take a lead on organising and funding street theatre activities, using funds from their precepts, despite the different roles of Parish and District Councils. Concerns were also raised that some arts and cultural activities had taken place in the Birdbox in Bromsgrove town centre and Councillor Colella suggested that this approach appeared to demonstrate a focus on the town at the expense of communities in outlying areas. Councillor Colella concluded by highlighting the content of the Centres Strategy and questioning

whether the focus of this strategy had been reduced without prior consultation.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor Hotham acknowledged that the Council was in a challenging financial position and only had finite resources. However, Members were asked to note that there would be funding in the budget for arts events and activities in 2023/24 and it was important to ensure that decisions about how this funding was used were made following consultation. It was also important to ensure that Members were kept informed about plans for the District in terms of use of this funding.

Members subsequently discussed the Motion in detail and in so doing noted that the Welcome Back Fund had consisted of two tranches of funding. However, Council was asked to note that this funding had not been cut. It was noted that the allocation of funding to services was determined by Members but how this funding was used was delegated to officers to decide following consultation with the Leader.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change explained that in 2022 it had been agreed that the Council should use the budget for street theatres to deliver three key and unique events:

- 1) The Queen's Platinum Jubilee commemorating 70 years on the throne. This event involved the lighting of a beacon as part of the thousands lit across the UK to mark the start of the celebrations.
- 2) The Green Funday, an event to support the messaging and challenges around the climate emergency.
- 3) The Queen's Baton Relay event in Sanders Park to welcome the Queen's Baton as it moved across the Midlands before reaching its destination in Birmingham for the Commonwealth Games.

These events were programmed and delivered following consultation with the relevant lead Portfolio Holder and officers had had delegated authority to act in this way.

Members were asked to note that a recommendation within the emerging Leisure and Culture Strategy for Bromsgrove District was to develop programmes of support to increase skills and capacity amongst local organisations and communities and to ensure the successful delivery of new programmes of events and activities. This would allow local groups and communities to have more say and control of what happened where they lived. The Council would continue to assess the most appropriate ways to deliver events and activities moving forward and Members were asked to note that, just because a particular event had taken place in the past, this would not guarantee that it would continue to take place in the future if there was evidence to suggest that a different approach was needed to meet the needs of the local community.

Reference was made by Members to the need for the Council to prioritise use of funding in any given year and it was noted that in 2022 events related to Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee, the Commonwealth Games and to tackling climate change had all been prioritised. However, it was also commented that there needed to be greater transparency in future in respect of determining which events and activities should be prioritised.

On being put to the vote the Motion was lost.

Cost of Living

Council considered the following Motion on Notice that was submitted by Councillor H. Rone-Clarke:

"Council recognises that the current cost of living crisis is both an emergency and a matter of paramount concern for local residents.

Therefore, council resolves to:

1. Lobby the new Prime Minister for concrete action to be taken in order to support the public through this upcoming crisis
2. To ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider use of the Parkside complex as a day centre during the Autumn/Winter period to support residents who cannot afford to heat their homes, providing a warm space to sit and even socialise."

The Motion was proposed by Councillor Rone-Clarke and seconded by Councillor May.

In proposing the Motion, Councillor Rone-Clarke explained that, following a conversation with the Leader, the wording of the Motion had been amended slightly from the version published in the agenda to ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to investigate the potential to use the Parkside building to provide warmth and support to residents who could not afford to heat their homes.

In seconding the Motion, Councillor May commented that she was keen to lobby the Government over the provision of certainty in relation to the Revenue Support Grant for the Council. In addition, the Council would aim to liaise with Worcestershire County Council, which managed the Library in Parkside, over the potential for that facility to provide a safe and warm space for local residents. Reference was made to leaflets that had recently been circulated for Members' consideration on the cost of living and Members were advised that the Print Unit could produce copies of this leaflet on request for Members to distribute.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the agenda for the following meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board had already been published and the cost of living was not an item on the agenda. However, there was a review that had been undertaken by the Fuel

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Poverty Task Group, which was close to completion, which could potentially be asked to investigate this matter further and to report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Board in due course. As the Fuel Poverty Task Group had been due to report to the meeting of the Board in October, Members suggested that this item should be postponed at the Board meeting and that the outcomes of the group's discussions could be reported at a following meeting of the Board, which could include holding an extra meeting of the Board in November.

On being put to the vote the Motion was agreed.

RESOLVED that Council recognises that the current cost of living crisis is both an emergency and a matter of paramount concern for local residents.

Therefore, council resolves to:

- 1) Lobby the new Prime Minister for concrete action to be taken in order to support the public through this upcoming crisis.
- 2) Ask the Overview and Scrutiny Board to consider use of the Parkside complex as a day centre during the Autumn/Winter period to support residents who cannot afford to heat their homes, providing a warm space to sit and even socialise.

The meeting closed at 9.15 p.m.

Chairman



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

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 – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS)

1. Update on Strategic Purposes

Run and grow a successful business:

All the work of the shared Regulatory Service, for which the portfolio holder leads, contributes to the success of the local economy. One of the key purposes of regulation, according to local businesses, is “Help me to trade well and ensure my competitors do the same”. Ensuring a level playing field for all businesses is a key part of local authority regulation.

Communities which are safe, well maintained and green:

A range of regulatory work contributes to the safety of our local communities. Licensing of business activities-whether taxis, alcohol and entertainment venues or gambling establishments-helps to ensure that those involved are fit and proper and that the businesses are run in a way that does not cause issues for individuals and communities. Statutory nuisance work addresses a range of issues in communities, and many other areas of work ensure that consumers, employees and some elements of the environment are protected. Work on air quality and contaminated land contributes to the wider maintenance and improvement of environmental standards.

Key activities since last report:

These are outlined in more detail below. The focus of work has varied across the teams. WRS took a leading role in the pandemic response, leading on the enforcement of business restrictions, and additionally:

- Embedded staff in the Local Outbreak Response Team,
- Ran the Covid Advisor scheme across the county,
- Managed the local contact tracing system,
- Supported Events Management to ensure safety as we emerged from controls,
- Worked with ED and local business engagement officers to support the business community

The team continues to be engaged with the Local Outbreak Response Team to provide support and to ensure there is preparation in case of another wave of Covid cases during the winter.



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

As we have emerged from the pandemic, the shared regulatory service has been moving back to its business-as-usual activity. The Food Standards Agency suspended all routine food hygiene interventions for a significant period during the pandemic, and the service has been working through the Agency's 18-month long road to recovery programme for food law enforcement, which ends at the end of March 2023.

In Licensing a wide range of activities have been restarted with several policy consultations on-going and there has been one high-profile licence review in the town centre, with another one in the pipeline.

Air quality is another area of WRS work that has come to the fore in recent months, with plans for improved monitoring at various locations in the county including Bromsgrove.

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:

Worcestershire Regulatory Services is a shared service constituted under the provisions of the Local Government Act 1972, reporting to a joint committee of the six district councils, making it constitutionally part of all six local authorities. All staff are employed by Bromsgrove District Council to act on behalf of the six partners, so the district effectively provides what might be called “pay and rations” for the service, for which the council is reimbursed.

The service discharges all the key statutory duties of the district council in relation to food law enforcement, infectious disease control, health and safety at work, statutory nuisance and related matters, air quality, contaminated land, environmental permitting, and many others.

Key activities since last report:

The authority adopted its new Licensing policy for the taxi trades, which came into force on 1st September 2022. The new policy has implemented the national standards produced by the Department of Transport and intended as a model for all local authorities to adopt. The new standards are very much aimed at addressing the safety of the travelling public and improving safeguarding. To support the trade coming out of the pandemic and at a time of increasing cost pressures, the council has agreed to increases in Hackney carriage tariffs twice during 2022. Page 27



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

A new street collections policy has also been approved this year and the consultation process on a revised sex establishment licensing policy has commenced. One high profile review of license under the Licensing Act 2003 also took place, although the operator has appealed against the decision of the council's licensing sub-committee.

Former Fire Station, Windsor Street: WRS are working with the Environment Agency on a review of all information held concerning some very tricky contaminants associated with fire-fighting foam retardants which have been found on site.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones and Priorities For Next Period.

WRS will shortly be starting consultation on revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle age limits and testing intervals, partly to try to incentivise the take up of less polluting vehicles and support the move to zero carbon.

3. Good News Stories and Awards

Air Quality bid submitted to DEFRA:

WRS has submitted a bid to Defra for funding of an enhanced Air Quality monitoring strategy to support wider behavioural change and reduction in air pollution. The result of the bid will be known towards the end of the financial year. In addition, work has commenced on an update to the countywide air quality action plan which has a significant Bromsgrove element due to the three Air Quality Management Areas in the district. Additional work will need to be undertaken to establish the current required reduction equivalent in each vehicle type in each area of concern

Former Covid Advisors support Homes for Ukraine scheme:

Much of the work of the COVID Advisors during the pandemic was to support businesses and members of the public with a variety of issues, concerns and worries. The Advisors were selected for their communication skills and drive to help people. This has served well in supporting Housing colleagues at Bromsgrove, Malvern Hills, Redditch, and Wychavon in delivering the work of supporting Ukrainians who have arrived in the county.

Our Housing colleagues have had to carry the burden of delivering this worthwhile work but a significant proportion has been delivered by former COVID Advisors on the ground. In April 2022, COVID Advisors were asked to assist with the Welfare and Safeguarding visits for our hosts and guests in the



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

Bromsgrove and Redditch districts. Our in-house Duty Officer team were also utilised to assist with some of the administration work for the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Support for this scheme remains on-going.

Food Safety scores remain good

Officers have continued to visit premises to catch-up with inspections following the Food Standards Agency’s suspension of work during the Covid pandemic, freeing up resource for response work.

Rating	5	4	3	2	1	0	Unrated	Total
No Premises	721	112	42	3	3	1	99	981

Although there has been some slippage, most premises remain at 3 or above, demonstrating they produce safe food. Unrated premises are generally the newly registered businesses which flow into WRS all year round from across the county at the rate of 800-1000 per year. They are entered on a database and then prioritised for inspection. When we say new businesses, many are changes to ownership at existing food premises rather than new outlets. Most are on the high street, but some are domestic premises with people producing food at home, while others could be schools, sports clubs, etc. There tends to be a relatively high turnover of ownership in hospitality, particularly in the takeaway trades, so many will fit into this description.

Beyond this, one business has been served with an emergency prohibition order, ratified by Magistrates, in relation to a hidden room, unsuitable for food work.

4. Other

Planning Enforcement Support:

WRS continues to have the benefit of working alongside our County Council Trading Standards colleagues, which has enabled the high standard of enforcement practices to be developed and honed. Whilst the subject matters being enforced by each of the teams in the organisations may be different, the ability to investigate crime, collate evidence, produce witness statements, and prepare an enforcement file is the same. These are crucial skills in adherence to our Enforcement Policy and enable successful prosecutions to achieve our vision, "That Worcestershire is a healthy, safe and fair place to live, where businesses can thrive".



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WRS has been utilising the knowledge and skills we have in this area to support our partner authorities. During the Spring we trained former contact tracing staff where required (as some had considerable experience in enforcement previously) to deliver planning enforcement work on behalf of four of the Worcestershire District Councils including Bromsgrove.

Initially it was basic collation of evidence to assist the Planning Officer to make an informed decision in a timely manner. A significant backlog of casework had been created by COVID related restrictions and, in some cases, historically by capacity and recruitment issues. Whilst the work for Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts ceased in June, we have continued to work alongside our Planning colleagues in Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils to deliver part of this service. Several cases have been difficult and challenging including those in Bromsgrove, where our Chair of Planning said in the most recent WRS Board meeting, how pleased she had been with the work carried out in this area by WRS. Having this enforcement work undertaken within the team has made it easier for liaison on other issues such as nuisance, where they are part of planning matters.

Enforcement

1. Update on Strategic Purposes

In terms of planning enforcement matters, the National Planning Policy Framework (2019) emphasises that planning enforcement is a discretionary activity and Local Planning Authorities should act proportionately in responding to suspected breaches of planning control.

The priority of the planning enforcement function is to protect amenities, safeguard the built environment and uphold local planning policy in the most effective way, thus contributing to the council's strategic purposes. Depending on the type of enforcement case, this contributes to strategic purposes.

Key activities since last report:

The aim of any enforcement action is to encourage compliance with the policies of the Council and seeks regularisation of the development if deemed acceptable. Any measure of enforcement action must recognise that the most desired outcome is compliance within an acceptable timeframe. The table below provides a summary of the main enforcement actions this year, to time of report writing.



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

	1/04/22 – 30/09/22	1/10/22 – 10/11/22
New Planning Enforcement Cases	84	26
Warning letters issued (cases will not normally have been received in this time period)	5	4
Enforcement Notices (including Stop Notices)	3	6 (with an additional 5 being prepared)
Prosecution or injunctions (cases will not have been received in this time period)	0	1

2. Good News Stories and Awards

Successful prosecution:

In November the outcome of a lengthy enforcement case was reported positively in the national planning press. An individual was found guilty of failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice leading the judge to sentence with a fine of £160,000, costs of £7,258 and a victim surcharge of £170.

Development Management

1. Update on Strategic Purposes

Development Management (DM) is the part of the service responsible for determining planning applications and defending associated appeals. The service also provides pre application guidance, maintains historical information and completes searches (normally associated with selling of property). The DM service integrates fully with the strategic planning and conservation team by making decisions on planning matters that are in accordance with the adopted plan for the area.

The scope of developments proposed through the DM process means that most areas of the Council's strategic purposes and the Council priorities are influenced by the service. In practice this may mean applications for expansion or relocation of businesses, new recreational activities and new homes of varying type and tenure. Some notable applications approved since January 2022 include



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- **21/00684/HYB** Bordesley Hall, The Holloway, Hybrid application consisting of a full application for the demolition of employment buildings and the conversion of Bordesley Hall into 3 apartments and an outline application (with all matters reserved with the exception of access) for the construction of up to 46 dwellings and all associated works.
- **19/00592/FUL** Blue Bird Confectionery Ltd, Romsley. Part demolition and site clearance of the former Blue Bird factory site for its redevelopment to provide 108 residential dwellings (Use Class C3), consisting of both new dwellings and conversion of the Welfare and Administration buildings, along with associated landscaping; drainage; engineering; highways and access works.

Part of providing a DM service is to provide timely decisions. Government assesses the time take to make decisions and require 60% of major applications to be decided within a specific timeline (Rolling two-year performance was 81.5%) and require 70% of smaller (Non-Majors) to be determined (Rolling two year performance was 78.6%).

Similarly, the quality of appeals decision is assessed. Since April 2022 there have been 21 non-major appeal decisions 16 have been dismissed and 5 allowed. These appeal numbers are pleasingly low in the context of the overall number of decisions made. (There have been no major appeal decisions made in this period to date).

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:

Working with others is a key part of the DM (and as appropriate enforcement) process. Consultation with interested parties (the public, Parish Councils and consultees both statutory and general, including internal partners) is an integral part of the planning process. Subject to criteria the outcome may be that certain conditions are imposed on a development to make it acceptable. In the case of more major developments, and again subject to circumstances, financial contributions may be collected in order to mitigate the impact of developments. Examples may include Education or NHS contributions, or monies to ensure certain highway improvements are secured as part of a development.



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

At the other end of the spectrum, being aware that development is being proposed gives businesses the opportunity to promote their services to applicants. Having information publicly available at to when planning permission is being applied for assists residents and businesses in this regard.

Anticipated milestones

Regeneration of key sites within Bromsgrove Town Centre will be a significant area of work for DM over the next 2-year period and early meetings with NWEDR have commenced. These developments will have a high public profile and will need to be delivered in a timely manner whilst working with key partners. This work will reflect the council priority of economic regeneration in particular.

Strategic Planning and Conservation

1. Update on Strategic Purposes

The strategic Planning and Conservation function contributes to a range of strategic purposes.

Affordable and sustainable homes

In relation to affordable and sustainable homes, the team commissioned and received the Bromsgrove District Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA). This document gives the authority a much clearer indication of the housing needs of the district including the types and amounts of affordable housing that should be delivered by the Bromsgrove District Plan review.

Key activities since last report:

Significant progress on the review of the Bromsgrove District Plan has been made. As Council is aware, further infrastructure planning work is being undertaken.

Anticipated Activities/Key Milestones For Next Period

A key milestone for the next period will be to further progress the Bromsgrove District Plan review to its next consultation stage, and to respond to the planning reforms outlined in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill.



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

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:

Significant partnership working with a number of key stakeholders in plan production, most notably Worcestershire County Council.

Building Control

1. Update on Strategic Purposes

Affordable and sustainable homes

Whilst the affordable element of this strategic purpose is not widely addressed within the scope of building regulations, the sustainability of new, and increasingly existing homes, is a strong factor in the design and construction of dwellings.

The role of Building Control within this field is critical in ensuring the real-world delivery of sustainable homes.

The building regulations and supporting Gov. guidance on this topic continue to evolve towards the 2025 Future Homes net zero targets. Matters encompassed within this include thermal efficiencies and new ways of heating homes moving away from grid gas connections. The new provision for EV charging points in dwellings and regulations addressing thermal over-heating as well as ensuring safe comfortable living spaces all contribute to ensuring the sustainable use of new dwellings.

It is likely the next tranche of regulation changes towards the Future Homes Standard will place more pressure on landlords to upgrade existing stock; again, Building Control will play a significant role in ensuring this work is undertaken correctly.

Living independent, active and healthy lives

As with affordable and sustainable homes, provisions within the building regulations call for a wide range of designed-in features allowing the use of new dwellings (and new commercial buildings) to be suitable for the access and use by disabled people.



Portfolio Holder Report – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services

The role of building Control ensures these design features are created on site to assist in the independent occupation of such buildings.

Key activities since last report:

Addressing the consequences of recruitment issues in the industry.

Another key activity within the service has been the adoption of key relevant recommendations from the Grenfell Tower Hackett Review. Certain recommendations have created the new Building Safety Regulator (BSR) to oversee the profession. At the time of writing, the BSR, sitting within the Health and Safety Executive, is consulting on a wide range of changes within the profession.

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:

Other than working closely with local building firms, architects and other agents, Building Control does not have any formal partner organisation arrangements within the District.

3. Good News Stories and Awards

ISO 9001 Quality Management System

Via the industry-wide overarching body known as the LABC, each local authority has been audited under ISO 9001. Our audit provided no non-conformities.

The reputation of North Worcestershire Building Control remains high. The strong and effective work of the team continues to help both residents and business within the District deliver successful and compliant building projects.

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Council Meeting 7th December 2022
Recommendations from the Audit, Standards and Governance
Committee

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee meeting 9th November 2022

Section 24 Notice

RECOMMENDED that the Section 24 Statutory Recommendation is accepted and that Council review the recommendation, endorse the actions included in the management responses which form the rectification process required as per legislation.

Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21

RECOMMENDED that

- 1 the 5 Key Recommendations and 13 Improvement Recommendations within this report be agreed.
- 2 Council agree that the Management Actions contained within this report will rectify these issues.

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SECTION 24 REPORT

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Pete Carpenter
Report Author	Job Title: Interim Director of Finance email:peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 0152764252
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council has received a Statutory Recommendation from our External Auditors Grant Thornton with key reason being the non-delivery of the 2020/21 financial statements is a **key reason**. This report sets out the reason for the Statutory Recommendation, and the process the Council now has to follow to rectify that position.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Audit Standards and Governance Committee are asked to Recommend to Cabinet and Council that:

- 1 That the Section 24 Statutory Recommendation is accepted and that Council review the recommendation, endorse the actions included in the management responses which form the rectification process required as per legislation.

3. Background

Introduction

- 3.1 The Council has set out in a number of meetings during 2022 the issues it has encountered in the implementation of a new financial system in February 2021 and its knock-on effect in terms of staff retention, delivery of the 2020/21 Accounts, delivery of 2021/22 in year monitoring, delivery of Government Returns being key items. This position has been
- Discussed at Audit Standards and Governance Committees in July and October as part of the Internal Audit Report items.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

9th November 2022

- Discussed in Cabinet as Part of the Finance Improvement Recovery Report on the 12th October.
 - Discussed at Council on the 17th October as part of the as part of the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Governance's annual report.
- 3.2 The majority of these issues have been resolved or are in the process of being resolved. This includes the recruitment of a new finance team, delivery of monitoring in 2022/23, and compliance reporting. However, the Council still have not been able to complete the 2020/21 Statutory Accounts. This has been due to issues in rectifying issues on the cash receipting module of its new finance system. This also impacts key reconciliations.
- 3.3 The external Auditors have noted progress in their 2020/21 Annual Auditors Report which is also coming to this Committee for review. However, they have concluded that it is appropriate for them to use their powers to make written recommendations under section 24 of the Act, with the key reason being the non-delivery of the 2020/21 Statutory Accounts. Further details are set out in the attached report
- 3.4 Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires the following actions:
- The Council must consider the recommendation at a meeting held before the end of the period of one month beginning with the day on which it was sent to the Council. This will take place at the Council meeting on the 7th December
 - At that public meeting the Council must decide
 - whether the recommendations are to be accepted; and
 - what, if any, action to take in response to these recommendations.
 - Schedule 7 specifies the meeting publication requirements that the Council must comply with.
- 3.5 The report must come to Audit, Standards and Governance Committee initially for their discussion, and their views to then be fed into Council in December.
- 3.6 The External Auditors Report sets out that Management state that the proposed resolution is now in the final phase of rectification, with regression testing of the solution key to its implementation. With the Cash Receipting fix implemented, the Council are aiming to have a draft set of accounts ready for the end of November.
- 3.7 Page 4 of the External Audit Report sets out the main issues and the Council's Management Responses to each of those issues.

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

9th November 2022

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

4.2 This is set out in section 3.4 above.

Service / Operational Implications

4.3 Non-Delivery of the 2020/21 Accounts is a fundamental deficiency and this is part of the Corporate Risk Register and impacts all service areas directly and indirectly.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

4.4 There are none of these within this report.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 Non-Delivery of the 2020/21 Accounts is a fundamental deficiency and this is part of the Corporate Risk Register.

6. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Bromsgrove District Council Section 24 Statutory Recommendation – Grant Thornton.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

7. **KEY**

None

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Bromsgrove District Council

Section 24 Statutory Recommendations

31 October 2022

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31 October 2022

Dear Sirs

[Recommendations made under section 24 schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014](#)

Our responsibilities

As well as our responsibilities to give an opinion on the financial statements and assess the arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the Council's use of resources, we have additional powers and duties under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. These include powers to issue a public interest report, make written recommendations, apply to the court for a declaration that an item of account is contrary to law, and to give electors the opportunity to raise questions about the Council's accounts and to raise objections received in relation to the accounts.

We have concluded that it is appropriate for us to use our powers to make written recommendations under section 24 of the Act, due to inadequate arrangements relating to issues with financial systems which further impact on key statutory returns and related financial governance. This non-delivery of the 2020/21 financial statements is a key reason for our S24 Recommendation. Further details are set out in the attached report.

We will also consider these issues as part of our work on the Council's value for money arrangements and its financial statements, once produced.

What does the Council need to do next?

Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires the following actions:

The Council must consider the recommendation at a meeting held before the end of the period of one month beginning with the day on which it was sent to the Council.

At that public meeting the Council must decide

- whether the recommendations are to be accepted; and
- what, if any, action to take in response to these recommendations.

Schedule 7 specifies the meeting publication requirements that the Council must comply with.

[Jackson Murray](#)

Key Audit Partner
Grant Thornton UK LLP

Chartered Accountants

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Background to the recommendations

We have concluded that it is appropriate for us to use our powers to make written recommendations under section 24 of the Act, due to inadequate arrangements relating to issues with financial systems which further impact on key statutory returns and related financial governance.

Financial systems and reporting

The Council has historically had difficulties producing information to support the financial statements audits, resulting in external audit recommendations and late approval of audited accounts. For the 2019/20 financial year the draft financial statements were not published by the statutory deadline of 31 August 2020, instead being published 18 September 2020. The date for publication of audited financial statements of 30 November 2020 was also missed, with the audit opinion not issued until eleven months after this date on 5 October 2021.

One of the cited reasons for the issues faced in previous audits was the Council's aging financial ledger system which could not produce system reports to support key accounting entries and did not integrate with other key financial and Council systems, amongst other issues. In June 2019 the Council approved a contract for the implementation of a new financial ledger system to be developed by TechnologyOne. This Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system would integrate financial, human resources and payroll and supply chain information into a single electronic system.

The implementation date of the new system was 8 February 2021. Following our interim audit procedures earlier in the year we became aware of examples of mis-coding issues in the new ledger. The Council have now produced evidence that the closing balances from the old ledger system were completely and accurately transferred to the new system in February 2021, but we are yet to receive or verify this. This assurance should have been provided within 1 month of Go Live as standard.

Since the implementation of the system there have been significant challenges, particularly in respect of the cash receipting module. Following its introduction, the system has been posting cash transactions to suspense accounts, receipts in transit and inter-company balances. This makes a number of routine and key control activities challenging, including bank and control account reconciliations and providing meaningful budget monitoring information to managers and Members. The completion of bank and control account reconciliations is key to ensuring that potential areas of error or fraud are identified and rectified in a timely manner. The Council continues to work with the system supplier to attempt to reach a solution to this issue, and as such bank and control accounts have not been routinely undertaken. Management state that the proposed resolution is now in the final phase of rectification, with regression testing of the solution key to its implementation. Lack of routine reconciliations represents a significant failure in the Council's financial governance.

Initially, the impact of implementing a new system during COVID-19 restrictions, and the loss during the 2021/22 financial year of the majority of staff involved in the implementation of the new financial ledger system which led to a lack of financial capacity resulted in work-arounds continuing to be used rather than the software supplier's system fixes being tested and implemented. The Cash Receipting fixes were still being developed at that time and are only in final testing at the moment. More recently, following the recruitment of permanent finance team members, the Council has been working with TechnologyOne on a solution to cash receipting and has held regular meetings with them. The Council recognises that without resolution of the financial ledger challenges it cannot move forward and close its 2020/21 financial statements. This non-delivery of the 2020/21 financial statements is a key reason for our S24 Recommendation.

As the Council has not been able to finalise the 2020/21 accounts there are knock on implications. The Council has now also missed the draft publication deadline for the 2021/22 accounts of 31 July 2022 and cannot finalise other key Government returns, with the Revenue Outturn (RO) and Capital Outturn (CO) submissions for 2020/21 paused awaiting closure of the 2020/21 accounts.

The Council has recognised these issues and has reported updates and mitigations steps through:

- Audit, Governance and Standards Committee in July 2022 – via the Internal Audit Reports;
- The Finance Recovery Report to Cabinet in October 2022; and
- The Cabinet Members Update reported to Council in October 2022.

In conclusion, the implementation of the new financial ledger in February 2021 was not effective, given the continued challenges with cash receipting and as evidenced by the fact that the Council continue to attempt to resolve significant issues with the system some 20 months after the implementation date. This has led to key elements of financial governance not being completed which increase the risk of incorrect, irregular or fraudulent transactions or events occurring. It also means that the Council has now fallen significantly behind in respect of key statutory financial reporting deadlines. Our statutory recommendation in relation to these matters are set out on page 4 of this report.

Recommendations made under section 24 schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Area	Recommendation	Management Response/ Responsible Officer/ Due Date
Financial systems and governance	<p>The Council cannot yet produce its 2020/21 draft statement of accounts with long-standing issues with its new ledger system in relation to cash receipting requiring resolution. The Council must ensure that arrangements allow for the successful implementation of cash receipting within its ERP system to allow key elements of financial governance and compliance to be undertaken routinely and in a timely manner. In order to achieve this the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the Council has access to the necessary knowledge and expertise to resolve the remaining key issues with the ERP system in a timely manner to provide management with sufficient assurance over the completeness and veracity of the data included within the system; • undertake appropriate testing of the fixes and ensure that appropriate sign-off of these is received prior to running them on live system data; and • ensure budget holders and other relevant officers possess the skills and knowledge to appropriately use the ERP system as intended, including relevant training and updates to key documentation and process manuals. <p>Once system issues are properly resolved, the Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake key control activities such as bank and control account reconciliations on a monthly basis and ensure that these are kept up to date; • produce the 2020/21 and 2021/22 draft financial statements, along with high quality supporting working papers; • conclude the 2020/21 and 2021/22 RO and CO submissions, and other key Government returns including Whole of Government Accounts; and • ensure timely reporting of budget outturns and report publicly on in-year financial monitoring, including updates on the capital programme and savings scheme achievement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Finance Recovery Plan which is a wider schedule of finance deliverables – monitoring, delivery of returns, budget, reported to CMT on a Monthly basis, and reviewed by the Sr Finance Team on a weekly basis. • Weekly meetings held both internally on reconciliation and associated issues. Monthly ERP Board is in place. Two weekly meetings on utilisation of assets. • Cash Receipting issues escalated on Tech1 side to worldwide Head of Local Government (met 6 July 2022) for resolution. Now in final phase of testing before solution can be transferred to the live environment. • Council is a first and only Council user for cash receipting and there is limited Tech1 expertise to resolve ongoing design issues which require scheduling. • System Tech1 expertise commissioned to fully document the solution in October to aid full understanding. • Documentation a plan to correct 20/21 and 21/22 entries which will be reviewed by Internal Audit before being presented to External Audit. • Handovers have taken place to new establishment Staff who were on-boarded up to August 22 in preparation for delivery of 20/21 accounts and user training.. • Financial Governance is being reviewed as part of Finance Recovery plan and is basis for revised training and responsibilities being implemented in the Autumn. • User Guides and manuals being redrafted for Autumn training launches. • Tech1 User Group set up in September to assess documentation and support across the Sector. • Tech1 has the Tech1 University which is comprehensive but not site specific to base documentation on. Staff have access to this to deliver updated guides and manuals. • Staff in place to undertake bank rec but dependent on final cash receipting fix. Cannot fully start bank reconciliation on system as it is presently causing more transactions to be produced. • Other monthly controls set up for the end of August. • Internal Audit Recommendations will be added to the Recovery plan • Members have been updated on issues through Audit Committee, Cabinet and the Cabinet Member update to Council during 2022.

Impact on Value for Money reporting

We began to discuss our finding and concerns with Officers in February 2022 after the commencement of our 2020/21 interim audit visit identified the issues reported with the financial ledger system and its related governance, although our reporting of these issues was initially paused by the pre-election period at Redditch Borough Council to May 2022.

After raising these issues with management, it is pleasing to note that they began to resolve them from March 2022, as per the interim Head of Finance and Customer Service's recovery plan, although this plan should have been set up sooner to mitigate issues that had arisen.

We will consider the impact of the issue through our Value for Money reporting in 2020/21 and subsequent years and this work is detailed in our Interim Auditor's Annual Report for 2020/21.

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The contents of this report relate only to those matters which came to our attention during the conduct of our normal audit procedures which are designed for the purpose of completing our work under the NAO Code and related guidance. Our audit is not designed to test all arrangements in respect of value for money. However, where, as part of our testing, we identify significant weaknesses, we will report these to you. In consequence, our work cannot be relied upon to disclose all irregularities, or to include all possible improvements in arrangements that a more extensive special examination might identify. We do not accept any responsibility for any loss occasioned to any third party acting, or refraining from acting on the basis of the content of this report, as this report was not prepared for, nor intended for, any other purpose.

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

9th November 2022

INTERIM AUDITORS ANNUAL REPORT ON BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL 2020-21

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Pete Carpenter
Report Author	Job Title: Interim Director of Finance email:peter.carpenter@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 0152764252
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 The Interim Auditor's Annual Report 2020/21 sets out the auditor's view on controls within the organisation. Apart from the Statutory Recommendation, for which there is a separate Report, there are 5 Key and 13 Improvement Recommendations in this report. The Council's responses and progress in delivery of these Recommendations are set out in the Auditors Report.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

Audit Standards and Governance Committee are asked to Recommend to Cabinet and Council that:

- 1 They agree with the 5 Key Recommendations and 13 Improvement Recommendations within this report.
- 2 They agree with the Management Actions contained within this report will rectify these issues.
- 3 They highlight any other actions they deem necessary to rectify these issues.

3. **Background**

Introduction

- 3.1 The External Auditors at the meeting of Audit Standards and Governance Committee on the 12 April 2022 set out their Audit Plan and the revised approach to Value for Money Assessments. This included the three main changes arising from the National Audit Office's (NAO) new approach.

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

9th November 2022

- 3.2 This report is the interim auditors annual report. It will not be able to be issued in final until the 2020/21 financial statements are produced and have been audited. Grant Thornton have issued a Statutory Recommendation which is included as a separate report in this agenda. This report sets out five key recommendations and thirteen improvement recommendations.
- 3.3 This report covers the arrangements that the Council had in place up to the 31st March 2021. The Auditors began their work in February and are pleased to see that officers have responded positively to the ongoing discussions and have begun to address many of the key concerns. The Auditors note that the changes made will still need to be embedded.
- 3.4 The report notes that the audit opinion on the 2019/20 Statements was not provided until the 5th October 2021.

Key Recommendations

- 3.5 There are five Key recommendations which are set out on pages 7 to 11 of the Auditors Report. These recommendations are:
1. The Council needs to ensure that the Medium-term Financial Plan presented to Members is completely transparent regarding the financial challenge and that any savings schemes included are fully worked up and approved by Members in advance.
 2. The Council needs to improve management of key projects, such as the financial ledger implementation, to ensure that expected benefits are realised. As part of this the Council needs to undertake a comprehensive review of the financial ledger implementation and ensure lessons are learned for future key projects.
 3. The Council should review and implement effective governance arrangements in respect of performance monitoring to allow Members to make informed decisions. In order to achieve this the Council should reinstate public reporting on performance, linking this to the Council Plan and the related strategic objectives, allowing Members to scrutinise performance. This should be done at least twice per year.
 4. The Council should review and implement effective governance arrangements in respect of risk monitoring to allow Members to make informed decisions. In order to achieve this the Council should make risk management reporting a standing item on the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee agenda, with Members considering the Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management arrangements in an appropriate forum.
 5. The Council should ensure timely and relevant financial monitoring reporting is undertaken and presented to the appropriate public forum.
- 3.6 In terms of these five key recommendations, the data on pages 7-11 set out what these are Key Recommendations and the impact they have, the auditors Judgement and summary findings, followed by the Management Response.

