



BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

MONDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2022
AT 6.00 P.M.

PARKSIDE SUITE - PARKSIDE

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

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence and Named Substitutes**
2. **Declarations of Interest and Whipping Arrangements**

To invite Councillors to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Disclosable Interests they may have in items on the agenda, and to confirm the nature of those interests.
3. **To confirm the accuracy of the minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Board held on 11th and 24th October 2022 (Pages 1 - 20)**

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 24th October 2022 will be published in a Supplementary Papers pack.
4. **CCTV Digitalisation Upgrade (Pages 21 - 26)**
5. **Planning Enforcement Update (Pages 27 - 30)**
6. **Update on the Corporate Performance Dashboard (Pages 31 - 36)**
7. **Fuel Poverty Task Group - Final Report (Pages 37 - 66)**
8. **Finance and Budget Working Group - Update**

9. **Task Group Updates**
10. **Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee - Update**
11. **Cabinet Work Programme (Pages 67 - 74)**
12. **Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme (Pages 75 - 82)**

K. DICKS
Chief Executive

Parkside
Market Street
BROMSGROVE
Worcestershire
B61 8DA

11th November 2022

If you have any queries on this Agenda please contact
Mat Sliwinski

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

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Notes:

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- Meeting Minutes
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Overview and Scrutiny Board
11th October 2022

BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

11TH OCTOBER 2022, AT 6.00 P.M.

PRESENT: Councillors C.A. Hotham (Chairman), J. Till (Vice-Chairman), S. J. Baxter, R. J. Hunter, A. J. B. Beaumont, S. R. Colella, R. J. Deeming and A. D. Kriss and H. Rone-Clarke (substituting for Councillor P McDonald).

Observers: Councillor S. A. Webb (present up to Minute 29/2022)

Officers: Mrs. S. Hanley, Mr. M. Bough (on Microsoft Teams), Ms. A. Delahunty (on Microsoft Teams), Mrs. P. Ross (on Microsoft Teams) and M. Sliwinski.

25/2022

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NAMED SUBSTITUTES

An apology was received from Councillor P. McDonald with Councillor H. Rone-Clarke attending as a substitute.

26/2022

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING ARRANGEMENTS

There were no declarations of interest nor whipping arrangements on this occasion.

27/2022

TO CONFIRM THE ACCURACY OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD HELD ON 5TH JULY 2022

The minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 5th July 2022 were considered.

The Chairman advised that a recommendation made by the Board with regards Air Quality Annual Update on 5th July 2022 (Minute No. 18/2022 refers) would be submitted to Cabinet at its meeting of 12th October 2022.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 5th July 2022 be agreed as a true and correct record.

28/2022

WORCESTERSHIRE HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY - PRE-SCRUTINY

The Housing Strategy and Enabling Manager and the Housing Development and Enabling Manager presented a detailed presentation, included as an Appendix A to the minutes, on the development of the county-wide Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25 and action plan. During a detailed presentation, the following matters were highlighted by the Officers:

- The Homelessness Act 2002 placed a statutory duty on all housing authorities to have a homelessness strategy in place, which had to be based on a review of all forms of homelessness in the county/district. The current Worcestershire Homelessness Strategy was due to expire on 31st December 2022.
- The new Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy set out how the Worcestershire local housing authorities and Worcestershire County Council would work together to prevent and relieve homelessness.
- In developing the new Strategy, a comprehensive assessment of the nature and extent of homelessness and rough sleeping across the County was carried out by analysing homelessness data and taking account of the views of customers and partner organisations.
- Subject to approval by Cabinet, there would be a public consultation on the draft Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25 and action plan, from 17th October to 4th December 2022.

Following presentation of the report, Members discussed a number of areas and Officers responded to questions – this included:

- Typographical error in respect of data in Table 3 of the Worcestershire Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022-25, detailing the temporary accommodation (TA) units in the District. Officers advised that the Council had an agreement in place with Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) to provide static units and temporary accommodation. In total, there were up to 50 units available. This provided flexibility in the system in order to meet demand, so there was a net surplus of units. Officers undertook to rectify the typographical error in the report.
- Explanation of the variance in funding allocated to councils through the Government's Homeless Prevention Fund for

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2022/23 (for example £362,524 to Wychavon District Council in comparison to £163,348 to Bromsgrove District Council). It was explained that the amount of funding was based on level of incidence of homelessness. Compared with most neighbouring authorities, Bromsgrove District had a lower incidence of homelessness and lower number of people towards whom the Council had a relief duty (i.e., duty to take reasonable steps to help the applicant to secure suitable accommodation), which resulted in a smaller grant allocation.

- Clarification around the Relief Duty. Officers explained that local authorities had a duty to provide accommodation to residents who were in priority need group and unintentionally homeless, even if the housing was provided in another local authority area (i.e., the resident's home council had to cover the cost). It was noted, however, that Bromsgrove District Council would generally use its temporary accommodation to house Bromsgrove residents only.
- Reasons as to why the number of rough sleepers in the Borough declined during the Covid-19 pandemic period and what lessons were learned. Officers explained that initiatives such as No First and No Second Night Out accommodation, which provided support above statutory duty and targeted people who were sleeping rough year-on-year, were successful in reducing the number of rough sleepers and encouraged people to sustain settled accommodation. The targeted support provided on substance misuse also contributed to lowering the number of rough sleepers during the pandemic.
- It was explained that the County Navigator Service from Maggs Day Centre were occasionally deployed around the District to look for people who were rough sleeping and there were regular checks in rough-sleeper hotspots.
- It was clarified that when service users were placed out of area on a temporary basis, the Council would keep in contact and monitor the quality of service received. When support was provided permanently out-of-district, the Council would not monitor those service users. Officers confirmed, however, that there was currently no need for redirecting to out-of-district provision as enough capacity was available in Bromsgrove District to meet the demand.
- Ability of the services to respond to increased demand. Officers confirmed that a considerable increase in demand for temporary accommodation was anticipated as a result of the cost-of-living crisis. Despite the stalling rate of housing construction and large demand on the Council's Housing Register, Officers expressed

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confidence in being able to deal with the anticipated increase in demand.

- Reciprocal arrangements with other authorities. The Housing Development and Enabling Manager explained that the Council had informal arrangements with other authorities, for example in terms of providing transport for people rough sleeping from other parts of the country back to their home local authority area where they could access support. It was highlighted, however, that there was a limited scope for any further cooperation as Bromsgrove District Housing Trust (BDHT) had only six units of emergency temporary accommodation.
- Family or friends were no longer willing to accommodate was being cited as the main reason becoming homeless in the District.
- It was noted that in the post-Covid period there had been a considerable increase in number of people becoming homeless through being evicted from private sector accommodation due to the end of an embargo on Section 21 notice evictions.
- Reporting cases of rough sleeping. Some Members reported significant delays when contacting Streetlink via telephone to report rough sleeping. In response Officers advised to report the cases through the Streetlink website as any information submitted this way was logged on the central government website and alerted all local agencies, which enabled a coordinated, multi-agency response.
- Other avenues to report rough sleeping/homelessness. Members queried if there were other avenues for reporting cases locally which allowed for immediate response in urgent situations. Officers confirmed BDHT could be telephoned from Monday to Friday during working hours, and they would alert the local outreach team. The average response time for this service was 48 hours.
- Feasibility of a 24-hour helpline number. Some Members commented that there should be an immediate support service available to telephone in cases of urgency. In response, Officers stated that it was not currently feasible for either the Council or the County to have a dedicated, staffed 24-hour helpline as there were not enough resources. However, there was an emergency, out of hours contact number for people who were homeless or rough sleeping. In addition, there was a Severe Weather Emergency provision available on immediate basis.
- Officers confirmed that the Council had a dedicated Housing Officer for the Homes for Ukraine scheme, and this was funded via a Government grant.

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- Arrangements for custody leavers not to be released on Fridays. Members asked if the current HM Prisons policy of allowing prisoners to be released on Fridays had been reconsidered, given that custody leavers without prior housing arranged were at risk of being left homeless on the weekend as they had insufficient time to access local support services, especially if they had a long way to travel home. In response, the Officer undertook to provide Members with a response and explained that this was a serious issue as prisoners discharged on a Friday were likely to find it difficult to access services and may start rough sleeping as a consequence.
- Bidding for the Mental Health Grant. Officers reported that the County was not successful in the first round and there had been another bid submitted by the public health team at Worcestershire County Council. It was explained that, if successful, the grant would only provide enough funds for appointing one health worker, and there were other avenues for the Council to bid for larger amounts of funding.

Members requested that a Homelessness Services leaflet containing contact details of various support organisations be produced by Officers and that a local 24-hour contact number for reporting rough sleeping and homelessness cases be provided to Members.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and recommendations contained therein endorsed.

[Councillor S. A. Webb left the meeting after consideration of this item.]

29/2022

FINANCE AND BUDGET WORKING GROUP - UPDATE

The Chairman informed Members that there had not been a meeting of the Finance and Budget Working Group since the last meeting of the Board, as the September meeting was cancelled as a mark of respect following the death of Her Majesty the Queen. It was reported that the next meeting was scheduled for 20th October 2022.

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

30/2022

TASK GROUP UPDATES

Councillor R. Hunter, the Chairman of the of the Fuel Poverty Task Group, reported that the Task Group held a number of meetings over the

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last month, which focused primarily on issues of signposting and access to support services and funding in response to the cost of living crisis. The Fuel Poverty Task Group had interviewed numerous stakeholders and had managed to gather a lot of evidence. The Task Group had now produced a draft version of the final report, which contained recommendations that would be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

Councillor R. Hunter explained that although he would be unable to physically attend the next meeting of the Board on 24th October, he hoped to appear via a video link to provide a more comprehensive update on the Fuel Poverty Task Group's activities.

RESOLVED that the Task Group Updates be noted.

31/2022

WORCESTERSHIRE HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - UPDATE

Councillor S. Baxter, the representative on the Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee, explained that the September meeting was cancelled as a mark of respect following the death of Her Majesty the Queen. The next meeting was scheduled for Monday 17 October 2022.

RESOLVED that Worcestershire Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee Update be noted.

32/2022

CABINET WORK PROGRAMME

The Cabinet Work Programme was presented for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED that the contents of the Cabinet Work Programme be noted.

33/2022

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman requested that the item on Climate Change Policy be added to the work programme for the January meeting of the Board.

Following a discussion around enforcement, Councillor A. Kriss reiterated his request from previous meeting that an item be included on the work programme which covered the effectiveness of enforcement

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across the Council. It was envisaged that this would include such areas as litter picking, fly tipping and planning enforcement.

RESOLVED that subject to the pre-amble above the Overview and Scrutiny Board Work Programme be noted.

The meeting closed at 7.16 p.m.

Chairman

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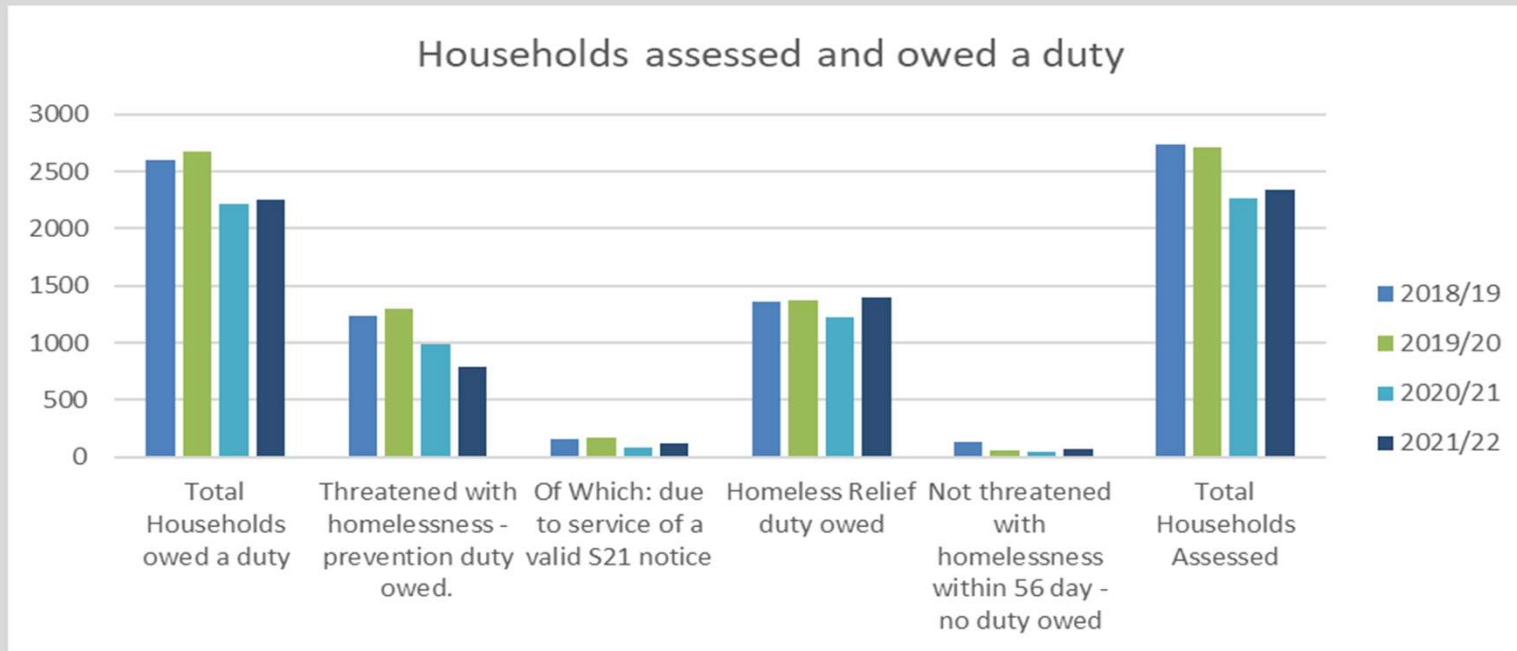
Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy

2022 -2025

Strategy Development

- Review of homelessness and related data
- Lived experience questionnaires
- Stakeholder questionnaires
- Review of national and local legislation, strategies and policies
- Stakeholder day - identification of actions
- Writing the strategy - four key priorities of prevention, intervention, recovery and increasing the supply of accommodation
- Consultation - 17th October until 4th December

Key Homeless Data - countywide



Main reasons for homelessness

Prevention

- Family / friends / relatives no longer willing to accommodate
- End of Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- Relation breakdown violent and non-violent
- Other

Relief

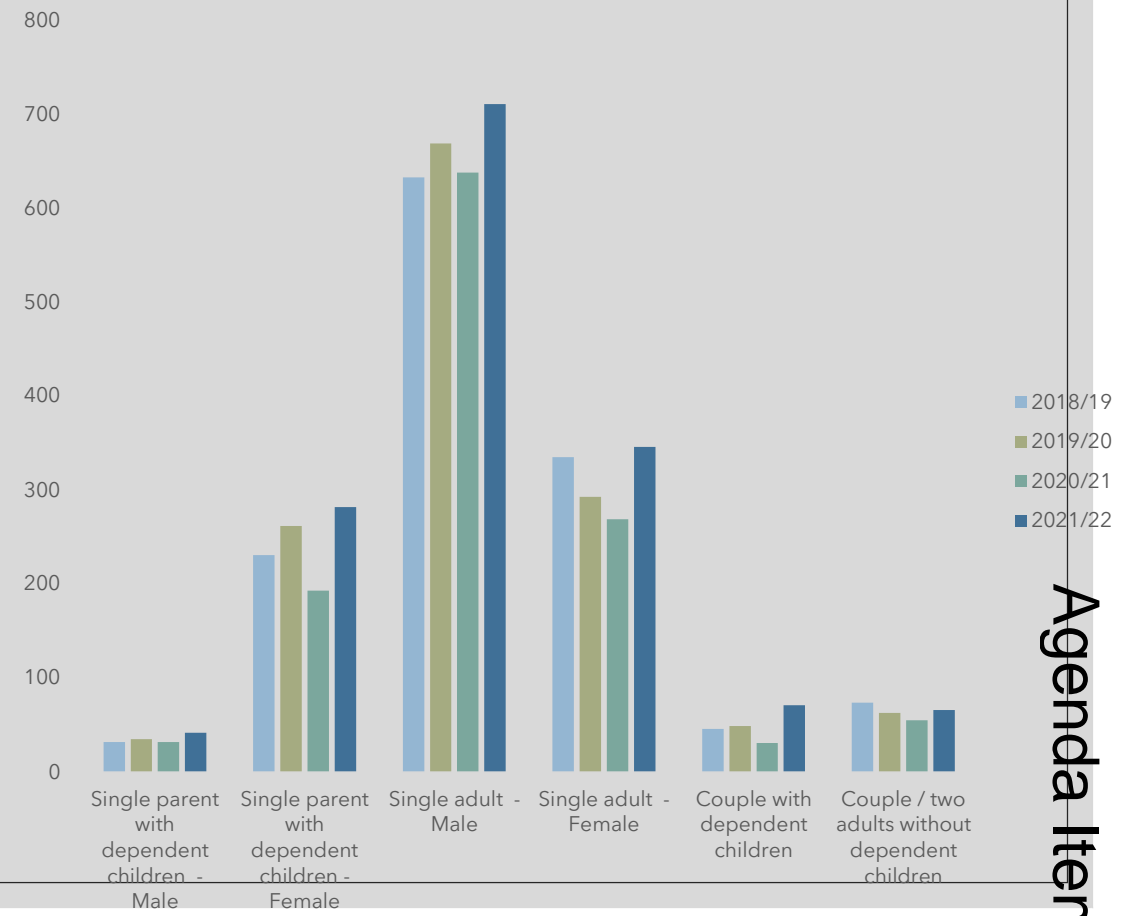
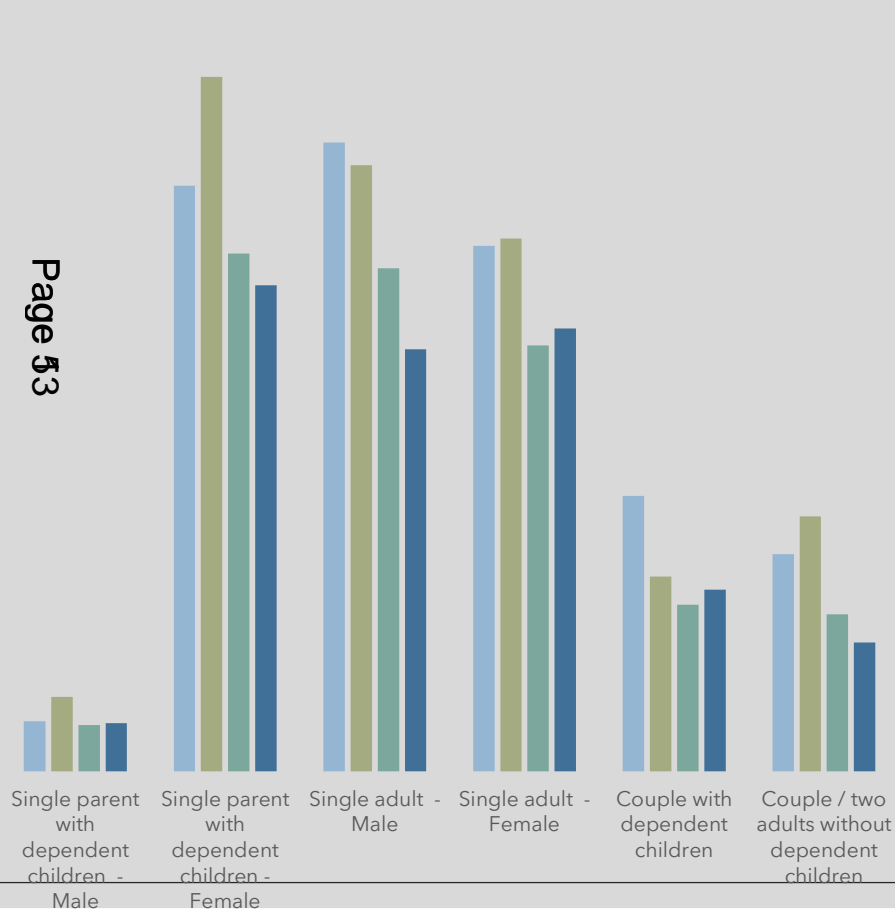
- As prevention plus;
- Left institution
- End of social housing tenancy