- 3.7 The Council view is for these five Key Recommendations that management actions are in place to mitigate all of them including:
- The staffing up on the finance team to give the correct capacity for delivery of Recommendations.
 - Delivering the 2023/24 MTFP in two Tranches, with the first already in the public environment since the 26 October.
 - Having a monthly Cross Council assurance review meeting assessing priorities and delivery of other cross cutting meetings.
 - Integrating Performance and Financial monitoring in one report. The Quarter 1 combined report was presented to Cabinet on the 12th October. Q2 will be presented on the 23rd November.
 - Risk Monitoring Governance has been updated and reporting through to Audit, Standards and Governance Committee on a quarterly basis.

Improvement Recommendations

- 3.8 The Auditors also comment on the Councils arrangements to secure economy, efficiency, and effectiveness in its use of resources. The majority of these points are included in the Improvement Recommendations on pages 21-33 of the Auditors Report:
1. The Medium-Term Financial Plan / Budget setting report should be linked to specific actions which are set out in the Council Plan to make it clearer how investments in services will help to achieve the eight key priorities as set out in the Council Plan.
 2. The Council needs to improve capital budgeting and ensure that the capital programme is delivered as planned.
 3. The Council should develop a workforce plan / strategy and ensure that this aligns to its financial plans.
 4. Financial plans presented to Members should include better explanation around the key risks and assumptions as well as sensitivity analysis and modelling different scenarios.
 5. The Council should work with Internal Audit to ensure that proactive fraud prevention work is included in the audit plan, and the work and outcomes are reported to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee.
 6. The Council needs to ensure that internal and external stakeholders, including service users, are engaged and consulted in the budget setting processes, and that this is documented and reported.
 7. The Council needs to develop quarterly financial monitoring reports so that performance information is included in order to better explain variances and the financial impact of service decisions.
 8. The Council needs to ensure that budget holders are actively involved in budget monitoring and are aware that it is a key part of their role.
 9. The Council need to put in place arrangements to provide independent assurance over the accuracy on in-year financial reporting and performance information.

10. The Council needs to significantly enhance the use of benchmarking costs and performance against other similar bodies.
11. The Council needs to ensure that the recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2018 and February 2020 are addressed and that it then further improves by learning from exemplar councils across the country.
12. The Council should ensure that it has an up-to-date procurement strategy and that this, and any other key policies and strategies, are routinely reviewed and updated.
13. The Council needs to engage and consult with key stakeholders, where appropriate, to determine local priorities for resources or opportunities for savings.

3.9 As with the Key Recommendations, the Councils view it as a priority to be in the process of integrating these recommendations into normal processing.

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

4.2 The Council must comply with the Recommendations set out in the Interim Auditors Report and the Management Actions set out how this will be delivered.

Service / Operational Implications

4.3 Delivery of the five Key Recommendations and the thirteen Improvement Recommendations will impact several key processes. These changes form part of the financial recovery plan.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

4.4 There are none of these within this report.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 Non-delivery of the 2020/21 Accounts is a fundamental deficiency and this is part of the Corporate Risk Register as it the delivery of a Balanced Budget.

Audit, Standards and Governance Committee

9th November 2022

6. **APPENDICES**

Appendix A – Interim Auditor’s Annual Report on Bromsgrove District Council
– Grant Thornton.

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

7. **KEY**

None

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Interim Auditor's Annual Report on Bromsgrove District Council

2020-21

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We are required under Section 20(1)(c) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 to satisfy ourselves that the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources. The Code of Audit Practice issued by the National Audit Office (NAO) requires us to report to you our commentary relating to proper arrangements.

We report if significant matters have come to our attention. We are not required to consider, nor have we considered, whether all aspects of the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources are operating effectively.



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Executive summary



Value for money arrangements and key recommendations

We presented our Audit Plan to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee on 12 April 2022. In this we set out the revised approach to Value for Money work for 2020/21 onwards. We noted there are three main changes arising from the NAO's new approach:

- A new set of key criteria, covering financial sustainability, governance and improvements in economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- More extensive reporting, with a requirement on the auditor to produce a commentary on arrangements across all of the key criteria, rather than the current 'reporting by exception' approach; and

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The replacement of the binary (qualified / unqualified) approach to VFM conclusions, with far more sophisticated judgements on performance, as well as key recommendations on any significant weaknesses in arrangements identified during the audit.

We reported at that time that we had identified four risks of significant weaknesses from our initial planning work. We have continued our review of your arrangements and are now able to issue our interim auditor's annual report. We are unable to issue this in final until the 2020/21 financial statements are produced by management, and we have audited these.

We have issued a Statutory Recommendation under section 24 schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 and this is included in a separate report issued 31 October 2022. We have also made five key recommendations and thirteen improvement recommendations.

Summary

This report covers the arrangements that the Council had in place up to 31 March 2021. There are significant issues raised. We began our work in February 2021 and have discussed the issues with senior officers regularly in the period to date. These meetings have involved the Chief Executive, both Executive Directors of Resources, and the previous Head of Finance. We are pleased to see that officers have responded positively to our discussions and the issues raised and have begun to address many of our key concerns. The changes made still need to be embedded and our work in subsequent years will consider the progress made.



Financial sustainability

The Council is financially sustainable in the short term but needs to develop fully worked up savings and income generation schemes which are approved by Members, and then incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The MTFP presented to Cabinet in February 2021 shows use of reserves of £638k / £1,200k / £1,472k in the three years from 2021/22 onwards. At that stage general fund reserves are forecast to be £1,735k, which is broadly only sufficient for one year. Whilst the Council has some savings / income generation schemes in place, it is still heavily reliant on the use of reserves, to a point where it is not sustainable in the longer term under the current forecasts. We consider this to be a significant weakness and have raised a key recommendation.

The Council also needs to ensure arrangements are in place to keep the Council's financial plans under review and reported to Members. There was quarterly finance monitoring reporting up to Q3 of 2020/21, presented to Cabinet on 31 March 2021. Arrangements were therefore appropriate for 2020/21. After that, the next finance report was the 2020/21 Outturn Report on 24 November 2021. For 2021/22 Cabinet was presented with a Month 11 finance report on 3 May 2022. This represents a significant weakness in arrangements for 2021/22 as it is unclear what budget monitoring has been happening and there has been inadequate reporting to Members of the financial position. While arrangements were adequate up to 31 March 2021, the absence of regular financial reporting since then is a factor we will consider in our work for 2021/22 and we have identified a key recommendation in respect of 2021/22 arrangements in this report, in accordance with the NAO Code of Audit Practice.



Governance

Since October 2019 there have not been any formal risk management update reports to Members, nor has a corporate risk register been presented. Members are therefore not provided with appropriate assurance over effective risk management and whether the issues previously raised by Internal Audit and Zurich Municipal have been addressed. We have raised a key recommendation in relation to this. We note that risk management reporting has recommenced from July 2022.

Our 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter, presented on 15 November 2021, commented that our opinion on the 2019/20 financial statements was not provided until 5 October 2021. We also noted that the 2020/21 financial statements should have been prepared by 31 July 2021. The 2020/21 draft financial statements have still yet to be produced, and the deadlines for other key Government financial returns have also passed. Challenges relating to cash receipting continue to exist with the Council's new financial ledger that was implemented in February 2021, and we have raised a statutory recommendation relating to this.

Executive summary



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

The last performance management report to Cabinet was 30 May 2018. This pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic by nearly two years, and it is now four years since the last report to Cabinet. Decision makers were therefore unable to monitor the Council's performance and identify areas for improvement. We note that from September 2022, Cabinet were provided a quarterly integrated Financial and Performance Report. However, for 2020/21 this is a significant weakness and we have raised a key recommendation regarding this issue.

During this period, the Council did have a corporate performance dashboard which was available to Members. Usage data statistics log on a rolling 9-month basis and so we are no longer able to evidence usage statistics during the period under review. The dashboard is being replaced with a Power BI based application and the corporate management team currently have access to this new version. We are informed that Member access will be available by the end of 2022.

The Council could improve its arrangements in respect of internal and external engagement and benchmarking with other councils.

The Council needs to learn the lessons from the very significant challenges caused by the financial ledger implementation and ensure mistakes are not repeated. The expected benefits have not yet been realised, and the Council has incurred extra costs in trying to resolve issues. This has also had a significant impact on the timeliness of internal and external financial reporting and returns to central government as we have previously reported. We have raised a key recommendation in respect of benefits realisation and post implementation review of this project.



Opinion on the financial statements

Our 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter, presented on 15 November 2021, commented that our opinion on the 2019/20 financial statements was not provided until 5 October 2021. We also noted that the 2020/21 financial statements should have been prepared by 31 July 2021. After several delays and postponements, we currently expect them by mid November 2022. This represents a significant weakness and is covered by our Statutory Recommendation.

We have been able to undertake most of initial planning and risk assessment for our 2020/21 financial statements audit and were able to present our audit plan to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee on 12 April 2022.

Use of formal auditor's powers

We bring the following matters to your attention:

Statutory recommendations

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors can make written recommendations to the audited body which need to be considered by the body and responded to publicly

On 31 October 2022 we made a Statutory Recommendation in respect of financial systems and governance. This was included in our report entitled “Bromsgrove District Council - Section 24 Statutory Recommendations” and the recommendation is replicated on page 6.

Public interest report

Under Schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors have the power to make a report if they consider a matter is sufficiently important to be brought to the attention of the audited body or the public as a matter of urgency, including matters which may already be known to the public, but where it is in the public interest for the auditor to publish their independent view.

We did not issue a public interest report.

Application to the Court

Under Section 28 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, if auditors think that an item of account is contrary to law, they may apply to the court for a declaration to that effect.

We did not make an application to the Court.

Advisory notice

Under Section 29 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may issue an advisory notice if the auditor thinks that the authority or an officer of the authority:

- is about to make or has made a decision which involves or would involve the authority incurring unlawful expenditure,
- is about to take or has begun to take a course of action which, if followed to its conclusion, would be unlawful and likely to cause a loss or deficiency, or
- is about to enter an item of account, the entry of which is unlawful.

We did not issue an advisory notice.

Judicial review

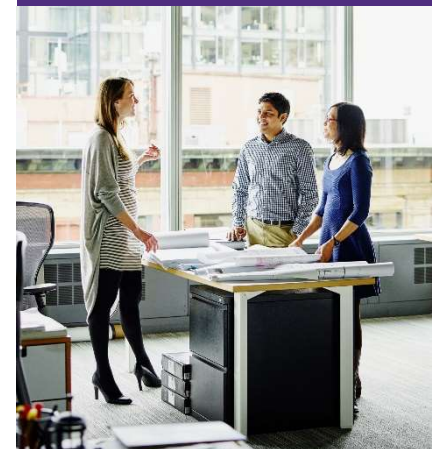
Under Section 31 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, auditors may make an application for judicial review of a decision of an authority, or of a failure by an authority to act, which it is reasonable to believe would have an effect on the accounts of that body.

We did not apply for a judicial review.

Recommendation made under section 24 schedule 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Area	Recommendation
Financial systems and governance	<p>The Council cannot yet produce its 2020/21 draft statement of accounts with long-standing issues with its new ledger system in relation to cash receipting requiring resolution. The Council must ensure that arrangements allow for the successful implementation of cash receipting within its ERP system to allow key elements of financial governance and compliance to be undertaken routinely and in a timely manner. In order to achieve this the Council should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensure the Council has access to the necessary knowledge and expertise to resolve the remaining key issues with the ERP system in a timely manner to provide management with sufficient assurance over the completeness and veracity of the data included within the system; • undertake appropriate testing of the fixes and ensure that appropriate sign-off of these is received prior to running them on live system data; and • ensure budget holders and other relevant officers possess the skills and knowledge to appropriately use the ERP system as intended, including relevant training and updates to key documentation and process manuals. <p>Once system issues are properly resolved, the Council must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • undertake key control activities such as bank and control account reconciliations on a monthly basis and ensure that these are kept up to date; • produce the 2020/21 and 2021/22 draft financial statements, along with high quality supporting working papers; • conclude the 2020/21 and 2021/22 RO and CO submissions, and other key Government returns including Whole of Government Accounts; and • ensure timely reporting of budget outturns and report publicly on in-year financial monitoring, including updates on the capital programme and savings scheme achievement.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.



Key recommendations



Recommendation 1

The Council needs to ensure that the Medium-Term Financial Plan presented to Members is completely transparent regarding the financial challenge and that any savings schemes included are fully worked up and approved by Members in advance.

Why/impact

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) presented to Cabinet on 17 February 2021, covering the period 2021/22 - 2024/25, includes savings which are not fully worked up, based on robust evidence, and approved by Members. This masks the financial situation and could be misleading. In addition to this, the MTFP shows use of reserves of £638k / £1,200k / £1,472k. At that stage general fund reserves are forecast to be £1,735k, which is broadly only sufficient for one year. While the Council has some savings and income generation schemes in place, it is still heavily reliant on the use of reserves, to a point where it is not sustainable in the longer term. Savings and income generation schemes represent only around 1/3 of the overall requirement, with no robust plans to address the balance.

Auditor judgement

This represents a significant weakness in arrangements. Without transparent reporting of the underlying financial position and the challenges faced it is not possible for Members to fully understand the financial challenge and work with officers to ensure the Council is financially sustainable in the long term.

Summary findings

While the Council has adequate reserves in the short term it needs to take action to ensure long term financial sustainability.

Management comments

- Unallocated savings amount from the existing MTFP of £478k has been highlighted in the Q1 monitoring that went to Cabinet in September. Decision has been taken to apply these amounts to vacancies at Q2 to resolve the issue. This will be reflected in the Q2 monitoring which will be presented to Cabinet in November.
- 2023/24 MTFP will be delivered in 2 Tranches. As set out in the existing MTFP there is a deficit of £1,588k to close in 2023/24 rising to £1,623k in 2025/26. Tranche 1 documentation which will be presented to Cabinet on the 26th sets out how could be bridged without the use of Reserves. Fuller detail is given on underlying assumptions and a Savings Proposal Document gives the required transparency and allocation to the correct budgets.
- Given the present financial crisis, and including inflation running at over 10%, with utilities even higher, the Tranche 1 Reports have a draft Robustness statement setting out the viability of the budget at this time as the projected Gap with present inflationary and utility pressures would extinguish reserves within 2 years..
- 20/21 forecast outturn report presented to Cabinet in November 2021.
- 21/22 P11 set out that revenue would be delivered within budget, confirming the savings built into the budget were anticipated to be delivered in year.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.





Recommendation 2

The Council needs to improve management of key projects, such as the financial ledger implementation, to ensure that expected benefits are realised. As part of this the Council needs to undertake a comprehensive review of the financial ledger implementation and ensure lessons are learned for future key projects.

Why/impact

In June 2019 the Council approved a contract for the implementation of a new financial ledger system to be developed by TechnologyOne. This Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system would integrate financial, human resources and payroll and supply chain information in a single electronic system. Implementation of the new system was 8 February 2021. There still remain significant issues with the cash receipting part of the system, which is not functioning as intended some 19 months after implementation.

The Council need to understand and document learning points from this implementation for application on other projects so that a similar situation does not arise in the future.

Auditor judgement

The expected benefits have not yet been realised. Worse, the Council has incurred significant additional cost and time in resolving issues that could have been addressed at the time. This has had a knock-on effect in other areas such as reports and returns to government and internal and external financial reporting.

Summary findings

Officers are working hard and investing significant time and money into resolving the issues created by the financial ledger implantation not going as planned. It is crucial that lessons are learned to ensure there are no repeat issues with future projects.

Management comments

- The Council has set up a Back Office Working Group which meets on a 2 weekly basis. Part of this groups remit is to “gatekeep” major projects to ensure the correct resources are allocated to projects up front and that there is clarity if an initiative cannot be resourced and this is linked to benefits realisation. This also applies to ongoing contract management.
- A Level 4 Group, which is a sub Group of CMT, now meets on a 2 weekly basis. Part of the remit of this group, which is cross Council, is to future scan for new “projects” and again ensure the right officers/expertise is involved from initiation.
- The present MTFP has assessed projects and deliverability.
- Key Council projects are reported to CMT on a Quarterly basis for review
- The present CIVICA implementation has taken on board learning points around interfaces and reconciliations from the ERP implementation with significant Finance input to ensure full system integration to Tech1 and the Benefits system.
- That a shortcoming of the ERP implementation was that it was not fully documented at the time of implementation – full documentation of the system is now being addressed through a third party
- The ERP was implemented in a time of restrictions due to C-19. A key learning point has been the limitations of remote working on a major implementation and the effects on staff – most of whom have left the Authority.
- A full post implementation review will take place once the system moves to steady state.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.





Recommendation 3

The Council should review and implement effective governance arrangements in respect of performance monitoring to allow Members to make informed decisions. In order to achieve this the Council should reinstate public reporting on performance, linking this to the Council Plan and the related strategic objectives, allowing Members to scrutinise performance. This should be done at least twice per year.

Why/impact

The last performance management report to Cabinet was 30 May 2018. This pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic by nearly two years. In this time, a performance dashboard was available to Members via the portal, although actual usage can no longer be evidenced as the data is logged as a 9-month rolling dataset. Decision makers are therefore unable to publicly monitor the Council's performance and identify areas for improvement. We note that from September 2022, Cabinet were provided a quarterly integrated Financial and Performance Report. However, for 2020/21 this is a significant weakness.

Auditor judgement

It is essential that Members are presented with timely, accurate and transparent performance reports as these, alongside financial and risk management reporting, are the pillars of basic governance and informed decision making.

Summary findings

It is pleasing to note that performance reporting has recommenced from September 2022. As our report relates to the arrangements in place during 2020/21 this is still reported as a significant weakness in that year.

Management comments

- During this period the council did have a corporate performance dashboard which was available to Members. This is now being replaced with a Power BI based application. The corporate management team currently have access to this new application. Member access will be available by the end of 2022
- The Q1 2022/23 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report was presented to Members in September. This has been reviewed by the Budget Working Group in September.
- CMT reviews performance data on a monthly basis as part of its monthly assurance meeting
- The Q2 Finance and Performance Monitoring Report will be presented to Cabinet in November.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.





Recommendation 4

The Council should review and implement effective governance arrangements in respect of risk monitoring to allow Members to make informed decisions. In order to achieve this the Council should make risk management reporting a standing item on the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee agenda, with Members considering the Corporate Risk Register and Risk Management arrangements in an appropriate forum.

Why/impact

An Internal Audit report from June 2019 identified significant weaknesses in risk management arrangements. The Council engaged external experts (Zurich Municipal) to build on this report, and reported the findings to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee in October 2019. Since that date although there have not been any formal update reports to Members, nor has a corporate risk register been presented, there has been informal reporting to Audit Committee by Member Risk Champions. Members are therefore not provided with appropriate assurance over effective risk management and whether the issues raised by Internal Audit and Zurich Municipal have been addressed.

Auditor judgement

It is essential that Members are presented with timely, accurate and transparent risk management reports as these, alongside financial and performance reporting, are the pillars of basic governance and informed decision making.

Summary findings

It is pleasing to note that risk management reporting has recommenced from July 2022. As our report relates to the arrangements in place during 2020/21 this is still reported as a significant weakness in that year.

Management comments

- Risk Management was relaunched in April and went to both Cabinet and Audit Committees in July 2022 as part of a quarterly monitoring regime.
- An updated Risk Approach agreed by CMT in April 2022.
- Risk data is reviewed monthly by Departmental Management Teams, quarterly by a Council wide officer risk board before being presented to CMT as part of the Assurance meeting.
- The Risk Management report to the 21st September will be presented to both Cabinet and Audit Committee in October.
- Risk Management is planned to be reported quarterly to Audit Committee.
- Internal Audit have recently conducted a follow up Audit on Risk Management where progress on the Risk Action plan was reviewed.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.





Recommendation 5 The Council should ensure timely and relevant financial monitoring reporting is undertaken and presented to the appropriate public forum.

Why/impact

Whilst we consider that arrangements for 2020/21 were appropriate, with quarterly financial reporting happening up to Q3 2021 reported in March 2021, the next finance report was the Outturn Report on 24 November 2021. We have not seen any reporting of the 2021/22 finances for the majority of the 2021/22 financial year, with Cabinet presented with a Month 11 finance report on 3 May 2022, being the first public reporting on the 2021/22 position and after the 2022/23 budget had been set. This represents a significant weakness in arrangements for 2021/22 as it is unclear what budget monitoring has been happening, and there has been inadequate reporting to Members of the financial position to allow them to scrutinise, challenge, and make properly informed decisions.

Auditor judgement

It is essential that Members are presented with timely and accurate financial reporting to allow proper scrutiny, challenge and understanding of the financial position and to allow informed decision making. Members could not be expected to make properly informed decisions on the 2022/23 financial budget if they had not received any financial reporting information on the in-year 2021/22 financial position.

Summary findings

We consider that arrangements in 2020/21 were appropriate. Given the time of our reporting, and due to the requirement to report weaknesses at the earliest opportunity, we are reflecting a key recommendation in respect of the arrangements in place for 2021/22. We note that a high-level period one finance report was presented to Cabinet in July 2022, setting out the approach to financial monitoring for the year, and in September 2022 a Q1 finance report was issued to Cabinet.

Management comments

- As reflected above financial monitoring was delivered for P11 in 2021/22
- There was internal financial reporting in 21/22 to managers to ensure operation delivery could be maintained.
- There is a monthly CMT Assurance meeting where progress on key controls is reviewed
- The 2022/23 Q1 combined Finance and Performance monitoring was presented to Cabinet in September.
- Unallocated savings amount from the existing MTFP of £478k has been highlighted in the Q1 monitoring that went to Cabinet in September. Decision has been taken to apply these amounts to vacancies at Q2 to resolve the issue. This will be reflected in the Q2 monitoring which will be presented to Cabinet in November.
- The 2022/23 Q2 Combined Finance and Performance Monitoring will be delivered to Cabinet in November.
- The Tranche 1 2023/24 Budget (See Recommendation 1) sets out the ongoing position and moves to balance the budget. This will be presented to Cabinet in October.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.



Commentary on the Council's arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources

All Councils are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. The Council's responsibilities are set out in Appendix A.

Councils report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness of these arrangements as part of their annual governance statement.

Under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, we are required to be satisfied whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The National Audit Office's Auditor Guidance Note (AGN) 03, requires us to assess arrangements under three areas:



Financial sustainability

Arrangements for ensuring the Council can continue to deliver services. This includes planning resources to ensure adequate finances and maintain sustainable levels of spending over the medium term (3-5 years).



Governance

Arrangements for ensuring that the Council makes appropriate decisions in the right way. This includes arrangements for budget setting and management, risk management, and ensuring the Council makes decisions based on appropriate information.



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

Arrangements for improving the way the Council delivers its services. This includes arrangements for understanding costs and delivering efficiencies and improving outcomes for service users.



Our commentary on each of these three areas, as well as the impact of COVID-19, is set out on pages 13 to 20. Further detail on how we approached our work is included in Appendix B.



Financial sustainability



We considered how the Council:

- identifies all the significant financial pressures it is facing and builds these into its plans
- plans to bridge its funding gaps and identify achievable savings
- plans its finances to support the sustainable delivery of services in accordance with strategic and statutory priorities
- ensures its financial plan is consistent with other plans such as workforce, capital, investment and other operational planning
- identifies and manages risk to financial resilience, such as unplanned changes in demand and assumptions underlying its plans.

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Key messages

Identifies significant financial pressures

Financial plans are based on realistic key assumptions. For example, the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) presented to Cabinet on 17 February 2021, covering the period 21/22 - 24/25 has inflation built in, and there are "Unavoidable pressures", all of which are reasonable. Savings / additional income are shown separately, and we have found these to be reasonable in the past. Business rates and council tax growth are reasonable.

As a second-tier council Bromsgrove is comparatively less impacted by changes in service demand or population. It does not have adult social care, or children's services for example. However, the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) presented in February 2021 includes cost pressures, including changes to service provision, inflation and pay inflation. The MTFP also includes "Unavoidable pressures", all of which are reasonable and amount to around 5% of the base budget.

The funding settlement had a positive impact on finances, and assumptions around council tax and business rates are reasonable.

However, it is unclear what arrangements are in place to keep the Council's financial plans under review and reported to Members. There was quarterly finance monitoring reporting up to Q3 of 2020/21, presented to Cabinet on 31 March 2021. Progress was reported against each item, and the savings schemes were shown as being on track. This provides evidence that until March 2021, appropriate arrangements were in place to report on financial budgets, and recurrent savings were being delivered.

2021/22 update

After the Q3 2020/21 report, the next finance report was the Outturn Report on 24 November 2021. We have not seen any reporting of the 2021/22 finances for the majority of the 2021/22 financial year, with Cabinet presented with a Month 11 finance report on 3 May 2022. This represents a significant weakness in arrangements for 2021/22 as it is unclear what budget monitoring has been happening, and there has been inadequate reporting to Members of the financial position to allow them to scrutinise, challenge, and make properly informed decisions.

During this time period, Council staff were working remotely (due to COVID-19 regulations) and this, along with implementing a new financial systems with its the associated challenges, led to a significant loss of staff, including the Section 151 Officer in Autumn 2020. We note that adequate arrangements were in place during 2020/21, and so have not raised a key recommendation for this year. Key recommendation 5, page 11, relates to this issue and to 2021/22 arrangements. The National Audit Office Code of Audit Practice is clear that when weaknesses are identified, the auditor should not delay reporting until the Auditor's Annual Report for that year.

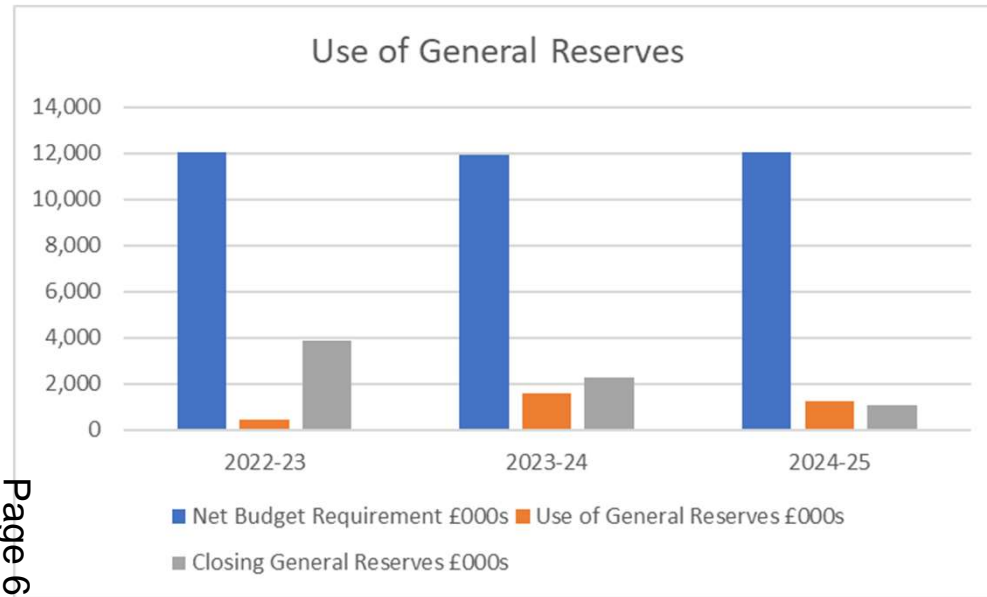
Bridging funding gaps

The Council has significant savings plans which represent around 3.5 - 4% of the base budget each year. In addition to this, reserves are being used to support around 10% of revenue expenditure each year.

We reviewed the MTFP presented to Cabinet on 17 February 2021, covering the period 2021/22 - 2024/25. Savings of £1,305k are included in the MTFP. We selected three savings schemes for further testing. Two of these - "management review savings" (intended to save £250k) and "future operating model" (intended to save £150k) appear to be unsupported by detailed business cases or robust evidence as to how those savings will be realised. The third scheme, "vehicle hire budget savings" (intended to save £171k) appears to be moving an underspend to reserves, and then using it in future years.

Including savings in the MTFP which are not fully worked up, based on robust evidence, and approved by Members, masks the financial situation and could be misleading. In addition to this, the MTFP shows use of reserves of £638k / £1,200k / £1,472k respectively. At that stage general fund reserves are forecast to be £1,735k, which is broadly only sufficient for one year. While the Council has some savings and income generation schemes in place, it is still heavily reliant on the use of reserves, to a point where it would not be sustainable in the longer term. Savings and income generation schemes represent only around one third of the overall requirement, with no robust plans to address the balance. This represents a significant weakness in arrangements. See Key recommendation 1, on page 7.

The funding gap



The graph on the left takes key figures from the Medium Term Financial presented to Cabinet on 16 February 2022. While this is outside the year of review for this report, it is important that Members are provided with an up-to-date picture of the significant financial challenges the Council faces. The figures used here are therefore different to those on the preceding page.

It is also important to note that whilst an outturn for 2020/21 was presented, this still reflects an unaudited position and challenges with the new financial ledger could also lead to adjustments to this position.

The graph shows that the amount the Council plans to spend on services over the three years is unchanged at just over £12m. However, the projected use of reserves, particularly in 2023/24 and 2024/25, means that general fund balances are planned to decrease from £3.8m to £1m. At that stage they will be insufficient to cover likely expenditure in 2025/26.

Sustainable service delivery

The Fees & Charges report for 2021/22, presented to Cabinet on 25 November 2020, demonstrates an understanding of the cost of delivering core services, and that Officers have thought about the cost of providing statutory and discretionary services, and have discussed proposed changes with portfolio holders.

The Council Plan 2019-2023 sets out eight key priorities for the next four years, underpinned by five strategic purposes. The Plan then sets out, for each of the priority areas, what the Council will do to achieve them (actions), and how they will be measured. When looking at the MTFP / Budget Setting report presented in February 2021, there is a column to state which strategic purpose the investment or saving relates to, but it could be further enhanced to link to specific actions which are set out in the Council Plan to make it clearer how investments in services will help to achieve the eight key priorities as set out in the Council Plan. This is an area that could be improved, as it also links to informed decision making around budget proposals. See Improvement recommendation 1, page 21.

Ensuring financial plans are consistent with others

The ongoing revenue costs of major capital investments is properly reflected in the revenue budget, including Key Government Grant Funded schemes such as Levelling Up where finance have been involved from the outset. For example, the MTFP presented to Cabinet in February 2021 stated "MRP, interest costs and investment income (net) (£92k)" The explanation for the £92k movement from earlier plans is "This change is due to a re-profiling of the capital programme to reflect more accurately planned spend which has moved expenditure into future years. There was also a reduction in budgeted spend at outturn for 2019/20 which has moved MRP and borrowing costs into future years. The investment income has also been revised to take account of the actual spend this financial year, 2020/21."

The 2019/20 capital outturn expenditure (£3.5m) was broadly consistent with the original budget (£4.5m), but significantly below the revised budget of £11.9m. There is a brief explanation in the financial statements, which mainly talks about making improvements to the process. The outturn report for 2019/20 explains the reason for the slippage. There is a sound rationale for each of the slipped elements, as compared to them being slipped because they or the associated revenue costs are unaffordable. However, there was a £1m underspend on the original capital budget of £4.5m, but £6.4m against the revised budget of £11.9m. While the reasons for this are explained at a high level in the outturn report, and a portion of this was due to COVID-19 impacting supply chain and project delivery, the Council needs to be much better at forecasting capital expenditure to ensure that it can more accurately plan its capital programme and build the related revenue costs more accurately into its MTFP. This is an improvement area. See Improvement recommendation 2, page 22.

Given staffing costs are a key element of the Council's expenditure, we would expect that a workforce plan would exist, setting out proposed plans for establishment amongst other things, and that this would be consistent with financial projections reported through the MTFP. Whilst the MTFP includes assumptions for pay increases and savings in respect of vacancy management, we were not provided with any evidence that a workforce plan exists. Given the staffing and recruitment challenges the Council face (as many other Councils also do), we consider this a weakness in arrangements. See Improvement recommendation 3, page 23.

Identifying and managing risk to financial resilience

A report was presented to Cabinet in October 2020, so that Members were aware of the financial framework, prior to approving the MTFP itself in February 2021. There is a section on risks to the MTFP - including government funding, business rates income and identification of savings schemes. However, none of these are quantified or subject to ranges, impact, sensitivity analysis etc. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 4, page 24.

We have not seen any evidence of scenario analysis through different assumptions being used for modelling. The Council needs to conduct scenario analysis through different assumptions being used for modelling. These could then be presented to Members so that they can see the impact different assumptions have on the MTFP and this would support more informed decision making. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 4, page 24.

Governance



We considered how the Council:

- monitors and assesses risk and gains assurance over the effective operation of internal controls, including arrangements to prevent and detect fraud
- approaches and carries out its annual budget setting process
- ensures effectiveness processes and systems are in place to ensure budgetary control
- ensures it makes properly informed decisions, supported by appropriate evidence and allowing for challenge and transparency
- monitors and ensures appropriate standards.

Key messages

Risk management and internal control

Each report presented to Members has a section on "Risk Management", so risks are identified and highlighted. Member Risk Champion reports provide assurance over the identification and recording and scoring of risks at a departmental level, based on a "Deep Dive" into specific risk areas. However, an Internal Audit report from June 2019 identified significant weaknesses in risk management arrangements. The Council engaged external experts (Zurich Municipal) to build on this report, and reported the findings to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee in October 2019. Since that date there have not been any formal update reports to Members until July 2022. Members were therefore not provided with appropriate assurance during this period over effective risk management and whether the issues raised by Internal Audit and Zurich Municipal have been addressed. This is a significant weakness, and we raised a key recommendation related to this, see page 10.

Internal Audit is provided by the Worcestershire Internal Audit Shared Service, hosted by Worcester City Council. The service provides internal audit to a number of local authority bodies in Worcestershire. The service is effective and assesses the effectiveness of controls, reporting to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee on a regular basis. The revised annual plan was delivered in full, although the original plan was reduced significantly as a result of the impact of COVID-19. The audits completed provide sufficient coverage for the Head of Internal Audit Opinion to be issued.

Internal Audit also oversee and manage the Council's response to possible fraud - including being aware of the risk in their audit work and undertaking any investigations. What is done proactively is less clear, although there were posters on the noticeboards in Parkside. While the Council has adequate arrangements in place in respect of the prevention and detection of fraud, it could enhance the proactive fraud awareness work undertaken. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 5, page 25.

Annual budget setting process

We have not seen any evidence of external engagement in the budget setting process. While this is not considered to be a significant weakness, the Council should enhance the budget setting process by ensuring appropriate engagement with external stakeholders. This should include council taxpayers as well as service users. This will help the Council better understand the priorities and non priorities of those who live in the District and may enable increasingly scarce resources to be better focused. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 6, page 26.

The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was approved by the (Acting) S.151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder. It was also considered by the Finance and Budget Working Group. However, it is unclear the extent to which budget holders and senior managers were consulted. The Council needs to retain and provide evidence of internal involvement in the budget setting process to evidence wider consultation, which ensures informed decisions are being made. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 6, page 26.

Budgetary control

During 2020/21 the finance team engaged with budget holders to review financial performance and identify actions to resolve adverse variances. Reporting to Cabinet was timely, with a clear explanation of the main variances and corrective action being taken. As noted already, these arrangements essentially stopped with the implementation of the new ledger system in February 2021, and there was no in year reporting after that date until after the 2021/22 year end. Whilst not a weakness for 2020/21, this is a significant weakness for 2021/22 and we have raised a key recommendation on page 11.

Non-financial information, such as service activity and workforce information, is not integrated into financial reports to Cabinet. The lack of formal performance reporting to Members is a significant weakness. During this period Members did have access to the Performance Dashboard. While the quarterly finance reports to Cabinet during 2020/21 include very high-level information, for example, about activity being higher or lower than planned, this is not in sufficient detail to allow meaningful comparisons against expected activity and its impact on the budget and also service users. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 7, page 27.

There is adequate reporting on treasury management activity to Cabinet. Cabinet received the "Capital Strategy 2020/21 incorporating the Treasury Management Strategy" on 25 November 2020. The report presents the Capital Strategy, Treasury Management Strategy, Minimum Revenue Provision Statement, a policy for use of flexible capital receipts and the Investment Strategy for 2020/21 to be considered for recommendation to Council. The MTFP presented to Cabinet in February 2021 sets out the changes from initial forecasts in regard to MRP, interest costs and investment income. The report also includes summary budget, for three years, which highlights the revenue impact of capital bids, investment income, interest payable and MRP. This allows the impact of treasury and capital activity to be properly understood, and also evidences that the Council is aware of the impact of these activities upon its revenue budgets.

We have not seen any evidence that financial performance is a key objective for senior managers or forms part of the body's performance management processes, to ensure formal and effective accountability for the delivery of budgets. Discussions with some Officers suggest that budget holders are reluctant to get involved in budget monitoring and see it as a finance job. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 8, page 28.

Our 2019/20 Annual Audit Letter, presented on 15 November 2021, commented that our opinion on the 2019/20 financial statements was not provided until 5 October 2021. We also noted that the 2020/21 financial statements should have been prepared by 31 July 2021. After several delays and postponements, we are now told to expect them by mid November 2022. This represents a significant weakness and is reflected within our Statutory Recommendation on page 6.

Making properly informed decisions

The Council ensures that Cabinet is provided with appropriate levels of relevant information on which to make major decisions, for example, the "Burcot Lane Site Redevelopment - Next Steps Report" presented to Cabinet on 6 August 2020. Before being presented to Cabinet reports are frequently considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, with recommendations made as appropriate.

However, as we have previously reported it is unclear the extent to which the Council engages with stakeholders regarding the body's medium- to long-term financial strategy, current financial position and likely financial challenges. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 6, page 26.

Ensuring appropriate standards

The Council has adequate arrangements in place to monitor compliance with legislation and regulatory standards and to communicate expected behaviours to staff. This includes a Monitoring Officer, as well as an in-house legal team. The Monitoring Officer provides a report to each Audit, Standards & Governance Committee.

Declarations of interest are shown for each Councillor on the website, so are publicly available. Declarations of Interest is also one of the first items on all Committee and Cabinet meetings. This helps to ensure that appropriate standards are maintained within the Council, and we have no evidence of inappropriate arrangements.

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness



We considered how the Council:

- uses financial and performance information to assess performance to identify areas for improvement
- evaluates the services it provides to assess performance and identify areas for improvement
- ensures it delivers its role within significant partnerships, engages with stakeholders, monitors performance against expectations and ensures action is taken where necessary to improve
- ensures that it commissions or procures services in accordance with relevant legislation, professional standards and internal policies, and assesses whether it is realising the expected benefits.

Key messages

Using performance information

The last performance management report to Cabinet was 30 May 2018. This pre-dates the COVID-19 pandemic by nearly two years. Decision makers were therefore unable to monitor the Council's performance and identify areas for improvement. We note that from September 2022, Cabinet were provided a quarterly integrated Financial and Performance Report. However, for 2020/21 and 2021/22, although Members did have access to the Corporate Dashboard, wider public reporting was not undertaken nor was performance discussed on public agendas and this is a significant weakness which is reflected within our key recommendation on page 9.

We have not seen any evidence that Cabinet is provided with assurance over the accuracy of financial and performance information. Once financial reporting and performance reporting again become routine and regular, the Council should consider expanding the role of internal audit or to provide assurance that financial information presented to Members accurately reflects the financial ledger. The Council should also consider asking internal audit to verify the accuracy of performance information. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 9, page 29.

The Council makes very limited use of benchmarking costs and performance against similar bodies in order to identify areas for improvement, cost savings or income generation. We have seen one example from the 2021-22 fees & charges summary presented to Cabinet on 25 November 2020 in regard to street naming where a benchmark was taken from

eight council areas that included Wyre Forest, Walsall, Worcester, Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull. However, there is scope to significantly enhance this area. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 10, page 30.

Evaluating services

The Council received an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2018 with a follow up visit in February 2020. This report was finalised in July 2020 having been delayed whilst the Council responded to the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is therefore open to learning from other organisations but does not do this systematically. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 11, page 31.

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge identified that the Council needs to ensure services align to strategic priorities and that it considers services which don't need to be continued, and whether they should continue to be. Post the COVID-19 pandemic the Council needs to ensure that it addresses the recommendations made by the peer review.

The Council focuses on the longer-term, rather than looking at short term savings or cuts. Examples include revisiting Minimum Revenue Provision and making advance payments to the pension fund in order to secure a discount on contributions over three years. This helps to ensure more sustainable planning and decision making.

We have not identified any issues in respect of significant procurement within the period. The Council has a procurement strategy; however contract procedure rules were last updated in 2016. The Council should be reviewing and updating the procurement strategy regularly, not least to ensure that legislative changes are reflected appropriately. The latest version of the Contract Procedural Rules is dated 2016 which is what procurement training is based upon. See Improvement recommendation 12, page 32.

Partnership working

Opportunities for consultation with key stakeholders have been more limited during the COVID-19 pandemic. This was exacerbated by staffing capacity issues already referenced during the period. However, post pandemic the Council needs to engage and consult with key stakeholders, where appropriate, to determine local priorities for resources or opportunities for savings. This is particularly important given the financial challenges the Council faces and as the District builds back from the pandemic. This is an area for improvement. See Improvement recommendation 13, page 33.

Where the Council is considering undertaking significant or unusual transactions, for example, the Burcot Lane site redevelopment and possible establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company, it provides appropriate levels of information on risk and reward to decision makers.

There are shared service arrangements with Redditch BC for a large number of back and front office functions, and this works well and has delivered efficiencies over many years. The Council also works with other councils across Worcestershire, for example, on highways and infrastructure projects. The Council also hosts Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) - a shared service delivering Environmental Health functions (food safety, health and safety and many aspects of pollution control) and Licensing administration on behalf of the six district councils in Worcestershire. There is evidence that the Council seeks to engage and work with partners to deliver and improve services.

Benefits realisation

In terms of benefits realisation, we have considered the new finance system - a major project which "went live" in February 2021. As of October 2022, we are advised that the significant issues with the implementation of cash receipting are almost resolved, and data migration mapping is complete. We have not yet been provided with this work and so cannot confirm this. The expected benefits have not yet been realised. In fact, it has caused significant delays in internal and external financial reporting and cost additional resources in trying to address the issues. It is clear that there are a number of lessons to be learned from the implementation, and that this was not managed appropriately. We consider this to be a significant weakness. See Key recommendation 2, page 8.

COVID-19 arrangements



Since March 2020 COVID-19 has had a significant impact on the population as a whole and how Council services are delivered.

We have considered how the Council's arrangements have adapted to respond to the new risks they are facing.

Financial sustainability

Financially, the main impact was reduced income in terms of leisure and car parking. These have subsequently been covered by government grants and reimbursement schemes, which mean that the potentially significant impacts to the Council's 2020/21 budget were not realised.

Governance

The COVID-19 pandemic impacted the Council in a number of ways. Systems and processes within the finance function were largely unaffected, as these were largely automated, and officers had the ability to work from home. The Council also made safe space available in the Council Offices for those people who needed it.

Meetings were held virtually, in line with the emergency legislation, and this allowed the business of the Council to continue.

Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

The Council found distributing discretionary business grants challenging. This is in terms of agreeing an approach and/or policy, responding to changes in Government guidance, and processing the number of requests received. Final guidance was often received significantly after Government announcements. The challenge is as expected as the finance and revenue teams cover two councils.

Ultimately, the Council distributed significant sums of money to local residents and businesses during a very challenging period.



**COVID-19
RESPONSE**

Improvement recommendations



Financial sustainability

Page 75

1 Recommendation	The Medium-Term Financial Plan / Budget setting report should be linked to specific actions which are set out in the Council Plan to make it clearer how investments in services will help to achieve the eight key priorities as set out in the Council Plan.
Why/impact	The Council Plan 2019-2023 sets out eight key priorities for the next four years, underpinned by five strategic purposes. The Plan then sets out, for each of the priority areas, what the Council will do to achieve them (actions), and how they will be measured. When looking at the Medium-Term Financial Plan / Budget Setting report presented in February 2021, there is a column to state which strategic purpose the investment or saving relates to, but it could be further enhanced to link to specific actions which are set out in the Council Plan to make it clearer how investments in services will help to achieve the eight key priorities as set out in the Council Plan.
Auditor judgement	Linking the Council Plan to the Medium-Term Finance Plan and Budget Setting Report could be improved, as it also links to informed decision making around budget proposals.
Summary findings	Better linking the two reports will help decision making and demonstrate how actions set out in the Council Plan are being delivered.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Present Savings quantum , given the “cost of living crisis” and double digit inflation has required a re-questioning of priorities with financial sustainability the most pressing issue. • Cabinet were updated on process being followed to balance budgets in the P1 Monitoring report in July 2022. • Officer sessions have taken place in July and August to give members options to balance the budget , which will be discussed in Tranche 1 of the 2023/24 Budget in October. • Budget setting clearly linked to Council priorities • CMT refocussed from 27 July with final Wednesday CMT each month reviewing in year budget, performance and projects (compliance and Assurance). • Ongoing quarterly monitoring from Q1 (Sept 2022) will be financial and performance based to link both sides together.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Financial sustainability

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2 Recommendation	The Council needs to improve capital budgeting and ensure that the capital programme is delivered as planned.
Why/impact	2019/20 capital outturn expenditure (£3.5m) was broadly consistent with the original budget (£4.5m), but significantly below the revised budget of £11.9m. A portion of this was due to COVID-19 impacting supply chain and project delivery. There is a brief explanation in the financial statements, which mainly talks about making improvements to the process. The outturn report for 2019/20 explains the reason for the slippage. There is a sound rationale for each of the slipped elements, as compared to them being slipped because they or the associated revenue costs are unaffordable. However, there was a £1m underspend on the original capital budget of £4.5m, but £6.4m against the revised budget of £11.9m. While the reasons for this are explained at a high level in the outturn report, the Council needs to be much better at forecasting capital expenditure.
Auditor judgement	While some slippage in capital projects is inevitable, this should be kept to a minimum. Capital expenditure on local projects has a direct benefit to the local economy, which will be vital post COVID-19.
Summary findings	Better capital budgeting and ensuring the capital programme is delivered will ensure that the improvements projects are intended to deliver are realised and also benefit the local economy.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital monitoring has been fully integrated in a joint finance and performance monitoring report starting Q1 – September 2022. • Financial Services Manager, who started in August has extensive Capital Experience as so will be nominated Finance lead for Capital. • Report now includes the impact and ongoing monitoring of Levelling Up and UK Shared Prosperity Fund as part of the overall process as these sums dwarf the “normal” capital programme and resources need to be concentrated on them as they are time limited (Levelling Up, UKSPF). Finance has been involved in these project from inception to give financial providence • New Processes in place by end of September 2022 which has resulted in a freeze on schemes not yet started (reported as part of the Tranche 1 Budget). • Capital Budget Manager training will need to take place from October 2022. • Noted that COVID-19 and the present inflation crisis have significant impact on supply chain and delivery of Capital Programmes.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Financial sustainability

3 Recommendation	The Council should develop a workforce plan / strategy and ensure that this aligns to its financial plans.
Why/impact	Staffing costs represent a significant element of the Council's budget. Ensuring a clear linkage between planned staffing levels, establishment and seniority and the Council's financial plans ensures that these key areas are aligned.
Auditor judgement	We were not provided with evidence to establish that a workforce plan exists that clearly links to the Council's financial plans.
Summary findings	Whilst the Council does include assumptions for pay increases and potential savings related to vacancy management, we did not see evidence of an approved workforce plan being in place. A lack of clear workforce plan risks that financial and workforce planning is not sufficiently aligned and could lead to financial challenges.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce plan and skills matrices have come to CMT in June 2022. • Updated plans, including succession planning, and skills matrices were completed in all Services by August 2022. • A review of establishment is part of the finance recovery programme (was initially June), with Finance and HR jointly visiting Services to revalidate establishment and vacancies. • Workforce Strategy due to Cabinet in November 2022.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Financial sustainability

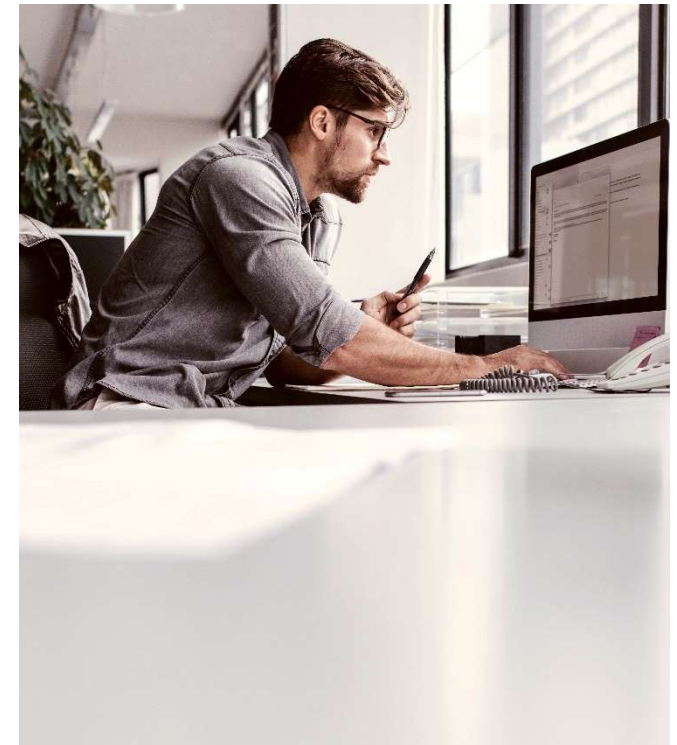
4	Recommendation	Financial plans presented to Members should include better explanation around the key risks and assumptions as well as sensitivity analysis and modelling different scenarios.
	Why/impact	<p>A report was presented to Cabinet in October 2020, so that Members were aware of the financial framework, prior to approving the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) itself in February 2021. There is a section on risks to the MTFP - including government funding, business rates income and identification of savings schemes. However, none of these are quantified or subject to ranges, impact, sensitivity analysis etc.</p> <p>We have not seen any evidence of scenario analysis through different assumptions being used for modelling. The Council needs to conduct scenario analysis through different assumptions being used for modelling. These could then be presented to Members so that they can see the impact different assumptions have on the MTFP.</p>
	Auditor judgement	Providing Members with information around risks and the impact of using different scenarios and assumptions supports Members to better understand how the decisions they are being asked to make could be impacted.
	Summary findings	Presenting a report in advance of the full MTFP is good practice. However, more comprehensive information is needed in order to make fully informed decisions.
	Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/24 MTFP will be delivered in 2 Tranches. As set out in the existing MTFP there is a deficit of £1,588k to close in 2023/24 rising to £1,623k in 2025/26. Tranche 1 documentation which will be presented to Cabinet on the 26th September has £1,685k of proposals which will result in the Initial gap being closed without the use of Reserves. Fuller detail is given on underlying assumptions and a Savings Proposal Document gives the required transparency and allocation to the correct budgets. • Given the present financial crisis, and including inflation running at over 10%, with utilities even higher, the Tranche 1 Reports have a draft Robustness statement setting out the viability of the budget at this time as the projected Gap would require £1.5m of additional savings in Tranche 2 which if not met would extinguish reserves within 2 years. Budget has high level scenarios in assumptions section. • Have now access to CIPFA comparative data (21 July 2022) to benchmark costs as part of this process. • Budget working Group timetable aligned now to the 2 Tranche budget that is being delivered.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations

Governance

5 Recommendation	The Council should work with Internal Audit to ensure that proactive fraud prevention work is included in the audit plan, and the work and outcomes are reported to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee.
Why/impact	Internal Audit oversee and manage the Council's response to possible fraud - including being aware of the risk in their audit work and undertaking any investigations. What is done proactively is less clear, although pre-pandemic, there were posters on the noticeboards at Parkside.
Auditor judgement	While the Council has adequate arrangements in place in respect of the prevention and detection of fraud, it could enhance the proactive awareness work undertaken. This is an area for improvement.
Summary findings	While it is clear that Internal Audit work takes account of the risk of fraud, there is scope to enhance, and make more public, the proactive work undertaken.
Management comment	Director of Finance to commission Internal Audit to undertake and overall Fraud Assessment (linked to present plan).



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations

Governance

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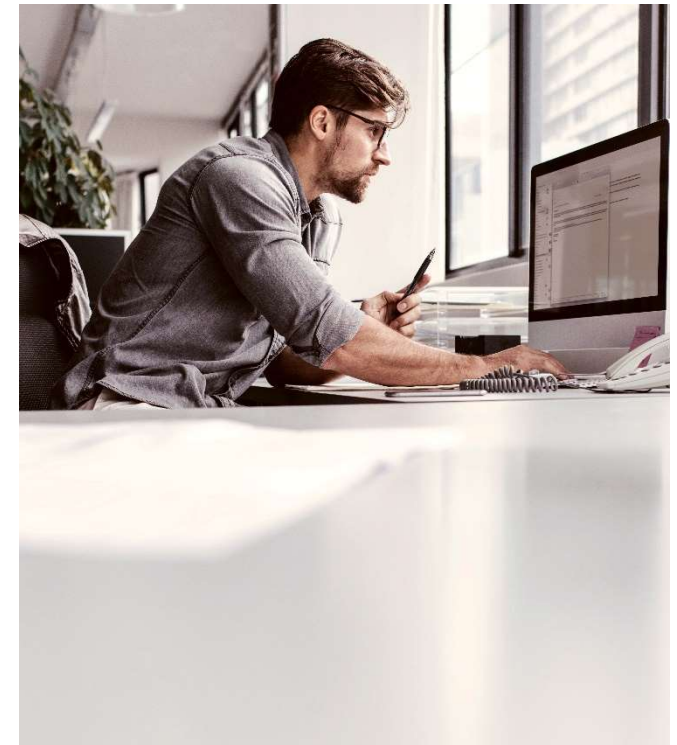
6 Recommendation	The Council needs to ensure that internal and external stakeholders, including service users, are engaged and consulted in the budget setting processes, and that this is documented and reported.
Why/impact	<p>We have not seen any evidence of external engagement in the budget setting process. While this is not a significant weakness the Council should ensure appropriate engagement with external stakeholders. This should include council taxpayers as well as service users. This will help the Council better understand the priorities and non priorities of those who live in the District and may enable increasingly scarce resources to be better focused.</p> <p>The Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) was signed off by the (Acting) S.151 Officer and the Portfolio Holder. It was also considered by the Finance and Budget Working Group. However, it is unclear the extent to which budget holders and senior managers have been consulted. The Council needs to retain and provide evidence of internal involvement in the budget setting process.</p>
Auditor judgement	Ensuring that the budget is based on the needs of service users and other stakeholders is essential in demonstrating that public money, raised through taxation, is being directed to those areas most in need.
Summary findings	Setting a budget should not be seen as a finance team task. It should include all aspects of the Council as well as service users and the public.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2023/24 Tranche 1 budget sets out clearly timetable for delivery of both Tranches of the budget and includes a feedback form (and timetable for return) • 2023/24 Budget will also be web enabled to link to more Stakeholders. • Meetings will be set up in October to brief Staff and the Union on implications of the budget. • Budget Working Group (will review data and feedback to Cabinet) will have more meetings to reflect 2 Tranche budget. • A Savings Proposal Document which clearly sets out savings items, and impacts, is part of the Tranche 1 Budget Pack. This also includes the Feedback form.

The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations

Governance

7 Recommendation	The Council needs to develop quarterly financial monitoring reports so that performance information is included in order to better explain variances and the financial impact of service decisions.
Why/impact	Non-financial information, such as service activity and workforce information, is not integrated into financial reports to Cabinet. The lack of performance reporting to Members is a significant weakness which we have reported separately (see page 6). While the quarterly finance reports to Cabinet during 2020/21 include very high-level information, for example, about activity being higher or lower than planned, this is not in sufficient detail to allow meaningful comparisons against expected activity and budget.
Auditor judgement	Members cannot make informed decisions without being presented with a full picture encompassing financial and non-financial information.
Summary findings	Financial reporting to Cabinet during 2020/21 included high level non-financial information but should be quarterly and incorporate more detailed non-financial information.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Joint Finance and Performance Reports was delivered to Cabinet in September for 2022/23 Q1 Monitoring. • Q2 2022/23 Monitoring will be delivered to Cabinet in November.



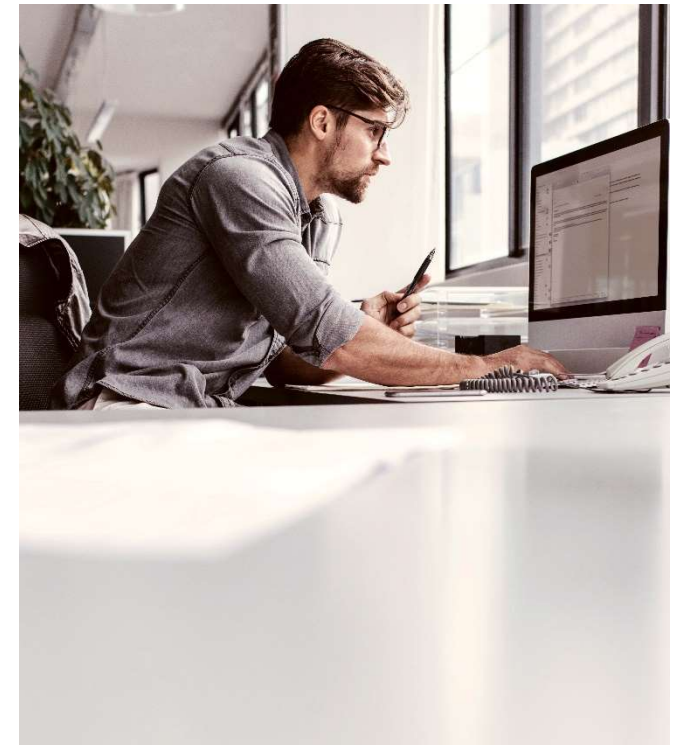
The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations

Governance

8 Recommendation	The Council needs to ensure that budget holders are actively involved in budget monitoring and are aware that it is a key part of their role.
Why/impact	We have not seen any evidence that financial performance is a key objective for senior managers and forms part of the body's performance management processes to ensure formal and effective accountability for the delivery of budgets. Our discussions with Officers suggest that budget holders are reluctant to get involved in budget monitoring and see it as a finance job.
Auditor judgement	The new finance system should give budget holders real time access to financial information. It is crucial that this is used by budget holders to inform decision making and ensure that finances are kept on track.
Summary findings	Budget monitoring should not be seen as a function of the finance team. All budget holders, throughout the Council, need to be involved and held to account where they are not.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Council has bought in 3rd party to document ERP system to ensure Council fully understands how the system is configured. This work started in October 22. • Updated training will take place on system use and financial requirements based on updated performance guides and procedures and documentation. • Part of this process will be a "finance agreement" which sets out clearly the expectations of finance staff and budget managers and their staff in key finance processes. This agreement has been widened so relates to all support services so all back-office process including payroll which is key to monitoring is included. Initial drafts were due at end of September and an overall draft will be on 14th October. • Formal quarterly monitoring to Members has restarted as at Q1 2022/23.

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The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

9 Recommendation	The Council need to put in place arrangements to provide independent assurance over the accuracy on in-year financial reporting and performance information.
Why/impact	We have not seen any evidence that Cabinet is provided with assurance over the accuracy of financial and performance information. Once financial reporting and performance reporting again become routine and regular, the Council should consider expanding the role of internal audit to provide assurance that financial information presented to Members accurately reflects the financial ledger. The Council should also consider asking internal audit to verify the accuracy of performance information.
Auditor judgement	Members need assurance that the information provided to them, on which they are asked to make decisions, is reliable and accurate.
Summary findings	There has not been any formal performance reporting for four years, although Members have had access to the Performance Portal during this time, and regular financial reporting ceased from March 2021 until May 2022. We have identified these as significant weaknesses and made Key Improvement recommendations in respect of both issues. When these are addressed, it is important that Members are provided with assurance over the accuracy and reliability of the information provided to them.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joint Finance and Performance reporting for Q1 was reported to Cabinet in September. • Audit Committee is the right place for financial performance to be challenged. The schedule will be changed so that Internal Audit Reports include their view on accuracy, timeliness and completeness of financial and performance monitoring information.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

10 Recommendation	The Council needs to significantly enhance the use of benchmarking costs and performance against other similar bodies.
Why/impact	The Council makes very limited use of benchmarking costs and performance against similar bodies in order to identify areas for improvement, cost savings or income generation. We have seen one example from the 2021-22 fees & charges summary presented to Cabinet on 25 November 2020 in regard to street naming where a benchmark was taken from eight councils that included Wyre Forest, Walsall, Worcester, Wychavon, Malvern Hills, Birmingham, Coventry and Solihull. However, there is scope to significantly enhance this area.
Auditor judgement	Making comparisons with other similar bodies can help drive improvement, lower cost or increase income and should be embedded across the Council.
Summary findings	It is unclear why the Council uses benchmarking information in one instance but, seemingly, nowhere else. This has the potential to significantly improve performance and / or finances across the Council.
Management comment	Council now has access to CIPFA comparative data (21 July 2022) to benchmark costs as part of this process. This data will be used to assess cost effectiveness of services being delivered to inform future strategy.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

11 Recommendation	The Council needs to ensure that the recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2018 and February 2020 are addressed and that it then further improves by learning from exemplar councils across the country.
Why/impact	The Council received an LGA Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2018 with a follow up visit in February 2020. This report was finalised in July 2020 having been delayed whilst the Council responded to the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Council is therefore open to learning from other organisations but does not do this systematically.
Auditor judgement	The Council should be applauded for requesting a Peer Challenge. It now needs to ensure that the recommendations made are implemented and that further improvements are made by comparison with other councils on a regular basis.
Summary findings	The COVID-19 pandemic inevitably delayed the Council response to the recommendations made by the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge. There is now an opportunity to not only implement these but go beyond them.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council's Action plan was contained in the Cabinet Report dated 31st October 2018. The Follow up Report was issued in July 2020, in the middle of the C-19 Pandemic. The Council will review outstanding actions from the Plan against strategies in place and provide an updated plan by the end of December 2022. Learning will also be integrated with benchmarking reviews that will be carried out as part of the MTFS process.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

12 Recommendation	The Council should ensure that it has an up-to-date procurement strategy and that this, and any other key policies and strategies, are routinely reviewed and updated.
Why/impact	Contract procedure rules were last updated in 2016. There is a risk that this is now out of date, does not reflect current practices or is not in accordance with current legislation. Whilst we did not identify and issues in respect of procurement activity, policies and strategies should be subject to regular review.
Auditor judgement	Strategies should be regularly reviewed to ensure that they remain relevant and up-to-date with current requirements and legislation.
Summary findings	Strategy/procedure rules have not been updated for a significant period.
Management comment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council has significant procurement information on the ORB. As with financial services, an updated plan is required to ensure compliance to process. This will include training (which takes place presently) and is required by December 2022.



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Improvement recommendations



Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness

13 Recommendation	The Council needs to engage and consult with key stakeholders, where appropriate, to determine local priorities for resources or opportunities for savings.
Why/impact	Opportunities for consultation with key stakeholders have been more limited during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, post pandemic the Council needs to engage and consult with key stakeholders, where appropriate, to determine local priorities for resources or opportunities for savings. This is particularly important given the financial challenges the Council faces and as it builds back.
Auditor judgement	The Council is funded by public money, largely through taxation, including council tax. It is important that taxpayers and service users have a say in the development of local priorities and areas for disinvestment.
Summary findings	As the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic continue to lessen and life returns to “normal” the Council needs to re-engage with service users and key stakeholders across the board to ensure that it is prioritising and delivering what they want and need.
Management comment	<p>Director of Finance to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set up internal staffing budget session in October 2022 for staff. • Staff have the ability to feed in savings ideas via the ORB. • Budget working group timetable now reflects the 2 Tranche process. • Savings Proposal Document within the MTFP has a feedback section . • Budget papers are clear when feedback has to be returned • Budget will also go out in Web version – to link to more stakeholders



The range of recommendations that external auditors can make is explained in Appendix C.

Opinion on the financial statements



Audit opinion on the financial statements

Page 88

We have yet to receive draft financial statements for 2020/21. As set out on page 6, this is a significant weakness, and is included in our statutory recommendation. As we have not received the financial statements this report is an Interim report.

Whole of Government Accounts

To support the audit of the Whole of Government Accounts (WGA), we are required to review and report on the WGA return prepared by the Council. This work includes performing specified procedures under group audit instructions issued by the National Audit Office.

As we have not received the 2020/21 financial statements, we have not been able to undertake this work.

When provided with financial statements, Grant Thornton provides an independent opinion on whether the accounts are:

- True and fair
- Prepared in accordance with relevant accounting standards
- Prepared in accordance with relevant UK legislation.



Appendices

Appendix A - Responsibilities of the Council



Role of the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent):

- Preparation of the statement of accounts
- Assessing the Council's ability to continue to operate as a going concern

Public bodies spending taxpayers' money are accountable for their stewardship of the resources entrusted to them. They should account properly for their use of resources and manage themselves well so that the public can be confident.

Financial statements are the main way in which local public bodies account for how they use their resources. Local public bodies are required to prepare and publish financial statements setting out their financial performance for the year. To do this, bodies need to maintain proper accounting records and ensure they have effective systems of internal control.

All local public bodies are responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness from their resources. This includes taking properly informed decisions and managing key operational and financial risks so that they can deliver their objectives and safeguard public money. Local public bodies report on their arrangements, and the effectiveness with which the arrangements are operating, as part of their annual governance statement.

The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

The Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) or equivalent is required to prepare the financial statements in accordance with proper practices as set out in the CIPFA/LASAAC code of practice on local

authority accounting in the United Kingdom. In preparing the financial statements, the Chief Financial Officer (or equivalent) is responsible for assessing the Council's ability to continue as a going concern and use the going concern basis of accounting unless there is an intention by government that the services provided by the Council will no longer be provided.

The Council is responsible for putting in place proper arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources, to ensure proper stewardship and governance, and to review regularly the adequacy and effectiveness of these arrangements.



Appendix B - Risks of significant weaknesses - our procedures and conclusions

As part of our planning and assessment work, we considered whether there were any risks of significant weakness in the Council's arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources that we needed to perform further procedures on. The risks we identified are detailed in the table below, along with the further procedures we performed, the conclusions we have drawn and the final outcome of our work:

Risk of significant weakness	Procedures undertaken	Conclusion	Outcome
Financial sustainability was identified as a potential significant weakness. See pages 12-14 for more details.	To address this risk we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewed the MTFP which Cabinet approved in February 2021 and selected a sample of savings or income generation schemes to test in order to obtain assurance that they are robust and realistic; monitored the progress made to identify non-priority areas and to begin to disinvest in those areas; and reviewed the longer-term plan to bridge the structural deficit. 	The Council needs to ensure that the Medium-Term Financial Plan presented to Members is completely transparent regarding the financial challenge and that any savings schemes included are fully worked up and approved by Members in advance.	Appropriate arrangements not in place, one key recommendation raised.
Governance was identified as a potential significant weakness in respect of risk management arrangement. See page 15 for more details.	To address this risk we: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewed the arrangements in place to ensure that Members are provided with appropriate risk management information in order for them to obtain assurance over the processes and to make informed decisions. 	The Council needs to ensure that regular, written risk management reports are presented to the Audit, Standards & Governance Committee. These should include corporate risks, how they are being managed, and named individuals responsible for overseeing them, together with any further actions being taken to reduce the risk.	Appropriate arrangements not in place, one key recommendation raised.