Household Composition

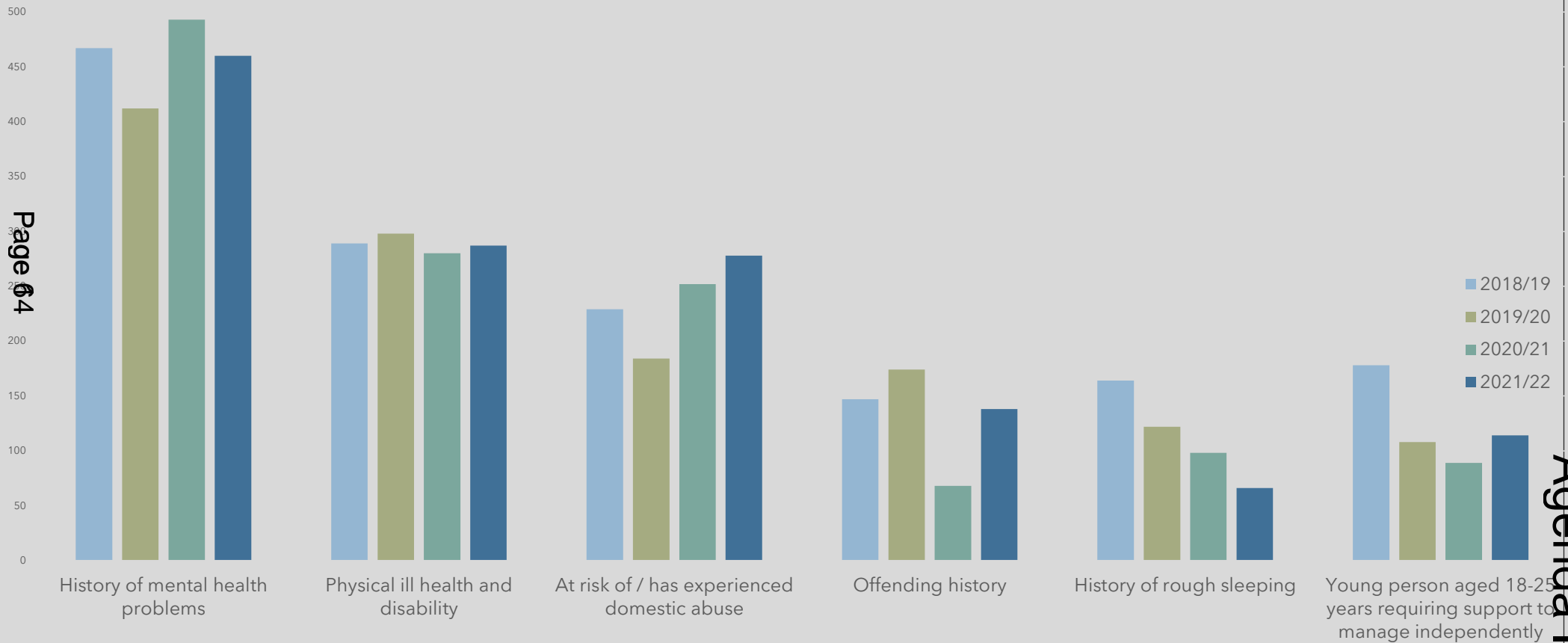
Prevention Duty

Relief Duty

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Support needs of households owed a prevention or relief duty



Other key stats

- 13,000 households on housing registers across the county
- Over 50% are families
- Nearly 800 households are placed into temporary accommodation every year
- 23% of households we owe a duty say they have a support need due to mental health
- Rough sleeping numbers reducing (from annual count)
- Accessing Private Rented Sector has got harder since the last strategy
- Number of social housing lets have declined (particularly during covid)
- New build levels declined but returning to pre-pandemic levels
- Rise in benefit claimants in 2020/21

Questionnaire & interview outcomes

Service users (single people)

- Most people had experienced homelessness for more than six months
- More than 50% had a mental health problem and 25% a substance misuse issue
- Most people had a tenancy at some point, most became homeless due to relationship breakdown either with family or a partner (but lost original reasons)
- Most people received support from their Housing Advice Team staff
- Most people wanted support and connection to their family and friends but this was made harder by being homeless
- In most areas the TA was beneficial but they wanted more support whilst being accommodated and many wanted support to remain once housed
- Accessing benefits and/or employment was an issue for those in more rural Districts

Stakeholders

- What was good?
 - Outreach teams & day centres
 - Support provision from LAs and Navigators
 - Collaboration between partners
 - RS Co-Ordinator role
 - Housing initiatives like Housing Led/First, No First Night Out
 - Charity run services and funding
- What were the gaps?
 - Lack of accommodation across the board but especially for young people and those with complex needs
 - Better access to mental, physical and substance misuse services
 - Raising awareness of services and pathways
 - Sharing good practice, reducing duplication and increasing collaboration

Action Plan

- Prevention
 - Reducing homelessness for victims of domestic abuse including through tackling financial abuse and developing a country wide sanctuary scheme
 - Utilise data collection and improve quality
 - Develop the prison leavers protocol
 - Collaboration and outreach with partners including Health services and DWP
 - Developing prevention panels
 - Increase use of the commitment or duty to refer
 - Deliver on thematic review of rough sleeper actions
- Intervention
 - Tenancy sustainment and support
 - Staff training including PIE
 - Increase utilisation of harm reduction services
- Recovery
 - Meaningful activities
 - Peer mentoring
 - Access to education, employment & training
- Supply of accommodation
 - Increase supply of supported and step-down accommodation for range of needs
 - Identify demand for supported units for rough sleepers and increase supply if required
 - Provide 35 units of safe accommodation for victims of Domestic Abuse

Communication plan

Action	Outcome	Communication Channels	Target Audience	Responsible	Due date and frequency
To re-promote the Duty to Refer / Commitment to Refer message.	To increase the number of referrals to Homeless Teams through Duty to Refer from a wider range of agencies.	Existing joint meetings and publicity materials with public organisations.	Public organisations who may meet people who are potentially homeless.	District Councils	Dec-22
For organisations and agencies who have an interest in preventing homelessness to continue to meet on a regular basis to share information, develop best practices and current policy developments.	To have a cohesive and coordinated approach and response to homelessness.	Regular local homeless forums	Organisations and agencies who are involved in homelessness.	District Councils and voluntary/ statutory agencies	Quarterly or Bi-annually depending on local arrangements
To continue to review information on housing and homelessness on the district council websites to make sure it is up to date and accessible including through obtaining views on the information from People With Lived Experience (PWLE) To include case studies or videos to make messages more impactful.	For the public, organisations and people who are homeless or may become homeless to have easily accessible online information.	District Councils' Websites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are homeless or may potentially become homeless General Public 	District Councils	Sep-22 and a six monthly review
To promote the services available to rough sleepers including Streetlink, Cold/Hot Weather Emergency Provision, new services plus the existing services both statutory and voluntary.	For the public to have an increased awareness of the services available for people who are homeless. All organisations to promote a jargon free, cohesive message.	Regular media campaigns to include local newspapers, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram channels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> People who are homeless or may potentially become homeless General Public 	District Councils, WSHOG and Homeless organisations	Quarterly as a minimum

Bromsgrove Data

	Prevention						Relief					
	18/19		19/20		20/21		18/19		19/20		20/21	
End of AST	34	20.2%	36	18.8%	13	11.1%	4	5.6%	7	7.9%	4	4.8%
Family/Friends no longer willing to accommodate	47	28.0%	57	29.7%	38	32.5%	21	29.2%	27	30.3%	29	34.5%
Other	26	15.5%	31	16.1%	29	24.8%	23	31.9%	20	22.5%	19	22.6%
Relationship Breakdown (non-violent)	20	11.9%	33	17.2%	19	16.2%	4	5.6%	12	13.5%	12	14.3%
Domestic Abuse	18	10.7%	17	8.9%	14	12.0%	12	16.7%	9	10.1%	14	16.7%

Local Action Plan for Year 1

Working with partners who attend the Homelessness Strategy Steering Group to develop local action plan

- Building partnerships with Health
- Supporting services who help those most affected by the cost of living crisis
- Review accommodation availability to meet need in respect of both temporary accommodation and longer term accommodation options
- Review the Domestic Abuse Officer role, the safe accommodation and the provision of sanctuary schemes.
- Ensure that there are options for Young People and Rough Sleepers (crash pad/NFNO)

Overview and Scrutiny 2022

21st November

CCTV Digitisation Upgrade Report

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor M. A. Sherrey
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis
Report Author	Job Title: CCTV and Telecare Manager Email: rachel.nicholls@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01527 64252 x 3126
Wards Affected	Wythall, Alvechurch, and Brook Rd Park
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	No
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	Communities which are safe, well maintained and green.
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview and scrutiny committee are asked to note the report.

2. BACKGROUND

The Bromsgrove CCTV has gone through an extensive upgrade following recommendations made during a Review by O and S, in 2018.

All recommendations have been carried and additional improvements have been funded through 5 years of PCC funding.

Members requested an update of the BDC CCTV scheme improvements which was given April 2022. Members then asked if/when all remaining analogue cameras are to be made digital.

Since that report was written the following camera locations are have been made digital by incorporating the cameras into their local wireless network and replacing the camera head with a digital camera:

Camera 2 - Stourbridge Road Car park, Bromsgrove Town Centre

Camera 61 and 62 - Hagley Recreation Ground.

Cameras 46, 47, and 48 - Hewell Rd and Station Approach, Barnt Green.

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All camera within the BDC scheme have been replaced. Most transmission links are now digital, many analogue links have been replaced with wireless connections where cameras have line of sight.

The following 3 locations remain on analogue transmission.

Brook Rd Park, Rubery – There are 2 analogue cameras at this location. Cameras at this location are solely analogue not hybrid. Due to historical installation methods, the cable between the cameras and the BT cabinet cannot be upgraded and would need to be replaced completely with a new digital fibre. Costs for this work plus 2 digital cameras have been estimated at £12,800 (plus a contingency of £7,000 depending on what duct work is required). BT costs to upgrade the circuit are £3,400 capital and increased revenue charges by £615 £ to £1,470.

Wythall – although all cameras have been upgraded to the latest hybrid analogue to digital tech (future proofed for years to come), and providing great image quality now*, the transmission of these cameras is still analogue. The reason for this is that the distance between cameras makes wireless connectivity impossible (as line of sight is required). Therefore, all existing BT fibres would need to be upgraded to digital and there would be 2 days work for the incumbent CCTV contractor and minor equipment costs estimated at £2800. There are four circuits serving these 5 cameras, so the BT costs to upgrade these circuits is £13,600 capital and increased revenue charges by £3,700.22 £ to £5,880.

Alvechurch - currently a mix of analogue and digital transmission. All cameras have been upgraded to the latest hybrid analogue to digital tech (future proofed for years to come), and providing great image quality now*. Two cameras are using digital transmission and three are analogue. To change the 3 cameras to digital settings would cost in the region of £2200. To change all fibres to digital in Alvechurch requires 2 circuits to be upgraded. Capital costs would be £6800 and revenue costs would increase each year by £1,715 to £2,940.

* Note the Hybrid cameras purchased across the District have a digital and analogue output. This means transmission can be either analogue or digital, based upon camera settings. The cameras were purchased to provide good quality analogue images where digital transmission was cost prohibitive, but future proofed to be used in digital mode should the opportunity/need to change transmission arise. Whilst the digital image may slightly sharper the camera functionality is the same, day and night time capabilities are still good.

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3. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

3.1 Cost for each location

Location	CAPITAL Equipment/integration work by CCTV contractor	CAPITAL Transmission upgrade to digital.	REVENUE Annual increase above current revenue costs.
Brook Rd	£19,800	£3,400	£615
Wythall	£2,800	£13,600	£3,700
Alvechurch	£2,200	£6,800	£1,715
TOTAL COST	£24,800	£23,800	£6,030

Capital	£48,600 +VAT	Revenue increase per year	£6,030 +VAT
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Upgrading these transmission systems would benefit the scheme and future proof them going forwards, it is noted that the last 5 years has seen funding from the PCC to support the CCTV project. If members wish to fund the above upgrades, a capital budget bid would be required or alternatively Officers would recommend pausing any decision to determine if any PCC grant funding becomes available in the future.

4. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no legal implication

5. **STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS**

Relevant Strategic Purpose

5.1 Communities which are safe, well maintained and green.

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Climate Change Implications

- 5.2 There are no climate change implications

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 There are no equality and diversity implications as these are not new locations to the scheme.

Operational Implications

- 6.2 Down time of the system is limited to only the cameras being worked upon. Down time in these circumstances is usually limited to 48hrs, and in most cases much less.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 The risk to not carrying out this upgrade work is that in the future BT may no longer support analogue transmission. However recent enquiries do not pose this scenario as an imminent risk.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background: Briefing Note April 2022

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9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr Margaret Sherrey	
Lead Director / Head of Service	Judith Willis	
Financial Services		
Legal Services	N/A	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

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Overview & Scrutiny Board 2022

21st November

Briefing Note on Planning Enforcement

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Phil Thomas
Portfolio Holder Consulted	No
Relevant Head of Service	Ruth Bamford
Report Author: Mark Cox	Job Title: Technical Services Manager Contact email: mark.cox@worcsregservices.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738023
Wards Affected	ALL
Ward Councillor(s) consulted	N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)	
Non-Key Decision	
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.	

1. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Board note the information included in the report.

2. **BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following a discussion around enforcement the question of how enforceable Planning conditions were and how many enforcement processes result in prosecutions. This briefing note has been compiled to update the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on the planning enforcement work undertaken by the Council.
- 2.2 Planning Enforcement is a discretionary service which supports the wider development control process in ensuring appropriate development is encouraged and policies are adhered to.

3. **Planning Enforcement Update**

- 3.1 Planning Officers, whilst following technical advice from consultees, will only apply conditions in compliance with the Town & Country Planning Act and associated guidance which includes applicability for potential control (enforcement).
- 3.2 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. Thus, whilst the table below provides a summary of the main enforcement actions the key element is the

Overview & Scrutiny Board 2022

21st November

number of enforcement actions relative to the number of cases closed during the period.

	2021-22	2022-23 (First 6 months)	1 Oct-10 Nov 2022
Planning Enforcement Cases in BDC	268	84	26
Warning letters (Final informal stage)	n/a	5	4
Enforcement Notices (including Stop Notices)	2	3	6 (with an additional 5 being prepared)
Prosecution or injunctions	0	0	1

- 3.3 Travel and access restrictions during 2020 and 2021 together with staff sickness and recruitment issues have caused some difficulties with the delivery of many services, including planning enforcement. However, since March 2022, WRS colleagues who have a background in enforcement activities have assisted their planning colleagues with the investigation of alleged planning breaches. This has assisted in a reduced timeframe for most elements of the enforcement process and timely enforcement actions being taken.
- 3.4 In November Tracie Carter of land at Aqueduct Lane was found guilty of failing to comply with an Enforcement Notice leading the judge to sentence Ms Carter with a fine of £160,000, Costs of £7,258 and a victim surcharge of £170.

**Overview & Scrutiny Board
2022**

21st November

4. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder:	N/A	
Lead Director / Head of Service	N/A	

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Overview & Scrutiny

21st Nov 2022

Update on the corporate dashboard

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor G Denaro
Portfolio Holder Consulted		Yes
Relevant Head of Service		D Poole
Report Author	Job Title: Head of Transformation, OD & Digital Services Contact email: d.poole@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk	
Wards Affected		N/A
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		N/A
Relevant Strategic Purpose(s)		Enabling
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Board RESOLVE to note the:-

- 1) Answers provided to questions raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Board about the development of the corporate dashboard (Appendix 1)**

2. BACKGROUND

A report was sent to Overview & Scrutiny on the 30th of May outlining the development of a corporate performance dashboard by use of Microsoft Power BI tools. During the discussion some additional questions were raised by members about the ongoing development of the corporate dashboard. The organisation currently has a legacy performance dashboard which is being replaced with a more comprehensive performance dashboard. The organisation is using Microsoft Power BI (Business Intelligence) data visualisation tools to develop a dashboard of performance measures for managers and senior leaders. The use of data to drive informed decision making is a key requirement for the organisation.

The organisation has many different systems, datasets and reporting requirements, Power BI is a comprehensive design tool that requires data modelling, calculation development, visual design, and product configuration skills, to deliver the corporate dashboard.

The high-level phases of project activity to date have been:

Proof of Concept - A collection of initial reports were delivered to demonstrate capability, gain feedback and inform requirements. This phase has been completed.

Infrastructure - To enable data to flow in and reports to flow out of the solution, several infrastructure items have been implemented. These include:

- A new SharePoint site and framework
- A data migration tool to transfer legacy data to SharePoint (where applicable)
- Power BI Service configuration.
- Power BI Data Gateway install and configuration

Data Needs - Interviews with CMT members and a survey of 4th and 5th tier managers, has allowed us to understand data needs and challenges. This data has been used to inform the design.

Training - Due to the variety of skills required, training and support for internal officers is underway and will continue.

Solution Design and Report Template - A repeatable approach and accompanying re-usable report template has been developed to streamline the creation of new reports.

Build and Improve – Data continues to be obtained in order to build reports for strategic measures. The public (web based) interface is also under development.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The councils Microsoft site arrangement includes Power BI software. Licences to access this software cost £68 each. Further details of the costs so far have been included in Appendix 1.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 N/A

5. STRATEGIC PURPOSES - IMPLICATIONS

Relevant Strategic Purpose

- 5.1 The MS Power BI dashboard is used as a tool to assist the organisation to deliver on the priorities outlined in the Council Plan

Overview & Scrutiny

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2019 – 2023 through the use of data to monitor and improve performance.

Climate Change Implications

5.2 N/A

6. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Equalities and Diversity Implications

6.1 N/A

Operational Implications

6.2 The use of data can help to gauge how services are delivering against the strategic priorities outlined in the council plan. It provides insight and opportunities to identify areas of good practice or where some improvement may be needed.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 N/A

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1 – Dashboard Overview and Scrutiny Questions

Overview & Scrutiny

21st Nov 2022

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Cllr G Denaro	10/11/2022
Lead Director / Head of Service	N/A	
Financial Services	N/A	
Legal Services	N/A	
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	N/A	
Climate Change Officer (if climate change implications apply)	N/A	

Bromsgrove Microsoft Power BI Dashboard

Q. Concerns were raised that if all Members were to have a license, then this would be a significant annual cost to the Council. It was suggested that it could be limited to the equipment available for Members' use in the Members' Room, if necessary.

A public view of the dashboard is being created which will not incur licence costs. This will provide a dashboard view of each performance measure and will be available via the Council website by the end of the year. This option provides greater flexibility for Member use as it can be accessed from any PC that has an internet connection.

Due to Microsoft's licensing policy it is not possible to provide access on a generic machine as licenses are allocated to each named user.

Q. The Director, Finance and Resources confirmed that the dashboard was currently in its development phase and the scope of it was being built, the resources to fund it and the final costs would be considered in the later stage and be subject to further consideration.

The scope of the project was defined in late 2020 before the project started. The purpose of this piece of work is to:

1. Develop and implement a MS Power BI based performance dashboard.
2. Develop internal Power BI skills in the Policy & Performance team.
3. Understand data needs to inform the development of a performance dashboard.
4. Establish the options for presenting and delivering data to a variety of stakeholders.

It is anticipated that the ongoing cost of the dashboard will be no more than £3,000 of license costs per year. Staff time needed to populate the system will be less than the time currently taken to populate the current alternative, which is less efficient. The use of automated processes to generate reports is also envisioned in the future.