Appendix B - Risks of significant weaknesses - our procedures and conclusions

Risk of significant weakness	Procedures undertaken	Conclusion	Outcome
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness was identified as a significant weakness, in respect of performance reporting. See page 17 for further information	<p>To address this risk we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewed how the Council is reporting performance to Members or making information available to them on an ongoing basis in order for them to obtain assurance over the processes and to make informed decisions. 	The Council needs to re-instate quarterly performance reporting to Cabinet. Each report should cover a suite of corporate key performance indicators or measures and then focus on each portfolio on a rotating basis.	Appropriate arrangements not in place, one key recommendation raised.
Improving economy, efficiency and effectiveness was identified as a significant weakness, in respect of benefits realisation. See page 18 for further information	<p>To address this risk we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewed the arrangements in place for how the Council measures benefits realisation from commissioned or procured services. 	The expected benefits from the new financial ledger system have not yet been realised. Worse, the Council has incurred significant additional cost and time in resolving issues that could have been addressed at the time. This has had a knock-on effect in other areas such as reports and returns to government and internal and external financial reporting.	Appropriate arrangements not in place, one key recommendation raised.

Appendix C - An explanatory note on recommendations

A range of different recommendations can be raised by the Council's auditors as follows:

Type of recommendation	Background	Raised within this report	Page reference
Statutory	Written recommendations to the Council under Section 24 (Schedule 7) of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014. A recommendation under schedule 7 requires the Council to discuss and respond publicly to the report.	Yes – and also subject to a separate report entitled “Bromsgrove District Council - Section 24 Statutory Recommendations”	6
Key	The NAO Code of Audit Practice requires that where auditors identify significant weaknesses as part of their arrangements to secure value for money they should make recommendations setting out the actions that should be taken by the Council. We have defined these recommendations as ‘key recommendations’.	Yes	7-11
Improvement	These recommendations, if implemented should improve the arrangements in place at the Council but are not a result of identifying significant weaknesses in the Council's arrangements.	Yes	21-33



CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Cabinet meeting 26th October 2022

Fees and Charges 2023/24

RECOMMENDED that all of the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 be approved.

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CABINET RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE COUNCIL

Cabinet meeting 23rd November 2022

Sherwood Road Footbridge, Aston Fields – Permanent Closure of Footbridge, Removal of Bridge Deck and Transfer of Ownership to Severn Trent Water Ltd

RECOMMENDED that A budget of £10k be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from internal resources.

Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26 – Update

RECOMMENDED that the Tranche 1 savings proposals, Fees and Charges increases including updated WRS charges, and the single Growth item in respect of the Climate Change Officer are approved for implementation to ensure maximum benefit as at 1st April 2023.

Fees and Charges Update

RECOMMENDED the approval of all exempt fees and charges.

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FEES AND CHARGES 2023-24

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Finance & Customer Services email:michelle.howell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 0152764252
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To set out the fees and charges to be levied on services provided by the Council as used as the basis for income levels in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet consider the fees and charges as included at Appendix 1 and;
- 2.1.1 **recommend to Council** the approval of all fees and charges that are included in Appendix 1

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan is being prepared on the basis that additional income will need to be generated from fees and charges in order for the Council to move towards financial sustainability. The process being followed for the review of income to be realised from 1st April 2023 includes an assessment of each fee to identify how it meets the Councils strategic purposes and the level of increase that is proposed as well as taking account of present economic conditions, including inflation running at over 10%. The levels of increase have been based on a robust estimate of the impact of cost increases and demand within the services and the Councils overall financial

Cabinet

26th October 2022

position. This includes assessing at the affordability of any of these increases to our residents and customers.

- 3.2 Fees were to be considered using the following criteria:
- Service to be subsidised by the Council
 - Service to break even
 - Service to make a surplus to offset other overhead costs
- 3.3 Appendix 1 details all the fees and charges for each area with a commentary against each block. The Council’s proposal is to generally increase Fees and Charges by 10%. The 10% has been applied to Contributions and Fees and Charges budgets but not on services where charges are set statutorily, where full costs are required as part of the service, Lifeline, SLA Income, or those services that are charges across a number of Councils (WRS).
- 3.4 The estimated increase in income generated from the proposed increases are set out in the table below. If agreed, these will be included in the Medium-Term Financial Plan Tranche 1 which is another report on this agenda.

Year	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Base Budget	3,820,000	3,899,000	3,904,000
10% Increase	382,000	389,000	390,000

Legal Implications

- 3.4 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist, the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council’s statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.5 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.6 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.

Cabinet

26th October 2022

4. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually.

5. **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges

6. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None.

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Business Transformation and Organisational Development

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed Charge 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
<u>New & Existing Properties</u>							
Naming a Street	554.10	5.00%	27.70	581.80	10%	640.00	
Additional charge for each new premise on a street	130.00	5.00%	6.50	136.50	10%	150.20	
Naming and numbering of an individual premise	274.00	5.00%	13.70	287.70	10%	316.50	
Additional charge for each adjoining premise (eg Blocks of flats)	77.00	5.06%	3.90	80.90	10%	89.00	
Confirmation of address to solicitor/conveyancer/ occupier or owner	53.60	5.04%	2.70	56.30	10%	61.90	
Additional charge including naming of building	138.00	5.00%	6.90	144.90	10%	159.40	
<u>Further Comments</u>							
5% increase to cover increase in costs.							

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Chief Executive

Roundings to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase/ Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed Charge 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
Venue hire additional services							
Feature on official social media & website	Please contact us £30-£100			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Place your promotional material in reception	10.00			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Print your materials	Request a quote			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Full design & print services:							
Luxury roll-up banner - Flat rate	102.50			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- any additional	51.30			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Vinyl banner	51.30			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- any additional	25.60			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Posters (10)	25.60			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- any additional	Request a quote			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Leaflets (500)	51.30			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- any additional	Request a quote			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Printing up to A0 size, with a range of finishing options on papers and cards. Tiny labels to large banners, bins, and laminating, booklets, copies, reports, posters, duplicate pads, brochures, leaflets, flyers, & more. Integrated in-house Design team services also available.	Request a quote			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Quote based on how many copies, size, media, finishing and design requirements, using current paper and contract pricing.
Your bespoke requirements	Request a quote			Request a quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
PLUS Boost your event with our simple options:-							
• Promotional services -							
o Reach the local community with our official social media							
o Show up on Google with our special website options							
o Promote your event in our busy public spaces							
• Design services -							
o Stand out							
o Bespoke for you, from our professional design team							
• Printing services-							
o All your printing needs in one place							
o Signs, flyers, agendas, welcome banners, and more							
Packages available from as little as £30. To find out more contact 01527 881296 or venues@bromsgrove.gov.uk. www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/venues							
Beautiful wedding stationery to suit your budget The personal touch for all your guests, with bespoke packages from £25							
• Choose beautiful invitations							
• Add table plans, place settings, & more							
• Photo displays & banners							
• Signs							
• Use your own designs, or our designers							
To find out more just contact 01527 881296 or weddings@bromsgrove.gov.uk. www.bromsgrove.gov.uk/weddings							

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL							
Community & Housing Services							
Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.							
Service Category	Charge 1st April 2020 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2021 £	Proposed charge 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
STRATEGIC HOUSING							
Bed and breakfast							
- Single room	16.10	0.00%	0.00	16.10	10%	17.70	Charge in line with housing benefit amounts
- Two single rooms	32.50	0.00%	0.00	32.50	10%	35.80	
- Double room	16.10	0.00%	0.00	16.10	10%	17.70	
- More than one double room per room	21.00	0.00%	0.00	21.00	10%	23.10	
- Breakfast							
- adult	2.50	5.00%	0.10	2.60	10%	2.90	
- child	2.10	5.00%	0.10	2.20	10%	2.40	
- Storage of effects (per night)	2.60	5.00%	0.10	2.70	10%	3.00	
- Right to Buy (RTB) Plan Preparation for BDHT	119.70	5.00%	6.00	125.70	10%	138.30	
- Late Consents to transfer (shared ownership and low cost properties)	250.00	5.00%	12.50	262.50	10%	288.80	
Private Sector Housing							
Housing Fitness Inspections	150.00	0.00%	0.00	150.00	10%	165.00	New Charge This year
First Homes Application	0.00	0.00%	0.00	0.00	New	150.00	
Registration of housing in multiple occupation:							
per occupant	122.00	5.00%	6.10	128.10	10%	140.90	
Service and Administration of Improvement Prohibition, Hazard Awareness or Emergency Measures Notices * under Housing Act 2004, per hour	34.00	5.00%	1.70	35.70	10%	39.30	
Enforcement of Statutory Notices, Supervision of Work in Default etc.	Actual + 10% Admin fee			Actual + 10% Admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Mobile Home Park Licencing - New Licence Application Fee				326.67	10%	359.30	
- Licence Amendment Application Fee				256.67	10%	282.30	
- Licence Transfer Application Fee				186.67	10%	205.30	
Mobile Home Park - Annual Site Inspection Charge -Band A (2-10 units)				256.67	10%	282.30	
-Band B (11-30 units)				274.17	10%	301.60	
- Band C (31-70 units)				385.00	10%	423.50	
- Band D (71 + units)				420.00	10%	462.00	
Mobile Home Park Statutory Registration or amendment of Park Home Rules				99.17	10%	109.10	
- Valuation Fee (relating to properties of 30% ownership)	225.00	33.33%	75.00	300.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Full cost recovery
*Based on salary of employee							
LIFELINE							
- Installation Fee	52.00	0.00%	0.00	52.00	0%	52.00	
- Lifeline (per week)	4.25	5.00%	0.30	4.50	4.5%	4.70	
- Replacement Pendant	Cost of product + 17% admin fee			Cost of product + 17% admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- Key Safe	Manufacturers cost + 17% admin fee			Manufacturers cost + 17% admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- GSM Alarm Hire	5.50	0.00%	0.00	5.50	0%	5.50	Following digital upgrade the GSM unit is the primary equipment choice and cost prices are reducing due to bulk purchase and falling data charges
- GPS Tracker Hire	7.00	5.00%	0.40	7.40	-25%	5.50	
- Daily Living Activity Equipment	7.00	5.00%	0.40	7.40	0%	7.40	
HIRE PRODUCTS							
Hire of smoke alarm per week (hard wired, serviced smoke alarm)	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	0%	1.50	Costs to be retained to remain competitive
CO2 Detector per week	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	0%	1.50	
Bogus Caller Panic Button	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	0%	1.50	
Flood Detector	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	0%	1.50	
Falls Detector	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	0%	1.50	

Additional pendant	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	0%	1.50	
Temperature extreme sensor	1.40	3.57%	0.10	1.50	10%	1.70	

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Environmental Services

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed Charge 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
CEMETERY							
The following charges would be subject to 25% plus or minus in year adjustment facility delegated to Bereavement Services Manager or Head of Service to allow for supplier increases such as utilities or memorial suppliers etc							
Interments in a grave							
- children aged under 1 year	No Charge		No Charge	No Charge			
- children aged under 1 year (non resident)	114.00	5.00%	5.70	119.70	10%	131.70	
- children aged 1 year - 17 years	No Charge		No Charge	No Charge			
- children aged 1 year - 17 years (non resident)	166.00	5.00%	8.30	174.30	10%	191.70	
- persons aged 18 and over	636.00	5.00%	31.80	667.80	10%	734.60	
Interment in a bricked grave							
Interment of cremated remains	211.00	5.00%	10.55	221.55	10%	243.70	
Interment of Cremated Remains (under 17 years non residents only)	78.00	5.00%	3.90	81.90	10%	90.10	
Scattering cremated remains in grave	89.00	5.00%	4.45	93.45	10%	102.80	
Exclusive rights of burial (75-year grants)							
- adult grave space	1,603.00	5.00%	80.15	1,683.15	10%	1,851.50	
- child grave space	292.00	5.00%	14.60	306.60	10%	337.30	
- cremated remains plot	612.00	5.00%	30.60	642.60	10%	706.90	
Renewal of expired deed (single fee charged in all cases)							
Burial	457.00	5.00%	22.85	479.85	10%	527.80	
Cremated remains	179.00	5.00%	8.95	187.95	10%	206.70	
Ashes grave purchased in reserve	733.00	5.00%	36.65	769.65	10%	846.60	
Full grave purchased in reserve	1,969.00	5.00%	98.45	2,067.45	10%	2,274.20	
- Disinterment of Remains - Cremated Remains	557.00	5.00%	27.85	584.85	10%	643.30	
- Wooden cremated remains casket	97.00	5.00%	4.85	101.85	10%	112.00	
Memorials							
Bench with 10 year lease & top rail engraving (max 40 letters) - £800.00	104.00	5.00%	5.20	109.20	10%	120.10	
Bench with 10 year lease & standard silver plaque (max 60 letters) - £760.00	863.00	37.66%	325.00	1,188.00	10%	1,306.80	
Bench replacement plaque - £110.00	820.00	37.80%	310.00	1,130.00	10%	1,243.00	
-Assignment / Transfer of Exclusive Right of Burial	118.00	38.47%	45.40	163.40	10%	179.70	
Exhumation Ground works	104.00	5.00%	5.20	109.20	10%	120.10	
New Container	211.00	5.00%	10.55	221.55	10%	243.70	
Officer time	97.00	28.87%	28.00	125.00	10%	137.50	
Cremator usage	216.00	5.00%	10.80	226.80	10%	249.50	
Certified copy of entry	33.00	5.00%	1.65	34.65	10%	38.10	
Bird bath memorial	23.00	5.00%	1.15	24.15	10%	26.60	
5 Year Lease							
- size 1 (small)	210.00	6.00%	12.60	222.60	10%	244.90	
- size 2	234.00	5.90%	13.80	247.80	10%	272.60	
- size 3	258.00	5.81%	15.00	273.00	10%	300.30	
- size 4	280.00	6.14%	17.20	297.20	10%	326.90	
- size 5 (large)	304.00	6.05%	18.40	322.40	10%	354.60	
10 Year Lease							
- size 1 (small)	327.00	5.96%	19.50	346.50	10%	381.20	
- size 2	351.00	5.90%	20.70	371.70	10%	408.90	
- size 3	373.00	6.41%	23.90	396.90	10%	436.60	
- size 4	397.00	6.07%	24.10	421.10	10%	463.20	

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- size 5 (large)	421.00	5.51%	23.20	444.20	10%	488.60
20 Year Lease						
- size 1 (small)	444.00	5.95%	26.40	470.40	10%	517.40
- size 2	467.00	6.12%	28.60	495.60	10%	545.20
- size 3	490.00	6.29%	30.80	520.80	10%	572.90
- size 4	514.00	6.03%	31.00	545.00	10%	599.50
- size 5 (large)	538.00	5.99%	32.20	570.20	10%	627.20
Motif	117.00	5.98%	7.00	124.00	10%	136.40
Memorial Vaults						
Double unit - 20 year lease in first interment and casket	1,310.00	6.12%	80.20	1,390.20	10%	1,529.20
2nd interment of remains including casket	181.00	5.58%	10.10	191.10	10%	210.20
Inscribed tablet of upto 80 letters	147.00	5.71%	8.40	155.40	10%	170.90
Additional letters (per letter)	4.20	7.14%	0.30	4.50	10%	5.00
Standard Motif	105.00	6.00%	6.30	111.30	10%	122.40
Photo of 1 person	126.00	5.87%	7.40	133.40	10%	146.70
Photo of 2 people	199.00	6.08%	12.10	211.10	10%	232.20
Photo of 3 people	257.00	5.84%	15.00	272.00	10%	299.20
Other items are available but quoted individually	QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY			QUOTED INDIVIDUALLY	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Memorial Posts						
Memorial plaque - 3 year lease	251.00	6.25%	15.70	266.70	10%	293.40
Motif	47.00	7.23%	3.40	50.40	10%	55.40
Replacement Plaque	126.00	5.87%	7.40	133.40	10%	146.70
Private Memorial Garden						
Including memorial - 20 year lease	1,678.00	6.00%	100.70	1,778.70	10%	1,956.60
Additional Inscription on Plaque	147.00	5.00%	7.35	154.35	10%	169.80
REFUSE COLLECTION						
Bulky Household Waste						
Proposed Charges						
The Bulky Service operates based on a standard unit price based on size and weight, with collection from the						
Bulky collection - single unit*	9.00	5.56%	0.50	9.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
* Depending on size items maybe charged for as a multiple of units						
Items that are classed by WCC as non domestic waste	Quotation			Quotation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Items not on the boundary of the property	Quotation			Quotation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Litter and Dog Bins (Yearly Charge)						
High Usage Site First Bin	850.00	0.00%	0.00	850.00	10%	935.00
High Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	350.00	0.00%	0.00	350.00	10%	385.00
Medium Usage Site First Bin	425.00	0.00%	0.00	425.00	10%	467.50
Medium Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	175.00	0.00%	0.00	175.00	10%	192.50
Low Usage Site First Bin	210.00	0.00%	0.00	210.00	10%	231.00
Low Usage Site Additional Bins (each)	90.00	0.00%	0.00	90.00	10%	99.00
Parish Lengthsman Work						
Hourly Rate	15.75	0.00%	0.00	15.75	10%	17.33
High Hedge Complaints						
High Hedge Complaints - reduced for people on benefits	595.10	5.00%	29.80	624.90	10%	687.39
	237.60	5.00%	11.90	249.50	10%	274.45
Investigation of Abandoned Vehicles on Private Land						
Per Vehicle	60.00	0.00%	0.00	60.00	10%	66.00
Mechanically Sweep Private Road / Car Park - Sweeper per Hour + disposal costs	50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	10%	55.00

Garden Waste Collection Service (2021/23)	46.00	0.00%	0.00	46.00	10%	50.60	
Re-issue of service	40.00	0.00%	0.00	40.00	10%	44.00	
Road Closures							
New Charge - £80 per Road closure plus VAT						80.00	

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Environmental Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed Increases 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
CAR PARKS							
Churchfields Multi-storey							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
All day	3.00	0.00%	0.00	3.00	0%	3.00	
New Road							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
All day	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	0%	5.00	
North Bromsgrove							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
All day	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	0%	5.00	
Parkside							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
All day	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	0%	5.00	
School Drive							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
All day	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	0%	5.00	
Stourbridge Road							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
All day	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	0%	5.00	

Service Category	charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £			COMMENTS
Recreation Road South							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.40	0.00%	0.00	0.40	0%	0.40	
Not exceeding one hour	0.80	0.00%	0.00	0.80	0%	0.80	
Not exceeding two hours	1.60	0.00%	0.00	1.60	0%	1.60	
Not exceeding three hours	2.40	0.00%	0.00	2.40	0%	2.40	
Not exceeding four hours	3.20	0.00%	0.00	3.20	0%	3.20	
Not exceeding five hours	4.00	0.00%	0.00	4.00	0%	4.00	
Not exceeding Six hours	6.40	0.00%	0.00	6.40	0%	6.40	
Not exceeding Severn hours	8.80	0.00%	0.00	8.80	0%	8.80	
Not exceeding Eight hours	11.20	0.00%	0.00	11.20	0%	11.20	
Windsor Street							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.50	0.00%	0.00	0.50	0%	0.50	
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0.00%	0.00	1.00	0%	1.00	
Not exceeding two hours	2.00	0.00%	0.00	2.00	0%	2.00	
St John Street							
Not exceeding 30 minutes	0.50	0.00%	0.00	0.50	0%	0.50	
Not exceeding one hour	1.00	0.00%	0.00	1.00	0%	1.00	
Not exceeding two hours	2.00	0.00%	0.00	2.00	0%	2.00	
Not exceeding three hours	3.00	0.00%	0.00	3.00	0%	3.00	
Season Tickets (valid at long stay car parks only)							
Annual	320.00	0.00%	0.00	320.00	0%	320.00	
Quarterly	80.00	0.00%	0.00	80.00	0%	80.00	
Season Tickets (valid at Churchfields Road car park only)							
Annual	215.00	0.00%	0.00	215.00	0%	215.00	
Quarterly	53.75	0.00%	0.00	53.75	0%	53.75	
Season Tickets (valid at Alvechurch Sports and Social club car park only)							
Annual	250.00	0.00%	0.00	250.00	0%	250.00	
Quarterly	62.50	0.00%	0.00	62.50	0%	62.50	
Parking Fines PCN's On Street							
Certain Contraventions	70.00	0.00%	0.00	70.00	Stat	70.00	
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	0.00%	0.00	35.00	Stat	35.00	
Other contraventions	50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	Stat	50.00	Set by Statute
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	Stat	25.00	
<i>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</i>							
Parking Fines PCN's Off Street							
Certain Contraventions	70.00	0.00%	0.00	70.00	Stat	70.00	
If paid within fourteen days	35.00	0.00%	0.00	35.00	Stat	35.00	
Other contraventions	50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	Stat	50.00	Set by Statute
If paid within fourteen days	25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	Stat	25.00	
<i>These charges will increase if the charge remains unpaid after the 28 days given on the NTO (Notice to Owner)</i>							

Car Park charges apply everyday

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL**Financial and Customer Service**

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

SERVICE CATEGORY	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed Charges 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
LOCAL TAX COLLECTION							
	67.50	0.00%	0.00	67.50			
- Council Tax Court Costs (includes Magistrates Court fee of 50p)					10%	74.30	
- NNDR Court Costs (includes Magistrates Court fee of 50p)	97.50	0.00%	0.00	97.50	10%	107.30	
- Magistrates' court fee (added to both council tax and NNDR Summons)	0.50	0.00%	0.00	0.50	0%	0.50	The Magistrates' Court Fee is set in statutory instruments and cannot be adjusted

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Legal, Democratic and Property Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed Charges 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
ELECTORAL REGISTRATION							
Register Sales*							
In data form							
- basic fee	20.00	0.00%	0.00	20.00	Stat	20.00	Statutory Fixed Fees and not subject to any change
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	1.50	0.00%	18.50	20.00	Stat	20.00	
In printed form							
- basic fee	10.00	0.00%	0.00	10.00	Stat	10.00	Statutory Fixed Fees and not subject to any change
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	Stat	5.00	
Marked Election Register Sales*							
In data form							
- basic fee	10.00	0.00%	0.00	10.00	Stat	10.00	Statutory Fixed Fees and not subject to any change
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	1.00	0.00%	0.00	1.00	Stat	1.00	
In printed form							
- basic fee	10.00	0.00%	0.00	10.00	Stat	10.00	Statutory Fixed Fees and not subject to any change
- for each 1,000 names or part thereof	2.00	0.00%	0.00	2.00	Stat	2.00	
Copy of return of Election expenses plus 20p per sheet, per side.	5.00	0.00%	0.00	5.00	Stat	5.00	Statutory Fixed Fees and not subject to any change
Miscellaneous Charges							
* Address labels printed	13.50	0.00%	0.00	13.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	Costs are covered no additional increase required
* - for each 1,000 properties or part thereof	6.80	0.00%	0.00	6.80	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
- street list	13.50	0.00%	0.00	13.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
* - Data Property Addresses	24.50	-44.90%	-11.00	13.50	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
* - For each 1,000 properties or part thereof	1.90	0.00%	0.00	1.90	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
LEGAL							
- Legal work (per hour)	146.80	6.00%	8.80	155.60	10%	171.20	
- Legal Consent - Admin Fee	26.10	6.02%	1.60	27.70	10%	30.50	
- RTB	205.10	6.00%	12.30	217.40	10%	239.10	
- Consent for proposed works	161.20	6.00%	9.70	170.90	10%	188.00	
- Retrospective Consent	169.60	6.00%	10.20	179.80	10%	197.80	
Garden License	249.80	6.00%	15.00	264.80	10%	291.30	
Wayleave Agreement	374.70	6.00%	22.50	397.20	10%	436.90	
Deed of Grant or Easement	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
License to Assign	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Rent Deposit Deed	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Authorised Guarantee Agreement	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
License for Alterations	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
License to Sublet	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Deed of Variation	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Grant of Lease	531.10	6.00%	31.90	563.00	10%	619.30	
Extended Lease	531.10	6.00%	31.90	563.00	10%	619.30	
Deed of Surrender	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Tenancy at Will	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Renewal of Lease	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
Section 106:							
- Private Owner	548.70	6.00%	32.90	581.60	10%	639.80	
- Each additional unit added (up to a maximum of £1,650)	73.50	6.00%	4.40	77.90	10%	85.70	
- Affordable housing schemes	1,030.10	6.00%	61.80	1,091.90	10%	1,201.10	
- Deed of Variation	391.50	6.00%	23.50	415.00	10%	456.50	
- Fee for agreeing a unilateral undertaking	391.50	6.00%	23.50	415.00	10%	456.50	
Other Fees							
- Fees for sale of property under Low Cost Housing Scheme	269.90	6.00%	16.20	286.10	10%	314.70	
- Fees for purchase of additional 30% Share	176.10	6.00%	10.60	186.70	10%	205.40	
- Fees for preparation of Deed of postponement	115.00	6.00%	6.90	121.90	10%	134.10	
- Administration fee for the grant of licences for more than 12 months	64.60	6.01%	3.90	68.50	10%	75.40	
- Issuing of consents (transfer of mortgage)	76.20	6.00%	4.60	80.80	10%	88.90	
Minor land sales up to £10,000	515.70	6.00%	30.90	546.60	10%	601.30	
Major Land sales £10,000+ 2.75% of purchase price with a minimum charge of £500	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	

Major Land sales £50,000+ 2.75% of purchase price with a minimum charge of £750	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Fixed Fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Deed of Release of Covenant	392.70	6.00%	23.60	416.30	10%	457.90	
- Footpath Diversion Orders	2,189.60	5.00%	109.50	2,299.10	10%	2,529.00	
LAND SEARCHES							
Single Con29 Question							
Official Certificate of Search (LLC1) only	29.20			N/A			LLC searches now carried out by HMLR
CON29R Enquiries of Local Authority (2016)							
- Residential	111.60		0.00	111.60	10%	122.80	
- Commercial	156.30		0.00	156.30	10%	171.90	
Standard Search Fee: LLC1 and CON 29R combined							
- Residential	142.90			N/A			LLC searches now carried out by HMLR
- Commercial	188.90			N/A			LLC searches now carried out by HMLR
CON 29O Optional enquiries of Local Authority (2007)							
(Questions 5,6,8,9,11,15) per question	13.50	5.00%	0.70	14.20	10%	15.60	
(Questions 7,10,12,13,14,16-21) per question	6.80	5.00%	0.30	7.10	10%	7.80	
(Question 22)	30.00	0.00%	0.00	30.00	10%	33.00	
Extra written enquiries (Refer to Worcestershire County Council for Highways enquiries)	52.70	5.00%	2.60	55.30	10%	60.80	
Question 4	15.80		0.00	15.80	10%	17.40	
Each additional parcel of land (LLC1 and CON29R)	24.70			N/A			
Expedited (within 48 hrs)	33.70	5.00%	1.70	35.40	10%	38.90	
PARKSIDE SUITE							
Per Hour (Suggest min Hire of 2hrs)							
Main Room							
Community Group	23.00	4.35%	1.00	24.00	10%	26.40	
Regular Hire	35.00	4.29%	1.50	36.50	10%	40.20	
Commercial Hire	46.00	4.35%	2.00	48.00	10%	52.80	
Committee Room							
Community Group	13.00	4.62%	0.60	13.60	10%	15.00	
Regular Hire	19.00	4.21%	0.80	19.80	10%	21.80	
Commercial Hire	25.50	4.31%	1.10	26.60	10%	29.30	
Committee Room 2 – Full Day							
Community Group	75.00		-75.00	0.00			
Regular Hire	88.00		-88.00	0.00			
Commercial Hire	106.00		-106.00	0.00			
Committee Room 2 – Half Day							
Community Group	45.00		-45.00	0.00			
Regular Hire	60.00		-60.00	0.00			
Commercial Hire	72.00		-72.00	0.00			
Committee Room 2 – per hour (min 2Hours)							
Community Group	17.00	0.00%	0.00	17.00	10%	18.70	
Regular Hire	22.00	0.00%	0.00	22.00	10%	24.20	
Commercial Hire	30.00	0.00%	0.00	30.00	10%	33.00	
Combined							
Community Group	31.00	4.84%	1.50	32.50	10%	35.80	
Regular Hire	49.00	4.08%	2.00	51.00	10%	56.10	
Commercial Hire	67.50	4.44%	3.00	70.50	10%	77.60	
Half Day up to 5pm (max 4hrs)							
Main Room							
Community Group	86.00	4.65%	4.00	90.00	10%	99.00	
Regular Hire	105.00	4.76%	5.00	110.00	10%	121.00	
Commercial Hire	172.50	4.35%	7.50	180.00	10%	198.00	
Committee Room							
Community Group	38.00	4.21%	1.60	39.60	10%	43.60	
Regular Hire	52.00	4.42%	2.30	54.30	10%	59.70	
Commercial Hire	65.00	4.62%	3.00	68.00	10%	74.80	
Combined							
Community Group	105.00	4.29%	4.50	109.50	10%	120.50	
Regular Hire	150.00	4.33%	6.50	156.50	10%	172.20	
Commercial Hire	215.00	4.19%	9.00	224.00	10%	246.40	

Full Day Up to 5pm

Main Room

Community Group	160.00	4.38%	7.00	167.00	10%	183.70
Regular Hire	200.00	4.35%	8.70	208.70	10%	229.60
Commercial Hire	280.00	4.29%	12.00	292.00	10%	321.20
Committee Room						
Community Group	65.00	4.31%	2.80	67.80	10%	74.60
Regular Hire	78.00	4.49%	3.50	81.50	10%	89.70
Commercial Hire	96.00	4.17%	4.00	100.00	10%	110.00
Combined						
Community Group	205.00	4.39%	9.00	214.00	10%	235.40
Regular Hire	260.00	4.23%	11.00	271.00	10%	298.10
Commercial Hire	345.00	4.35%	15.00	360.00	10%	396.00
Combined Evening Commercial Hire, Fridays and Saturday's, 5pm - Midnight	345.00	4.35%	15.00	360.00	10%	396.00

Only half day and full day rates allowed for weekends. No hourly rates.

All day rate for weddings £720** (day and evening to include kitchen and set up) 9am – 12 midnight

Sunday hire rates by negotiation.

Room 54(Training Room) - Any internal county organisations whom wish to use this room will be charged £25.00 per hour.