Q. It was questioned whether the officer time spent on the dashboard's development had impacted on other areas of work within the Council.

The Power BI specialist is employed as a contractor. The contractor is working to build the dashboard and to support the Policy & Performance officer to develop Power BI skills. The Policy & Performance officer is required to support the existing legacy dashboard as part of their role. The new dashboard will replace this legacy system. Other duties around data analysis, surveys and performance reports have not been impacted.

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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
BOARD**

**FUEL POVERTY TASK
GROUP**

FINAL REPORT

November 2022



Bromsgrove
District Council

www.bromsgrove.gov.uk

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MEMBERSHIP OF THE TASK GROUP



Councillor Rob Hunter (Chairman)



Cllr Andrew Beaumont



Cllr Sue Baxter



Cllr Janet King



Cllr Harrison Rone-Clarke



Cllr Caroline Spencer

SUPPORTING OFFICER DETAILS

Amanda Scarce – Democratic Services Officer

a.scarce@bromsgroveandredditch.gov.uk

Foreword from the Chairman

Our group was set up at the start of 2022 out of concern over the impact of sharply rising energy bills on the health and wellbeing of the people of Bromsgrove.

Since then, the fuel poverty crisis has become a cost-of-living crisis. General inflation in the UK is now at a rate far higher than many of us have ever seen before. It's no longer just about gas and electricity. Food and drink, clothes, and household goods have all been subject to eye-watering increases. All of us have had to tighten our belts, but for those already struggling to keep their head above water we have entered truly frightening times.

There were already around 5,000 households in Bromsgrove living in fuel poverty, even before this group started its work. This represents more than one in ten households in the district. In some wards it is more than one in five. We don't yet know how much this has increased, but we did hear evidence from Act on Energy that calls to their service have doubled over this time and that they are now frequently hearing from people who never expected they would ever need help.

We also know that 59% of households in our district have an EPC of D or below, indicating poor energy performance and greater exposure to rising energy costs. This is despite the best efforts of Bromsgrove District Council to seek funding to retrofit homes. As a country we simply have not done enough to insulate our homes and protect people from an increasingly volatile global energy market.

As part of our investigations, we heard from representatives of a broad range of public sector and voluntary groups who are already working incredibly hard to support vulnerable people and are making a huge difference. I would like to say a sincere thank you to Graeme Anderson (BDHT), The Reverend David Ford (Bromsgrove Churches Together), Rachel Jones (Act on Energy) and Nicki Hitchcock (Worcestershire County Council Libraries) for supporting our group but more importantly for the incredible work their teams do day in day out in our community. I would also like to thank our own officers Judith Willis and Della McCarthy for their time and dedication to this critical issue and that of their hardworking teams. Thanks also to Lisa Devey, Claire Felton and Julie Heyes for providing evidence to the Task Group.

As a task group we enjoyed rich input from councillors of all parties represented at Bromsgrove District Council and indeed from independent councillors of no political affiliation. I would like to thank each of you for your earnest and diligent engagement with the issues at stake. In particular, I would like to thank the Portfolio Holder for Housing, Health and Wellbeing Councillor Shirley Webb, who has gone out of her way to help our group bring forward deliverable recommendations.

Agenda Item 7

I'm proud of what we have achieved by working together. I believe our proposals will make a real difference, but they do not go nearly far enough and sadly will not solve all the problems we heard about over the last few months. So, we must continue to campaign for a better deal for our communities so that nobody ever needs to ask for help with something as essential as heating their own home.

My final thanks go to Amanda Scarce, Democratic Services Officer, who came back from retirement to help us make a success of this group and has over the years given a great deal to the people of Bromsgrove through her tireless work behind the scenes at Bromsgrove District Council.

**Councillor Rob Hunter
Chairman, Fuel Poverty Task Group**

Summary of Recommendations

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

1. Chapter 1 – Support already available and how the Council can help

Recommendation 1
That 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.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications for recommendations: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time in checking and updating the webpages and posting to the social media account.

Recommendation 2
That 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.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation. Although it is acknowledged there would be a small outlay for printing costs.
Legal Implications for recommendations:

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

Officer time in creating the document.

Recommendation 3

That 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.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

Officer time in supporting the Councillors.

Chapter 2 – External Support and what needs to be done to help

Recommendation 4

That 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.

Financial Implications:

There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.

Legal Implications:

There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.

Resource Implications:

Officer time in supporting the Bromsgrove Partnership.

Recommendation 5
That 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.
Financial Implications: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation.
Legal Implications: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time in supporting the Bromsgrove Partnership.

Recommendation 6
That the Cabinet actively explores all 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.
Financial Implications for recommendations: There are no direct financial implications in relation to this recommendation, although it is acknowledged that there may be financial implication in the future should Cabinet consider the suggestion.
Legal Implications for recommendations: There are no direct legal implications in relation to this recommendation.
Resource Implications: Officer time in administering any scheme that is set up in the future.

Background Information

Councillor Rob Hunter presented a topic proposal form containing proposed terms of reference for a Task Group to be set up to investigate the position in respect of fuel poverty in the District. Councillor Hunter explained that residents were facing an unprecedented rising level in the cost of living and that it was important that the Council provided as much support as possible to those residents identified as in need.

Following consideration of the topic proposal at its meeting on 28th March 2022, the Board agreed that a Task Group should be set up and appointed Councillor Hunter as its Chairman at that meeting.

At the May meeting of the Board, the membership of the Task Group was confirmed and a six month timescale set for the completion of the investigation. The first meeting of the Task Group took place on 14th June 2022. The Task Group has held 8 meetings in total since that date and held discussions with a number of key witnesses, both internal and external partners. In view of the topic of the investigation, the Task Group Members were keen for any recommendations to be considered as soon as possible.

Chapter 1

The current position and what can be done to help

The Task Group was keen to understand at the beginning of its investigation the support which was already in place for residents and to ensure that this information was readily available to them. The Task Group interviewed Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services, who provided Members with a detailed briefing paper, which explained the support that was available and how resident could access this. This included the following areas:

Energy Advice

The Council funds an energy advice service, delivered by Act On Energy and information on this service was available through the Council's website. Residents can call the energy advisors to receive guidance on how best to reduce their fuel bills, with support on a range of topics, including finding the best tariff and energy deals, how best to use heating controls, lifestyle changes that can make significant savings and available grant funding for energy saving home improvements.

Warmer Worcestershire

The Council also works closely with other partners via the Bromsgrove LSP and the Warmer Worcestershire Network. Its aim is to deliver reductions in both fuel poverty and carbon emissions through improved energy efficient across the housing stock. Its membership was made up of the six district councils, the county council, Act on energy, Age UK and Public Health. It was noted that the Network was in the process of producing a Countywide Fuel Poverty Plan.

Essential Living Fund

The Financial Independence Team at the Council administer the Essential Living Fund (ELF) and this fund provides support to residents with energy and utility bills, supermarket vouchers, food parcels and white goods. As part of an application for ELF the Team will try to establish some further details to see what other support may be available that has not already been accessed. This could include a number of DWP benefits such as Universal Credit, free childcare and school meals or discretionary housing payments. Where appropriate the Team will signpost applicants to other agencies and partners in order for residents to access this additional support.

Household Support Fund

This was funding provide by the DWP to support vulnerable households as part of the ongoing recovery from the pandemic. Worcestershire County council was the lead and accountable body for the funding, with a proportion of the funding being allocated to the district councils. The fund specifically related to the provision of support to meet daily needs, such as food and utilities, including

help with energy bills. This has enabled the Council to issue fuel vouchers to eligible residents. In addition, funding was also allocated to Act on Energy to provide vulnerable residents with one off fuel payments of up to £500, pre-payment fuel vouchers of up to £150 and replacement/repair of boilers/heating systems. This scheme was initially for the period October to March 2022; however it was extending to October 2022 with additional funds being provided, with specific guidelines also being amended as to who it should be aimed at supporting.

During the discussions with the Head of Community and Housing Services the Task Group questioned the availability of data and it was acknowledged that whilst there was national and regional data available it was produced by Central Government and often significantly in arrears. Members asked how the data available was used to target interventions and to assess the success of the support provided. It was explained that no one data set was perfect on its own for targeting, for example an area may be modelled as having high fuel poverty, but there may be a wide variation within that area of energy bills and income. Warmer Worcestershire had recently purchased Home Analytics Data from the Energy Saving Trust for all district, which extrapolated existing data to all properties in the district, including EPC rating and predicted fuel poverty scoring. This would be used to target specific funding such as Sustainable Warmth to properties most likely to be eligible for it, based on EPC and income.

Following on from the discussion with the Head of Community and Housing Services the Task Group began to form a picture of the support that was already provided to residents and were keen to understand this in more detail. This was done through interviewing representatives from the Council's Financial Inclusion Team and Act on Energy, the service funded by the Council.

Financial Inclusion Team

The Task Group provided Lisa Devey, Customer Support Manager with a number of pre-prepared questions, which were responded to in writing.

- Members were advised that there were 4 main schemes the Council was involved in administering: Essential Living Fund, Discretionary Housing Payments, Council Tax Hardship and Household Support Fund (HSF). The HSF was administered by Citizens Advise for the Council, with the remaining schemes being administered internally by the Benefits Section.

Officers spoke regularly to partners to establish any new funding streams or initiatives and the internal schemes were all considered by the same team to offer a single service, Officers also signpost where relevant to other partners.

- Members has asked for details on how an initial enquiry was dealt with and Ms. Devey explained that Officers spoke to each resident as an individual to ascertain their circumstances. This helped them work out which scheme(s) would best suit their needs, offer the most support and maximise their income. The Team made sure to take the time to listen

and signpost to other partners where appropriate; for example, Citizens Advice, Act on Energy, DWP, NewStarts, foodbanks and the like.

- Members also asked if Officers had seen an increase in enquiries in recent months? And if so, what measures were in place to ensure that any future increase was able to be managed in a timely manner. It was questioned whether the Council would have sufficient funds to support residents through the coming months and whether there was a contingency plan in place to cover this. Ms. Devey responded that whilst they had seen an increase in enquiries, demand had remained quite consistent for the Team. However, she believed that there had been more demand and pressure felt by Citizens Advice and Act on Energy.