Customer Services

Interview rooms (based at the service centre)

- Per Full day (9am - 5pm)	44.40	4.28%	1.90	46.30	10%	50.90
- Per Half day (9am-1pm/1pm-5pm)	27.80	4.32%	1.20	29.00	10%	31.90
- Per Hour (1Full hour only)	9.50	4.21%	0.40	9.90	10%	10.90

Bromsgrove Markets

3 x 3m Market Stall (per day)

Tuesday Regular Trader	26.50	3.02%	0.80	27.30	10%	30.00
Tuesday Casual Trader	28.50	3.16%	0.90	29.40	10%	32.30
Each additional stall requested	11.50	3.04%	0.40	11.85	10%	13.00
Friday Regular Trader	30.50	2.95%	0.90	31.40	10%	34.50
Friday Casual Trader	32.50	3.08%	1.00	33.50	10%	36.90
Each additional stall requested	11.50	3.04%	0.40	11.85	10%	13.00
Saturday Regular Trader	32.50	3.08%	1.00	33.50	10%	36.90
Saturday Casual Trader	34.50	2.90%	1.00	35.50	10%	39.10
Each additional stall requested	12.00	2.92%	0.40	12.35	10%	13.60

Catering Van

Tuesday Regular Trader	25.50	2.94%	0.80	26.25	10%	28.90
Tuesday Casual Trader	30.00	3.00%	0.90	30.90	10%	34.00
Friday Regular Trader	29.50	3.05%	0.90	30.40	10%	33.40
Friday Casual Trader	34.00	2.94%	1.00	35.00	10%	38.50
Saturday Regular Trader	31.50	3.02%	1.00	32.45	10%	35.70
Saturday Casual Trader	36.00	3.06%	1.10	37.10	10%	40.80
All 3 days (Annual booking per week) - Charge to be deleted	78.00	-100.00%	-78.00	0.00	10%	0.00
All 3 days (Casual booking per week) - Charge to be deleted	83.60	-100.00%	-83.60	0.00	10%	0.00

Table only booking for Craft Markets (only available in good weather)

First two 5ft tables	15.00	3.00%	0.50	15.45	10%	17.00
each additional table	5.00	3.00%	0.20	5.15	10%	5.70

Electric

Regular 3 day traders	9.20	3.26%	0.30	9.50	10%	10.50
Casual/Single day traders per day	5.00	3.00%	0.20	5.15	10%	5.70

Trade Waste Collection

Regular 3 day traders	2.60	3.85%	0.10	2.70	10%	3.00
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Casual/Single day traders	5.00	3.00%	0.20	5.15	10%	5.70	
<u>Other Market Charges - New Charges</u>							
Vintage, Craft and Food Markets							
Single Stall	20.00	3.00%	0.60	20.60	10%	22.70	
Additional stalls	10.00	3.00%	0.30	10.30	10%	11.30	
Catering units/pitch	15.00	3.00%	0.50	15.45	10%	17.00	
Sunday Food Festival Markets							
Price by negotiation to include staff on cost and overtime	price on negotiation		0.00	price on negotiation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Seasonal Traders							
Seasonal supplement per stall for seasonal adhoc traders in December	5.00	4.00%	0.20	5.20	10%	5.70	
Market Hire							
Hiring cost of providing a market to Parish Councils or other organisations	700.00	3.00%	21.00	721.00	10%	793.10	
Trader Incentive Scheme							
New traders attending the market on a Tuesday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continuous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	14.25	3.16%	0.45	14.70	10%	16.20	
New traders attending the market on a Friday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continuous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	15.25	2.95%	0.45	15.70	10%	17.30	
New traders attending the market on a Saturday will be charged 50% rent fee for 4 weeks continuous weeks only (based on a 3m x 3m stall)	17.25	3.19%	0.55	17.80	10%	19.60	
<u>Property Services - New Charges</u>							
Minor Land Sales Request for Information	52.90	36.11%	19.10	72.00	10%	79.20	VAT not included in previous year plus Inflationary Increase
Minor Land Sales Full Application	387.35	27.02%	104.70	492.00	10%	541.20	VAT not included in previous year plus Inflationary Increase
Advertising - Estimated Fee per Advert (new charge based on cost per advert)	0.00	100.00%	360.00	360.00	10%	396.00	New charge based on cost per advert
Surveyors Fees - Estimated Fee (new charge based on an hourly cost)	0.00	100.00%	90.00	90.00	10%	99.00	New charge based on an hourly rate

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	Charge 1st April 2021 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	Proposed changes 23/24	New Charge 1st April 2023 £	COMMENTS
Development Management							
Pre Application Fee							
Residential Development/ Development Site Area/Proposed Gross Floor Area							
Householder Development	103.00	5.83%	6.00	109.00	10%	119.90	
1* Dwellings	222.00	5.41%	12.00	234.00	10%	257.40	
2-4 Dwellings	333.00	5.11%	17.00	350.00	10%	385.00	
5-9 Dwellings	666.00	5.11%	34.00	700.00	10%	770.00	
10 - 49 Dwellings	1,333.00	5.03%	67.00	1,400.00	10%	1,540.00	
50 - 99 Dwellings	2,443.00	5.03%	123.00	2,566.00	10%	2,822.60	
100 - 199 Dwellings	3,333.00	5.01%	167.00	3,500.00	10%	3,850.00	
200+ Dwellings	4,443.00	5.00%	222.00	4,665.00	10%	5,131.50	
* includes one-for-one replacements							
Non-residential development (floor space)							
Floor area is measured externally							
Less than 500sqm	308.00	5.19%	16.00	324.00	10%	356.40	
500 - 999sqm	556.00	5.04%	28.00	584.00	10%	642.40	
1000 - 1999sqm	1,111.00	5.04%	56.00	1,167.00	10%	1,283.70	
2000 - 4999sqm	2,221.00	5.00%	111.00	2,332.00	10%	2,565.20	
5000 - 9999sqm	2,777.00	5.01%	139.00	2,916.00	10%	3,207.60	
10,000sqm or greater	3,333.00	5.01%	167.00	3,500.00	10%	3,850.00	
Non-residential development (site area) where no building operations are proposed							
Less than 0.5ha	334.00	5.09%	17.00	351.00	10%	386.10	
0.5 - 0.99ha	666.00	5.11%	34.00	700.00	10%	770.00	
1 - 1.25ha	1,111.00	5.04%	56.00	1,167.00	10%	1,283.70	
1.26 - 2ha	2,221.00	5.00%	111.00	2,332.00	10%	2,565.20	
2ha or greater	3,333.00	5.01%	167.00	3,500.00	10%	3,850.00	
Variation/removal of conditions and engineering operations (flat fee)	205.00	5.37%	11.00	216.00	10%	237.60	
Recovering Costs for seeking specialist advice in connection with Planning proposals	Full recovery cost		0.00	Full recovery cost	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Monitoring Fees to be applied to Planning Obligations							
Obligations where the Council is the recipient							
All contributions (financial or non-monetary) - PER OBLIGATION	298.00	5.03%	15.00	313.00	10%	344.30	
Pre-commencement trigger - PER OBLIGATION	103.00	5.83%	6.00	109.00	10%	119.90	
Other Triggers (Phased Payments/Provision of Infrastructure) - PER TRIGGER POINT	154.00	5.19%	8.00	162.00	10%	178.20	
Other obligations (eg. Occupation restrictions or removal of Permitted Development rights) - PER CLAUSE	123.00	5.69%	7.00	130.00	10%	143.00	
Obligations for another signatory (eg. Worcestershire County Council)							
All contributions (financial or non-monetary) - PER OBLIGATION	180.00	5.00%	9.00	189.00	10%	207.90	
Pre-commencement trigger - PER OBLIGATION	62.00	6.45%	4.00	66.00	10%	72.60	
Other Triggers (Phased Payments/Provision of Infrastructure) - PER TRIGGER POINT	92.00	5.43%	5.00	97.00	10%	106.70	
Ongoing Monitoring of large sites	410.00	5.12%	21.00	431.00	10%	474.10	

Fee Concessions

Some pre-application advice will still be provided free of charge. For example where the development is for the direct benefit of a disabled person (and as such there would be no fee incurred to make the planning application) or where works relate to a listed building. Some advice is provided at a reduced or concessionary rate. If the proposal is being submitted by or is for the benefit of a Parish Council or other Local Authority, then the appropriate fee is reduced by 50%. In addition if the scheme relates to a solely affordable housing scheme, the Applicant is a Registered Social Landlord or Housing Association the fee for pre application advice would also be reduced by 50%.

BUILDING CONTROL -2021 - VAT AT 20%

Explanatory notes

1 Before you build, extend or convert a building to which the building regulations apply, you or your agent must submit a Building regulations application. The charge you have to pay depends on the type of work, the number of separate properties, or the total floor area. You can use the following tables with the current charges regulations to work out the charges. If you have any difficulties, please do not hesitate to call us.

2 The charges are as follows.

- Category A: New domestic homes, flats or conversions etc.
- Category B: Extending or altering existing homes
- Category C: Any other project including commercial or industrial projects etc.

Individually determined fees are available for most projects. We would be happy to discuss these with you if you require. In certain cases, we may agree that you can pay charges in instalments. Please contact us for further discussions.

3 Exemptions and reductions in charges.

- a If your plans have been approved or rejected, you won't have to pay again if you resubmit plans for the same work which has not started, provided you resubmit with 3 years of the original application date.
- b You don't have to pay charges if the work will provide access to a building or is an extension to store medical equipment or provide medical treatment facilities for a disabled person. In order to claim exemption, an application must be supported by appropriate evidence as to the nature of the disabled persons disability. In these regulations, a 'disabled person' is a person who is described under section 29(1) of the National Assistance Act 1948 (as extended by section 8(2) Mental Health Act 1959).

4 You have to pay VAT for all local authority Building Regulation charges, except for the regularisation charge. VAT is included in the attached fees.

5. Regularisation applications are available for cases where unauthorised building work was undertaken without an application. Such work can only be regularised where the work was undertaken after October 1985 and not within the last 6 months. The Authority is not obliged to accept Regularisation applications. Regularisation application fees are individually determined. Please contact us to discuss regularisation application fees.

6. Reversion applications. Where the control of a building project passes from a third party to the Council a reversion application will be required. Reversion application fees are individually determined.

7. The additional charge refers to electrical works undertaken by a non qualified person who is unable to certify their work to appropriate electrical regulations.

Other information

1 These notes are for guidance only and do not replace Statutory Instrument 2010 number 0404 which contains the full statement of the law, and the Scheme of Recovery of Fees dated April 2014.

2 These guidance notes refer to the charges that you have to pay for building control services within North Worcestershire.

Telephone payments are accepted. Please contact the relevant payment centre with your address and card details:

Bromsgrove 01527 881402

Service Category	charge 1st April 2020 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2021 £			COMMENTS
TABLE A: Standard Charges for the Creation or Conversion to New Housing							
Application Charge	Please Ring for Quote			Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	Please Ring for Quote			Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	Please Ring for Quote			Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
TABLE B: Domestic Extensions and alterations to a Single Building (please contact us)							
Application Charge - New	Please Ring for Quote			Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge - New	Please Ring for Quote			Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge - New	Please Ring for Quote			Please Ring for Quote	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Garage Conversion to habitable room							
Application Charge	375.00	0.00%	0.00	375.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	450.00	0.00%	0.00	450.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	Please contact us			Please contact us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Electrical works by non-qualified electrician							
Application Charge	Please contact us			Please contact us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	Please contact us			Please contact us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	N/A			N/A			
Renovation of thermal element							
Application Charge	231.00	0.00%	0.00	231.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	275.00	0.00%	0.00	275.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	N/A			N/A			
Installing steel beam(s) within an existing house							
Application Charge	225.00	0.00%	0.00	225.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	270.00	0.00%	0.00	270.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	N/A			N/A			
Window replacement							
Application Charge	225.00	0.00%	0.00	225.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	270.00	0.00%	0.00	270.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	N/A			N/A			
Installing a new boiler or wood burner etc.							
Application Charge	440.00	0.00%	0.00	440.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	530.00	0.00%	0.00	530.00	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Additional Charge	N/A			N/A			
TABLE C: All Other works - Alterations and new build							
Application Charge	Please Contact Us			Please Contact Us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	
Regularisation Charge	Please Contact Us			Please Contact Us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	

For Office or shop fit outs, installation of a mezzanine floor and all other work where the estimated cost exceeds £50,000, please contact the Building Control Office on 01527 881402 for a competitive quote

These charges have been set on the following basis:

1. That the building work does not consist of, or include innovative or high risk construction techniques and / or duration of the building work from commencement to completion does not exceed 12 months
2. That the design and building work is undertaken by a person or company that is competent to carry out the relevant design and building work. If they are not, the building control service may impose supplementary charges.

Building Control – Supplementary Charges

If you are selling a property that has been extended or altered, you need to provide evidence to prospective purchasers that any relevant building work has been inspected and approved by a Building Control Body. That evidence is in the form of a Building Regulations Completion / Final Certificate and / or an Approval or Initial Notice (called the 'authorised documents' in the Home Information Pack Regulations).

Legal entitlement to a Completion Certificate is subject to conditions. In cases where the Council is not told that building work is completed, or the building is occupied without addressing outstanding Building Regulation matters, a certificate is not issued. Despite the best efforts of the Council's Building Control Surveyors, many home owners who undertake building works fail to obtain a Completion Certificate and their application is archived. A fee is payable to re-open archived building regulations applications for the purposes of issuing a completion certificate.

Other charges are payable where we are asked to withdraw a Building Regulations application and refund fees, or asked to re-direct inspection fee invoices. Fees are payable in cleared funds before the release of any authorised documents or other actions listed below.

ARCHIVED APPLICATIONS						
Process request to re-open archived building control file, resolve case and issue completion certificate (Administration Fee)	55.40	0.00%	0.00	55.40	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Each visit to site in connection with resolving archived building control cases (Per Site Visit)	72.30	0.00%	0.00	72.30	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
WITHDRAWN APPLICATIONS						
Process request	55.40	0.00%	0.00	55.40	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
<u>With additional fees of:</u>						
Withdraw Building Notice application where no inspections have taken place	refund submitted fee less admin fee		refund submitted fee less admin fee	refund submitted fee less admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Withdraw Building Notice application where inspections have taken place	refund submitted fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site visit made		refund submitted fee less admin fee, less £65.90 per site visit made	refund submitted fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site visit made	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Withdraw Full Plans application without plans being checked or any site inspections being made	refund submitted fee less admin fee		refund submitted fee less admin fee	refund submitted fee less admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Withdraw Full Plans application after plan check but before any inspections on site	refund submitted fee less admin fee refund inspection fee (where paid up-front) less admin fee		refund submitted fee less admin fee refund inspection fee (where paid up-front) less admin fee	refund submitted fee less admin fee refund inspection fee (where paid up-front) less admin fee	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Withdraw Full Plans application after plan check and after site inspections made	refund any paid inspection fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site inspection made		refund any paid inspection fee less admin fee, less £65.90 per site inspection made	refund any paid inspection fee less admin fee, less £72.30 per site inspection made	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
RE-DIRECT INSPECTION FEES / ISSUE COPY DOCUMENTS						
Process request to re-invoice inspection fee to new addressee or issue copies of previously issued Completion Certificates, Plans Approval Notices or Building Notice acceptances.	55.40	0.00%	0.00	55.40	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Optional Consultancy Services	Please Contact Us		Please Contact Us	Please Contact Us	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery
Charges Note						

Under the Building (Local Authority Charges) Regulations 2010 local authority building control is not permitted to make a profit or loss. The service is to ensure full cost recovery and no more. Any surplus or loss made against expenditure budgets is to be offset against the following years fees and charges setting. In addition, the level of competition from the private sector needs to continually defended against therefore it is proposed to curtail both the extent of fee categories published and to make extensive use of the fact that legislation now allows local authorities to offer site specific quotations for building regulations applications. In addition expenditure of the service has reduced since the creation of a shared service resulting in a reduction in the hourly rate charged by the service. Inspection fees equate to 70% of the total fee payable for a project.

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT						
Community exercise class	3.50	5.00%	0.20	3.70	10%	4.10
Specialised health class	3.50	5.00%	0.20	3.70	10%	4.10
Primary Sports Project (Standard Curriculum)	30.00	-100.00%	30.00	NIL		
Primary Sports Project (Specialist Curriculum)	35.00	-100.00%	35.00	NIL		
Inclusive activities (hourly rate)	3.30	5.00%	0.20	3.50	10%	3.90
Inclusive activities (90 minute rate)	3.80	5.00%	0.20	4.00	10%	4.40
Inclusive activities (2 hour rate)	4.40	-100.00%	-4.40	NIL		
Multi Skills clubs	4.00	-100.00%	-4.00	NIL		
Community Gymnastics	4.00	5.00%	0.20	4.20	10%	4.60
Couch 2 5k	1.00	0.00%	0.00	1.00	10%	1.10
PSI Falls Prevention	3.50	5.71%	0.20	3.70	10%	4.10
SANDERS PARK						
Tennis Courts (per court per Hour)						
- Adult	7.55	5.00%	0.40	7.95	10%	8.70
- Adult & Junior	6.60	5.00%	0.40	6.95	10%	7.60
- Junior/Senior Citizen	5.05	5.00%	0.30	5.30	10%	5.80

Tennis Courts (per court per 1 and 1/2 Hour)						
- Adult	11.00	5.00%	0.50	11.50	10%	12.70
- Adult & Junior	9.50	5.00%	0.50	10.00	10%	11.00
- Junior/Senior Citizen	8.50	5.00%	0.30	8.80	10%	9.70
Bowls						
- Adult (per hour)	8.00	5.00%	0.40	8.40	10%	9.20
- Junior (per hour)	4.20	5.00%	0.20	4.40	10%	4.80
- Senior Citizen (per hour)	5.50	5.00%	0.30	5.80	10%	6.40
- Adult (season ticket)	53.50	2.80%	1.50	55.00	10%	60.50
- Junior (season ticket)	29.00	3.45%	1.00	30.00	10%	33.00
- Senior Citizen (season ticket)	39.00	2.56%	1.00	40.00	10%	44.00
Hire of Bowls Green Pavillion - half day (4 hours) - new charge	NEW			60.00	10%	66.00
Hire of Bowls Green Pavillion - full day - new charge	NEW			90.00	10%	99.00
<u>OTHER RECREATION GROUNDS AND OPEN SPACES</u>						
<u>Football</u>						
SENIOR 11 a side with changing						
Match games	55.00	5.45%	3.00	58.00	10%	63.80
SENIOR 11 a side without changing						
Match games	40.00	6.25%	2.50	42.50	10%	46.80
JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side with changing						
Match games	30.00	6.67%	2.00	32.00	10%	35.20
per season (x 12 games)	360.00	6.67%	24.00	384.00	10%	422.40
JUNIOR 9 or 11 a side without changing						
Match games	22.50	6.67%	1.50	24.00	10%	26.40
per season (x 12 games)	270.00	6.67%	18.00	288.00	10%	316.80
MINI FOOTBALL 5 or 7 a side						
Match games	16.50	6.06%	1.00	17.50	10%	19.30
per season (x 12 games)	198.00	6.06%	12.00	210.00	10%	231.00
<u>ALLOTMENTS</u>						
- Rent per acre equivalent to 0.404685 hectares	1,173.10			NA		
- Rent per 3/4 acre equivalent to 0.303514 hectares	787.80			NA		
- Rent per 1/2 acre equivalent to 0.202342 hectares	467.50			NA		
- Rent per 1/4 acre equivalent to 0.101171 hectares	214.80			NA		
- Rent per 1/16 acre equivalent to 0.25529 hectares	49.40	38.87%	19.20	68.60	10%	75.50
- Rent per 1/32 acre equivalent to 0.01264 hectares	34.60	32.43%	11.20	45.80	10%	50.40
<u>Events, Open Spaces and Civic Spaces Hire</u>						
<u>£250 - £1500 Bond Payable</u>						
Events						
Commercial Rates						
Small Attendance = 0 to 99						
Per half day	155.00	3.23%	5.00	160.00	10%	176.00
Per Day	282.00	2.84%	8.00	290.00	10%	319.00
Medium Attendance = 100 to 499						
Per half day	220.00	2.27%	5.00	225.00	10%	247.50
Per Day	378.00	1.85%	7.00	385.00	10%	423.50
Large Attendance = 500 to 1999						
Per half day	280.00	3.57%	10.00	290.00	10%	319.00
Per Day	472.00	2.75%	13.00	485.00	10%	533.50
Community Rates						
Small Attendance = 0 to 99						
Per half day	65.00	1.54%	1.00	66.00	10%	72.60
Per Day	106.00	1.42%	1.50	107.50	10%	118.30
Medium Attendance = 100 to 499						
Per half day	80.00	1.25%	1.00	81.00	10%	89.10
Per Day	134.50	1.12%	1.50	136.00	10%	149.60
Large Attendance = 500 to 1999						
Per half day	95.00	0.00%	1.00	96.00	10%	105.60
Per Day	166.00	0.00%	1.00	167.00	10%	183.70
<u>Charities / Not For Profit Organisations</u>						
Small Attendance = 0 to 99						
Per half day	45.00	0.00%	0.00	45.00	10%	49.50
Per Day	74.00	0.00%	0.00	74.00	10%	81.40
Medium Attendance = 100 to 499						

Per half day	54.00	0.00%	0.00	54.00	10%	59.40		
Per Day	89.50	0.00%	0.00	89.50	10%	98.50		
Large Attendance = 500 to 1999								
Per half day	65.00	0.00%	0.00	65.00	10%	71.50		
Per Day	118.30	0.00%	0.00	118.30	10%	130.10		
Fairs & Circuses Min of 3 day Hire								
Small Attendance = 0 to 99 Per Day	440.20	2.23%	9.80	450.00	10%	495.00		
Medium and large attendance more than 99 per day (new Charge)	NEW			480.00	10%	528.00		
Boleyn Road, Frankley								
- fairs (per day)	473.80	0.00%	0.00	473.80	10%	521.20		
- deposit	2,166.70	0.00%	0.00	2,166.70	10%	2,383.40		
Market Street Recreation Ground								
- fairs (per day)	477.35	0.00%	0.00	477.35	10%	525.10		
- deposit	2,187.75	0.00%	0.00	2,187.75	10%	2,406.50		
<p>One free day is allowed for each of the above bookings by fairs/circuses. Other hiring's – charge to be decided at the time of application. Football pitches and parks are not available for any organised football activity during the period June 1st to July 15th. This is to allow the pitches a rest period and for maintenance work to take place. After this date any organised football training must be paid for at a cost of £10 per session for one team and a negotiated price for more than one team. Please contact the Parks Team to book this, pitches will be allocated at our discretion.</p>								
Ø Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate								
Ø Any event in excess of 1999 attendees is STN								
Event - Officer Support for event (per hour)	NEW			£50.00 per hour	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery	This is a new proposal for large scale external events that request on site officer support during the event Proposal to charge separately for use of power or water for each application?	
Power and Water Supply Additional Charges	NEW			Negotiation	Full cost	Full Cost Recovery		
Additional Costs for Outdoor Fitness Space:								
Ø Set up and Clearance charged @ 50% of applicable rate								
Outdoor Fitness Session								
Commercial Rates (Per Day)								
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	400.45	3.63%	14.60	415.00	10%	456.50		
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	650.00	3.08%	20.00	670.00	10%	737.00		
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	700.00	3.57%	25.00	725.00	10%	797.50		
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	200.00	3.50%	7.00	207.00	10%	227.70		
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	400.00	3.75%	15.00	415.00	10%	456.50		
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	600.00	3.33%	20.00	620.00	10%	682.00		
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	520.00	3.85%	20.00	540.00	10%	594.00		
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	850.00	3.53%	30.00	880.00	10%	968.00		
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	1,000.00	5.00%	50.00	1,050.00	10%	1,155.00		
Community Rates (Per Day)								
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) One day maximum usage per week	200.00	2.50%	5.00	205.00	10%	225.50		
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Two days maximum usage per week	300.00	2.33%	7.00	307.00	10%	337.70		
Summer Fee (Apr to Sept) Three days maximum usage per week	350.00	2.86%	10.00	360.00	10%	396.00		
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) One day maximum usage per week	80.00	2.50%	2.00	82.00	10%	90.20		
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Two days maximum usage per week	200.00	2.50%	5.00	205.00	10%	225.50		
Winter Fee (Oct to Mar) Three days maximum usage per week	300.00	2.33%	7.00	307.00	10%	337.70		
Annual Fee One day maximum usage per week	250.00	2.00%	5.00	255.00	10%	280.50		
Annual Fee Two days maximum usage per week	450.00	2.22%	10.00	460.00	10%	506.00		
Annual Fee Three days maximum usage per week	500.00	2.40%	12.00	512.00	10%	563.20		
Trial fee (1 day per week - MAX 4 week trial)	100.00	5.00%	5.00	105.00	10%	115.50		
The Bird Box - NEW CHARGE								
Use of Power connection	1.60	0.00%	0.10	1.70	10%	1.90		

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Regulatory Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	charge 1st April 2022 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	COMMENTS
LICENSING ACT 2003 - FEES SET BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - SAME FOR ALL DISTRICT COUNCILS					
Temporary Event Notices					
Fee to serve a Temporary Event Notice (TEN)	£21.00	0.00%		21.00	Nationally set charge
Copy of a TEN (if lost or stolen)	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	Nationally set charge
Personal licences					
Application for the grant of a personal licence	£37.00	0.00%		37.00	Nationally set charge
Fee for a replacement personal licence (if lost or stolen)	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	Nationally set charge
Fee to notify a change of name or address on a personal licence	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	Nationally set charge
Applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates					
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%		100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%		190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%		315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£450.00	0.00%		450.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£635.00	0.00%		635.00	Nationally set charge
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%		100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%		190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%		315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%		900.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,905.00	0.00%		1,905.00	Nationally set charge
Additional fees for grant of a premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)					
5000 - 9999	£1,000.00	0.00%		1,000.00	Nationally set charge
10000 - 14999	£2,000.00	0.00%		2,000.00	Nationally set charge
15000 - 19999	£4,000.00	0.00%		4,000.00	Nationally set charge
20000 - 29999	£8,000.00	0.00%		8,000.00	Nationally set charge
30000 - 39999	£16,000.00	0.00%		16,000.00	Nationally set charge
40000 - 49999	£24,000.00	0.00%		24,000.00	Nationally set charge
50000 - 59999	£32,000.00	0.00%		32,000.00	Nationally set charge
60000 - 69999	£40,000.00	0.00%		40,000.00	Nationally set charge
70000 - 79999	£48,000.00	0.00%		48,000.00	Nationally set charge
80000 - 89999	£56,000.00	0.00%		56,000.00	Nationally set charge
Applications to vary premises licences and club premises certificates					
Applications to vary a premises licence or club premises certificate					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%		100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%		190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%		315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£450.00	0.00%		450.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£635.00	0.00%		635.00	Nationally set charge
Applications to vary a premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%		100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%		190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%		315.00	Nationally set charge

Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%		900.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,905.00	0.00%		1,905.00	Nationally set charge
Application for a minor variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate	£89.00	0.00%		89.00	Nationally set charge
Annual maintenance fees					
Annual premises licence or club premises certificate fee					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00	0.00%		70.00	
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00	0.00%		180.00	
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00	0.00%		295.00	
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£320.00	0.00%		320.00	
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£350.00	0.00%		350.00	
Annual premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00	0.00%		70.00	
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00	0.00%		180.00	
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00	0.00%		295.00	
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£640.00	0.00%		640.00	
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,050.00	0.00%		1,050.00	
Additional annual fees premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)					
5000 - 9999	£500.00	0.00%		500.00	
10000 - 14999	£1,000.00	0.00%		1,000.00	
15000 - 19999	£2,000.00	0.00%		2,000.00	
20000 - 29999	£4,000.00	0.00%		4,000.00	
30000 - 39999	£8,000.00	0.00%		8,000.00	
40000 - 49999	£12,000.00	0.00%		12,000.00	
50000 - 59999	£16,000.00	0.00%		16,000.00	
60000 - 69999	£20,000.00	0.00%		20,000.00	
70000 - 79999	£24,000.00	0.00%		24,000.00	
80000 - 89999	£28,000.00	0.00%		28,000.00	
Other applications and notifications					
Application to transfer a premises licence	£23.00	0.00%		23.00	
Application to vary a premises licence to nominate a premises supervisor	£23.00	0.00%		23.00	
Fee to change name or address of the holder of a premises licence	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	
Fee to change the name or address of a designated premises supervisor on a premises licence	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	
Fee for a replacement premises licence or club premises certificate (if lost or stolen)	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	
Fee to notify licensing authority of a property interest in a premises	£21.00	0.00%		21.00	
Notification of change or club name or alteration to club rules	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	
Notification of change of registered address of club	£10.50	0.00%		10.50	
Interim authority notice following death, incapacity or insolvency of licence holder	£23.00	0.00%		23.00	
Application for grant of a provisional statement	£315.00	0.00%		315.00	
Other Fees and Charges					
TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE					
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£248.00	5.00%	12.40	260.40	
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£230.00	5.00%	11.50	241.50	
Private Hire Operator Licence (5 year)	£1,124.00	5.00%	56.20	1,180.20	
Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver Licence (3 year)	£233.00	5.00%	11.70	244.70	
Knowledge Test	£23.00	5.00%	1.20	24.20	
Replacement vehicle licence plate	£23.00	5.00%	1.20	24.20	
Replacement driver's licence	£21.00	5.00%	1.10	22.10	
Transfer of ownership of a licensed vehicle	£38.00	5.00%	1.90	39.90	
Criminal Record (DBS) Check	£56.00	5.00%	2.80	58.80	
Temp vehicle licence fees (@75%)		New			This figure needs to be at 75% of the licence fee after the uplift.
ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENCES					
Hiring out horses, breeding of dogs, providing or arranging the provision of boarding for cats or dogs and selling animals as pets					
Application fee	£329.00	0.00%	0.00	329.00	

Licence fee (1 year)	£184.00	0.00%	0.00	184.00
Licence fee (2 years)	£364.00	0.00%	0.00	364.00
Licence fee (3 years)	£546.00	0.00%	0.00	546.00
Application to vary a licence	£240.00	0.00%	0.00	240.00
Veterinary fees (if applicable)	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£164.00	0.00%	0.00	164.00
Keeping or training animals for exhibition (only)				
Application fee	£219.00	0.00%	0.00	219.00
Licence fee (3 years)	£300.00	0.00%	0.00	300.00
Application to vary a licence	£158.00	0.00%	0.00	158.00
Veterinary fees (if applicable)	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£163.00		1.00	164.00
ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC PIERCING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS				
Fee to register a premises	£136.00	5.00%	6.80	142.80
Fee to register a practitioner	£89.00	5.00%	4.50	93.50
GAMBLING ACT 2005 (inc. SMALL LOTTERIES)				
Small society lotteries				
Fee to register a small society lottery	£40.00	0.00%	0.00	40.00
Small society lottery annual maintenance fee	£20.00	0.00%	0.00	20.00
Application for the grant of a premises licence				
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,761.00	5.00%	88.10	1,849.10
Betting Tracks	£1,469.00	5.00%	73.50	1,542.50
Bingo	£2,111.00	5.00%	105.60	2,216.60
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	60.30	1,266.30
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	60.30	1,266.30
Premises licence annual fees				
Betting (excluding tracks)	£363.00	5.00%	18.20	381.20
Betting Tracks	£604.00	5.00%	30.20	634.20
Bingo	£604.00	5.00%	30.20	634.20
Adult Gaming Centres	£604.00	5.00%	30.20	634.20
Family Entertainment Centres	£454.00	5.00%	22.70	476.70
Application to vary a premises licence				
Betting (excluding tracks)	£906.00	5.00%	45.30	951.30
Betting Tracks	£754.00	5.00%	37.70	791.70
Bingo	£1,059.00	5.00%	53.00	1,112.00
Adult Gaming Centres	£906.00	5.00%	45.30	951.30
Family Entertainment Centres	£700.00	5.00%	35.00	735.00
Application to transfer a premises licence				
Betting (excluding tracks)	£722.00	5.00%	36.10	758.10
Betting Tracks	£573.00	5.00%	28.70	601.70
Bingo	£723.00	5.00%	36.20	759.20
Adult Gaming Centres	£722.00	5.00%	36.10	758.10
Family Entertainment Centres	£573.00	5.00%	28.70	601.70
Application for a provisional statement				
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,761.00	5.00%	88.10	1,849.10
Betting Tracks	£1,469.00	5.00%	73.50	1,542.50
Bingo	£2,111.00	5.00%	105.60	2,216.60
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	60.30	1,266.30
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	60.30	1,266.30
Application for reinstatement of a premises licence				
Betting (excluding tracks)	£704.00	5.00%	35.20	739.20
Betting Tracks	£562.00	5.00%	28.10	590.10

STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND

STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND

Bingo	£704.00	5.00%	35.20	739.20	
Adult Gaming Centres	£704.00	5.00%	35.20	739.20	
Family Entertainment Centres	£562.00	5.00%	28.10	590.10	
Premises licence fees (miscellaneous)					
Copy of a premises licence (all types)	£25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	AT STATUTORY MAXIMUM
Notification of a change in respect of a premises licence (all types)	£50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	AT STATUTORY MAXIMUM
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£150.00	0.00%	0.00	150.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for the transfer of a permit	£25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	0.00	15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Licensed Premises Gaming Machines (Automatic Entitlement)					
Fee to serve notification	£50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Club Gaming Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	0.00	200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	0.00	200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	0.00	15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Club Machine Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	0.00	200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	0.00	200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	0.00	50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	0.00	15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permit					
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	0.00	300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	0.00	300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	0.00	15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Prize Gaming Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	0.00	300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	0.00	300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	0.00	15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Temporary Use Notices					
Fee to serve a Temporary Use Notice	£287.00				
Request for a copy of a Temporary Use Notice	£25.00	0.00%	0.00	25.00	
STREET TRADING					
Annual street trading consent - food - initial	£1,447.00	5.00%	72.40	1,519.40	
Annual street trading consent - food - renewal	£1,327.00	5.00%	66.40	1,393.40	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - initial	£1,207.00	5.00%	60.40	1,267.40	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - renewal	£1,086.00	5.00%	54.30	1,140.30	
SCRAP METAL DEALERS LICENCES					
Application for a new site licence	£296.00	0.00%	0.00	296.00	
Fee per additional site	£153.00	0.00%	0.00	153.00	
Application for renewal of a site licence	£245.00	0.00%	0.00	245.00	
Fee per additional site	£153.00	0.00%	0.00	153.00	
Application for a new collectors licence	£148.00	0.00%	0.00	148.00	
Application for renewal of a collectors licence	£97.00	0.00%	0.00	97.00	

Variation of a licence	£67.00	0.00%	0.00	67.00	
Request for a copy of a licence (if lost or stolen)	£26.00	0.00%	0.00	26.00	
ZOO LICENCES					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£113.00		137.00	250.00	
Secretary of state inspector and veterinary fees	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS (DWA)					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£235.00	0.00%	0.00	235.00	
Veterinary inspection fees	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
SEX ESTABLISHMENTS					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£1,020.00	0.00%	0.00	1,020.00	
Application for a transfer		New		500.00	
Application for a variation	£1,020.00	0.00%	0.00	1,020.00	
STREET AMENITY PERMISSIONS					
Application for grant of a new permission	£200.00	0.00%	0.00	200.00	No Change - waiting for new legislation
Application for renewal of a permission	£55.00	0.00%	0.00	55.00	No Change - waiting for new legislation
PAVEMENT LICENCE					
Application for a licence (6 months)	£100.00	0.00%	0.00	100.00	
HYPNOTISM					
Application for authorisation		New		50.00	

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**CABINET
2022**

23 November

SHERWOOD ROAD FOOTBRIDGE, ASTON FIELDS – PERMANENT CLOSURE OF FOOTBRIDGE, REMOVAL OF BRIDGE DECK AND TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP TO SEVERN TRENT WATER LTD

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Sherrey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Guy Revans - Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Report Author	Job Title: Engineering Team Leader Contact email: pete.liddington@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 534108
Wards Affected	Aston Fields and Avoncroft
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green
Key Decision	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 The Cabinet is asked to RESOLVE that: -

- i) The existing pedestrian footbridge in Sherwood Road be permanently closed, due to its current structural condition;**
- ii) After removal of the bridge deck, the remaining structure be declared surplus to Council requirements, and disposed of to Severn Trent Water Ltd at nil cost.**

1.2 The Cabinet is asked to RECOMMEND that: -

- i) A budget of £10k be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from internal resources.**

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The footbridge (refer to Appendix 1) is owned by this Authority. It would seem that the footbridge was probably originally constructed for a joint purpose, by whom is unknown, serving both as a pedestrian route to the adjacent development, Sugarbrook Court, and as a structural support for Severn Trent Water Ltd's (STW) 675mm diameter combined sewer.