It was further commented that as other schemes had ended such as test and trace, she had been able to make more resource available and felt that the Team was in an excellent position should volumes spike during the winter months.

- The Task Group had raised concerns around how the services that were available were communicated to residents, as it was felt this was key to supporting those residents that were in most need of support. It was confirmed that this was an area the Team had been working on alongside partners. The Council now had a dedicated Cost of Living page on the website and a postal leaflet would be available from early October, with the details of all the partners who can help alongside a brief explanation of the services they provide are included on this leaflet. A series of partnership surgeries throughout the district were also being planned. This would allow residents to get answers and support in one place from several organisations.

Act on Energy

The Task Group also interviewed Rachel Jones, the CEO of Act on Energy and again, provided her with a number of pre-prepared questions. Ms. Jones provided Members with background information on how Act on Energy had originally been established in 1998 and how its role had developed over the years, from that of providing advice around climate change to the current position it found itself in, which was largely dealing with concerns around fuel poverty. The majority of enquiries were around providing support in paying bills and advice on energy efficiency, whilst many of the energy efficiency steps would only make a small difference to the annual cost of a bill it was a way of empowering those people and giving them the belief that they could take back some control over what was happening. There was a lot of confusion around the price cap and tariffs, so work was also being carried out in trying to explain what this also meant and how it impacted on overall costs. It was also noted that there was already a number of “scams” circulating, and Act on Energy was trying to raise awareness about this and encourage people to be aware of them and not be taken in.

Ms. Jones provided data around the number of enquiries which they dealt for the district, for the last 6 months there had been over 1,200 whereas for the

previous year for the same period there had been just over 500. Members commented on the significant increase and Ms. Jones provided more detail around the changing demographic of those enquiries. This included 12% being over the age of 65 and the inclusion of a new category which was for working adults, which took up some 47% of the enquiries. It was also noted that the calls being taken had changed significantly over the last 6-12 months, with a much greater emphasis being on the mental health of those calling in and much more detail being given to Act on Energy. This in turn had an impact on the officers taking the calls and Ms. Jones explained that appropriate measure had been put in place to ensure staff received the relevant support themselves in order to be able to provide a good service.

The Task Group were advised about specific funding that Act on Energy had been administering and it was noted that whilst this was appreciated it often came with tight timescales and a very complicated application process. An example was given for the Household Support Fund which had stipulated that of the funds provided one third must go to the over 65 age group. This was historically an age group which had always been a challenge and one which was often reluctant to ask for help. Ms. Jones explained that Outreach Workers had been accessing various community centres and events to talk to people about the help that was available as this was often the best way to engage with them.

Members were provided with data in respect of specific issues, and it was noted that over 200 were in respect of debt, with an average fuel debt for the county of around £750, with Bromsgrove being slightly higher. Again, it was important that people understood the meaning of the fuel cap and of the tariff system and just exactly how much they paid for both electricity and gas. Members were provided with how Act on Energy were trying to educate residents through various means, including via the website using videos and through leaflets, which would be distributed by the outreach workers. In the longer term it was important to look at energy efficiency and how people can make their homes better. It was also noted that the OFGEM website provided some useful information and data.

Ms. Jones also provided Members with information around how Act on Energy worked with the Bromsgrove Partnership and Councillor Shirley Webb was also on the Bromsgrove Partnership and she provided Members with details of the work that was being undertaken and the support provided by Act on Energy to residents. She was able to give first hand experience of the work of the Outreach Workers and how they had helped her within the Ward. Members were keen to hear about the work of the Outreach Workers and asked for all Councillors to be provided with their details for future reference.

Notice of Motion

Appendix 2 of this report provides details of a Notice of Motion from Councillor Harrison Rone-Clarke, which was considered at the Council meeting held on 17th October 2022. During the debate on this matter, the Leader agreed to action point 1 and following discussion it was agreed that point 2, in respect of considering the use of the Parkside complex as a day centre/warm hub/space,

would be referred to the Fuel Poverty Task Group for further investigation. The Task Group held a meeting in early November and invited the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services and the Business Development Manager from the Council to attend together with the Bromsgrove Library Manager to discuss options available in supporting residents with a Warm Hub/Space.

The Task Group Members had already been provided with a briefing note which explained the Worcestershire Libraries Warm Space provision throughout the county and the Library Manager provided further detail around the specific support offered at the Bromsgrove Library, which was based in the Parkside complex. The Library Manager explained that she also covered the libraries in Droitwich, Rubery, Hagley and Catshill and provided a detailed summary of what the libraries were able to offer, this included comfy seating, study and work desks, access to wifi and various activities. It was noted that this was something that the libraries had always provided, but there had been an increase in use of these facilities over recent years. The aim was to further promote the facilities in the coming months, when it was likely that there would be an increased need as the cold weather set in. Currently, the Parkside Library was unable to offer free warm drinks, but this would be something which could be considered in the future. The libraries also provided support by signposting people to other organisations who were better placed to provide specific help. The Library Manger commented that it was likely that in the coming months those needing support would never have accessed it previously and therefore would not be aware of how to access many of the services available. It was also noted that often people who came to the libraries were those who felt digitally excluded for whatever reason and were not necessarily the older members of the community. This was something which the Task Group had discussed with other witnesses and had raised concerns about. It was clear from the information provided by the Library Manager that the library service was much more than simply borrowing a book and already provided a great deal of support to a wide variety of local residents in many different ways.

The Task Group went on to discuss with the Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services the potential use of the Council space at the Parkside complex as a warm space, but given the provisional already provided by the library, it was felt that this was much better suited to the needs of residents, than the Council space. Although, it was acknowledged that if further support was needed in the future, perhaps with a contribution towards the cost of warm drinks for example, this was something which could be considered at that time. The Task Group were keen to ensure that the provision of support was not duplicated in anyway.

Members also discussed the support provided at Amphlett Hall and the Business Development Manager confirmed that she was in close contact with Age UK who provided a variety of support and would ask them to provide details of this in order for it to be included within the resources available on the Council's website. It was agreed that the promotion of the support available through both the libraries and Amphlett Hall should be included in any promotional documentation that the Council produced.

General

It was clear to the Task Group that there was in fact more support available to residents than it had originally thought, but the concern was whether this was easily accessed and that the application processes were completed in a timely and efficient manner. Concerns were raised in respect of the majority of support being through access to the internet and it was acknowledged that this was not always readily available to some residents. Members discussed how the services could be better communicated to residents and how they could be supported in accessing them.

The Task Group gathered data from the Council's Web Team about the number of times specific webpages had been accessed to see whether there was any increase in more recent months as the cost of living crisis began to take hold, although the data was not able to show any particular increase in the number of people accessing these pages, it did show that there were "peaks and troughs" throughout recent months.

The Task Group were also provided with data from the Citizen's Advice Bureau who provided a free advice service to residents covering housing, financial, welfare and budgeting from a grant given by the Council. Unfortunately, the data only covered the first quarter of 2022-23 so the Task Group were unable to assess whether there had been a significant increase in recent months. However, it was acknowledged that this was an important service that was provided and something Members were keen to see continue, particularly in light of the difficult times facing residents in the future.

Whilst the Task Group acknowledged that there was support available to residents, its main concern was how this was communicated to those in need of help and its general accessibility. It was also acknowledged that everyone had a part to play in ensuring that residents were supported, this included Councillors taking an active role in promoting the services and supporting residents as much as possible. This could be done by liaising with residents directly or through local voluntary organisations or parish councils for example, to ensure that the information available was up to date and readily available. The Head of Community and Housing Services had advised the Task Group that officers were considering preparing a leaflet which would have all the relevant information in one place and the Task Group were keen for this to be put together and made available in as many places as possible, again it was felt that Councillors had a role to play in helping distribute this and it was also suggested that a simple A4 poster also be provided to be displayed in prominent places within each Ward. It was felt that they would be better placed to know how this could be done most effectively.

Finally, it was noted that a specific page had been set up on the Council's website, where all relevant information was available. The Task Group wanted to ensure that the information was up to date and easily accessible, with the information being reviewed and monitored regularly.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 1

That 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.

Recommendation 2

That 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.

Recommendation 3

That 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.

Chapter 2

External Support and what needs to be done to help

At one of its earliest meetings the Task Group took the opportunity to meet with and interview Della McCarthy, the Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager, as it was felt that she would be able to provide information around the work of external partners and the work they were undertaking. It was felt that she may also be able to help with contacts for potential external witnesses.

During the meeting the Task Group was provided with a summary of the role of the Partnership (which was made up from representatives from the public and voluntary sector), the partners involved (including representatives from the Council, Police, Primary Care, Heart of Worcestershire College, Age UK and NewStarts) and the separate theme groups within the Partnership. The main board was chaired by Mr. Graeme Anderson, Chief Executive of BDHT. Della was able to provide the Task Group with details of the Better Environment Group, which she felt would be useful for the Task Group's purposes and chaired by Rachel Jones from Act on Energy, who the Council worked with closely (see full details in previous chapter). The Task Group were able to get a much better understanding of the role of Partnership from these discussions, understanding the benefit of partnership working and the importance of maintaining those links. This provided the Task Group with some early ideas about how the Partnership could play a part in providing the much needed support to residents in the coming months.

The Task Group thought it would be useful to also speak to Mr. Anderson, in his role as Chair of the Partnership, but also as the CEO of the district main social housing provider.

The Task Group had also been provided with contact details and information in respect of the Churches Together Group who had held a symposium on June to look at how it could support communities with the anticipated increasing cost of living crisis. It was felt that it would therefore be useful to interview Rev. D. Ford, who was taking a lead role within this Group.

Churches Together and BDHT

Rev. David Ford and Mr. Graeme Anderson, CEO BDHT attended the same meeting, and a detailed discussion took place following them initially providing information about the work they were doing.