**CABINET
2022****23 November**

- 2.2 A recent inspection of this reinforced concrete structure has revealed significant structural failures, particularly with large cracks appearing in the concrete, exposing the steel reinforcement. In addition, there are Universal steel beams integrated within the structure, which are open to the elements, as opposed to being integrated within the concrete structure, which would have offered protection. As a consequence, these beams have degraded to such an extent that in some instances only the outline of these sections remain (refer to Appendix 2).
- 2.3 This pedestrian footbridge appears not to be a well-used pedestrian link, and it is currently obscured by overgrown shrubs and trees. There are other adequate pedestrian routes easily accessible. Once, the footpath's condition was known to us, we ensured it was immediately closed to all pedestrians and adequately fenced off. No comments whatsoever have been received from local businesses or the general public as to the actual closure.
- 2.4 In view of the apparent non-usage of the footbridge, it is considered practical that the permanent closure of this structure would be the best course of action on the Council's part. The anticipated full reconstruction costs, coming at a time when finance is particularly restricted, could not be fully justified. Obviously, the existing gravity sewer crossing is a necessity for STW, and therefore preliminary discussions have taken place with STW, with regards to the best way forward. Our proposal to STW, was that as they require the structure to be maintained as a structural support for their sewer crossing, this Council would be prepared to transfer the ownership of the total structure to STW, in its existing condition, and STW would then need to undertake and totally finance the necessary remedial/reconstruction costs. In view of the existing condition of the structure, it is recommended that no purchase price is levied against STW.
- 2.5 STW have provisionally agreed to this arrangement, subject to the bridge decking being removed and financed by the Council, in advance of the sale transfer, hence the need for the Capital budget approval.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The cost of removal of the existing bridge deck is substantially less than the anticipated reconstruction works if the footbridge were to be kept for its original purpose. Indeed, a more detailed structural analysis could well result in proposing that it was more financially beneficial to demolish the complete structure and totally replace it.

- 3.2 The proposal to add an additional £10k to the Capital Programme needs to be recommended on to Council as this is a new addition to the budget.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Referring to the existing Conveyance and Deed, they are both silent in terms of providing a bridge or a structure for STW to span the watercourse to support their sewer. Therefore, on the basis of these two titles, the Council do not have an obligation to repair/maintain or provide such a structure.

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 *Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green* – with adoption of the proposals included within this report, this structurally unsafe existing pedestrian footbridge will be permanently removed from use.

Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no Climate Change implications.

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no Equalities and Diversity Implications

Operational Implications

- 6.2 Although the bridge deck will be removed from the structure, making it just a watercourse crossing for STW's sewer, there will of course be a possible incentive for individuals to try and traverse the remaining structure, as an inviting 'dare.' Consequently, as part of our works, a fence will be provided on each embankment to deter any such potential crossings, and STW will be advised to install safety fans, or similar, to supplement the deterrent. Such deterrents will be provided in conjunction with Community Safety.
- 6.3 The required budget for the works as described in 6.2, is arrived at utilising the Council's current Term Contract for Minor Civil Engineering and Ancillary Works. The budget of £10k will be sufficient to complete all the necessary works.

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6.4 It is anticipated that the works will commence in late January 2023 and will take approximately two/three weeks to complete. However, the actual start date will be dependant on the completion of the legal transfer of the structure to STW.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The removal of the bridge deck, together with the transfer of the remaining structure to STW, will eliminate any potential future Health and Safety risk for the Council.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i) Appendix 1 – Footbridge Location Details
- ii) Appendix 2 – Existing condition photographs

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Sherrey	01 August 2022
Lead Director/Head of Service	Guy Revans Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	05 July 2022
Financial Services	Peter Carpenter Director of Finance	13 July 2022
Legal Services	Clare Flanagan Principal Solicitor	11 July 2022
Policy Team	Emily Payne Engagement and Equalities Advisor	13 July 2022
Climate Change Officers	Kath Manning - Climate Change and Energy Support Officer Anna Wardell-Hill	11 July 2022

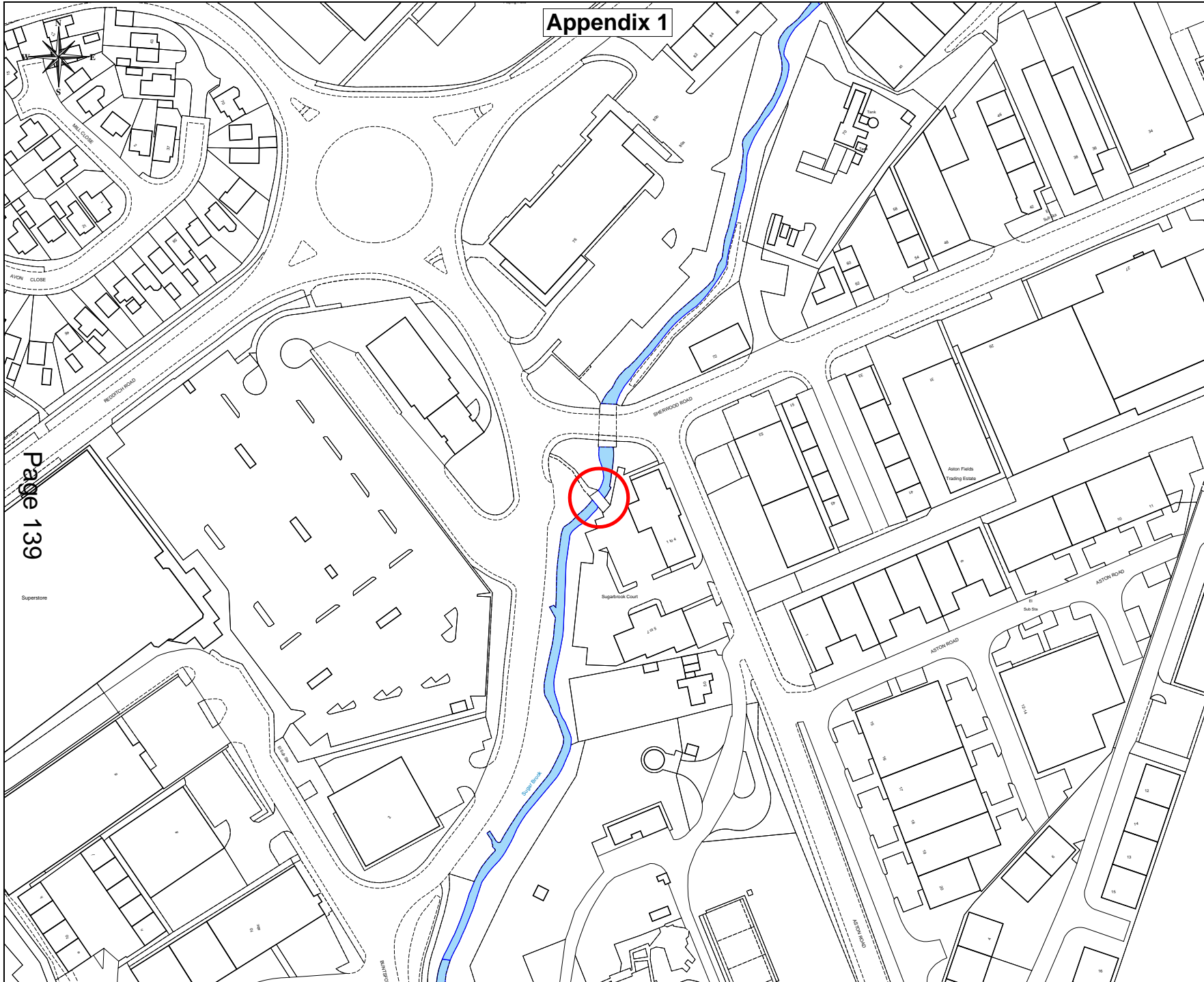
CABINET
2022

23 November

	Environmental Policy and Awareness Officer	
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Appendix 1



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Superstore

Notes:

Date	Rev	Details

Project:
**Existing Footbridge
 Sherwood Road, Bromsgrove**

Drawing:
Location Details

Drawn:	PTL	Scale:	1/1250 @ A3
Surveyed:	OS	Date:	Apr 2021

Drawing No: **P2030/299**

Engineering and Design Services
 Town Hall
 Walter Stranz Square
 Redditch
 Worcs B98 8AH



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 Ordnance Survey 100024252

Agenda Item 12b

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APPENDIX 2



APPENDIX 2



MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN UPDATE

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Finance & Customer Services email:michelle.howell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252
Wards Affected	N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 The Council will set its budget in two Tranches this year. The initial Tranche was published on the 26th October. This report updates Members on proposed changes announced in November by the Chancellor and how this might affect budget assumptions along with any feedback received for the savings proposals in Tranche 1 of the budget. It recommends to Council that these savings proposals are Recommended for Council approval in December.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are asked to Resolve that:

- 1 That Officers continue to work on additional options, as outlined in the Strategy section of the Tranche 1 Report for presentation to Cabinet in February as Tranche 2 of the Budget.

Cabinet are asked to Recommend to Council that:

- 2 The Tranche 1 savings proposals, Fees and Charges increases including updated WRS charges, and the single Growth item in respect of the Climate Change Officer are approved for implementation to ensure maximum benefit as at 1st April 2023.

Cabinet

23rd November 2022**3. Background****Introduction**

3.1 The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process, as set out in the Tranche 1 documentation (attached as Background Papers) has been more difficult due to the following factors and as such has been split into two Tranches to ensure maximisation of delivery in the 2023/24 financial year:

- Starting the process with an initial deficit amount from the 2022/23 MTFP.
- This being the first year that the Government starts to pay for the C-19 Pandemic.
- The present cost of living crisis.
- A change of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Limited Reserves and balances.

Tranche 1 Proposals

3.2 The Tranche 1 Report was discussed by Cabinet on the 26th October. In that report, the Interim Director of Finance noted in his draft robustness statement set out that the MTFP highlights that the current financial position is untenable without some form of intervention. Whilst a balanced budget for 2022/23 was approved with the use of reserves in February 2022, the Council is currently forecasting a £1.5m overspend in 2023/24 due to the additional demands placed on it due to the present rates of inflation, which in turn is utilising the remaining available reserves balances to fund these pressures.

3.3 It is important, for planning purposes that those initial savings proposals are approved by Council as soon as possible in order to achieve the maximum benefit in the 2023/24 financial year. As per the Q2 Monitoring Report, which is also being presented to Cabinet today, prior years "unallocated savings" have now been fully allocated to service budgets.

3.4 Those initial savings proposals to be approved and the position on the Councils budget as per Tranche 1 are set in the following table. Overall, the Council has identified £1.625m of savings items. These offset the £1.588m budget deficit. However, when we add in inflationary pressures (non-utilities) we move to a deficit position of £863k which increases to £942k over the three-year period. We kept utilities separate, pending possible Government support, however this increases the overall deficit position to £1.5m, rising to £1.6m on present working assumptions. Fees and Charges increases were part of the Tranche 1 proposals. Appendix A sets out the full set of WRS Fees and Charges. The initial appendix did not contain all the Environmental Health charges.

Bromsgrove Position Statement				
		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		£000	£000	£000
Base Budget Position 22/23 MTFP				
Expenditure		11,948	12,077	12,347
Funding		-10,360	-10,864	-10,724
Net		1,588	1,213	1,623
Revised Gap		1,588	1,213	1,623
Pressures				
50% Funding for Climate Change Officer		30	30	30
Savings Options				
Environmental Services Partnership		0	-25	-50
Service Reviews		-140	-330	-405
Town Hall		-70	-70	-70
Finance Vacancies		-100	-100	-100
MRP		-100	-100	-100
Pension Fund		-663	-663	-663
Engage Capacity Grid (One Off)		-200	-200	0
10% Increase in Fees and Charges		-382	-389	-390
Total Savings		-1,625	-1,847	-1,748
Revised Position		-37	-634	-125
Pressures				
Pay Pressure Year 1		718	718	718
Pay Pressure Future Years (1%)		0	0	155
Transport Pressure		32	33	34
Contracts Pressures		150	155	160
Core Pressures		900	906	1,067
Updated Position		863	272	942
Utilities Inflation		702	702	702
Final Draft Position		1,565	974	1,644

Table 1 – Tranche 1 Position

- 3.5 The Council's Capital Programme must prioritise the spending of Levelling up and UK Shared Prosperity Grant Funding – both of which have to be delivered by April 2025. Therefore, the new rationale is for any scheme not yet started (unless grant or S106 funded) is that they must rebid for funds as part of the 2023/24 budget process.
- 3.6 The Savings Proposal Document had a feedback section – any feedback will be fed back to Cabinet aurally.

Cabinet

23rd November 2022

Chancellors Statement 17th November 2022

- 3.7 The Statement by the Chancellor Jeremy Hunt has now been delayed from the 31st October to the 17th November.
- 3.8 A verbal update will be given to Cabinet on the 23rd November setting out implications for Local Government from the Statement and any possible changes to the budget gap that can be verified from the data presented.
- 3.9 It is expected that Provisional Local Government settlement take place as per previous years in the middle of December. Therefore, the overall timetable remains as per the timetable set out on the 26th October:
- Initial Tranche 1 Options published - 17th October
 - Cabinet discuss initial options – 26th October
 - Chancellors Statement – 17th November
 - End of feedback period – 23rd November
 - Tranche 1 approved by Cabinet in November and Council in December
 - Provisional Local Government Settlement – 15th December
 - Final Local Government Settlement – 12th January
 - Tranche 2 options ready for Cabinet – 17th January
 - Tranche 2 options presented to Cabinet – 15th February
 - Full Budget approved by Council – 22nd February

Timescales are estimated – however the issue is that the timescales are challenging for the delivery of either Tranche1 or Tranche 2.

The Council's Base Assumptions including Inflation and Grants

- 3.10 Following the Chancellors announcement in November, it is important that the Councils base assumptions are revised. This section sets out those base assumptions now.
- 3.11 Tax Base underlying assumptions are as follows
- Council Tax – Figures assume the full 1.99% increase
 - Business Rates Increases – Base assumptions no increases over the medium term, being reviewed in light of post C-19 Environment.
 - New Homes Bonus – It is assumed to be none in 23/24 onwards
 - Lower Tier Services Grant – It is assumed to be none in 23/24 onwards
 - Pension Fund assumptions – takes account of the latest triennial valuation which was received in September

Cabinet

23rd November 2022

3.12 Grant support assumptions are as follows (Revenue and Capital). It should be noted that these are budgeted figures and final grant figures will not be confirmed until the time of the final Local Government Settlement.

- The main Revenue Grants are
 - S-31 Grant (for Business Rate reductions) - £1.126m
 - Housing Benefit - £14.7m
 - Housing Benefit Administration - £0.148m
 - Cost of Revenues Collection Grant - £0.119m
- The Council has £14.492m of Levelling Up Grant to be spent by April 2026 which is match funded by £1.610m of Council funding.
- The Council has £2.681m of UK Shared Prosperity Fund to spend by April 2025. This is both revenue (£2.068m) and capital (£0.613m) in nature

3.13 Inflationary increases are significant due to factors already identified in previous sections. The following are the current base assumptions although given the present “cost of living” crisis and the change of Government in September it is likely these will need to be updated in Tranche 2.

- Presently, the Employers have offered a 2022/23 pay award of £1,925 per pay point plus on costs. This equates to an additional £675,675 cost to the Council from its initial budget. We budgeted for a 2% increase in our base budget in the 2022/23 MTFS which was £180k. In addition, we are assuming the 2023/24 will see an additional cost of 1.5% over our 1% base at a cost £222,518 before reverting back to 1% from 2024/25.
 - Therefore, at our present employee budgets this accounts for an ongoing pressure of £898,193. Taking account of the £180k inflation this results in a £718,193 increase.
- General inflation is running at 10% as of the 18th August. The assumption is this will affect transport and contract budgets in particular. Its impact on 2023/24 will be as follows (it is assumed that 2024/25 will move back to normal levels of 2%):
 - Bromsgrove base transport budget - £320k – Increase £32k
 - Bromsgrove base “contracts” budget - £1.5m – Increase £150k
- Utilities increases will be significant, with all our existing Utility contracts requiring renewal by the end of this financial year. We have seen increases in some areas of up to 400%. For planning purposes, we will assume an increase of 200% in 2023/24 which should then be relatively constant for the next three years.
 - Bromsgrove base utilities budget - £351k – Increase £702k

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3.14 There are also other possible pressures that will be monitored during the Tranche 1 and Tranche 2 processes as many relate to changes in Government legislation which is yet to be received. Key items include:

- The future waste operating model,
- Possible commercial opportunities to maximise income.
- Climate Change
- Review of the Councils Leisure contract.

3.15 Other service-based pressures will be identified for inclusion in the Tranche 2.

Strategic Approach

3.16 The Council came into the 2023/24 budget process with a number of conflicting issues. These included:

- An ongoing budget deficit position from the 2022/23 MTFS of £1.6m which has now been resolved.
- Significant inflationary increase due to the “cost of living” crisis.
- Limited reserves to call on to reduce any deficit, which is still the case due to inflationary pressures. Earmarked reserves stand at just over £8m.
- Increases in Council Tax are limited at 2% or £5, which is significantly lower than the present rates of inflation.

3.17 The Council must move to financial sustainability as soon as is practically possible due to the present inherent risks but must be minded of Government support that will be announced in the settlement.

3.18 As set out in the Tranche 1 report, the strategy must be to move the Council to financial sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year. To get to this position there will be the need for investment and possibly the requirement to fund redundancy (both from reserves). Both these requirements will be outputs from the Council having to implement changes to the way it operates to continue to become a viable entity going forward and this will take 18 months to implement fully.

3.19 As set out later in the Robustness Statement, in compiling Tranche1 of the budget, assumptions have been made based on the best information held now. Issues the Council is facing are not unique, they are being faced by almost all Councils. Tranche 2 of the budget will adjust for any funding that the Government will provide and also look at other options to close any deficit should the Government settlement not bridge any resultant gap. Initiatives that will be assessed in Tranche 2 (as more time is required to analyse these individual options) include:

- Clarity on the Local Government Settlement including the Lower Tier Services Grant and New Homes Bonus which if confirmed as

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intimated at Prime Ministers Question Time on the 12th October is worth £1.0m

- Ensuring Grants are maximised.
- Ensuring Agency work reflects the income provided for its delivery.
- Minimisation of Bed and Breakfast Temporary Accommodation costs
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's largest Contracts.
- Maximising the effectiveness of our refuse fleet
- Reviewing the location and effectiveness of our Depot
- Assessing the Council's leisure and cultural strategy in terms of affordability
- Reviewing recharging mechanisms between the Councils for appropriateness
- Rationalisation of Back Office services as we embrace technology.

3.20 Many of these initiatives will require investment, for which the only present source of funding is reserves (General Fund and Earmarked Reserves). Key areas of investment will be:

- Documentation of Processes
- Investment in automation and robotic processes
- Possible redundancy – through restructures

3.21 However, in any situation, the Council must move to sustainability by the 2024/25 financial year.

Impact on Reserves

3.22 As per the Tranche 1 Report these will be fully revised in Tranche 2.

Capital Programme

3.23 The final position, based on scheme slippage to date in 2022/23 and the availability of resources will be reassessed as part of Tranche 2.

Robustness Statement

3.24 For Tranche 1, the opinion of the Interim Director of Finance is that the 2023/24 budget estimates contain considerable risk due to the level of uncertainty in the Councils operating environment, making it problematic to develop meaningful assumptions.

3.25 The revenue budget and capital programme have been formulated having regard to several factors including:

- Funding Available.
- Inflation.
- Risks and Uncertainties.
- Priorities.

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- Service Pressures.
- Commercial Opportunities.
- Operating in a Post C-19 environment.

3.26 The MTFP highlights that the current financial position is untenable without some form of intervention. Whilst a balanced budget for 2022/23 was approved with the use of reserves in February 2022, the Council is currently forecasting a £1.5m overspend in 2023/24 due to the additional demands placed on it due to the present rates of inflation, which in turn is utilising the remaining available reserves balances to fund these pressures.

3.27 Given all the uncertainty which encapsulates this MTFP, the assumptions have been based on the best available information to the Council at this time. Work will continue in validating all assumptions, robustly challenging estimates, ensuring the delivery of existing saving plans. Updates will be included in Tranche 2 of the MTFS and balanced budget setting process

4. **IMPLICATIONS**

Financial Implications

4.1 Financial implications are set out in section 3.

Legal Implications

4.2 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

4.3 Service implications of savings proposals are set out in the Savings Proposal Document in the background papers.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

4.4 There are none of these in Tranche 1, although it is expected there will be impacts in Tranche 2 where further savings will be required.

5. **RISK MANAGEMENT**

5.1 Medium Term Financial Plan risks are set out in the background papers.

Cabinet

23rd November 2022

6. **APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix A – Updated WRS Fees and Charges

Appendix B – Tranche 1 Savings

Background Papers

Tranche 1 MTFP – Cabinet 26th October 2023: [Agenda for Cabinet, 26/10/2022 18:00 \(bromsgrove.gov.uk\)](#)

MTFP 2022/23 – Approved February 2022: [Agenda Document for Council, 23/02/2022 18:00 \(bromsgrove.gov.uk\)](#)

7. **KEY**

None

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Regulatory Services

Roundings are generally rounded to the nearest 10p.

Service Category	charge 1st April 2022 £	% Change	Increase / Decrease £	Proposed charge from 2022 £	COMMENTS
LICENSING ACT 2003 - FEES SET BY CENTRAL GOVERNMENT - SAME FOR ALL DISTRICT COUNCILS					
Temporary Event Notices					
Fee to serve a Temporary Event Notice (TEN)	£21.00	0.00%		£21.00	Nationally set charge
Copy of a TEN (if lost or stolen)	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50	Nationally set charge
Personal licences					
Application for the grant of a personal licence	£37.00	0.00%		£37.00	Nationally set charge
Fee for a replacement personal licence (if lost or stolen)	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50	Nationally set charge
Fee to notify a change of name or address on a personal licence	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50	Nationally set charge
Applications for new premises licences or club premises certificates					
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%		£100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%		£190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%		£315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£450.00	0.00%		£450.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£635.00	0.00%		£635.00	Nationally set charge
Applications for the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)					
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%		£100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%		£190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%		£315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%		£900.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,905.00	0.00%		£1,905.00	Nationally set charge
Additional fees for grant of a premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)					
5000 - 9999	£1,000.00	0.00%		£1,000.00	Nationally set charge
10000 - 14999	£2,000.00	0.00%		£2,000.00	Nationally set charge
15000 - 19999	£4,000.00	0.00%		£4,000.00	Nationally set charge
20000 - 29999	£8,000.00	0.00%		£8,000.00	Nationally set charge
30000 - 39999	£16,000.00	0.00%		£16,000.00	Nationally set charge
40000 - 49999	£24,000.00	0.00%		£24,000.00	Nationally set charge

50000 - 59999	£32,000.00	0.00%	£32,000.00	Nationally set charge
60000 - 69999	£40,000.00	0.00%	£40,000.00	Nationally set charge
70000 - 79999	£48,000.00	0.00%	£48,000.00	Nationally set charge
80000 - 89999	£56,000.00	0.00%	£56,000.00	Nationally set charge
Applications to vary premises licences and club premises certificates				
Applications to vary a premises licence or club premises certificate				
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%	£100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%	£190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%	£315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£450.00	0.00%	£450.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£635.00	0.00%	£635.00	Nationally set charge
Applications to vary a premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)				
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£100.00	0.00%	£100.00	Nationally set charge
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£190.00	0.00%	£190.00	Nationally set charge
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£315.00	0.00%	£315.00	Nationally set charge
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£900.00	0.00%	£900.00	Nationally set charge
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,905.00	0.00%	£1,905.00	Nationally set charge
Application for a minor variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate				
	£89.00	0.00%	£89.00	Nationally set charge
Annual maintenance fees				
Annual premises licence or club premises certificate fee				
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00	0.00%	£70.00	
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00	0.00%	£180.00	
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00	0.00%	£295.00	
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£320.00	0.00%	£320.00	
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£350.00	0.00%	£350.00	
Annual premises licence (where the premises is used exclusively or primarily for the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises)				
Band A (NDRV 0 - 4300)	£70.00	0.00%	£70.00	
Band B (NDRV 4301 - 33000)	£180.00	0.00%	£180.00	
Band C (NDRV 33001 - 87000)	£295.00	0.00%	£295.00	
Band D (NDRV 87001 - 125000)	£640.00	0.00%	£640.00	
Band E (NDRV 125001 +)	£1,050.00	0.00%	£1,050.00	
Additional annual fees premises licences (for large venues with capacities over 5000)				
5000 - 9999	£500.00	0.00%	£500.00	
10000 - 14999	£1,000.00	0.00%	£1,000.00	
15000 - 19999	£2,000.00	0.00%	£2,000.00	
20000 - 29999	£4,000.00	0.00%	£4,000.00	
30000 - 39999	£8,000.00	0.00%	£8,000.00	

40000 - 49999	£12,000.00	0.00%		£12,000.00
50000 - 59999	£16,000.00	0.00%		£16,000.00
60000 - 69999	£20,000.00	0.00%		£20,000.00
70000 - 79999	£24,000.00	0.00%		£24,000.00
80000 - 89999	£28,000.00	0.00%		£28,000.00
Other applications and notifications				
Application to transfer a premises licence	£23.00	0.00%		£23.00
Application to vary a premises licence to nominate a premises supervisor	£23.00	0.00%		£23.00
Fee to change name or address of the holder of a premises licence	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50
Fee to change the name or address of a designated premises supervisor on a premises licence	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50
Fee for a replacement premises licence or club premises certificate (if lost or stolen)	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50
Fee to notify licensing authority of a property interest in a premises	£21.00	0.00%		£21.00
Notification of change or club name or alteration to club rules	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50
Notification of change of registered address of club	£10.50	0.00%		£10.50
Interim authority notice following death, incapacity or insolvency of licence holder	£23.00	0.00%		£23.00
Application for grant of a provisional statement	£315.00	0.00%		£315.00
Other Fees and Charges				
TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE				
Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence	£248.00	5.00%	£12.40	£260.40
Private Hire Vehicle Licence	£230.00	5.00%	£11.50	£241.50
Private Hire Operator Licence (5 year)	£1,124.00	5.00%	£56.20	£1,180.20
Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver Licence (3 year)	£233.00	5.00%	£11.70	£244.70
Knowledge Test	£23.00	5.00%	£1.20	£24.20
Replacement vehicle licence plate	£23.00	5.00%	£1.20	£24.20
Replacement driver's licence	£21.00	5.00%	£1.10	£22.10
Transfer of ownership of a licensed vehicle	£38.00	5.00%	£1.90	£39.90
Criminal Record (DBS) Check	£56.00	5.00%	£2.80	£58.80
Temp vehicle licence fees (@75%)		New		
ANIMAL ACTIVITY LICENCES				
Hiring out horses, breeding of dogs, providing or arranging the provision of boarding for cats or dogs and selling animals as pets				
Application fee	£329.00	0.00%	£0.00	£329.00
Licence fee (1 year)	£184.00	0.00%	£0.00	£184.00
Licence fee (2 years)	£364.00	0.00%	£0.00	£364.00
Licence fee (3 years)	£546.00	0.00%	£0.00	£546.00
Application to vary a licence	£240.00	0.00%	£0.00	£240.00
	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost
Veterinary fees (if applicable)				
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£164.00	0.00%	£0.00	£164.00
Keeping or training animals for exhibition (only)				
Application fee	£219.00	0.00%	£0.00	£219.00

This figure needs to be at 75% of the licence fee after the uplift.

Licence fee (3 years)	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	
Application to vary a licence	£158.00	0.00%	£0.00	£158.00	
	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
Veterinary fees (if applicable)					
Local authority inspection (on request of licence holder)	£163.00		£1.00	£164.00	
ACUPUNCTURE, COSMETIC PIERCING, SEMI-PERMANENT SKIN COLOURING, TATTOOING, ELECTROLYSIS					
Fee to register a premises	£136.00	5.00%	£6.80	£142.80	
Fee to register a practitioner	£89.00	5.00%	£4.50	£93.50	
GAMBLING ACT 2005 (inc. SMALL LOTTERIES)					
Small society lotteries					
Fee to register a small society lottery	£40.00	0.00%	£0.00	£40.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Small society lottery annual maintenance fee	£20.00	0.00%	£0.00	£20.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for the grant of a premises licence					
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,761.00	5.00%	£88.10	£1,849.10	
Betting Tracks	£1,469.00	5.00%	£73.50	£1,542.50	
Bingo	£2,111.00	5.00%	£105.60	£2,216.60	
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	£60.30	£1,266.30	
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	£60.30	£1,266.30	
Premises licence annual fees					
Betting (excluding tracks)	£363.00	5.00%	£18.20	£381.20	
Betting Tracks	£604.00	5.00%	£30.20	£634.20	
Bingo	£604.00	5.00%	£30.20	£634.20	
Adult Gaming Centres	£604.00	5.00%	£30.20	£634.20	
Family Entertainment Centres	£454.00	5.00%	£22.70	£476.70	
Application to vary a premises licence					
Betting (excluding tracks)	£906.00	5.00%	£45.30	£951.30	
Betting Tracks	£754.00	5.00%	£37.70	£791.70	
Bingo	£1,059.00	5.00%	£53.00	£1,112.00	
Adult Gaming Centres	£906.00	5.00%	£45.30	£951.30	
Family Entertainment Centres	£700.00	5.00%	£35.00	£735.00	
Application to transfer a premises licence					
Betting (excluding tracks)	£722.00	5.00%	£36.10	£758.10	
Betting Tracks	£573.00	5.00%	£28.70	£601.70	
Bingo	£723.00	5.00%	£36.20	£759.20	
Adult Gaming Centres	£722.00	5.00%	£36.10	£758.10	
Family Entertainment Centres	£573.00	5.00%	£28.70	£601.70	
Application for a provisional statement					
Betting (excluding tracks)	£1,761.00	5.00%	£88.10	£1,849.10	

Betting Tracks	£1,469.00	5.00%	£73.50	£1,542.50	
Bingo	£2,111.00	5.00%	£105.60	£2,216.60	
Adult Gaming Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	£60.30	£1,266.30	
Family Entertainment Centres	£1,206.00	5.00%	£60.30	£1,266.30	
Application for reinstatement of a premises licence					
Betting (excluding tracks)	£704.00	5.00%	£35.20	£739.20	
Betting Tracks	£562.00	5.00%	£28.10	£590.10	
Bingo	£704.00	5.00%	£35.20	£739.20	
Adult Gaming Centres	£704.00	5.00%	£35.20	£739.20	
Family Entertainment Centres	£562.00	5.00%	£28.10	£590.10	
Premises licence fees (miscellaneous)					
Copy of a premises licence (all types)	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	AT STATUTORY MAXIMUM
Notification of a change in respect of a premises licence (all types)	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	AT STATUTORY MAXIMUM
Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£150.00	0.00%	£0.00	£150.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for the transfer of a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Licensed Premises Gaming Machines (Automatic Entitlement)					
Fee to serve notification	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Club Gaming Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Club Machine Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for grant of a permit (Club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for variation of a permit	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit (club premises certificate holders)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Annual permit fee	£50.00	0.00%	£0.00	£50.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Family Entertainment Centre Gaming Machine Permit					
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND

Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Prize Gaming Permits					
Application for grant of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Application for renewal of a permit	£300.00	0.00%	£0.00	£300.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Change of name shown on a permit	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Request for a copy of a permit	£15.00	0.00%	£0.00	£15.00	STATUTORY - CANNOT AMEND
Temporary Use Notices					
Fee to serve a Temporary Use Notice	£287.00	0.00%	£0.00	£287.00	
Request for a copy of a Temporary Use Notice	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	
STREET TRADING					
Annual street trading consent - food - initial	£1,447.00	5.00%	£72.40	£1,519.40	
Annual street trading consent - food - renewal	£1,327.00	5.00%	£66.40	£1,393.40	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - initial	£1,207.00	5.00%	£60.40	£1,267.40	
Annual street trading consent - non-food - renewal	£1,086.00	5.00%	£54.30	£1,140.30	
SCRAP METAL DEALERS LICENCES					
Application for a new site licence	£296.00	0.00%	£0.00	£296.00	
Fee per additional site	£153.00	0.00%	£0.00	£153.00	
Application for renewal of a site licence	£245.00	0.00%	£0.00	£245.00	
Fee per additional site	£153.00	0.00%	£0.00	£153.00	
Application for a new collectors licence	£148.00	0.00%	£0.00	£148.00	
Application for renewal of a collectors licence	£97.00	0.00%	£0.00	£97.00	
Variation of a licence	£67.00	0.00%	£0.00	£67.00	
Request for a copy of a licence (if lost or stolen)	£26.00	0.00%	£0.00	£26.00	
ZOO LICENCES					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£113.00		£137.00	£250.00	
Secretary of state inspector and veterinary fees	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
DANGEROUS WILD ANIMALS (DWA)					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£235.00	0.00%	£0.00	£235.00	
Veterinary inspection fees	Recovered at cost			Recovered at cost	
SEX ESTABLISHMENTS					
Application for grant or renewal of a licence	£1,020.00	0.00%	£0.00	£1,020.00	
Application for a transfer		New		£500.00	
Application for a variation	£1,020.00	0.00%	£0.00	£1,020.00	
STREET AMENITY PERMISSIONS					
Application for grant of a new permission	£200.00	0.00%	£0.00	£200.00	No Change - waiting for new legislation
Application for renewal of a permission	£55.00	0.00%	£0.00	£55.00	No Change - waiting for new legislation
PAVEMENT LICENCE					

Application for a licence (6 months)	£100.00	0.00%	£0.00	£100.00	
HYPNOTISM (entertainment)					
Application for authorisation		New		£50.00	
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH					
<u>Dog Warden</u>					
- Penalty (statutory fee)	£25.00	0.00%	£0.00	£25.00	Statutory Fine set by legislation
- Kennelling Fee £15 per day or part day	£17.00	5.88%	£1.00	£18.00	Increased to £18.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Kennelling Fee for dangerous dog by breed or behaviour- £25 per day	£25.00	4.00%	£1.00	£26.00	Increased to £26.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Admin charge	£15.00	13.33%	£2.00	£17.00	Increased to £17.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Levy for out of hours	£45.00	4.44%	£2.00	£47.00	Increased to £47.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Repeat offence levy	£40.00	5.00%	£2.00	£42.00	Increased to £42.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Treatment Costs (Wormer, Flea) - Per treatment	£10.00	20.00%	£2.00	£12.00	Increased to £12.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
- Veterinary Charges	Recharged at cost	Full cost		Recharged at cost	
- Return Charge	£40.00	5.00%	£2.00	£42.00	Increased to £42.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
WRS Commercial Animal Services (WRS Income)	Request Quote			Request Quote	Full cost recovery
Private Water Supplies					
Risk Assessment per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Investigation per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Granting an Authorisation per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Sampling Visit per hour (minimum 1 hour)	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
Sample analysis per sample taken	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
+ Laboratory Costs	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Sample taken during check monitoring	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
+ Laboratory Costs	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Sample taken during audit monitoring	£56.00		£3.00	£59.00	Increased to £59.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts
+ Laboratory Costs	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Other Environmental Health Fees					
Trading Certificates - WRS Income					

Health/Export					
- Annual Specific export inspections	£474.00	5%	£23.70	£497.70	
- Certificate	£104.40	5%	£5.20	£109.60	
- Per Hour	£47.00	5%	£2.40	£49.40	
FHRS re-rating - WRS Income	£168.00	5%	£8.40	£176.40	
ISS Certs Condemned Food - WRS Income	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Food Hygiene Basic Course fee - WRS Income	Full Cost Recovery			Full Cost Recovery	
Contaminated Land Enquiries - charge per hour - WRS Income	£45.00	2%	£1.00	£46.00	Increased to £46.00 help recover costs incurred and consistency with other Worcestershire Districts

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL
Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24
Tranche One
Savings Proposals Document

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Overview

Bromsgrove District Council provides district level local services, like housing, leisure and recreation, environmental health, waste collection, local strategic planning and planning applications, and local tax collection. Local Tax collection includes both Council Tax and Business Rates. The Council also collects Council Tax on behalf of County Council and the Fire and Police Authorities. The Council's proportion is just 12%. Business Rates are collected on behalf of the Council and the Government.

Bromsgrove is in the county of Worcestershire which operates a 2-tiered system of Local Government (as well as some parts of its area being covered by Parish Councils). The District Council provide the "district level" services (amongst others) described in the previous paragraph, whereas Worcestershire County Council provides county level local services like education, highways, transport planning, passenger transport, social care, libraries, waste disposal and strategic planning.

Parish Councils provide very local services like some parks, community centres, and war memorials.

Bromsgrove

- Covers an area of 84 Square Miles
- Has 96,000 residents
- Has 45,000 Homes and Businesses
- Has 31 Councillors and 30 Wards

The district has an above-average number of over 60s, with concentrations of people in several smaller towns and villages. Many residents commute to Birmingham but despite that has the highest % of self-employed and business start-ups in England. It has isolated areas of deprivation, higher median income levels.

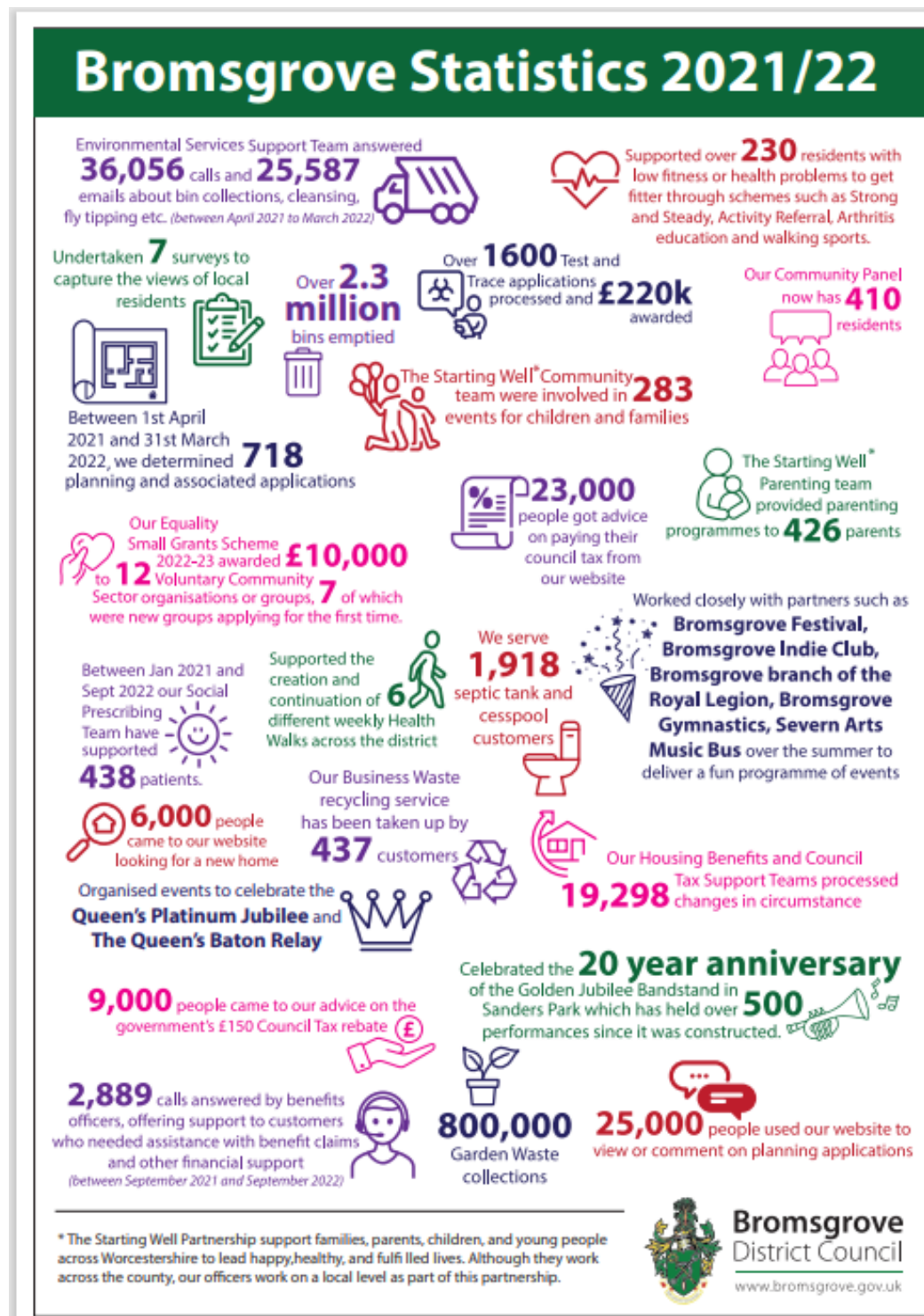
Elections are held once every 4 years. All seats are contested together. The next election is in 2023.

The council has a 'leader and cabinet' form of governance, which means the council delegates authority to decide some matters to a 'cabinet', which is chaired by the Leader of the Council. The cabinet handles much of the ordinary business of the council, with the full council having the final say on matters of strategic policy, budget and council tax.

The Council, along with Redditch Borough Council, were one of the first Councils in the country to form a shared service in 2008. This means we have a single team servicing both Councils. We also host services such as Worcestershire Regulatory Services which is pan Worcestershire.

The Council's vision is *"To enrich the lives and aspirations of all our residents, businesses and visitors through the provision of high-quality services that ensure those most need in need receive the appropriate help and support."*

The Council has delivered the following



Key initiatives being delivered in 2022/23 include:

- People starting to live in the 61 new low-carbon homes we're building at our old head offices on Burcot Lane, 12 of which we are delighted to be able to provide as new social housing.
- The brownfield redevelopment sites at both ends of Bromsgrove High Street - the former market hall site and the old fire station and library – are heading for regeneration after we were able to secure £14.5million in levelling up funding from the government

The Council sets a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan every year, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. This year's process will be more difficult due to the following factors

- Starting the process with an initial deficit amount from the 2022/23 MTFP.
- This being the first year of the Government paying for the C-19 Pandemic.
- The present cost of living crisis.
- A change of Prime Minister and Cabinet.
- Limited balances and reserves.

As such, it is prudent to split the budget process into two tranches,

- Having an initial Tranche which seeks to close as much of the deficit as possible using information known as at the end of September and seeking approval for those savings to be implemented at Council in January
- Having a second Tranche after the Christmas break, which will be approved in February, that takes account of the Local Government Settlement whose final detail will not be known until early January.

This document sets out the present financial situation as well as Tranche 1 service pressures and savings proposals.

2023/24 Budget Process

The council is faced with a challenging financial position this year. The magnitude of the savings required has meant that we have had to consider significant changes to our operating model and redesign the way we deliver services.

Due to the nature and scale of this, developing the proposals has required additional time and resource to ensure the plans are robust, deliverable and collectively achieve financial sustainability.

As such, the budget will be delivered in two tranches, the first with proposals being approved on the 12th December and the second with proposals being approved on the 22nd February.

Tranche 1	
MTFP and savings proposals Tranche 1 published	17 th October 2022
Budget Scrutiny Committee	20 th October 2022
Cabinet	26 th October 2022
O&S Scrutiny	tbc
Feedback Closing Date	5 th December 2022
Cabinet	23 rd November 2022
Council	12 th December 2022

Tranche 2	
MTFP and savings proposals Tranche 2 published	7 th February 2023
Budget Scrutiny Committee	Tbc
Cabinet	15 th February 2023
O&S Budget Scrutiny	13 th February 2023
Feedback Closing Date	21 st February 2023
Council	22 nd February 2023

Bromsgrove has the following Strategic Purposes:

Run and Grow a Successful Business

Finding Somewhere to Live

Aspiration, Work and Financial Independence

Living Independent, Active and Healthy Lives

Communities which are Safe, Well Maintained and Green

The Green Thread runs through the Council Plan

Council Service Areas

Business Transformation & Organisational Development

This service area covers the following Services:

Human Resources and Organisational Development - The Human Resources and Organisational Development primary function is to provide a HR advisory service, organisational development, training and health and safety, providing advice and support to the organisation in respect of; recruitment, employment issues, pay and grading, training, workforce planning and health and safety advice. HR focuses on the people within the business and on every aspect of the employment relationship.

Information Communication and Technology - The different areas of ICT include helpdesk support, technical project implementation, infrastructure and business application support, small systems development and automation, service requests, website design and support, graphical information systems support (including street naming and numbering) and information management.

Business Improvement Team - The Business Improvement team supports service areas to improve their delivery of our Strategic Purposes, through changing work practices, processes, and behaviours.

Policy, Equalities and Performance Team - The Policy Team supports elected members, CMT, managers and service areas with corporate planning (such as the development of the Council Plans), performance, data gathering and analysis, consultation and engagement and equalities.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive's Unit comprises Strategic Partnerships (facilitating partnership working across the District to ensure more effective outcomes for people), Communications and Print and PA / Directorate Support (which provides administrative support to the Leader, Corporate Management Team and Chairman of the Council (including post room)).

Corporate Financing

Corporate financing sets out how the Council funds its revenue expenditure. The Council funds most of its activities from the collection of Council Tax and Business Rates. There are also Grants such as the Lower Tier Services Grant, and New Homes Bonus that makes up this figure.

Expenditure such as the Councils Minimum Revenue Position for borrowing and the net effect of investment income and payments also sit in this area.

Community and Housing General Fund Services

This service area covers the following Services:

Community Safety ensures compliance of the Council's statutory duties under the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 alongside providing co-ordination and support to the statutory Community Safety Partnership. Project activity improves community safety and reduces risk of crime & disorder with a focus on prevention. Examples include a

youth work team, Safer Spaces Scheme, Nominated Neighbour Scheme, Respect Programme.

The **Housing Strategy** team comprises of the Housing Strategy & Enabling Service is responsible for developing strategies and policies for all housing services and the effective management and delivery of Bromsgrove's housing development programmes. The private sector housing team are responsible for ensuring good housing standards by private sector landlords. Included in this service is the support for Disabled Facilities Grants. The Climate Change Officer provides advice to services across the Council with the aim of bringing about carbon reduction and efficiencies, including grant applications and the delivery of energy efficiency schemes.

A door-to-door **community transport scheme** called BURT provides community transport for those who cannot access or use public or private transport.

The **Shopmobility** service at Churchfields car park provides manual and motorised equipment for people with poor mobility so they can access local shops and health providers.

The **CCTV** service is monitored from our 24/7 Monitoring Centre using a vast number of cameras to cover the District. We support the police in spotting potential criminal activity and providing evidence for courts, as well as other community concerns such as a missing child.

NEW Lifeline is a telecare and assistive technology alarm service available 24 Hours per day, 365 days per year to any vulnerable person living within the District. Services include a pull cord/pendant to summon assistance, bed and fire alarm sensors, support for residents with dementia.

Bromsgrove and Redditch **Starting Well** is a commissioned service that works in partnership with Worcestershire Health & Care Trust. The focus is on improving health outcomes and reducing inequalities at the individual, family and community levels across Worcestershire. The service will contribute to ensuring every child has the best start in life, they are ready to learn at 2, ready for school at 5, thrive and develop well during their school years and into adult life.

Bromsgrove **Social Prescribing** is a way for local agencies to refer people to a link worker. Link workers give people time, focusing on 'what matters to me' and taking a holistic approach to people's health and wellbeing. They connect people to community groups and statutory services for practical and emotional support.

Environmental Services

Environmental services and operations, deliver a wide range of district wide and 'place based' services including weekly waste collections to nearly 80,000 households, and a paid for garden waste service to 22,000 households across the 2 Council areas (Bromsgrove and Redditch). The teams also deliver both a commercial waste and commercial recycling service, and a septic tank and cesspool emptying service to both households and commercial customers.

Grass cutting and street cleansing services are delivered via our 6 place teams and the core environmental team also undertakes Environmental Enforcement across the 2 Council areas.

The other key service areas include management of the **Councils tree stock** including Tree Preservation Orders and high hedges applications. Bereavement services, deliver both cremations (in Redditch) and burial services.

Support services include management of the Council transport and vehicle fleets including the provision of workshops at the two depots, a Stores Service, Design and management of civil engineering projects and customer management via the Business Support Team.

Our on and off-street enforcement and land drainage services across the 2 Council areas are delivered by a public sector contract/shared services with Wychavon District Council and Wyre Forest respectively.

Financial and Customer Services

- **Finance**

Corporate finance set the Councils financial agenda. They are responsible for the Councils financial regulations/controls and compliance to them, Supporting Members, the Chief Executive and CMT, setting and delivering the budget, closing the Council's Accounts, in year monitoring of the Councils financial position to stakeholders.

Management Accountancy is the primary source of financial support to Budget managers and Heads of Service. They are responsible for the delivery of the operational budget, the monthly/quarterly monitoring, and the closure of accounts in liaison with budget managers and other Council staff.

Exchequer Services delivers the Councils Payment and Income Services along with running the GPC Card (procurement Card) system and Insurance.

Payroll Services is a small team which work closely with HR and finance and run the monthly payrolls for Bromsgrove, Redditch, Rubicon and Wyre Forest Councils.

Revenues Services - Revenue Services is responsible for the annual collection of £60m of non-domestic rates; £116m council tax, £27m in sundry income and is responsible for collection of £2.4m in overpaid housing benefit.

Benefit Services - The principal functions of the Benefits Service are to maximise benefit awareness and take-up and to assess benefit claims promptly and accurately. The service area is responsible for paying over £30 million of Housing

Benefit and almost £10 million Council Tax Support to our residents across both Councils. We also have £60k Essential Living Fund budget to administer alongside the £250k Discretionary Housing Payments. Our experienced Financial Independence Team deal with the applications for these schemes.

Customer Services - Customer Services provided a comprehensive customer service function to the council, mainly face-to-face enquiries on both reception and cashiers.

When the building was closed to the public during the C-19 pandemic, we quickly mobilised the Customer Service Officers to take council tax and business rates calls, When the buildings were re-opened in July, staff have maintained these functions, albeit with fewer numbers.

Legal, Democratic and Property Services

This service area covers the following Services:

Legal Services - The shared legal service for Bromsgrove and Redditch Councils, is an in-house support service, providing legal advice and representation to the Council in its governance and decision-making role and to all departments of the Council in the delivery of their services to residents and in achieving their strategic objectives, including: Procurement, Contract negotiation, Litigation (both as Plaintiff and Defendant), Prosecutions, Planning Agreements, Property transactions (acquisitions and disposals), Corporate governance and supporting corporate projects, Member support and the decision-making process, Land Charges and Procurement.

Democratic and Electoral Services - The Democratic Services team facilitates Committee meetings, manages the decision-making process, including the work programmes (Forward Plans) and provides a support service to elected Members and officers.

Electoral Services manage and deliver elections and electoral administration

Property Services - The Property Services Team manage the asset portfolio in line with the Asset Management Strategy and all associated repairs, cyclical maintenance and refurbishment of the portfolio of properties, owned by the Council.

Planning, Regeneration & Leisure Services

The Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Service is composed of the following teams: Building Control: Strategic Planning and Conservation: Development Management: Leisure and Cultural Services. NWEDR and Emergency Planning and Business Continuity are managed by WFDC in a three-way shared service arrangement and these teams link into the Service.

Building Control - Building Control team ensures buildings are safely constructed with appropriate fire escapes.

Strategic Planning and Conservation - The team prepares local plans and supplementary planning and conservation documents and provides general policy, conservation, and listed building advice.

Development Management - This team is responsible for processing all types of applications under planning legislation and investigating breaches of planning control.

Leisure and Cultural Services - Leisure Services includes the management of parks and events and the development of arts, sports and cultural services

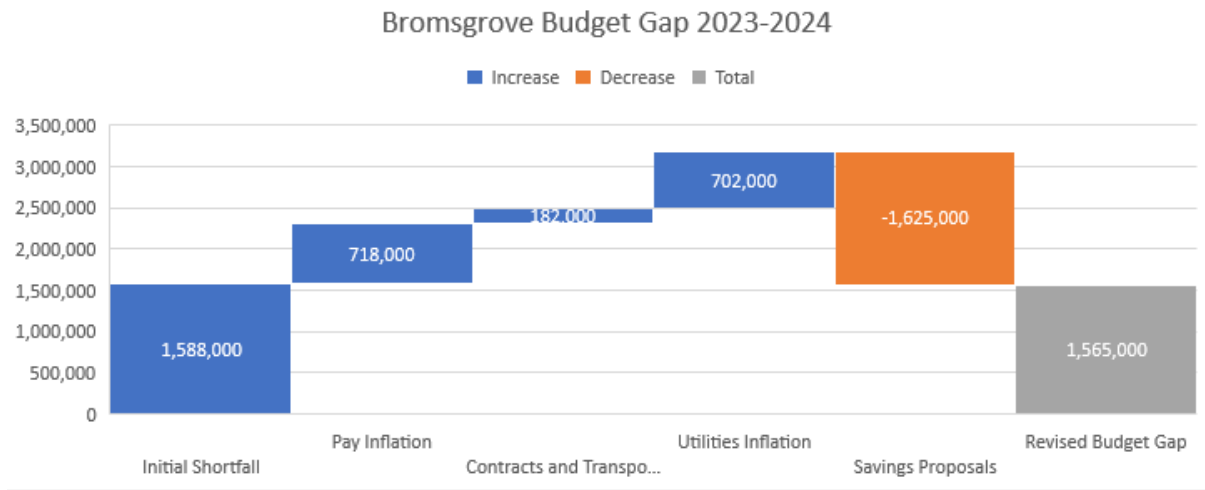
Economic Development and Regeneration - The team leads on regeneration initiatives, supporting businesses, shaping the skills agenda, and generally making sure the issues locally are appreciated by all who make or shape decisions or release funding.

Emergency Planning and Business Continuity - This function ensures the councils, with its partners are prepared for a range of scenarios.

Regulatory Services

Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) is the shared Environmental Health and Licensing service governed by a Joint Board, making it part of the six Worcestershire District Councils, with Bromsgrove District Council as the host authority. We provide all the traditional environmental health and licensing regulatory services for the six Worcestershire District Councils to include health & safety for commercial premises, food hygiene inspections, environmental protection (nuisance, contaminated land, air quality, private water supplies and industrial permitting) as well as administration of the licensing regime for taxi's, drivers, pubs, nightclubs, pet shops, animal boarding, stables, zoos and street trading. In addition we provide some environmental health and licensing services and associated services under contract or agreement for other local authorities in and outside Worcestershire.

Overall Financial Position



Bromsgrove			
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Initial Shortfall	1,588,000	1,213,000	1,623,000
Pay Inflation	718,000	718,000	873,000
Contracts and Transport Inflation	182,000	188,000	194,000
Utilities Inflation	702,000	702,000	702,000
Savings Proposals	-1,625,000	-1,847,000	-1,748,000
Revised Budget Gap	1,565,000	974,000	1,644,000

Summary Proposals

Bromsgrove Position Statement		2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
		£000	£000	£000
Base Budget Position 22/23 MTFP				
Expenditure		11,948	12,077	12,347
Funding		-10,360	-10,864	-10,724
Net		1,588	1,213	1,623
Revised Gap		1,588	1,213	1,623
Pressures				
50% Funding for Climate Change Officer		30	30	30
Savings Options				
Environmental Services Partnership		0	-25	-50
Service Reviews		-140	-330	-405
Town Hall		-70	-70	-70
Finance Vacancies		-100	-100	-100
MRP		-100	-100	-100
Pension Fund		-663	-663	-663
Engage Capacity Grid (One Off)		-200	-200	0
10% Increase in Fees and Charges		-382	-389	-390
Total Savings		-1,625	-1,847	-1,748
Revised Position		-37	-634	-125
Pressures				
Pay Pressure Year 1		718	718	718
Pay Pressure Future Years (1%)		0	0	155
Transport Pressure		32	33	34
Contracts Pressures		150	155	160
Core Pressures		900	906	1,067
Updated Position		863	272	942
Utilities Inflation		702	702	702
Final Draft Position		1,565	974	1,644

Savings Proposals

Wider Environmental Services Partnership

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	0	0	0
Savings Proposal	0	-25,000	-50,000
Revised Budget	0	-25,000	-50,000

We are actively engaging with consultants to look at the viability of greater partnership working across North Worcestershire with regards to the following services: Waste, Commercial Waste. and Fleet. This is reliant on business case and report approval.

Service Reviews

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	5,106,000	5,220,000	5,314,000
Savings Proposal	-140,000	-330,000	-405,000
Revised Budget	4,966,000	4,890,000	4,909,000

The implementation of the Customer and Digital Strategy through the rollout of Abavus, and the redesign of Redditch Town Hall as a Community Hub will facilitate significant service redesign and the ways we operate. Abavus is the software solution that will facilitate the Councils Customer and Digital Strategy, ensuring more of our services and customer interactions are delivered through Digital and Web. Works on Redditch Town Hall in its move to becoming a Public Sector Hub will begin in early 2023. Both these initiatives will result in significant reviews across a range of services to ensure we are effectively and efficiently using new solutions and space. In 2021/22 the Council had a 15% turnover rate and as at July 2022 on a combined staffing total of 651 FTE's there were 30 vacancies and 59 posts being covered by either Agency, consultants or staff acting up or on secondment. Service redesign will take these factors into account.

Redditch Town Hall Recharges

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	130,000	130,000	130,000
Savings Proposal	-70,000	-70,000	-70,000
Revised Budget	60,000	60,000	60,000

With significant less staff working at Council facilities and Redditch about to let out significant portions of their building this savings reflects reduced usage of that building.

Finance Vacancies

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	428,000	434,000	434,000
Savings Proposal	-100,000	-100,000	-100,000
Revised Budget	328,000	334,000	334,000

The finance Department are presently holding 4 vacancies (in 2022/23 these are being covered by Agency). These posts will not be required following the rectification of finance issues (subject of Reports to Executive in September 2022). These savings are shared across both Councils.

Minimum Revenue Provision Savings

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	1,172,000	1,078,000	1,298,000
Savings Proposal	-100,000	-100,000	-100,000
Revised Budget	1,072,000	978,000	1,198,000

The Councils MRP costs are over £1m. With the rationalisation of the Capital Programme and the concentration on delivery of Levelling up and Shared Prosperity Fund Programmes less is needing to be charged to capital financing, resulting on a lower MRP change than anticipated. The delay in replacing the cleansing fleet is a key input into this reduction as is the reduced capital programme. The Council's Treasury consultants Arlingclose reviewing the Councils MRP methodology to identify further possible savings (which would require Policy changes to implement.

Pension Fund Savings

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	2,916,000	2,988,000	3,027,000
Savings Proposal	-663,000	-663,000	-663,000
Revised Budget	2,253,000	2,325,000	2,364,000

The Councils Pension Fund contributions are reviewed on a 3 yearly basis by the County Councils actuaries. There were two valuations received in September, one which took account of moving into a high inflation/stagflation period and one which did not. The council has taken the prudent path of assuming a higher stagflation/inflation assumption which still lead to a significant yearly savings. The base budget is made up of two elements, the Councils Employers Contribution in service accounts and a central contribution which sits in the Chief Executives budgets.

Collection of Outstanding Council Tax and Business Rates Arrears

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget			
Savings Proposal	-200,000	-200,000	0
Revised Budget			

Presently there is £3.5m of outstanding Council Tax debt and £1.1m of outstanding Business Rates debt. The Council has engaged an external agency whose assessment of outstanding debt collectability is 20%. In going through this process, the remainder of the debt will be able to be written off as it will also have gone through the assessment process. Half the collected amount will be returned to the other precepting authorities, and the amounts in the table are the resultant amount for the Council. It is expected that this process will take 2 years to complete. This is “**one off**” savings.

10% Increase in Fees and Charges

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	-3,820,000	-3,899,000	-3,900,000
Savings Proposal	-382,000	-389,000	-390,000
Revised Budget	-4,202,000	-4,288,000	-4,290,000

The Council budget for the receipt of £3.8m of fees and charges. Given that inflation is running at well over 10% and Council Core Council Tax Income only can rise by 1.99% there is the requirement to increase fees and charges at the level of inflationary rate at 10%. An assessment has been made on deliverability as customer numbers will reduce, especially with the “cost of living crisis”, and debt levels will also potentially rise.

Growth Proposals

2022/23 Pay Award

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	15,500,000		
Savings Proposal	718,193	718,193	718,193
Revised Budget	16,218,193		

- Presently, the Employers have offered a 2022/23 pay award of £1,925 per pay point plus on costs. This equates to an additional £675,675 cost to the Council from its initial budget. We budgeted for a 2% increase in our base budget in the 2022/23 MTFs which was £180k. In addition, we are assuming the 2023/24 will see an additional cost of 1.5% over our 1% base at a cost £222,518 before reverting back to 1% from 2024/25.
 - Therefore, at our present employee budgets this accounts for an ongoing pressure of £898,193 on the base budget of £14.1m. Taking account of the £180k inflation this results in a £718,193 increase.

Future Pay Awards

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget			
Savings Proposal	0	0	155,000
Revised Budget			

See above Narrative

Contract Inflation

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	1,820,000	1,820,000	1,820,000
Savings Proposal	182,000	188,000	194,000
Revised Budget	2,002,000	2,009,000	2,014,000

General inflation is running at 10% as of the 18th August. The assumption is this will affect transport and contract budgets in particular. Its impact on 2023/24 will be as follows (it is assumed that 2024/25 will move back to normal levels of 2%):

- Bromsgrove base transport budget - £320k – Increase £32k
- Bromsgrove base “contracts” budget - £1.5m – Increase £150k

Utilities Inflation

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	351,000	351,000	351,000
Savings Proposal	702,000	702,000	702,000
Revised Budget	1,053,000	1,053,000	1,053,000

Utilities increases will be significant, with all our existing Utility contracts requiring renewal by the end of this financial year. We have seen increases in some areas of up to 400%. For planning purposes, we will assume an increase of 200% in 2023/24 which should then be relatively constant for the next three years.

- Bromsgrove base utilities budget - £351k – Increase £702k

Climate Change Post

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Existing Budget	0	0	0
Savings Proposal	30,000	30,000	30,000
Revised Budget	30,000	30,000	30,000

Required in order to manage and deliver the requirements of the Councils Climate Change Strategy and associated Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan also goes to Cabinet on the 26th October. 50% Funded with Redditch.

Consultation Feedback Form

BUDGET CONSULTATION FORM

We want to hear the opinions of all residents, partner organisations, businesses and other interested parties as part of the budget setting process.

People will be able to give their opinions by completing an online survey on the city council website.

Hard copies can be requested.

The consultation will close on 5 December 2022 at 5pm. Cabinet will consider initial comments on 23 November 2022 and Full Council will debate the Tranche One proposals on 12 December 2022.

The consultation will ask the following questions:

1. Do you have any comments to make about the phase one budget proposals?

2. Having read the phase one proposals document, how much do you now feel you understand about why the council must make total savings of almost £3.2million in 2023/24? Tick the answer you agree with.

- A great deal
- A fair amount
- Not very much
- Nothing at all

3. If you have any specific ideas about how the council can save money or generate additional income to protect services, please state these here:

So that we can check this survey is representative of Bromsgrove overall, please complete the following questions.

Are you?

- Male
- Female

Please tick which of the following best describes who you are:

- Resident
- Business person
- Member of council staff
- District councillor
- Work, but don't live in Bromsgrove
- Member of community or voluntary organisation
- Regular visitor
- Other (please state).....

Which of these age groups do you fall into?

- Under 16
- 16 to 24 years

- 25 to 34 years
- 35 to 44 years
- 45 to 54 years
- 55 to 64 years
- 65 to 74 years
- 75 years or over
- Prefer not to say

What is your ethnic group?

A White

English/ Welsh/ Scottish/ Northern Irish/ British

Gypsy or Irish Traveller

Any other white background

B Mixed/ multiple ethnic groups

White and Black Caribbean

White and Black African

White and Asian

Any other mixed/ multiple ethnic background

C Asian/ Asian British

Indian

Pakistani

Bangladeshi

Chinese

Any other Asian background, write in

D Black/ African/ Caribbean/ Black British

African

Caribbean

Any other Black/ African/ Caribbean background

E Other ethnic group

Any other ethnic group

Do you consider yourself to have a disability?

Yes.....

No

Thank you for taking the time to complete this survey

FEES AND CHARGES 2023-24 Confidential Items

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Geoff Denaro, Finance and Enabling Portfolio Holder
Portfolio Holder Consulted	
Relevant Head of Service	Michelle Howell
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Finance & Customer Services email:michelle.howell@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 0152764252
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	All
Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

- 1.1 To set out the Confidential fees and charges to be levied on services provided by the Council as used as the basis for income levels in the Medium-Term Financial Plan.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Cabinet **recommend to Council** the approval of all Confidential fees and charges that are included in Appendix 1

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The Medium Term Financial Plan is being prepared on the basis that additional income will need to be generated from fees and charges in order for the Council to move towards financial sustainability. The process being followed for the review of income to be realised from 1st April 2023 includes an assessment of each fee to identify how it meets the Councils strategic purposes and the level of increase that is proposed as well as taking account of present economic conditions, including inflation running at over 10%. The levels of increase have been based on a robust estimate of the impact of cost increases and demand within the services and the Councils overall financial position. This includes assessing at the affordability of any of these increases to our residents and customers.

Cabinet

23rd November 2022

- 3.2 Appendix 1 details all the fees and charges for each area with a commentary against each block. The Council's proposal is to increase all confidential Fees and Charges by 10%.

Legal Implications

- 3.3 A number of statutes governing the provision of services covered by this report contain express powers or duties to charge for services. Where an express power to charge does not exist, the Council has the power under Section 111 of the Local Government Act 1972 to charge where the activity is incidental or conducive to or calculated to facilitate the Council's statutory function.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.4 Monitoring will be undertaken to ensure that income targets are achieved.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.5 The implementation of the revised fees and charges will be notified in advance to the customer to ensure that all users are aware of the new charges and any concessions available to them.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 There is a risk that if fees and charges are not increased that income levels will not be achieved, and the cost of services will increase. This is mitigated by managers reviewing their fees and charges annually.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Fees and Charges (This document is restricted under Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended)

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

WEDNESDAY, 26TH OCTOBER 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors K.J. May (Leader), M. A. Sherrey, M. Thompson and S. A. Webb

Observers: Councillor C. A. Hotham

Officers: Mr P. Carpenter, Mrs. S. Hanley, Mrs. R. Bamford, Mrs. C. Felton, Ms. M. Howell, Mr. G. Revans, Ms J. Willis, Ms. A. Delahunty and Ms Karimi Fini (on Microsoft Teams).

32/22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G.N. Denaro and P.L. Thomas.

33/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

34/22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 12TH OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12th October 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 12th October 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

35/22 **TO CONSIDER ANY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD MEETING ON 24TH OCTOBER 2022**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, presented the recommendations of the meeting of the Board held on 24th October 2022. The four recommendations were in respect of the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan. Members had been particularly interested in the information regarding the latest figures (in tonnes) quantifying Bromsgrove District Council's reduction in carbon emissions. It was felt that the figures provided in the report,

which were from 2019, needed to be updated in order to provide a clearer picture of the carbon reduction improvements that had been made. The second recommendation was in respect of partnership working on carbon reduction with Birmingham City Council and other Worcestershire Councils, particularly as Lickey Hills Country Park, located mainly in Worcestershire, was owned and maintained by Birmingham City Council.

The third recommendation from the Overview and Scrutiny Board was concerned with accessibility of the Carbon Reduction Strategy & Implementation Plan, and the availability on the website, for the benefit of Councillors and members of the public given the complexity and detail of the strategy. The final recommendation proposed that Parish Councils be included as stakeholders in the Bromsgrove District Council Carbon Reduction Strategy & Implementation Plan and its ongoing development.

Members discussed the recommendations that had been made on this subject and reference was made that the data provided within the strategy and it was stated that the data post 2019 was not typical due to Covid-19. In addition to this, it was confirmed that the Council did not currently formally report on carbon. Members discussed that since one of the recommendations contained within the strategy was to restart carbon reporting, it was suggested that Officer time was best spent on implementing the action plan and putting in place effective carbon reporting going forward. Councillor C. Hotham acknowledged that this was acceptable, and that Covid-19 would certainly have impacted on the data collected during this period.

In respect of recommendation 2 it was suggested that rather than highlighting a specific Local Authority area, an amendment to the recommendation be made that partnership working take place with all bordering Local Authorities to support work on carbon reduction.

Members were supportive of the final two recommendations in respect of the accessibility of the strategy and the involvement of the Parish Councils as stakeholders in the Bromsgrove District Council Carbon Reduction Strategy & Implementation Plan and its ongoing development.