Rev. Ford provided some background information of Churches Together and its members. He explained the role he felt the churches had to play in supporting the communities but could not act alone in meeting the needs of residents. It was important that they partnered with statutory and community organisations who were also responding to the crisis. It was important that they were aware of all the support that was available and how best to access it. This could be through increasing support of organisations they already worked with rather than starting up something new, but what was clear was that there was

a real need for that support and that it was likely to increase. The concern was that there was no clear data which helped those organisations to understand what was needed and the level of the need. From discussions that had already taken place it was clear that the need was different to many others and that it was much more widely spread across the district, it went beyond the areas of deprivation that people were already aware of and was not impacting on families that would under normal circumstances be able to manage their finances. It was commented that people appeared to have significant outgoings and did not have savings to draw upon. The increase in the cost of fuel and its knock on effect on the cost of living, meant that many people appeared to be at their financial limit, with no room for manoeuvre, which was a real concern. The concern was that this was unknown territory and imperative that the right support was provided in the right places.

It was clear that Warm Spaces was an essential part of the support that could be provided, and the churches were looking at how they could support this. However, it brought with it its own challenges as not all churches had the funds to cover the cost to do this and some of the church halls also had inefficient heating systems, which would be difficult to run throughout the winter. There were a number of ways that Churches Together were looking at providing support and again this included providing a hot meal to those that needed it, but this also came at a cost and until data was available that gave an indication as to just how many people would need to access support, it was difficult to gauge just what was needed and the cost. All the support Churches Together provided was reliant on volunteers too, which added another dimension to the provision of support in the longer term. There were also a number of other things to take into consideration, for example would access to a warm space be done through a referral system, as was the case with foodbanks, was there an opportunity for the Warm Spaces to be used as an educational hub, by potentially linking it to the local college as work experience for students to assist with cooking meals, or to help teach those attending how to cook on a budget. There was a lot to think about and a need for there to be a central point for its co-ordination to ensure there was no duplication of services and that they were both what was needed and in the right place.

Mr. Anderson explained how he felt both BDHT and the Bromsgrove Partnership (in his position as Chair) could support residents and the challenges faced.

It was explained that whilst there were a number of places where data could be accessed, this was a new challenge that was being faced and the data available may not be appropriate to the current situation. He gave an example of how the Partnership had assisted in the collection of data during the pandemic and that it had been found the best way for this to be done was simply by knocking on doors and asking the relevant questions. This had been supported by BDHT officers who were familiar with the local areas and had a good relationship with many residents due to the work they carried out. It was important that the Partnership members worked together, asking the question to GP surgeries for example about what they were made aware of. All parties needed to come together to understand the problem before it would be possible to find a solution

to it. It was acknowledged that BDHT as the single largest provider of social housing in the district, had a significant role to play. Mr. Anderson commented that, as had previously been mentioned, there were areas which were well known to be classed as areas of deprivation, however the cost of living crisis was bringing to light a whole new set of demographics and even those in reasonably well paid employment, who previously had a disposable income, were beginning to feel the pinch, which was likely to increase as the winter months loomed. Everyone had a role to play in trying to help and support residents and finding the best way to do this, whether it be through Warm Spaces or other means of addressing some of the complex issues that people would be facing.

The Partnership was able to co-ordinate the collection of data and the provision of support, but it was a much wider problem which needed to be addressed by all those involved. In light of the information around the demographics of those needing help, it was suggested that the type of support needed may well be very different in each area and this would need to be considered carefully when planning an approach to take. It was important to empower people and for them to share their skills and resources.

Mr. Anderson explained to the Task Group how his staff supported its residents, through a variety of means, including one to one support, budget and job coaches and signposting. BDHT worked in partnership with the CAB who were able to deal with more complex financial difficulties.

The Task Group raised concerns with Mr. Anderson around the use of pre-paid gas and electric cards. Mr. Anderson explained that very often this was the only way in which people were able to access utilities and that it was surprising how many people did not have access to a bank account and were therefore not able to use direct debit as a form of payment. Whilst it was not an ideal way of getting gas and electric, it was commented that actually a lot of people were very good at budgeting and the difficulty was that there were simply not receiving enough money to cover the ever increasing cost of living. The lack of a bank account also had an impact on a number of benefits which were paid to people, for example the recent £150 refund which had been paid from central Government through the Council Tax, had meant that those who did not pay by direct debit were some of the last to receive it, but were likely to be those in most need of it. The lack of a bank account was a definite disadvantage to many people, as was also the lack of access to a smart phone. The impact of many services only being accessible online or by telephone had an impact on many people.

The Task Group discussed whether the funding provided by central government to both residents (through the benefit system) and to local authorities was sufficient to meet the ever increasing needs and also that a number of schemes put in place to provide additional support were very restrictive and complicated to navigate in a very short timeframe. Rev. Ford commented that it was likely that the Council would feel the impact in a number of ways, as he believed that Council Tax arrears would increase as a result of the increase in the cost of living generally. The situation was an urgent one, which needed to be

addressed and it was important that a co-ordinated approach was taken to mitigate the longer term effect on local communities.

General

The Task Group had been keen to involve both the Head of Community and Housing Services and Councillor Shirley Webb, as portfolio holder in its investigation and Councillor Webb was able to give evidence of the work that she was carrying out in her Ward supported by the Parish Council and other organisations. This included a flyer which had been produced (and printed by the Parish Council) which had details of Warm Spaces accessible each day of the week throughout her Ward. These were being distributed to as many people as possible to ensure that those that needed the help could access it. She hoped that the Act on Energy Outreach Worker would be able to attend some of those Warm Spaces in order to chat and provide support to those attending. She had also taken the time to distribute the Act on Energy leaflets to schools and her wish was for all children in the district to be given a leaflet to take home, to ensure those homes which needed support were aware of what was available. It was agreed that Councillors had an integral part to play in the work that was needed as they were most familiar with their own Ward, and it was important that they familiarised themselves with the support that was available and how it could be accessed.

From the discussions held with Rev. Ford and Mr. Anderson it was clear that there was a need for a co-ordinated approach to be taken and for data to be gathered to ensure that any support was the right support and targeted in the right places. It was acknowledged that there may be a need for additional financial support to be provided to some organisations to be able to provide that support, for example there may be some centres (or churches) who would be willing to help but were unable themselves to cover the full cost of their own heating, so a little support in this respect would be appreciated. The Task Group acknowledged that the Council was also facing its own challenges in respect of funding and that its budget for 2022/23 had already been agreed. However, the Task Group felt that it was important that all avenues of funding were investigated and applied for to ensure that the best possible support could be provided to its residents.

The Task Group therefore recommends the following:

Recommendation 4
That 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.

Recommendation 5

That 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.

Recommendation 6

That the Cabinet actively explores all 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.

Chapter 3

Areas to Note

There were a number of areas that the Task Group touched upon during its investigation, and which it wished to highlight. It was felt that these areas may warrant further investigation in the future, and which could have a positive impact in the long term.

Local Planning

Members may wish to further investigate how the Council may be able to influence housing developers in the future to ensure that future housing developments were as energy efficient as possible.

This was also discussed with Graeme Anderson, from BDHT and he was keen for future builds to be as energy efficient as possible.

District Heat Network

The Bromsgrove District Heating project could help to bring local resilience and stability to the cost of heating and an update on its current position may be something which the Overview and Scrutiny Board may wish to receive and investigate further.

Private Rented Housing Sector

Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations were in place regarding private rented homes and the Council's Private Sector Housing Team have the power to enforce these, should they be made aware of a property being let with an EPC rating of F or G without a registered exemption. Again, this may be something which the Overview and Scrutiny Board may wish to either receive regular updates on or investigate in more detail in the future.

Learning from other councils

The Task Group briefly touched on work that other councils were doing to address the impact of fuel poverty, both immediately and in the long term. This again, may be something which warrants further, more detailed investigation to ensure that this Council was doing all it could to support its residents.

Appendix 1

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY BOARD

Fuel Poverty Task Group

Terms of Reference as at February 2022

Background to the Proposal

Local residents face crippling energy costs as a result of the lifting of the energy cap at the start of February. Average bills are set to increase by £693 a year whilst those on pre-payment metres will face an average rise of £708 per year. Families are facing increases of more than 50% in their annual energy costs at a time when other essential costs including petrol and food are also increasing rapidly.

[Recent research](#) from the ONS shows that a third of households are already cutting back on gas and electricity spending, with the impact disproportionately affecting those on the lowest incomes. This energy crisis presents a real threat to the health and wellbeing of our residents. The purpose of this group is to examine what support the Council can offer to residents who are most adversely affected by the energy crisis and ensure we are doing as much as we can to prevent fuel poverty in our community.

This links to the Council's objectives as set out in the 2019-2023 Council Plan. One of our Strategic objectives is to promote work and financial independence, with an action to support residents to manage their finances. The energy crisis represents an unprecedented challenge to these objectives, which merits further investigation.

Aims and Objectives of the Task Group

- Explore what insight the Council has into the likely impact of the energy crisis on local residents, such as EPC ratings data, volume of support referrals.
- Explore what support is available locally, who provides it, how residents can access it and how success is measured
- Explore what measures are being taken to retrofit our social housing stock in order to make it as energy efficient as possible
- Explore what opportunities are available for residents in private rented housing to improve the energy efficiency of their homes
- Consider whether there are any gaps in support for those facing fuel poverty in Bromsgrove and explore how these could be filled

Agenda Item 7

- Investigate whether there are any areas of good practice at other councils that we could learn from
- Investigate whether there are any new national or regional policies or funding schemes that we could take advantage of to support local residents.

Appendix 2

NOTICE OF MOTION

MOTION – COUNCIL 17th OCTOBER 2022

The following Notice of Motion has been submitted in accordance with Procedure Rule 10 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. 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.”