RESOLVED that Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan be amended to incorporate that

- 1) All bordering Local Authorities be asked to engage in partnership working on carbon reduction with Bromsgrove District Council and other Worcestershire Councils and;

- 2) Parish Councils be included as stakeholders in the Bromsgrove District Council Carbon Reduction Strategy & Implementation Plan and its ongoing development and;
- 3) An easily accessible, infographic version of the Bromsgrove District Council Carbon Reduction Strategy & Implementation Plan be produced for the benefit of Councillors and members of the public on the website.

36/22

NOMINATION OF ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - FORMER SOCIAL CLUB, ALVECHURCH INN

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure presented a report on the subject of the Nomination of Asset of Community Value - Former Social Club at the Alvechurch Inn.

Members were advised that in order to qualify for asset of community value status the building had to further the well-being or social interests of the local community; and that it had to be realistic to think that this would continue in the future. It was reported that, in terms of the location of this building, the statutory requirements had been met.

Members attention was drawn to the paragraph contained within the report explaining that the final decision to list an asset of community value lay with the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services and that Cabinet was being consulted with, as part of the consultation process. With this in mind it was explained that a slight amendment to the recommendation was required as follows:

'Cabinet be asked to RECOMMEND to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure if it supported the listing of the Alvechurch Inn, Radford Road, Alvechurch, as an asset of community value or otherwise.'

On being put to the vote it was

RESOLVED that Cabinet supported the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure in the listing of the Alvechurch Inn, Radford Road, Alvechurch, as an asset of community value.

37/22

AIR QUALITY ENHANCED MONITORING OPTIONS REPORT

The Principal Officer (Planning and Technical Pollution Control) from Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) presented the Air Quality Enhanced Monitoring Options Report for Cabinet's consideration.

The report outlined the background of the proposal for an enhanced monitoring system. It was reported that historically there had been concerns about nitrogen dioxide emissions caused by road traffic in the Bromsgrove area. In addition to this, it was noted that there were limitations to the system currently deployed within Bromsgrove and delays were experienced in reporting using this system. However, it was confirmed that improved technology was now available and that this would provide more readily available data and moveable monitoring units. Cabinet was reminded that air quality enhanced monitoring had been raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board during its meeting held on 5th July 2022.

Also contained within the report were cost breakdowns of two options for enhanced monitoring for Bromsgrove District Council; one that outlined the cost of 3 units and revenue funding without grant funding and one that outlined the cost of 3 units and revenue funding with Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) grant funding. It was reported that, in September 2022, WRS had made an application to DEFRA on behalf of all Councils across Worcestershire of £280k worth of funding. Should this application be successful, it was required that the Council provide match funding of 10% for the capital and revenue costs over three years (£1,350 and £2,250 respectively).

During consideration of this item, it was clarified that the recommendations were subject to the successful outcome of the grant bid to DEFRA and that the Council would be notified of the outcome of this application in April 2023. The Interim S151 Officer confirmed that, subject to the outcome of the application, this would be included in tranche 2 of the budget.

Members also considered how the data collected from the enhanced monitoring system would be used. It was explained that it would feed into the County-wide Air Quality Management Plan and would drive local transport planning and active traffic planning for the future.

RESOLVED that subject to the successful outcome of the grant bid to DEFRA

- 1) the £1,350 capital match funding be incorporated into the Council's capital programme; and
- 2) the £2,250 revenue match funding be incorporated in the Council's revenue budget

as part of the Final Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26 which was due to be presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2023.

38/22

LOCAL LETTINGS PLAN

The Strategic Housing Officer presented the report in respect of the Local Lettings Plan Policy.

Cabinet was informed that the Council currently had a Housing Allocation Policy which provided a framework on housing allocations within the District. However, it was explained that Local Lettings Plans could be applied in order to provide variations to the main scheme. These variations were utilised for a number of reasons, which included ensuring a greater mix of social housing in local developments and Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB). It was clarified to Members that any variations must not dominate the main scheme.

Members were advised that the Housing Allocations Policy did not need to be consulted on, however within the policy it was stated that the Council reserved the right to apply Local Lettings Plans if necessary.

It was reported to Members that an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) had been undertaken on this Local Lettings Plan and that this would remain a live, working document. In addition to this, it was also confirmed that should any Local Lettings Plans be proposed in the future, additional EIAs would also be developed.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Local Lettings Plan Policy be approved and;
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Community and Housing Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Strategic Housing and Health and Well Being to agree and adopt future local lettings policies.

39/22

CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

The Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services presented the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan for the next 3 years for the consideration of Cabinet.

Members were informed that the strategy set out plans for the Council to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040, ahead of the Government's target of 2050. Each of the Council's service areas had contributed to the strategy and it was hoped that taking this approach ensured carbon reduction would become embedded throughout the organisation in the future.

In respect of the additional staffing information contained within the report, it was acknowledged that given the importance of this area of work, it was considered necessary to establish a new officer post to provide support at a more strategic level going forward. It was confirmed that this additional staffing resource would form part of the financial budget bid process later in the municipal year and was included in the Medium Term Financial Plan item due to be considered later in the meeting.

Cabinet was informed that the strategy would be refreshed every three years and reviewed annually. Alongside this, progress against targets would be reviewed twice a year by the Climate Change Working Group and annually by the Overview and Scrutiny Board and Cabinet. The Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services thanked Mr. A. Pearson, from the Midland Net Zero Hub who had been involved in the preparation of the Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan.

RESOLVED that the Council's Carbon Reduction Strategy and Implementation Plan, including the three recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Board (agreed at Minute Number 35/22) be endorsed and adopted.

40/22

LEISURE STRATEGY

The Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure presented the Leisure and Culture Strategy for Members' consideration.

Members were informed that included in the Leisure and Culture Strategy was an overarching document that set out the vision, aims and objectives for Leisure and Culture services across the Council until 2032. It was reported that the Leisure and Culture Strategy included the

recommendations that had been drawn from three further strategies that underpinned the main strategy. These were reported as being the Arts and Culture Strategy, the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy and the Built Facilities Strategy. It was highlighted that the second resolution included within the report contained recommendations that officers could start work on immediately and had no additional financial implications to the Council.

Members stated that this was a very important report which provided a strategic plan for the Council for the future.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the Leisure and Culture Strategy be endorsed and;
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services following consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change to implement the following Recommendations 1, 2, 9,10,11,12,13, 15,16,17,20 22, 24,25, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40 a, 41, 42, 43, 44 45 46 as set out in the Leisure and Culture Strategy.

41/22

ASSET STRATEGY

The Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services presented the Asset Disposal Strategy for the consideration of Members.

The Cabinet was informed that each year the Council must ensure all of its assets were included within the Statement of Accounts, including land, property and other assets. The Asset Disposal Strategy sought to provide a framework within which assets could be assessed for suitability and the likely costs that were associated with maintaining those assets. In addition to this, it was highlighted that the strategy sought to set out a clear mechanism for rationalisation of assets where appropriate. Members were informed that the number of Council owned assets was not huge and were generally already allocated.

RESOLVED that the Asset Disposal Strategy be approved for implementation.

42/22

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2025/26 - UPDATE

The Interim S151 Officer presented an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2025/26.

It was reported that each year the Council set out a 3-year Medium Term Financial Plan, with the final Council Tax Resolution being approved by Council in February. The Cabinet was advised that this year, the MTFP process would be run in two tranches in order to prepare the budget as early as possible. The initial tranche would use information known as at the end of September and would seek to close as much of the current deficit as possible. The second tranche would be processed after December 2022 and would be approved in February 2023. This second tranche would take into account the Local Government Settlement, details of which would not be known until early January 2023.

Members were informed that budget setting within the current climate would be more difficult due to a number of challenges. These were outlined as follows:

- Starting the process with an initial deficit amount of approximately £1.5m from the 2022/23 MTFP
- This being the first year that the Government began repaying for Covid-19 and the associated pandemic
- The cost of living crisis
- Changes at national level including new Prime Ministers and changes to Cabinet membership
- The Council having limited Reserves and Balances.

The MTFP 2023/24 to 2025/26 – Update report highlighted 10 major items in terms of budget setting for 2023/24 to 2025/26. These were as follows:

- The starting position for the 2023/24 MTFP and the three year “gap” that needed to be bridged in order for the Council’s budget to come back into a balanced sustainable position
- Unallocated savings – These would be considered as part of the Q2 2022/23 Finance and Performance Monitoring report due to be considered in November 2022.
- The emerging national picture which was not clear at the time of this meeting. It was hoped that more information would be available when the new Chancellor released his statement on 17th November 2022. At that point, it was thought more clarity would be available on the new Local Government Financial Settlement, which was expected to still be released the final week before Christmas. Officers informed Cabinet that it was still unknown as to whether this would be a single or multiple year settlement,

however the preference, from a Council perspective, given the current economic conditions, would be a single year settlement.

Officers reported that they had made a number of base assumptions within the report, including the following:

- An assumption on Council Tax on a full 1.99% or £5 increase (whichever was the least)
- An assumption of no growth in Business Rates
- An assumption that there would no New Homes Bonus in 23/24 onwards
- An assumption that there would be no Lower Tier Services Grant from 23/24 onwards

In respect of Pension Fund assumptions, it was noted that the Council's pension fund was in surplus, and the new contributions were approximately £500k less than they had been previously.

Cabinet was informed that the greatest impact on budget setting would be inflation. This was in light of the £1,925 proposed increase to staff wages that would cost an additional £718k. Furthermore, it was stated that 10% inflation on Contracts/Transport would cost an additional £182k alongside the increased cost of utilities. These, in particular, were unknown and it had been concluded that if there was a 200% increase in the cost of utilities this would result in an extra £702k cost to the Council. It was noted that Bromsgrove District Council's utilities contract were due to expire in April 2023 and it was planned that any new contracts would be as short-term as possible and offered the best value for money for the Council in the long term.

In respect of Fees and Charges, it was outlined that was to be an increase of 10% across the services with some exceptions including, WRS, LifeLine and parking charges.

In terms of strategic approach, it was key to move to financial sustainability as quickly as possible

Tranche 2 of the budget would be adjusted for any Government funding that was provided. In addition to this it would also look at other options to close any deficit should the Government settlement not bridge any resultant gap. It should be noted that in Prime Ministers Question Time the previous Prime Minister had said that allocation levels would be in line with 22/23 levels – which would mean the Lower Tier Support Grant and New Homes Bonus, both assumed to be zero in Tranche 1, could

be paid out. This was worth approximately £1m to the Council. However, it was stated that given the recent changes in Government this had still not been confirmed.

Initiatives included in tranche 2 required more time for analysis, however individual options included:

- Ensuring grants were maximised.
- Ensuring agency work reflected the income provided for its delivery.
- Minimisation of Bed and Breakfast temporary accommodation costs.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of the Council's largest contracts.
- Maximising the effectiveness of the Council's refuse fleet.
- Reviewing the location and effectiveness of the Council's depot.
- Assessing the Council's Leisure and Cultural strategy in terms of affordability.
- Reviewing recharging mechanisms between Bromsgrove District and Redditch Borough Councils for appropriateness.
- Rationalisation of back office services in light of the improvement of advanced technology.

In terms of savings in tranche one, the Council had identified £1.62m of savings which would offset the current £1.58m budget deficit. However, when taking into account inflationary pressures, the deficit position would be £863k. In addition to this, the increased costs of utilities would result in an overall deficit position of £1.5m.

Members were provided with information on the Council's Reserves and Balances, and it was explained that the existing MTFP saw general fund balances reduce from £4.257m to £1.046m over the three year planning horizon finishing in 2024/25. This was not considered a sustainable level of general fund reserves where a level of 5% of gross budget was usually advised, which for Bromsgrove District Council would be £2.5m.

The Council had also earmarked reserves which were held for specific purposes. These earmarked reserves were currently at £8.011m. It was reported that all reserves would be reviewed for their ongoing applicability.

In terms of the Capital Programme, it was stated that the Levelling Up Funding and UK Shared Prosperity Fund must take a priority due to the funding linked to these project being time limited. The projects included

within the Capital Program that had not yet commenced (apart from those that were in receipt of grant funding or S106 monies) would have to be rebid for as part of the 2023/24 budget process.

In concluding the detailed update on the MTFP 2023/24 to 2025/26 the Interim S151 Officer referred to the Robustness Statement and the feedback form that were also included within report.

During consideration of the report Members commented on the amount that was included within the report in respect of bus shelters and it was confirmed that as WCC were still not in a position to confirm bus routes until later in 2023 these monies would remain unspent for the time being.

It was recognised that these were very difficult and challenging times for Local Authorities particularly due to the current uncertainty being experienced at a national level.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the inputs into the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan as at the start of October, and the associated risks and opportunities be endorsed and;
- 2) to note that these inputs had been used, along with the 2022/23-24/25 Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) agreed by Council in February 2022, to project an initial "gap" to be closed and;
- 3) to note that an initial Tranche of savings proposals, and the associated Savings Proposal Document, that was published on the 17th October and any feedback will be considered by Cabinet in November 2022 and at Council in December and;
- 4) Tranche 2 of this process would add further information such as the Local Government Settlement to give a final financial position for the Council.

43/22

FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24

The Interim S151 Officer presented the Fees and Charges 2023/24 for Members' consideration.

In doing so, it was highlighted to Cabinet that Council Tax could only be increased by 1.99% and that Business Rates were set by Government at a national level. In addition to this, which had been highlighted to Members, was the rise in inflation which was likely to have a severe impact on the Council's finances.

The levels of increase of Fees and Charges had been based on a robust estimate of the impact of cost increases and demand within the services and the Councils overall financial position. This included assessing the affordability of any of these increases to our residents and customers.

Cabinet was informed that the Council's proposal was to increase all Fees and Charges by 10%. The 10% had been applied to Contributions and Fees and Charges budgets but not on services where charges were set statutorily, Lifeline, SLA Income, Parking, or those services that charged across a number of Councils (WRS).

RECOMMENDED that all of the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 be approved.

44/22

QUARTERLY RISK UPDATE

The Interim S151 Officer presented the Quarterly Risk Update consideration by Members.

The Cabinet were reminded that the Council had received a 'no assurance' audit in relation to 'Risk Management' in February 2022 and as a result of this an action plan had been approved by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) and implemented. Included in the action plan was the establishment of an Officer Risk Board. Members were informed that meetings of this Board had taken place initially on 8th April 2022 and two further meetings had taken place on 22nd June 2022 and 21st September 2022 to embed processes. An additional requirement included within the action plan was that each department nominated a representative and that these representatives met on a quarterly basis and reported back to management teams.

The up-to-date Risk Register had been submitted for consideration of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee in October 2022 and this formal reporting was also provided to the Corporate Management Team.

It was reported to Members that over the six-month period since the action plan had been in place the number of risks had reduced from 82

to 75. It was clarified that should 'green' risks, which were considered more day-to-day risks remain on the register for more than two iterations of the Officer Risk Board meeting cycle, they would be removed, which would result in a significant change to the number of risks.

A significant risk had been added to the Corporate Risk register in light of the Levelling Up Funding and UK Shared Prosperity Funding particularly since these grants were time limited.

RESOLVED that

- 1) the present list of Corporate Risks be approved and;
- 2) the progress made on the Action Plan approved by CMT on 16th March 2022 be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.06 p.m.

Chairman

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE CABINET

23RD NOVEMBER 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

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

Observers: Councillor C. A. Hotham and Councillor R. J. Hunter

Officers: Mr. K. Dicks, Mr P. Carpenter, Ms M. Howell, Ms. D. Poole, Ms J. Willis, Mr. K. Hirons, Mrs B. Talbot, Mr M. Rowan and Mrs. J. Bayley-Hill

45/22 **TO RECEIVE APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor M. Sherrey.

46/22 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

47/22 **TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CABINET HELD ON 26TH OCTOBER 2022**

The minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 26th October 2022 were submitted.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 26th October 2022 be approved as a true and correct record.

48/22 **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 24TH OCTOBER 2022**

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Councillor C. Hotham, presented the minutes of the meeting of the Board held on 24th October 2022.

Cabinet was informed that during the meeting, Members had received an update on the Levelling Up Project. Concerns had been raised about the impact of inflation on the building costs required for work on the project. A further update on the subject had been requested by the Board for consideration in 2023.

The Board had also received an update on the UK Shared Prosperity Fund settlement for Bromsgrove District at this meeting. Members had learned that there were limited timescales available in which the funding could be spent in the District.

At the meeting, the Board had pre-scrutinised the Council's Carbon Reduction Implementation Plan, which had been presented by the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change. The Board had agreed a number of recommendations on this subject which had been considered at the previous meeting of Cabinet.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 24th October 2022 be noted.

49/22

FUEL POVERTY TASK GROUP REPORT (OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY)

The Chairman of the Fuel Poverty Task Group, Councillor R. Hunter, presented the group's final report.

Cabinet was informed that at the start of the review there had already been 5,000 households living in fuel poverty in Bromsgrove and, based on reports from Act on Energy of recent increases in requests for help and support, it was likely that this number was growing. The Fuel Poverty Task Group had obtained evidence from a range of expert witnesses representing both the Council and external organisations and the group's recommendations were based on the evidence that had been gathered. These recommendations were ready to be implemented and this action would be timely.

During consideration of this item, Members noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Board had considered the Fuel Poverty Task Group's report at a meeting held on 21st November 2022. The Board had endorsed the recommendations subject to a minor change to recommendation 6, to require that the Cabinet should actively explore all *external* funding options available to the Council to support Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) groups.

Reference was also made to recommendation 2, which proposed that a poster or booklet should be produced containing a simple guide to the support that was available in the community. Members commented that a leaflet on this subject had already been introduced and it contained useful information for the benefit of local residents.

In considering the report, Cabinet concluded by thanking the Members who had served on the Fuel Poverty Task Group. Expert witnesses, including the Head of Community and Housing Services, were also thanked for attending meetings and submitting evidence.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The Council ensures its webpages are up to date and takes a proactive approach in promoting the various areas of support (including an up to date list of Warm Hubs/Spaces and support provided by local libraries in the District) available through as many different mediums as possible. For example, through its social

- media account and by learning from the best practice approaches used by other Councils;
- 2) A poster or booklet is created which includes a simple straight forward guide to all the various areas of support – this should be accessible in local buildings such as the libraries and Councillors provided with copies to hand out to residents or distribute for display on noticeboards;
 - 3) Councillors are provided with the contact details of Act on Energy and encouraged to proactively liaise with the outreach workers to ensure access to support is readily available to residents within their Wards;
 - 4) The Bromsgrove Partnership, supported by the Council, takes a lead role in the collection of high quality intelligence/data to ensure that the Council's partners can target their interventions where support is most needed;
 - 5) the Bromsgrove Partnership (with input from all District Councillors and/or relevant Parish Councils) take a lead role in co-ordinating appropriate support, to ensure it is readily available for residents throughout the whole district, for example this could mean the provision of a Warm Hub/Space and the facilities offered by the local libraries; and
 - 6) the Cabinet actively explores all external funding options (for example the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) available to the Council in order to ensure that, if needed, it is able to provide financial support to VCS organisations throughout the district in providing the support detailed in recommendation 5 above.

50/22

SHERWOOD ROAD FOOTBRIDGE, ASTON FIELDS - PERMANENT CLOSURE OF FOOTBRIDGE, REMOVAL OF BRIDGE DECK AND TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP TO SEVERN TRENT WATER LTD

The Environmental Services Manager presented a report on the subject of the Sherwood Road footbridge in Aston Fields.

Cabinet was informed that the footbridge was located between Sherwood Road and some offices on an industrial estate. The bridge was owned by Bromsgrove District Council and provided structural support to a sewer that ran under the bridge. Severn Trent Water had been contacted about the bridge and had indicated that they would be willing to maintain the bridge but not to maintain a footpath over the bridge. Officers were proposing remedial works to close the footpath and remove the existing bridge deck before transferring ownership to Severn Trent Water.

Members were advised that the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety had visited the footbridge with officers to view the bridge and footpath. The footbridge had been in a poor state of disrepair and the footpath had been overgrown, with no signs of usage in recent years. Based on the condition of the footbridge, the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety had reported that she would be supportive of the closure of the footbridge.

Consideration was given to the proposals and Members questioned whether, after the closure of the footpath and removal of the decking, there would be any further financial implications relating to the footbridge for the Council. Officers confirmed that there would be no further financial implications to the Council beyond that which had been detailed within the report.

During consideration of this item, questions were raised about whether the footpath was a designated public right of way. Members commented that there were lengthy and complicated processes that needed to be followed when closing public rights of way, including a requirement for a diversion order. Officers explained that it was understood that the footpath could be closed. It was acknowledged that public consultation had not yet been undertaken with respect to the closure of the footbridge but the overgrown state of the footpath indicated that there was limited awareness or use made of the footpath.

RESOLVED that

Subject to receiving confirmation that the footpath on Sherwood Road Footbridge in Aston Fields is not a designated public right of way

- 1) The existing pedestrian footbridge in Sherwood Road be permanently closed, due to its current structural condition;
- 2) After removal of the bridge deck, the remaining structure be declared surplus to Council requirements, and disposed of to Severn Trent Water Ltd at nil cost; and

RECOMMENDED that

- 3) A budget of £10k be added to the 2022/2023 Capital Programme to be funded from internal resources.

51/22

**HR AND ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT / PEOPLE /
WORKFORCE STRATEGY**

The HR and Organisational Development Manager presented the Workforce Strategy for Members' consideration.

Members were informed that the Workforce Strategy detailed the Council's vision and aspirations for the authority's workforce both at the present time and moving into the future. The Council recognised that staff were the authority's most valuable asset and the importance of employees having a chance to commit time to their personal development.

There were three key themes in the strategy:

- Workforce planning and development.
- Staff engagement.

- The health, safety and wellbeing of staff.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the content of the strategy and in doing so questioned how the strategy would be promoted to staff. Cabinet was informed that the strategy would be available for staff to access on the Council's intranet. In addition, the content of the strategy would be embedded into all working practices and other policies and procedures would link back to the content of the strategy.

Consideration was also given to how the Council could promote the authority's approach to people management at a challenging time for recruiting staff into the public sector, but particularly local government. Officers clarified that opportunities would be offered to staff to develop their skills whilst working for the Council as well as opportunities for promotion internally.

RESOLVED that the approach taken by the Chief Executive, as Head of Paid Service, to address the Workforce Strategy be endorsed.

52/22

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 TO 2025/26 - UPDATE

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented an update on the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had announced that the local government settlement would not be confirmed until the week commencing 19th December 2022. This would be the latest in the year that the settlement had been confirmed and in recognition of this, DLUHC had advised that some information would be made available to Councils in the next few weeks.

In the Chancellor's autumn statement, it had been confirmed that district Councils would be able to increase Council Tax by 3 per cent, rather than the 2 per cent that had previously been anticipated. Should Bromsgrove District Council choose to increase Council Tax at this level, the increase would result in an additional £92,000 income for the authority. The Chancellor had also announced that Councils would no longer have to pay increases to National Insurance contributions, which would potentially result in £139,000 savings, although the Government had also indicated that funding would subsequently be removed from grants to Councils as a consequence of this, so the level of savings could reduce. It had also been announced that there would be an extension to the Household Support Grant and the Government was consulting with local authorities on the appropriate approach to implementing this scheme.

Officers had been working hard to secure savings in order to achieve a balanced budget in 2023/24. To date, £1.5 million savings had been achieved. In addition, as part of the monitoring report, the unallocated savings that had been included in the MTFP that had been agreed in

February 2022 had now been allocated. These savings were detailed in the list of proposed savings in tranche 1 of the budget setting process. A pay award for staff of £1,925 per pay point for 2022/23 had been agreed and, as this was a higher figure than anticipated, this would add to pressures in the budget. The budget gap remained large, primarily due to the anticipated increase in costs arising due to the impact of inflation and increases in utilities costs. Therefore, further savings would need to be agreed in tranche 2 of the budget setting process.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the proposals and noted that Officers were requesting funding for an additional Climate Change Officer post. Questions were raised about the extent to which this post was needed, given the Council already employed a Climate Change Officer, another officer who supported the Climate Change Officer and two lead Heads of Service for climate change. Officers explained that all new proposed posts were reviewed by the Corporate Management Team (CMT) to ensure that they were needed. Heads of Service had responsibility for overseeing the delivery of a wide range of services and were not specialists in respect of climate change. The Officer who had been supporting the Climate Change Officer was shortly due to return to working primarily in her substantive post on environmental waste issues and therefore the new Climate Change Officer would help to support the Council's work to address climate change, in line with a key priority of the authority to reduce carbon emissions.

Consideration was given to the types of action that could be taken in tranche 2 of the budget setting process in order to reduce costs and secure further savings. Members were advised that Officers would be exploring all possible actions that could be taken to reduce costs, increase income and secure savings. This would include potentially reducing back-office functions and increasing automation of services.

Questions were raised about the extent to which the Council was likely to need to meet further pressures in relation to staff pension costs moving forward. Officers clarified that the information provided in the report was based on figures provided by the Council's pension actuaries in September 2022. The actuaries had reported that pensions were performing relatively well and the figures detailed in the report would apply for the following three year period.

RESOLVED that

Officers continue to work on additional options, as outlined in the Strategy section of the Tranche 1 Report for presentation to Cabinet in February as Tranche 2 of the Budget.

RECOMMENDED that

the Tranche 1 savings proposals, Fees and Charges increases including updated WRS charges, and the single Growth item in respect of the

Climate Change Officer are approved for implementation to ensure maximum benefit as at 1st April 2023.

53/22

FINANCIAL AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT QUARTER 2

The Head of Financial and Customer Services presented the Financial and Performance Monitoring report for quarter 2 of the 2022/23 financial year.

Cabinet was advised that at the end of quarter 2, Officers were projecting an overspend of £342,000 in the Council's general fund budget. This overspend was anticipated after the Council had addressed the unallocated savings that had been included in the MTFP for the 2022/23 financial year. A number of service variances had been identified, particularly in relation to housing support which was likely to be overspent by the end of the financial year due to significant growth in demand. The leisure sector continued to recover, following the Covid-19 pandemic, and Officers were suggesting that it would be prudent to forecast a pressure in income from the leisure services provider in the District, SLM as existing contractual income levels were still not deliverable.

There remained a number of factors that would potentially impact further on the budget position which included:

- The cost of living crisis, which was already impacting on demand for services, particularly housing support and homelessness services.
- The impact of inflation on costs, such as in relation to contracted services.
- The pay award of £1,925 extra per staff member, which would create an extra pressure on the budget. The payments would include back pay and would be provided in December 2022 to staff. This would need to be covered from reserves and the figures would be included in the financial and performance monitoring report for quarter 3 of the financial year.

In terms of capital expenditure, there had been £4.8 million expenditure allocated to the Burcot Lane project. Some of this expenditure would need to be carried forward to 2023/24.

The report also provided an update on the Council's performance in relation to the strategic purposes in the Council Plan. Data provided in relation to measures had been included in the report. This data would be important to help inform difficult decisions in respect of tranche 2 of the budget.

Following the presentation of the report, Members discussed the content and in so doing commented on the use of funding from business rates. Concerns were raised that, as no increases had been announced to business rates in the Chancellor's autumn statement, this income might

not be a reliable source moving forward. However, Officers explained that the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had recently announced that he was not aiming to reset business rates and Officers were anticipating that this fund would remain available for several years.

Concerns were raised about the financial pressures that had arisen in relation to housing support and the implications for the Council. Officers explained that the Council had spent the authority's allocated housing support grant (DHP) by August 2022. This situation was unusual, as usually some funding remained available until later into the financial year and this helped to demonstrate the level of demand at the present time. Members were advised that other Councils were in a similar position, with Redditch Borough Council also having spent its full grant for housing support.

RESOLVED that

- 1) The current financial position in relation to Revenue and Capital Budgets for the period July to September 2022 be noted; and
- 2) The Q2 Performance data for the Period July to September 2022 be noted.
- 3) That £150,000 is allocated from the Financial Services Reserve to fund cross council improvements in HR and ICT.

54/22

SECTION 24 REPORT

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented a report on the subject of the Section 24 Notice that had been issued by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton, to the Council.

In 2021, the Council had experienced a number of issues that had resulted in the non-submission of the authority's accounts for 2020-21. The Council had been working hard to address these issues, starting with work on the Financial Recovery Plan and various reports and monitoring updates had been presented for Members' consideration on this subject at meetings of the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee, Cabinet and the Finance and Budget Working Group. A lot of progress had been achieved, including through the introduction of combined financial and performance monitoring reports, which were prepared and presented on a quarterly basis, and the provision of regular risk monitoring reports to the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee and Cabinet.

There had been a number of key issues that had impacted on the non-submission of the 2020-21 accounts including:

- Problems with the new finance Tech1 system, particularly with the cash receipting part of the system.

- High turnover of staff from the Financial Services department.
- The Covid-19 pandemic.

The external auditors were aware that the Council had made a lot of progress but had concluded that a Section 24 Notice needed to be issued to the authority in relation to the non-submission of the accounts. The Council had resolved the issues with the cash receipting part of the Tech1 system by the date of the Cabinet meeting and it was anticipated that the authority would be in a position to submit the 2020-21 accounts prior to the Council meeting on 7th December 2022.

Members subsequently discussed the report in detail and commented on the discussions that had occurred when the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee had considered the report at a meeting on 9th November 2022. It was noted that some Members of the Committee had voted against the Section 24 Notice and questions were raised about whether this was a viable course of action and what the repercussions could be for this action. Officers explained that the key point was to ensure that the 2020-21 accounts were submitted as soon as possible. Once this occurred, all of the recommendations detailed in both the Section 24 Notice and the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21 would have been resolved.

Reference was made to the wording of the recommendation detailed in the report and Members noted that whilst all Councillors might be minded to approve the Section 24 Notice, some might not feel comfortable supporting the management responses. In this context, it was suggested that it might have been more appropriate for there to have been two recommendations on this subject made by the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee. However, whilst it was acknowledged that Members could consider proposing this in two parts at the Council meeting, it was important to ensure that the Cabinet considered the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's recommendation and that there was consistency in the arrangements for reporting on to Council.

RESOLVED to note the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's recommendation that the Section 24 Statutory Recommendation is accepted and that Council review the recommendation, endorse the actions included in the management responses which form the rectification process required as per legislation.

55/22

INTERIM EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented the Interim External Auditor's Annual Report 2020-21 for Cabinet's consideration.

Members were informed that the report focused on the period up to 31st March 2022. The external auditors had acknowledged that the Council had already undertaken a lot of work to address issues that had arisen in 2021. However, five key recommendations, focusing on financial

reporting and monitoring arrangements in 2021/22, had been included in the report. In addition, a number of improvement recommendations had also been included in the report.

The action that had already been taken to address the recommendations in the report included:

- Providing an open and transparent assessment of the issues and proposing plans to address these issues in the Financial Recovery Plan.
- Combining financial and performance monitoring reports for the first time. These reports had already been prepared for quarters 1 and 2 of the 2022/23 financial year.
- Updating the Council's risk management arrangements and presenting risk monitoring reports for Members' consideration.
- Delivering savings in the MTFP 2023/24 to 2025/26 in two tranches.

The Audit, Standards and Governance Committee would monitor the Council's progress over time in terms of addressing the recommendations detailed in this report.

RESOLVED to note the Audit, Standards and Governance Committee's recommendations that

- 1) They agree the 5 Key Recommendations and 13 Improvement Recommendations within this report.
- 2) They agree the Management Actions contained within this report will rectify these issues.

56/22

FEES AND CHARGES UPDATE

The Interim Section 151 Officer presented an update to the fees and charges 2023/24 for Members' consideration.

Cabinet was reminded that the majority of fees and charges had been approved by Council in November 2022. However, fees for services for which the Council was in direct competition with private sector organisations had not been detailed in that report and these were therefore being reported for Members' consideration at this stage. The majority of fees and charges had increased by 10 per cent and the proposals in the update were consistent with this approach.

RECOMMENDED the approval of all exempt fees and charges.

The meeting closed at 7.04 p.m.

Chairman

Bromsgrove District Council – 7th December 2022 Member Questions

**1. From Councillor P. McDonald
Question for the Chairman**

"Does the Chairman not agree with me that he should allow supplementary questions to ensure there is no ambiguity in the response to questions."

**2. From Councillor R. Hunter
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and
Community Safety**

"It has now been three years since this Council agreed to reverse the long standing neglect of our bus shelters and provide the modern well maintained facilities that residents deserve. However very few improvements have been made and the budget allocation is sitting unspent. I understand there are now further delays due to a review at County Council but please could you provide some reassurance of when you expect so see these much needed improvements actually installed?"

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

"Could you please explain why it costs £234 for a planning application for a dropped kerb?"

**4. From Councillor S. Robinson
Question for the Portfolio holder for Environmental Services and
Community Safety**

Are you concerned about the dark open spaces in our town centre that have developed as a result of this Council no longer maintaining lighting on void car parks such as School Drive, Stourbridge Road and Churchfields?

**5. From Councillor S. Douglas
Question for the Leader**

“It appears that less able people who use mobility scooters are being denied access to buses unless they have been assessed by the bus company as to their competence to drive a mobility scooter. This is degrading and humiliating and clearly an example of disability discrimination. This awful situation can result in unaware scooter users being left stranded at the roadside. Will the Leader join with me in condemning this practice and do all she can to ensure that all buses can be used by all appropriately sized mobility scooter users?”

**6. From Councillor C. Hotham
Question for the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and
Community Safety**

“Since the introduction of wheelie bins, residents have been instructed to place the handle side inwards away from the kerb and highway. This seems perverse as it awkward and adds extra work as the operators have to turn the bins round before emptying them. Some residents have taken matters into their own hands and do place the handles towards the highway. Is it now time for the council to review the advice on bin handle positioning?”

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

"Over 3.8 million children in the UK currently live below the poverty line and for those young people the price of school meals is prohibitive. In addition, with the cost-of-living crisis that is predicted to increase rapidly.

Council request our MP to lobby the Government to implement free school meals."

NOTICE OF MOTION

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

“This Council asks Officers to fully appraise and report back on the implications for Bromsgrove residents of the introduction of either a whole Worcestershire unitary authority or a smaller North Worcestershire unitary authority.”

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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