Appendix 3

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Council

Essential Living Fund

External

Household Support Fund
Government's Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
Information from various Nearest Neighbours' websites

Points of Reference

[Fuel poverty statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

[What is Fuel Poverty? | National Energy Action \(NEA\)](#)

[What Is Fuel Poverty In The UK | MoneySuperMarket](#)

[Fuel poverty factsheet, England, 2020 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Fuel poverty definition and meaning | Collins English Dictionary \(collinsdictionary.com\)](#)

[Fuel poverty | North Lanarkshire Council](#)

Appendix 4

WITNESSES

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

Internal Witnesses:

Claire Felton – Head of Legal, Democratic and Property Services
Judith Willis - Head of Community and Housing Services, Guy Revans, Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services
Julie Heyes – Business Development Manager
Della McCarthy – Bromsgrove and Redditch Partnership Manager
Lisa Devey – Financial Inclusion Team (written submission)

Councillor Shirley Webb – Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being and Strategic Housing

External Witnesses:

Graeme Anderson, Chief Executive, Bromsgrove District Housing Trust
Rev David Ford, Churches Together
Rachel Jones, Chief Executive, Act on Energy
Nicki Hitchcock - Bromsgrove, Droitwich, Rubery, Hagley and Catshill Library Manager, Worcestershire County Council

Legal, Equalities and Democratic Services

Bromsgrove District Council, Parkside Offices, Market Street
Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B61 8DA
Email: scrutiny@bromsgrove.gov.uk

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CABINET LEADER'S WORK PROGRAMME

1 DECEMBER 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023
(Published as at 1st November 2022)

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

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

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

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

The Cabinet's meetings are normally held every four weeks at 6pm on Wednesday evenings at Parkside. They are open to the public, except when confidential information is being discussed. If you wish to attend for a particular matter, it is advisable to check with the Democratic Services Team on (01527 64252 ext 3031) to make sure it is going ahead as planned. If you have any queries Democratic Services Officers will be happy to advise you. The full Council meets in accordance with the Councils Calendar of Meetings. Meetings commence at 6pm.

CABINET MEMBERSHIP

Councillor K J May	Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Economic Development, Regeneration and Strategic Partnerships
Councillor G. Denaro	Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Enabling
Councillor M. Sherrey	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Community Safety
Councillor P. Thomas	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regulatory Services
Councillor M. Thompson	Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Climate Change
Councillor S. Webb	Portfolio Holder for Health and Well Being and Strategic Housing

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Bromsgrove 2040 Vision Key: No	Cabinet Not before 18th Jan 2023 Council Not before 25th Jan 2023		Report of the Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration	Ostap Paparega, Head of North Worcestershire Economic Development and Regeneration Tel: 01562 732192 Councillor K. J. May
Bromsgrove Centres Strategy Key: Yes	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023 Council 25 Jan 2023		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Lyndsey Berry, Bromsgrove Centres Manager Tel: (01527) 881221 Councillor K. J. May
Council response to the Birmingham Local Plan issues and options consultation Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023 Council 25 Jan 2023		Report of the Head of Planning, Regeneration and Leisure Services	Mike Dunphy, Strategic Planning and Conservation Manager Tel: 01527 881325 Councillor P. L. Thomas

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Council Tax Base 2023/24 Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023 Council 25 Jan 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
District Heat Network - Proposed Revision Key: Yes	Cabinet Not before 18th Jan 2023		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor G. N. Denaro, Councillor M. A. Sherrey
Final Council Tax Support Scheme 2023/24 Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Financial Monitoring Report Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Financial Outturn Report 2021/22 Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023 Council 25 Jan 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Homelessness Prevention Grant 2023/24 Key: Yes	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Head of Community and Housing Services	Amanda Delahunty, Strategic Housing Officer Tel: 01527 881269 Councillor S. A. Webb
Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/25 - Update Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Parking Enforcement Service Level Agreement Key: Yes	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01527 881705 Councillor M. A. Sherrey
Quarterly Risk Update Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Worcestershire Housing Strategy 2040 Key: No	Cabinet 18 Jan 2023		Report of the Chief Executive	Judith Willis, Head of Community and Housing Services Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3284 Councillor S. A. Webb

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre and at Windsor Street Key: Yes	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023		Report of the Chief Executive	Kevin Dicks, Joint Chief Executive Tel: 01527 64252 Ext 3250 Councillor K. J. May
Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet Key: No	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023 Council 22 Feb 2023		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Kevin Hirons, Environmental Services Manager Tel: 01527 881705 Councillor M. A. Sherrey
Financial and Performance Monitoring Quarter 3 Report Key: No	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Council Tax Resolutions 2023/24 Key: No	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023 Council 22 Feb 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro

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Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
2023/24 Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan 2023/24 to 2025/26 (Including Treasury Management Strategy and Capital Programme) Key: No	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023 Council 22 Feb 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Pay Policy Statement 2023/24 Key: No	Cabinet 15 Feb 2023 Council 22 Feb 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Becky Talbot, Human Resources and Development Manager Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Financial Monitoring Report Key: No	Cabinet 15 Mar 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro

Decision including Whether it is a key Decision	Decision Taker Date of Decision	Details of Exempt information (if any) and information explaining why items have been postponed (where available)	Documents submitted to Decision Maker / Background Papers List	Contact for Comments
Quarterly Risk Update Key: No	Cabinet 15 Mar 2023		Report of the Executive Director of Resources	Peter Carpenter, Interim Section 151 Officer Tel: 01527 64252 Councillor G. N. Denaro
Environment Act - Changes to Waste Services - Implications Key: No	Cabinet Not before 1st Jun 2023 Council Not before 21st Jun 2023		Report of the Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services	Guy Revans, Head of Environmental and Housing Property Services Tel: 01527 64252 ext 3292 Councillor M. A. Sherrey

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

WORK PROGRAMME

2022-2023

RECOMMENDATION:

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

ITEMS FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

Date of Meeting	Subject	Additional Information
21 st November 2022	Enforcement – Planning	Fly tipping + litter picking to come at a later date
	CCTV – Digital Upgrade Update	
	Corporate Performance Dashboard	
	Fuel Poverty Task Group – Final Report	
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
17 th January 2023	Market Street site – Levelling Up Fund Update	
	Bromsgrove 2040 Update – pre-scrutiny	
	Electric Chargers in the District	
	Climate Change Policy - Overview	
	Working Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
	Any Task Group Updates	
13 th February 2023	Bromsgrove Town Centre Regeneration - Land at the Dolphin Centre - pre-scrutiny	
	Replacement Street Signs	
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	
13 th March 2023	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	

Agenda Item 12

17 th April 2023	Overview and Scrutiny Board – Annual Report 2022-2023	
	Working Group Updates	
	Any Task Group Updates	
	WCC Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee – update from Representative	
	Cabinet Leader’s Work Programme	

Outstanding items for 2022 – 2023 with no assigned date

2022/2023

- Decarbonisation of the Council Fleet – due for consideration not before April 2023
- Strategic Transport Assessment
- Enforcement – fly tipping and litter picking

When considering topics for investigations Members may wish to take into account the Council's Strategic Purposes as detailed below:



Run & grow a successful business

What does this mean to me?

Businesses choose to come to Bromsgrove & grow here, providing services & jobs.

Further development enhances the town & district centres as places that people want to visit.

Improved connectivity makes life easier, whether that's on the roads or online.

Why?

As an entrepreneurial area, supporting business is incredibly important for the District. Through North Worcestershire Economic Development & Regeneration we will continue to support new businesses. We will also work with established companies within the District to help them grow & flourish.

We are committed to making the Town & district centres places that residents & visitors can enjoy & that attract a variety of businesses.



Priority: Economic development & regeneration

We will:

Consult businesses to understand current needs & growth plans, working with partners to support business growth.

How we will measure it:

- Number of businesses engaged through the consultation
- Number of existing businesses supported to grow & develop

Work & financial independence



What does this mean to me?

There are more opportunities for young people, with the right skills for local businesses.

Money management support will help to reduce debt & increase financial confidence.

People get the benefits they are entitled to, when they need them.

Why?

The economic picture for Bromsgrove District is positive, with consistently low unemployment. However, the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2015 (specifically income, employment & education indicators) show there were issues, particularly in parts of Charford & Sidemoor.

We will support our residents to access work opportunities in new industries, focusing on the skills agenda. We will also work with residents to help them manage their money & access the right benefits.



Priority: Skills for the future

We will:

Undertake a skills audit with partners & work together with them to address any gaps.

How we will measure it:

- Number engaged through the skills audit.



**Live independent,
active & healthy lives**

**What does this
mean to me?**

People are supported to maintain a healthy lifestyle.

Communities & individuals feel less isolated.

There are more positive things to do through improved access to sport & cultural activities.

Why?

Whilst the health of people in Bromsgrove District is generally good, health priorities include improving mental well-being, increasing physical activity & ageing well. Increasing numbers of people living with reduced mobility, dementia & diabetes are an issue for the District. Through the Bromsgrove Partnership, Bromsgrove District Council will continue to play its part in addressing these issues.

We also want to enhance sport & cultural opportunities in the District, which will have health & social benefits.



**Priority: Improving
health & well-being**

We will:

Support targeted activities for healthy lifestyles.

How we will measure it:

- Number of people accessing targeted activities
- Number of people with diabetes
- Number of people who have had a stroke

Affordable & sustainable homes



What does this mean to me?

More affordable & appropriate homes become available.

Private tenants have homes which are safe & tenancies which are secure & affordable.

Homes can adapt to changes in circumstances & are increasingly energy efficient.

Why?

Bromsgrove has the highest level of home ownership in Worcestershire, & the smallest private rented sector in the county; demand for housing within the district has had a significant impact on property prices.

Access to affordable housing is recognised as an issue, as is ensuring homes are sustainable into the future.



Priority: A balanced housing market

We will:

Develop & implement a District Housing Strategy.

How we will measure it:

- Number of affordable homes (commitments & completions)

Communities which are safe, well-maintained & green



What does this mean to me?

Crime & anti-social behaviour reduces even further & the fear of crime also starts to decrease.

The district is well-maintained & people feel involved in keeping it clean.

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

Why?

Bromsgrove District Council has committed to playing its part in addressing the impact of climate change; from work to increase recycling to support to reduce fuel poverty, a **green thread** runs throughout this Council Plan.

It is important to ensure that Bromsgrove remains attractive for everyone, & our Place Teams, in partnership with local communities, provide a strong service across the District.

The District is a low crime area; through the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership we continue to work hard to address the causes of crime & anti-social behaviour & to support victims.



Priority: Reducing crime & disorder

We will:

Target the causes of crime affecting the night-time economy.

How we will measure it:

- Anti-social behaviour reports in the Town & district centres
- Crimes in the Town & district centres

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